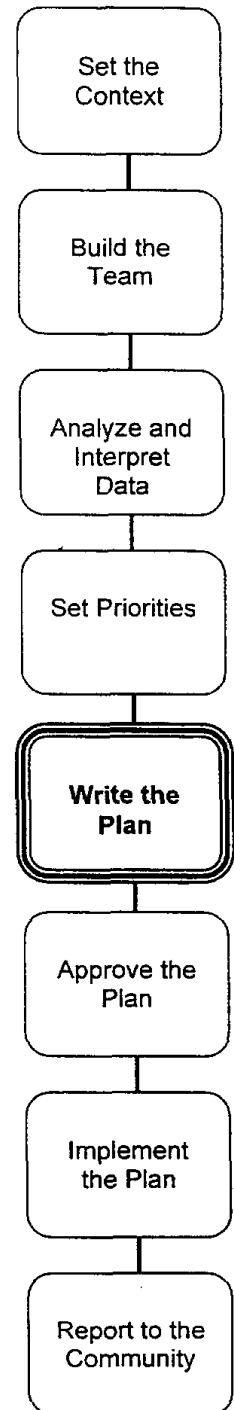


# EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

## Write the Action Plan

You are now ready to write your plan. Remember that the goals of the action plan must be clearly stated in terms of student results, using measurable data. Involving the faculty in determining the best actions to include in the plan is essential. Do not try to "do it all". By concentrating on a few reasonable goals, you have a better chance of success.



## Writing the Action Plan

### *How do you get started?*

In small schools, the action planning team may involve most of the staff. In larger schools and high schools, most of the staff will *not* have been directly involved in the initial stages of action plan development. Because of this, it will be important for the action planning team to involve the entire staff in a discussion regarding the analysis of data and the selection of priorities before the actual writing of the action plan. A presentation of the work that has already been done by the action planning team will inform the staff of the basis for the recommendations of the team.

The staff will need to understand the process that was used to analyze data. What was the origin of the data? Why were these data used for analysis? What steps were followed to analyze it?

The action planning team should also discuss with the staff the process that was followed in selecting proposed priorities for the plan. As discussed earlier, it is crucial that the plan be focused in order to assure success. The staff will need to hear the rationale that supports the selection of priorities that the action planning team is recommending. Building consensus among the staff is key to the successful implementation of the plan. Once the staff has participated in these conversations, you can begin writing the final version of the plan.

### *What needs to be included in the action plan?*

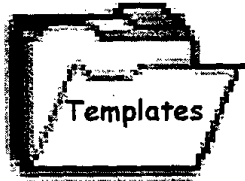
A good action plan describes how the goals will be achieved and acts as a guide or map for implementation. A good action plan has the following components:

1. A statement of need identified by assessment data;
2. A measurable student performance target that is tied to the need;
3. The steps or activities required to achieve the goal;
4. A timeline for all of the activities which includes interim progress indicators and check points;
5. The person designated to be responsible for ensuring each activity is completed and for reporting on progress;
6. A description of any professional development that may be required;

## Key Ideas



It is critical to build staff consensus for the actions to be included in the plan.



- ▶ See Appendix E.1 for an Annual Action Plan Template
- ▶ See Appendix E.2 for an Annual Action Plan Timeline
- ▶ See Appendix E.3 for Annual Action Plan Budget
- ▶ See Appendix E.4 for Annual Action Plan Budget for Technical Centers
- ▶ See Appendix D.2 for an Analyzing Time Template

### Key idea

The key is to be sure that the goals grow from data and are cast in terms of measurable student performance results.

7. A description of financial, material, and human resources that are required.

The format of the plan is not critical as long as all of the components are present. Best practice would be to *include all seven components for each assessment cluster* you adopt in the action plan. Writing the plan in this fashion will assure that the goals, activities, timelines, budget, and responsibility are clearly defined and focused on specific efforts and results. Remember to set reasonable goals to ensure there is capacity to succeed.

