

Educational Support Team (EST): Practice Profile

The Educational Support Team (EST) practice profile provides descriptions of possible EST practices. These have been organized in a rubric that ranges from ineffective or least effective on the far left to most effective and well-integrated on the far right. The practice profile addresses the following areas:

- Schedule, Norms and Teaming
- Referrals, Process and Outcomes
- Family and Student Engagement
- Administrative Engagement and Support

Purpose

The practice profile is intended as a tool to help district and school level EST staff to self-assess their EST and to pinpoint possible areas for improvement. It is not intended to provide an overall score or scores for the separate areas. This tool should promote open discussion and collaboration that helps improve the quality and consistency of EST practices.

How to Use the Practice Profile

Ideally, individuals involved with the EST would have an opportunity to review the practice profile prior to a discussion meeting. In a group, individuals should share their discoveries. Participants should consider whether there is data or evidence that supports their choices. It is not expected that any EST's practices will all fall exclusively into single columns and the numbers at the top of columns are for reference, not scoring.

If the group agrees that there are EST practices that fall in column 1 or 2, these should be considered as areas for improvement. If there is agreement that most or all practices are best described in column 3, consider how to expand practices to include those described in column 4. This column gives some ideas for integrating EST more completely with school or district-wide practices.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact:

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Schedule, Norms, Teaming

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<p>EST meetings are scheduled on an “as needed” basis <u>or</u> regularly scheduled meetings are often cancelled. There is one person who is seen to “own” the meetings and is responsible for scheduling and documentation. Records of minutes are incomplete and/or difficult to access. The team may rely on group recollection of decisions rather than recorded minutes. Attendance of team members is variable and unpredictable and the regular team lacks some roles recommended by the AOE. School administration does not give priority to scheduling and staffing the EST. There is no reliable mechanism for sharing EST information at the district level.</p>	<p>There is a regular schedule for EST meetings but it may be disrupted by other events. Sometimes there are too many concerns to address within the scheduled time or there are meetings that do not have enough work to fill the time. Meetings have stated norms and there is a division of roles, but the norms are rarely reviewed and may be ignored. Effectiveness of the meeting may be compromised when members who typically facilitate or record are absent. Membership generally conforms to AOE recommendations but regular attendance of members may be compromised by other conflicts or priorities. Team members may be selected on the basis of availability rather than interest or expertise. There are minutes of meetings but they may be incomplete and/or difficult to access. There are opportunities for connection with school and district administration but there is no formal district oversight.</p>	<p>EST meetings are scheduled through the school year. The meeting schedule is frequent enough to address all referrals and follow-ups in a timely manner. Meetings follow established norms with assigned roles, including a facilitator, recorder and timekeeper. Norms and required roles are reviewed periodically to consider whether they are followed or need modification. All EST members are scheduled to attend every meeting and the list of members conforms to AOE recommendations. At least one member is a member of a district level team that is charged with EST oversight. Some team meetings include discussion of potential systemic improvements that could build capacity in the general education classrooms. All team meetings include discussion of who else needs to know about team decisions. All decisions are documented, including timelines and staff responsible. Agendas are prepared prior to the meeting and include any review or discussion items previously scheduled.</p>	<p>All of the indicators listed in 3 <i>and</i></p> <p>EST norms include a shared vision for student inclusion and equity of engagement in achieving challenging academic outcomes. This vision is shared across the SU/SD.</p> <p>EST members are active participants in school/district learning communities and make intentional connections in their work in both settings.</p> <p>EST meeting practices are seen as exemplars of best practice for school/district meetings. Other school/district meetings have similar practices.</p>

Referrals, Process, Outcomes

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<p>Referrals may originate from a variety of sources, including those who have little direct information. There is no clear referral process. The cause for referral is often vague or very general. There is little or no indication that any interventions have been attempted prior to referral. The referral may be shared with the team by someone who does not have direct knowledge of the student or the concern.</p> <p>Team discussion includes speculation not supported by data. There is a tendency to address most problems with a limited set of options (i.e. special ed eval, general academic support program, placement in a less demanding class). There may be no criteria for improvement and no specified time to review progress.</p>	<p>Most referrals originate with teachers. There is a formal referral process but it is challenging to complete and may actually discourage some referrals. Other referrals take place outside the formal process.</p> <p>Prior interventions by the teacher are highly variable as is team involvement, data and operational description of the concern.</p> <p>There are usually efforts to involve the referring teacher in the meeting but these may take the teacher out of a class and involve substitute coverage.</p> <p>The quality of team discussion is uneven and often dependent on the variability of referrals and team attendance.</p>	<p>Most EST referrals originate with teachers. Prior to referral, teachers usually have attempted to address the concern by differentiating instruction and have used existing team supports. Families and school counselors have been informed of the concern(s) and are aware that an EST referral is being made. The referral includes an operational description of the concern with supporting data and a description of a desired result. The referring teacher or a team member with knowledge of the concern presents the concern to the EST.</p> <p>Team discussion typically includes a review of data and an opportunity for clarifying questions.</p> <p>Specialists/interventionists on the team suggest interventions that are likely to achieve the desired result. The team shares discussion to decide when, where and by whom supports will be provided. A review date is set to assess whether the plan has resulted in progress and whether it should be continued, discontinued or altered. The team also decides who else needs to be informed of any of the decisions.</p>	<p>All of the indicators listed in 3 <i>and</i></p> <p>The EST makes time to review the referral process and the fidelity of implementation. This includes general data about causes and sources of referrals. This data is shared with school and district teams for CNA/CIP development.</p> <p>EST data is used in assessing the relative strength of VTmtss components, including Effective Collaboration, High Quality Instruction and Intervention and Comprehensive Assessment.</p> <p>Teachers belong to other collaborative teams such as grade level/content area/learning community that support learners and educators. Student concerns are usually surfaced within these teams prior to an EST referral.</p> <p>Teachers often invite other staff to observe their classes, review lesson plans and discuss assessments. Professional practice is seen as a shared area for continuous improvement.</p>

