

Diagnostic Toolkit

(SY 2014-2015)



Assessment Strategy

Interview Questions

- Describe your district/CMO's assessment strategy.
- What assessments are mandated at the district-level? What purpose does each of them serve?
- What additional assessments may be administered at the school-level? What purpose does each of them serve?
- To what extent does the assessment content and schedule align with your district/CMO's curriculum and pacing expectations?
- When and how are assessment expectations communicated to schools?
 - What support or trainings do you provide principals in understanding and communicating the purpose of each assessment?
- *(If assessments are developed in-house):* How do you design your assessments? Walk me through the process.
 - Who does the assessment design work? How many hours of work go into assessment design?
 - When are the assessments created? When are they completed?
 - How are teachers involved in the assessment creation?
- Are assessments aligned to the CCSS (i.e. PARCC, Smarter Balanced)?
- Are teachers given access to assessments (or assessment design plans) in advance?
- What different types of items are included on assessments? (i.e. multiple-choice, short answer, open response, composition)
- Walk us through sample assessments for 3rd, 5th, and 7th grades.

Artifacts

- Sample assessments (if you cannot get one for each grade, try and get an assortment of grades)
- Assessment Calendar
- Assessment Team Org Chart
- Curriculum Materials for subjects being diagnosed
 - Scope and Sequence
 - Sample Unit and Lesson Plans
- Assessment design process documents (if designed in-house)
- Common Core Transition plan

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Assessments are aligned to curricular pacing and expectations
- Assessments are aligned in rigor to CCSS
 - Assessments include grade-level appropriate complex text passages
 - Evidence of use of quantitative and qualitative metrics in passage selection for assessments
- Leaders and teachers regularly look at data from their assessments to inform their planning and instruction

Shared Vision and Management Structures



Interview Questions

- Who makes up the central leadership team for the district/CMO? What structures are in place for communicating with one another?
 - To what extent is data analysis a regular part of this team's work?
 - How does data inform the team's decision-making?
 - How influential is the team?
- What is the district's vision? (*Look for: How does DDI factor into the district's vision?*)
 - Who sets the vision for the district? How are the vision and expectations communicated to schools?
- What is the ideal vision/expectation for district-, school-, and teacher-level data use?
- How is the data from assessments used at the district level?
 - How is the information that comes from school data teams shared and aggregated at the district level?
 - What actions are taken after reviewing the data?
 - What is the district's role on messaging "wins" and/or "hot spots"?
 - How does the district leadership translate and articulate action steps to central office, school leaders, instructional staff, and teachers?
 - How are the district priorities and results shared with stakeholders such as parents, board members, community members, funders, etc.?
- How do you define who uses DDI effectively? Which schools are strong in their DDI practice?
 - What evidence do you collect?
 - Are any staff members evaluated based on their consistent and effective use of data? If so, who?
- What is working well? How do you know?
- What do you believe are the greatest challenges hindering the effective use of data at the district and school level?
- How do you manage for improvement on skills associated with DDI for school leaders?
 - Does the district set goals on key areas? If so, how do you prioritize key areas?
 - Does the district use a rubric or list of key skills to measure effectiveness?
- What management rhythms do you have to check progress on practices you want to see across schools?
 - How often do district-level leaders interact with principal managers/principals? In what ways?
 - Do you have regular step-backs with cycles each cycle to reflect on DDI practice/progress?
- With which decisions do schools have autonomy? Which are determined by the district?
- How does the district's governance structure influence its priorities? (e.g., state-run, local school board, non-profit board)

Artifacts

- Data Leadership Team Meeting Agenda Sample
- Sample data reports used in meetings with district and school leaders
- Rubric or criteria used to measure teacher/leadership effectiveness
- District Strategic Plan/Vision documents

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Vision for effective use of data is aligned among district- and school-level leaders and communicated clearly to teachers, parents, and stakeholders
- Regular communication/interaction between district and school leaders around DDI
- Data Leadership Team meets regularly to review recent assessment data
- Follow-up structures are in place for meeting action items

Curricular Program

Interview Questions

- Is there a district-wide curriculum (aligned to or in transition to being aligned to CCSS) and pacing guide?
- Are schools and teachers using the curriculum and pacing guides?
 - What evidence do you have that they are or are not?
- What expectations are set for teachers regarding alignment in planning expectations to the curriculum and standards?
 - Do schools set norms for submitting long-term plans, unit plans, and lesson plans?
- When is the curriculum developed? When and how is it rolled out to schools?
- *If using a “packaged” curriculum:* Why was this curriculum selected?
 - How does it align with the state summative assessment?
 - How do schools supplement the materials?
- Is time built in for reflection on the curriculum’s effectiveness?
- Are lesson plans reviewed on a consistent basis?
 - Who reviews lesson plans?
 - How is feedback delivered and followed through?

