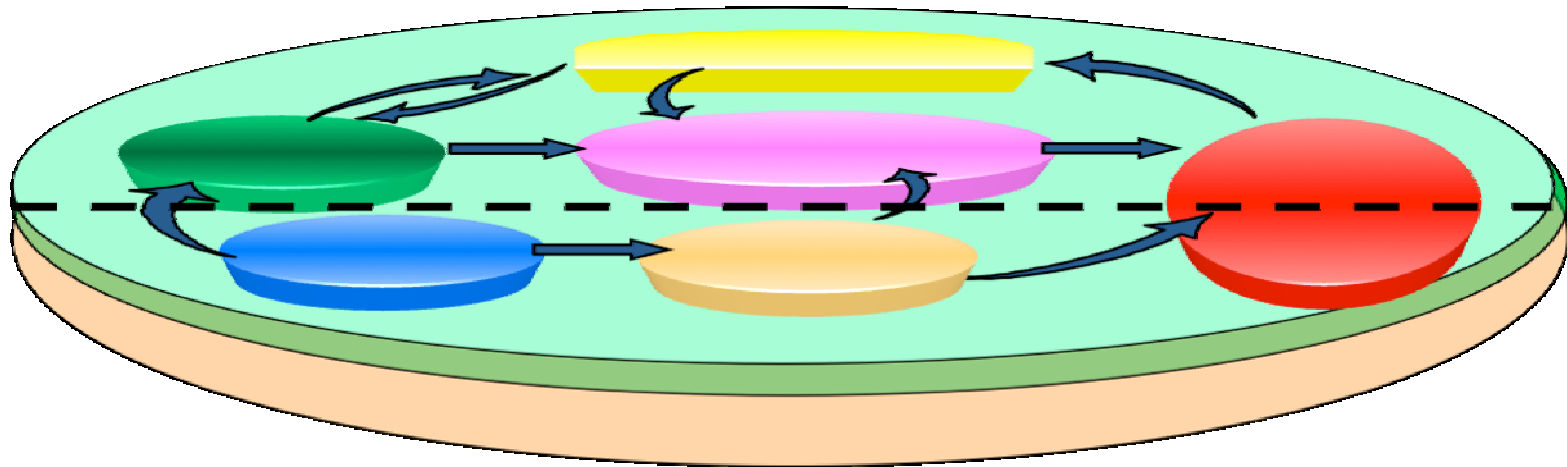


Flossmoor District 161 System Assessment Feedback Report

This system assessment report was developed for Flossmoor School District 161 by the system assessment review team of the Consortium for Educational Change.

Using the best practice criteria of the Professional Learning Communities Continuous Improvement Framework as a lens, the System Assessment Review Team reviewed information provided by the district and interviewed administrators, board members, faculty, staff, students, and parents in order to identify strengths and opportunities for system improvement.



This feedback report was developed reflecting on the indicators described in the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the school as well as from information gathered from interviews. It is not intended to represent the perspective of all school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. Its accuracy is dependent on the information presented and discussed.

SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

The district first completed a self-assessment. The district presented data and information in response to questions aligned to the Professional Learning Community continuous improvement framework and vision. The district presented its best attempt to describe its current state. The Review Team examined the information and data prior to the site visit. They developed a list of questions to explore as part of the site visit. The Review Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.

On the first day the team interviewed:

- Superintendent/Cabinet
- Board Members, Union Leaders, Parent Leaders
- Community Leaders
- Business, Curriculum, Human Resource Leaders
- Building Principals

On the second day, the team interviewed:

- Students
- Teachers/ Support Staff
- Parents
- Building Leadership Councils

Interview schedules were set by the district with guidelines that those interviewed reflect the demographics of the district.

Following interviews, the team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the district a preview of overall strengths and opportunities for improvement aligned to the framework and vision.

The week following the visit, the team communicated electronically to prepare the final written feedback report. This final report was sent to the district within seven days of the visit.

CEC is available to assist the school in any way it chooses to follow up with suggested next steps. The district has committed to use the information to update its improvement plans. It also has committed to allow at least one staff member to serve on a Review Team for another system assessment visit.

System Assessment team members included:

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The system assessment was based on the continuous improvement framework from the Professional Learning Community process. Listed below is the feedback from the assessment team aligned to each of the “Three Big Ideas” of the framework.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS

Among all of the strengths within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these strengths to be highest in priority. It is hoped that recognizing and celebrating these strengths will showcase past investment of resources in improving performance results.

FOCUS ON LEARNING

- + There is a focus on learning with an emphasis on what is best for students.
- + The District has strong student achievement scores and compares favorably to similar and high performing school districts in Illinois.
- + The District has a framework to help with fidelity implementation of standards, assessment, and instructional effective practices (transitioning to the common core state standards, aligned assessment systems, intervention and enrichment systems).
- + There are high expectations from parents and the community to provide a high quality school system.

