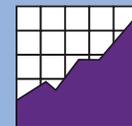# MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

District Self-Assessment Guide for Moving Our Numbers

Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students With Disabilities as Part of District-wide Improvement

NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

ABOUT *MOVING YOUR NUMBERS*

Moving Your Numbers: Improving Learning for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-wide Reform, examines how school districts with vastly different demographics increase the performance of students with disabilities and other at-risk learners as part of whole-district reform efforts. Case studies of featured districts, as described in the full report, provide evidence that students with disabilities, like all other students, can learn at higher levels when adults focus their collective efforts on improving instructional practice, consistently implement core work across the district, and use assessment and accountability as a lever for ongoing system and student learning and improvement.

Moving Your Numbers identifies six essential practices that must be in place to improve the performance of students with disabilities. Evidence suggests that these six practices, when used in an aligned and coherent manner, are associated with higher student achievement. These practices are *use data well, focus your goals, select and implement shared instructional practices (individually and collectively), implement deeply, monitor and provide feedback and support, and inquire and learn.*

Moving Your Numbers was initiated and is supported through the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) under the leadership of Dr. Martha Thurlow, NCEO Director; Rachel Quenemoen, NCEO Senior Research Fellow; and Dr. Laurene Christensen, NCEO Research Associate. Dr. Deborah Telfer, Director, School of Education and Allied Professions Grant Center, University of Dayton, coordinates the development and review of *Moving Your Numbers* on behalf of NCEO. NCEO was established in 1990 to provide national leadership in designing and building educational assessments and accountability systems that appropriately monitor educational results for all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Photographs used in this publication have been provided courtesy of the districts featured and the Ohio Department of Education.

Additional case studies of featured districts will be added to the *Moving Your Numbers* website as they are developed. Go to www.MovingYourNumbers.org for the complete report and additional tools and resources, and to submit success stories.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This *District Self-Assessment Guide* is intended for use by district leadership teams and school-level leadership teams in gauging the district's degree of implementation and scale of actions associated with effective practices identified by *Moving Your Numbers* (e.g., using data well). *Implementation* refers to how deeply practices were put in place, while scale refers to how broadly those practices were implemented.

The *Guide* offers a structure for supporting team member dialogue and discussion, and a simple scoring rubric for monitoring progress of core work. Teams are encouraged to use the *Guide* to reflect on their own practice, revisiting their actions and progress on a periodic basis to ask and answer such questions as: What have we learned? What gaps in implementation do we need to address?

What are our next steps?

Options for using this guide include:

(1) Individual members of a district or school-level leadership team complete the assessment individually in preparation for a team discussion during which any disparities among team member ratings are explored; or

(2) District or school-level leadership teams work together to complete the assessment.

Irrespective of the option selected, the *Guide* should be used to spur collective conversation and gauge progress on a periodic basis.

NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 1: USE DATA WELL

While districts, schools, and individual teachers use data and have been for some time now, there has been too much emphasis placed only on the performance of students on state assessments. While these data are important for strategic planning, they provide little ongoing guidance to teachers or administrators. Districts that have "moved their numbers" for all children have or are engaged in developing district-wide processes that allow for more collective use of relevant data to make smarter decisions, including the ongoing assessment of teaching and learning at the classroom, school, and district levels. These processes include the development, implementation, and ongoing use of teacher-developed formative assessments, and the use of grade-level/departmental/course, and vertical teams to collaboratively score these shared assessments and plan for shared instruction. They also include the use of building and district benchmark assessments. Fullan (2008) states that principals working directly with teachers in the use of data is more than twice as powerful as any other leadership dimension, and Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that the reliability for assessing student learning and district decision making was one critical characteristic of effective districts.