Artifacts

- Sample Curricular Map (for each grade, if possible)
- Sample Lesson Plans (for each grade, if possible)
- Sample of feedback provided for lesson plans
- Curricular Materials (i.e. Teacher’s Guides, program materials)
- Scope and Sequence/Pacing Guide

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Alignment between curricular map and assessment expectations
- Alignment at all levels (district-, school-, and classroom-levels) of expectations and implementation of curricular program

Staff Development

Interview Questions

- In your mind, what does a leader who is good at using standards and data to drive instruction do?
- What on-board and ongoing PD is provided to leaders and teachers on using data to drive instruction?
 - Is PD focused on leaders? Teachers? Both?
 - Who from the district-level staff provides Professional Development to leaders and teachers?
 - How is PD delivered? (i.e. by group, school-by-school, combination)
 - What job-embedded PD structures are in place? (e.g., observation/feedback cycles, professional learning community time, mentorship opportunities)
- Do you have a standard set of district "offerings" or trainings during the year?
 - How much PD is provided to school leaders and teachers throughout the year?
 - To what extent is student data used in Professional Development and/or to inform Professional Development?
 - How do you sequence what is covered in PD for schools? Is it captured in a document shared with schools?
 - What data is used to inform what PD is provided to teachers and school leaders?
- What initiatives, partners, and coaches (in-house or external) provide training/support to district, school leaders, and teachers?
- Who are your system-wide partners? What is the intended purpose of each system-wide partner?
 - How are your partners tied to the district strategic plan?
 - How is success for your system-wide partners measured?
 - How often are they present at schools?
- How are best practices shared within the district? What systems are in place to support this?
- Do Academic Directors spend equal time with all schools? If not, how is time allocation determined?
- What is the accountability structure for action plans developed by teachers, instructional staff, and principals?
- Who develops Professional Development sessions for school leaders? Teachers?
 - Walk me through an example of how a PD session is developed from start (assessed need) to finish (follow-up)

Artifacts

- Calendar of Professional Development Topics
- Sample agendas and materials from PD offerings and PLC meetings, if applicable
- PD Planning Templates, if any
- Sample school leader or teacher outcomes/products from PD offerings
- Sample Follow-Up communication (i.e. feedback or summary) post-PD
- Walkthrough/observation templates

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Relevant and meaningful topics scheduled for Professional Development (i.e. based on leader/teacher needs)
- PD offered around DDI and/or incorporating data analysis
- PD sessions planned and facilitated by content expert
- District-level leaders have a plan and take responsibility for developing school leaders as well as teachers

Planning and Intervention Structures

Interview Questions

- How much common planning time do teachers get each week?
 - Is there a district-wide expectation for how that time is used?
- How effectively is common planning time being used in schools (on average)?
- Are regular planning and intervention times scheduled and communicated prior to the start of the school year?
- Who develops the agenda for collaborative planning time?
- How are outcomes for collaborative planning time managed and reviewed?
- Are there structure blocks of time in the Master Schedule for “Intervention” for students?
 - If so, how frequent? Which students receive intervention time?
 - What data is used to inform intervention time?
 - Who is the primary teacher during intervention time?
 - What curriculum is followed during intervention time? Who develops it?

Artifacts

- Master Schedule (includes schedule for all grades)
- Sample Collaborative Planning Time agenda
- Sample outcomes of Collaborative Planning Time
- Intervention curricular materials
- Data used to inform Intervention Groups

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Teachers have regular time for collaborative planning each week
- Collaborative Planning Meetings are data-driven and purposeful; teachers and leaders are aligned in expectations around use of the time
- School- or district-level leader is present in meeting or in the follow-up
- Regular “Intervention Time” for students is included on the Master Schedule
- Intervention objectives are determined through the review of timely data
 - Students are grouped into intervention groups based on formative data

Data Collection and Reporting



Interview Questions

- Walk us through the reporting capabilities and functionality of your current system.
- How is student information tracked/recorded?
- How is student info updated throughout the year?
- When are testing schedules released? Do they change throughout the year?
- Is there a central data platform? If so, who can access it?
 - What data/information is accessible to district- and school-level leaders on the platform?
 - How does the district use this platform?
- What can teachers access on the platform?
 - Is it easy to use?
 - Do teachers consistently use it?
- What are the most commonly-used reports?
 - Can we see a few examples with identifiable student info blacked out?
- When are the most valuable reports created during the year? How timely are they?

Artifacts

- Data Platform Demo
- Sample commonly used reports from data platform
- Sample agenda including data review using the platform
- Assessment Calendar

Site Visit Look-Fors

- Regular use of data platform by district and school leaders
- Example of how teachers access and use the data from the platform
 - Are teachers able to pull grade-, class-, and student-level trends using the data platform?
 - How is the data being used to inform planning and instruction?
- Data is being used for development of PD sessions
- Pertinent data is being shared with leaders (district and school-level), parents, and other stakeholders