Family and Student Engagement

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<p>There are no regular processes for engaging or informing families about an EST meeting for their student. Any sharing of information is informal and incidental to the team process.</p> <p>Students and their families are not given specific information about the reason for the plan or the desired outcomes.</p> <p>School/district web pages do not describe the EST or information is minimal or difficult to locate.</p> <p>The EST may be offered to families as an alternative or required first step for a special education evaluation.</p> <p>There is no expectation that families will participate in a plan or that they will receive information about the progress of a plan.</p>	<p>There is a stated practice of informing and engaging families. This is usually limited to informing the family that a meeting will take place and may include a limited opportunity for input. Families may also be notified after a meeting and given information about a plan.</p> <p>Information given to families about the EST is general and may not help families understand the differences between EST, 504 and special education.</p> <p>Families may be included in plans that address behavior, social or emotional concerns but their involvement is generally limited to accessing non-school services such as counseling.</p> <p>Students may be involved in discussions about their needs. Such discussions may either portray supports as a negative consequence of student performance <u>or</u> accommodations that reduce the expectations for student learning.</p>	<p>In almost all cases, families and students are informed of concerns prior to an EST referral and have been informed of earlier interventions.</p> <p>There is an accepted belief that families are entitled to be informed when the school proposes an EST meeting and that their input is valued.</p> <p>School staff are intentional in their communications with families about the reason for an EST referral and data that support this decision.</p> <p>There may be an opportunity for family members and the student to attend the EST meeting, though this is not necessarily typical practice.</p> <p>Families and students are encouraged to share their thoughts and perspectives about a concern and to provide additional data if available.</p> <p>They are provided details of any plan developed by the EST, including objectives and expected time frame.</p> <p>Families are informed of the differences between an EST plan and services provided for students with disabilities through section 504 or special education.</p>	<p>All of the indicators listed in 3 <i>and</i></p> <p>The school and district make family engagement a priority and a focus for continuous improvement. EST data about family involvement is one measure used in this planning.</p> <p>Personalization and student agency in learning are important aspects of the educational system. Intentional efforts are made to include student voice and choice, including in the development of EST plans.</p> <p>Students are aware of learning objectives and can accurately self-evaluate their progress.</p>

Administrative Engagement and Support

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<p>School level administration designates a staff member to manage EST. The EST head is responsible for scheduling, staffing and maintaining EST records.</p> <p>School administrator(s) rarely attend EST meetings. The EST has no authority to request or assign resources or staff for supports.</p> <p>Administrative use of EST data is mostly confined to completion of an annual survey for the AOE.</p> <p>District level administration has no direct contact with school-based ESTs.</p>	<p>School administration works with the EST coordinator to staff and schedule an EST but staffing and/or scheduling issues still interfere with EST functioning.</p> <p>An administrator often attends the EST but is not a consistent, fully engaged member <u>or</u> an administrator manages the EST but there are concerns there is a lack of separation of supportive and evaluative roles.</p> <p>Administration does not provide or emphasize a clear, consistent vision for the success of all students. There may be an acceptance of a role of the EST to categorize students or to effectively remove students from the general education setting.</p> <p>District level administration has occasional involvement, typically through building level administration.</p> <p>There is no direct input from the EST about the assignment of shared district staff or for budgetary decisions about funding supports and interventions.</p>	<p>Staffing and scheduling the EST are planned in advance of each school year and are a priority in the school and district master schedules. School and district administration ensure that appropriate staff are assigned to the EST. Assignment to an EST does not conflict with other responsibilities.</p> <p>An administrator participates in every EST but the administrative role is generally seen as facilitative, not directive. All team members have an equal voice.</p> <p>SU/SD administration uses data and input from all ESTs to ensure that shared district staff are equitably assigned across all schools in the district.</p> <p>School and district administration use EST data and input to ensure that there is adequate funding for supports and interventions.</p>	<p>All of the indicators listed in 3 <i>and</i> School and district administration demonstrate commitment to collaborative staff work through scheduling, development of shared norms and practices, and attention to the work and outcomes of collaborative teams.</p> <p>Administrators from all levels of the school/district frequently visit classrooms and teaching team meetings. These visits are collaborative and supportive, not evaluative.</p> <p>School and district administrative teams make frequent use of EST data to determine needs and plan improvement.</p> <p>District administration understands that EST referrals often indicate systemic needs and respond accordingly.</p> <p>District administration is committed to equity of access and resources across all schools and settings.</p>