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Establish clear expectations for effective data use at all levels of the system? *Evidence:*								
2. Use data to identify district, building, and classroom needs, and establish goals and performance targets at the district and school level? *Evidence:*								
3. Use data to measure the degree of implementation of strategies/actions, including professional development, to reach district/school-identified goals? *Evidence:*								
4. Use data to evaluate the effect of strategies/actions on student learning? *Evidence:*								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Require teachers and teacher teams to use data to establish instructional priorities and inform instructional practice on an ongoing basis? *Evidence:*								
6. Require teacher teams (e.g., teacher-based teams, data teams, learning teams, PLCs) to use data to establish instructional priorities and inform instructional practice on an ongoing basis? *Evidence:*								
7. Model and monitor the use of data to inform instructional decisions? *Evidence:*								
8. Provide support at all levels in the effective use of data to facilitate higher levels of learning for all students and groups of students, such as students with disabilities? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
- ☐ Accomplished (26-32) ☐ Emerging (9-17)
- ☐ Progressing (18-25) ☐ Initiating (0-8)

OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
- ☐ Accomplished (26-32) ☐ Emerging (9-17)
- ☐ Progressing (18-25) ☐ Initiating (0-8)

Key: **Degree of Implementation**

4: Completely (High Level of Implementation) – could be described as "Accomplished"

3: Almost Fully (Moderate Level of Implementation) – could be described as "Progressing"

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1: Not at All (Planning for Implementation) – could be described as "Initiating"

Key: **Degree of Scale**

4: Implemented in all schools across the district (High Level of Implementation)

3: Implemented in one or more levels (e.g., elementary) across district with plans to implement at other levels (Moderate Level of Implementation)

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MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 2: FOCUS YOUR GOALS

When asked to describe the new initiatives undertaken in the last year or two, most teachers and administrators would list a litany of initiatives, often disconnected. If asked, "What are the district or school improvement initiatives?" most teachers and administrators often cannot articulate them. Reeves (2006) referred to this problem as "initiative fatigue," while Fullan (2008) calls this "repetitive change syndrome." If teachers, schools, and districts are to make improvement then they must be allowed and encouraged to focus on a few critical things well. As Patterson, et al. (2008) notes, "a few behaviors can drive a lot of change…Enormous influence comes from focusing on just a few vital behaviors." Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) recommend focusing the goals on student learning through the use of specific forms of instruction. They also recommend that the strategies be targeted on specific areas of low performance and phased in over time. Robinson, et al. (2008) identifies goal setting as one of the most critical school leadership responsibilities.

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Use a data-driven needs assessment to develop a limited number of focused goals, and measureable strategies and actions, directly related to addressing the district's greatest needs related to instruction and achievement? *Evidence:*								
2. Reflect in district goals that the core work and priority of the district is to improve teaching and learning? *Evidence:*								
3. Ensure that all schools in the district align their work with district-established goals and strategies? *Evidence:*								
4. Identify goal setting as an important leadership responsibility? *Evidence:*								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Develop a single coherent district plan to reach district goals and require that each school develops a building plan aligned to district goals? *Evidence:*								
6. Make intentional decisions to align resources (fiscal, material, personnel) across the district to meet district-wide goals? *Evidence:*								
7. Screen, interview, select, and provide ongoing support to staff based on district-wide goals? *Evidence:*								
8. Engage the larger community, including board members, in establishing and sustaining a focus on district-wide goals for improving instruction and student learning? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
- ☐ Accomplished (26-32)   ☐ Emerging (9-17)
- ☐ Progressing (18-25)   ☐ Initiating (0-8)

OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
- ☐ Accomplished (26-32)   ☐ Emerging (9-17)
- ☐ Progressing (18-25)   ☐ Initiating (0-8)

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MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 3: SELECT AND IMPLEMENT SHARED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Over the last several decades the research on effective instructional practices has demonstrated that "not all instructional strategies are equal" (See Marzano et. al., 2001). A recent synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses provides clear guidance in this area (Hattie, 2009). While most educators understand these findings, school districts have had limited success at implementing them. Both Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), and Fullan (2008) recommend focusing on specific effective instructional practices as a part of the district's improvement process. Fullan (2008) says we need "relentless consistency" in the use of effective "non-negotiable" practices.