Included in Appendix D and E are a number of suggested templates that you might find helpful. They serve only as prompts that might guide the development of your action plan. The annual action plan templates include prompts for setting action steps to reach your target for improved student performance. There are prompts that address needed professional development. A budget-planning template might help to determine funding needs and funding resources. The Analyzing Time Template (Appendix D.2) may prompt you to look creatively at time and may help you to complete an action planning timeline. We know that to achieve goals, there must be a clear road map. Using the templates may help the team map out a meaningful action plan.

After analyzing data and prioritizing findings, begin to write the action plan using the seven components described above as a guide. *The key* is to be sure that the goals grow from data and are cast in terms of measurable student performance results. **This is critical.** The way results are defined will determine the starting point for discussion and decision-making around the activities, professional development, and timelines needed to address the goals. Best practice for selecting the action steps requires discussion and consensus of the entire staff, as well as the planning team.

### *What is a "performance target"?*

A performance target is the performance goal that a school sets. It should indicate a score and a timeline for reaching the score.

### *What are some guidelines to follow in setting performance targets?*

- Set targets only on the reporting areas in which you have specific

actions to be taken with resources in time, people, and money allocated.

- Make the targets data driven and don't lose the data.
- Set realistic targets.

### *What are some types of performance targets that can be set?*

- Increase in the percentage of students Achieving the Standard or Achieving the Standard with Honors in a reporting cluster
- Decrease in the percentage of students Below the Standard or Little Evidence of Achievement in a reporting cluster
- Decrease in the gap in performance between different groups of student (e.g. males and females)
- Decrease in the percentage of students scoring in the lowest quartile on a norm-referenced assessment
- Increase in the percentage of students successfully completing upper level courses
- An increase in the number of students who score three or higher on Advanced Placement Exams

**Schools should decide on an area to target and put their resources behind it.**

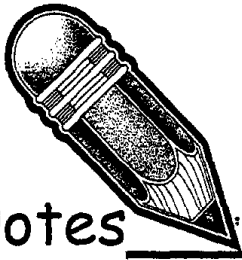
### *How do you decide what activities or action steps are needed to achieve the performance targets?*

Begin by asking a series of questions to help determine what activities are needed. These questions might include:

- Does your school or technical center have an articulated K-12, standards-based curriculum?
- Does your school have the expertise to build one?
- Does your school have developmentally appropriate standards-based resources (textbooks, standards-based units of study, supporting materials and supplies, equipment, library and technology resources, community resources)?
- Do your resources support the learning opportunities to adequately address student interests and needs?
- Is something preventing good pedagogies which address diverse learning styles?
- Is every classroom addressing the standards and learning opportunities?

#### **Examples of performance targets:**

- We will increase from 50% to 65% the number of students who Achieved the Standard in mathematics skills in 1999.
- We will increase the % of 8th grade males Achieving the Standard in Analysis & Interpretation on the New Standards Reference Exam from 50% to 70% by 2000-2001.



Notes

- Does every teacher have the content expertise to teach the standards?
- Do you have all the assessment information needed?
- Is on-going standards-based assessment used in every classroom for frequent student feedback and for making instructional decisions along the way?
- Do *all* students have the opportunity to take courses that address the full range of standards K-12?

The answers to these questions should suggest possible activities or action steps to include in the plan. These activities can then help determine checkpoints and timelines, assign responsibilities and resources, and develop progress indicators for interim evaluation.

### *Some examples of actions that schools may take*

- A celebration or recognition of areas of strength with the whole school community (students included)
- An analysis of local curriculum to see if weaknesses in results are related to gaps in curriculum. This includes an analysis of the implemented curriculum (what is actually taught).
- An analysis of implementation of “learning opportunities” based upon *Vermont’s Framework*
- Professional development in areas of weakness
- Purchase of curriculum materials with supporting professional development
- A school-wide focus on a specific curriculum area.
- A focus on an under-performing demographic group
- A modification in the school schedule to provide a greater focus on a specific curriculum area
- An analysis of accommodations for students needing extra help or who are typically underserved
- An analysis of assessment strategies to assure their alignment to *Vermont’s Framework*
- A review of curriculum policies and adjustments by the board where necessary
- An intervention strategy to support those students having difficulty meeting standards