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

- + There is energy and hope for the collaboration possibilities through new district leadership.
- + The district is transitioning from a top-down, authoritative decision-making structure to one that values opinions, input and collaboration.
- + The new District Leadership Council, Building Leadership Councils, and grade level/department Professional Learning Communities provide for possibilities of two-way communication and collaboration.
- + Teachers are provided sufficient collaboration and planning time within the day.
- + Students are very happy with their teacher(s) and their school. They feel safe and secure

and are satisfied with their learning opportunities.

- + Teachers, principals and other staff are dedicated, loyal, hardworking and have a “CAN DO” positive attitude about students and their learning success. Staff contributes 110% to their work.
- + Community members and parents are very proud of their school system.
- + Grade level and cross-school curriculum, assessment and instruction communication and collaboration opportunities are happening this year.
- + The district is a system of schools working toward becoming a school system. (not a clear understanding of the expectations for all teachers, all principals, all schools).

FOCUS ON RESULTS

- + The district has the fiscal resources to address many of its opportunities for improvement.
- + The district has a variety of academic data sources that are accessible to stakeholders.
- + Special education uses data effectively to drive the instructional interventions for students with an I.E.P.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

Among all of the opportunities for improvement within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these opportunities to be highest in priority. It is hoped that addressing these opportunities will yield a high future return on investment of resources in improving performance results.

FOCUS ON LEARNING

- △ Stakeholders are unable to articulate the “BIG PICTURE” of where the district is headed related to standards, assessments, instructions, interventions and enrichments.
- △ There has been a lack of professional learning for staff to ensure consistency and fidelity of implementation with regard to many new curriculum related initiatives.
- △ There has been a lack of horizontal and vertical articulation K-12 (grade-to-grade, elementary-to-junior high-to high school) with allocated time for that articulation to develop coherence and alignment.
- △ Common formative assessment data and information aligned to the core curriculum is not sufficient to provide necessary feedback to students, teachers, all staff, and parents to know what each student has mastered and what they need to learn next.
- △ Current building schedules do not support and promote learning needs.
- △ There are inconsistencies in homework and grading practices.
- △ Facilities are beginning to obstruct learning opportunities. (adequate space, teachers on carts, etc.)
- △ Technology is lacking to support both teaching and learning.

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

- △ Stakeholders cannot articulate the “BIG PICTURE” of where the district is headed in terms of mission, vision, values and goals. While there is a strategic plan that involved stakeholder input, the current plan is not well known by most stakeholders.
- △ There is a history of distrust, lack of appreciation, input into decision-making, respect for opinions, etc. among stakeholders and the district office.
- △ Staff are overwhelmed with the pace and number of new initiatives.
- △ Staff report implementation, training, and support for new initiatives has been lacking in the past.
- △ The teacher evaluation process is not being implemented effectively. The way it is being implemented is giving a negative connotation to a great research-based evaluation process.
- △ Technology is lacking to support improved communication and collaboration efforts.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

- △ The District lacks a results orientation (management by fact, data, information, etc.).
- △ Goals are not SMART. Goals are more activity-oriented than results -oriented.
- △ There is not a systematic process in place to establish measurable goals and develop measurable action plans by which to progress monitor whether new strategies are improving results.
- △ There is a lack of data monitoring and reporting. The district does not collect, analyze or act upon comparative data with similar or high performing school districts. The district does not collect, analyze or act upon comparative data within the organization. There is a lack of growth and cohort data(fall to spring, spring to spring, same group of students from grade to grade).
- △ There is a lack of student, family, staff and community satisfaction data.

- △ District departments are not driven by clear data measures on which to measure their success. These data measures are not aligned to strategic plan goals.
- △ The district lacks a long-range plan for facilities.
- △ Technology is lacking to support collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting of results.

NEXT STEPS

While this report is not intended to be prescriptive, this section provides some suggestions for addressing key opportunities for improvement. It provides suggestions that could serve as next steps. The strengths and areas of opportunity are based on set criteria framed by continuous improvement research. The priorities are not listed in any order. Each is equally important. Next Steps are framed by the experiences and opinions of the assessment team.

The assessment team recognizes that this district has a foundation of strong central leadership, talented and committed teachers, and supportive parents. The team congratulates the district and its stakeholders for their commitment to looking more deeply at a continuous improvement philosophy and actions.

The team offers the following priorities as the most urgent next steps that, if addressed, might offer the greatest return on the investment of time, study, and other resources.

Priority: Focus on Learning

- ❖ ***The District needs to limit and prioritize its initiatives so there is sufficient time, training, support and other necessary resources to assist in fidelity of implementation for those initiatives.***

Priority: Collaborative Culture

- ❖ ***The District needs to address the relationship between staff, management and board of education to improve trust and respect, value and celebrate contributions, and provide consistent opportunities for input into decisions that impact classrooms. The District needs to foster a Professional Learning Community continuous improvement culture.***

Priority: Results Orientation

- ❖ ***The District needs to establish a results-orientation by implementing a SMART goal setting and action planning process that includes progress monitoring and reporting of improvement results. Results need to be tracked over time and document all students, subgroups of students, cohort groups of students, and each individual student. Results need to be compared with similar and high performing groups. Results need to measure both growth and achievement. Results should include both quantitative or qualitative measures.***