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Establish and require the use of a district-wide standards-based curriculum aligned with district goals and priorities for instruction and student learning? ***Evidence:***								
2. Take steps to build a common language among all staff for what constitutes high-quality instructional practice? ***Evidence:***								
3. Ensure full access to challenging content aligned with rigorous standards for all students and student groups? ***Evidence:***								
4. Ensure that the use of prevention/intervention strategies is implemented consistently as part of, rather than separate from, the district's instructional program? ***Evidence:***								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Require the use of ongoing assessment and progress monitoring to inform instruction at the district level? *Evidence:*								
6. Require the use of ongoing assessment and progress monitoring to inform instruction at the school and teacher-team level? *Evidence:*								
7. Provide for the system-wide use of collaboratively developed common classroom formative assessment as part of the instructional process? *Evidence:*								
8. Provide structured opportunities for schools to learn from each other, for principals to learn from each other, and for teachers to learn from each other? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
☐ Accomplished (26-32) ☐ Emerging (9-17)
☐ Progressing (18-25) ☐ Initiating (0-8)

OVERALL RATING
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MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 4: IMPLEMENT DEEPLY

Most of us can identify a whole host of initiatives that were undertaken with great fanfare but then implemented poorly. So the first step of any change initiative must begin with the realization that without consistent, rigorous follow through, there will be limited progress. As Bossidy and Charan (2002) have stated "leadership without the discipline of execution is incomplete and ineffective" (p. 34). All too often we achieve limited success and blame this on the intervention, while the real problem is the lack of full implementation. Reeves (2006) documents the fact that we should not expect to achieve the outcomes identified in the research until we reach a 90% implementation level.

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Require that identified instructional strategies chosen for improvement are implemented in every building and in every classroom across the district? *Evidence:*								
2. Define what full implementation of identified instructional strategies chosen for improvement looks like? *Evidence:*								
3. Require the use of aligned structures (i.e., teacher-based teams, school-level teams, district-level teams) that support shared implementation of focused instructional strategies? *Evidence:*								
4. Hold staff at all levels accountable for following through on focused instructional strategies? *Evidence:*								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Provide staff at all levels with multiple opportunities for practice and support? *Evidence:*								
6. Set expectations for the direct involvement of administrators (superintendents, principals) in ensuring that focused instructional practices are being implemented at a high level? *Evidence:*								
7. Ensure that professional development is directly related to the identified instructional practices chosen for improvement? *Evidence:*								
8. Actively maintain a focus on improving instructional practice and student learning? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
- ☐ **Accomplished (26-32)**
- ☐ **Emerging (9-17)**
- ☐ **Progressing (18-25)**
- ☐ **Initiating (0-8)**

OVERALL RATING
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MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 5: MONITOR AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Even if we are successful in our implementation there must be a system in place to provide feedback. To develop the system we must first be clear about defining what the practices look like when they are being implemented well. This description can take the form of a rubric, checklist, or protocol, but it must clearly describe what the behavior looks like when it's being done well. Once these indicators are defined, there needs to be a monitoring and reporting schedule that informs everyone in the system as to the progress being made. The collection and reporting of these data serve to provide a feedback loop to the staff on the overall implementation level of the strategies and is described by Reeves (2006) as an inquiry process that is the most critical component of district and school continuous improvement. The second component includes the implementation of student progress indicators that have been collaboratively developed and scored by the staff.

