

Developing a School Profile: An Analysis of Critical School Improvement Dimensions

The purpose of this activity is to provide you with the opportunity to analyze the changes in seven important dimensions of school improvement over a period of time, in this case three years. We believe the activity will be insightful as you reflect upon the dimensions (Culture, Professional Development, Organizational Structure, Organizational Resources, Curriculum, Instructional Strategies, and Leadership). We encourage you to give this task your careful thought.

Directions

Please use the attached charts to assess your school on each dimension. The “1” to “9” scale was designed to represent continuous, equal intervals. Please note that “5” is not meant to be an average or median score. This scale is continuous, but does not represent a “normal curve.” To assist you in the interpretation of each dimension, we have provided “working definitions” of each dimension.

Rating Scale:

- 1=detrimental impact on students
- 3=neutral impact on students
- 5=minimal positive impact on students
- 7=solid positive impact on students
- 9=exceptional positive impact on students.

For each chart, please place a dark dot in the **shaded columns of January, May, and September for each year**. You certainly may place a dot for each month, but that is usually not necessary unless there were noticeable fluctuations in the impact of the dimension during the four-month period.

Attached example for Heartland Middle School:

The following page provides an example of a completed chart for Heartland Middle School. This page represents a profile of Heartland’s curriculum over a three-year period, as developed by the school faculty. The staff determined that in 2002 the curriculum had neither a positive or negative impact on the learning experiences of their students. That impact moved in a positive direction (up) over the next four months and as the 2002-03 school year began (September, 2002) the curriculum had improved (possibly due to curriculum development during the summer). Little change occurred from September, 2002 through May, 2003. In September of the 2003-04 school year the impact of the curriculum on the students was again on the rise, peaking in January and dipping slightly in May (perhaps a loss of effectiveness as the newness wore off and the school year became more hectic in the spring).

Copies of the Profile Charts:

After you have completed your Profile Charts, we will make a copy of them for our records. Please use a dark pen or pencil to complete our profile plot (connect the dots) before you give it to us to copy.

Engaging the Entire Faculty

As with most of the activities we have used throughout Project ASSIST, you can implement this activity with your faculty. Engaging the entire faculty provides them with the opportunity to “think-through” the evolution of these key dimensions over the past few years. That reflection and related discussion is healthy. A second benefit is that you will have the perspective of the entire faculty to use as a basis for goal setting. If you choose to engage the entire faculty, you might consider asking faculty to complete the sheets individually and then discuss the information and create a group (table) profile. You can then collect either the group profile and compile that information or collect the individual profiles and compile that information to create your school profile. As always, you will be provided a three-hole-punched copy for your binder and an electronic copy.