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Use a set of district-identified formative indicators for measuring district-wide implementation of focused improvement strategies and the effect of such implementation on student learning? *Evidence:*								
2. Use a consistent set of protocols/procedures for measuring district-wide implementation of focused improvement strategies and the effect of such implementation on student learning? *Evidence:*								
3. Monitor the degree of implementation of focused improvement strategies across the system? *Evidence:*								
4. Monitor the progress of students, and examine where and why students may be struggling? *Evidence:*								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Require central office personnel to actively monitor and provide feedback to principals and school-level teams on the implementation of focused instructional practices? *Evidence:*								
6. Require principals to actively monitor and provide feedback to teachers and teacher teams on the implementation of focused instructional practices? *Evidence:*								
7. Provide differentiated support, as needed, to schools and teachers in the implementation of focused instructional strategies? *Evidence:*								
8. Measure the effectiveness of feedback and/or differentiated support provided to schools and teachers? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
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- ☐ Progressing (18-25)
- ☐ Emerging (9-17)
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OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
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MOVING YOUR NUMBERS

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION & SCALABILITY OF KEY PRACTICES

KEY PRACTICE 6: INQUIRE AND LEARN

While data help us prioritize and gauge progress, data-driven decision-making begins by asking fundamental questions (Reeves, 2002). At the grade-level, department, course, building, and district level, we need to be able to reflect on our collective and individual practice, answer important questions, and learn from the work we're doing. Important questions for teams to ask to support systems learning include the following:

- *Where are the practices being implemented well?*
- *Why are they being successful?*
- *Where are the practices not being implemented well?*
- *Why are they being unsuccessful?*

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
1. Foster and communicate a sense of urgency for continuous improvement and positive change in student learning? Evidence:								
2. Engage everyone in continually evaluating the effect of the district's focused instructional practices on district and school performance? Evidence:								
3. Engage everyone in continually evaluating the effect of the district's focused instructional practices on student learning? Evidence:								
4. Establish a decision-making process that supports shared learning across and among central office personnel, school personnel, and teacher team members? Evidence:								

Characteristics of Effective Practice by Districts and Their Schools	Degree of IMPLEMENTATION				Degree of SCALE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
5. Support principals in actively participating in collegial discussions around instruction and its effects on student learning? *Evidence:*								
6. Require principals to provide active oversight and coordination of the instructional program? *Evidence:*								
7. Provide resources to support district-wide professional learning focused on improving instructional practice and student learning? *Evidence:*								
8. Have established parameters for making decisions about needed changes to the district's improvement strategies? *Evidence:*								

NEXT STEPS:

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE:_____
Total Possible = 32

OVERALL RATING
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OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE:_____
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SUMMARY

Use this summary page to record your overall level of implementation and scalability by noting your rating for each area of effective practice, and to plan your next steps. If team members have completed the assessment individually, note below whether scores represent one person's ratings, or the aggregate rating of all team members.

Characteristics of Effective Practice OVERALL RATINGS BY AREA	OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION SCORE				OVERALL SCALABILITY SCORE			
To what degree does our district and our schools:	Accomplished	Progressing	Emerging	Initiating	Accomplished	Progressing	Emerging	Initiating
1. Use Data Well								
2. Focus Your Goals								
3. Select and Implement Shared Instructional Practices								
4. Implement Deeply								
5. Monitor and Provide Feedback and Support								
6. Inquire and Learn								

NEXT STEPS:

Name of Team: _____ Date(s) of Assessment: _____ Date of Team Discussion: _____

Name of Team Member (if completed individually): _____ Date of Assessment: _____

Notes

References

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Available *MOVING YOUR NUMBERS* Publications:

• Administrator Preparation Guide: Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-wide Improvement.

• **District Self-Assessment Guide for Moving Our Numbers: Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-Wide Improvement.**

• Moving Your Numbers: A Synthesis of Lessons Learned from Districts Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-Wide Improvement.

• Moving Your Numbers: Five Districts Share How They Used Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-Wide Improvement.

• Moving Your Numbers: The Critical Role of Regional Providers in Facilitating School District Capacity to Improve Achievement for Students with Disabilities.

• Moving Your Numbers: The Critical Role of SEAs in Facilitating School District Capacity to Improve Achievement for Students with Disabilities.

• Parent/Family Companion Guide: Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-Wide Improvement.

• Teacher Preparation Guide: Using Assessment and Accountability to Increase Performance for Students with Disabilities as Part of District-Wide Improvement.