

## **Appendix E1. School Readiness Assessment and Guidance**

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This assessment will help you understand your readiness for implementing the research-based principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide. The assessment explores several school readiness criteria that should be met prior to implementing these principles and practices. For each criterion, three options are available; select the option that best reflects your school's current position.

Once you have completed your selections, continue to the results section of the assessment. For selections that indicate you are ready to implement the principles and practices, a brief discussion is provided concerning the importance of the criteria for overall school quality and readiness. For selections that indicate a lack of readiness, guidance such as the following is provided:

- Questions to consider and actions needed to reach readiness
- Resources such as templates and examples
- Information about the importance of the criteria and, in some cases, links to other helpful resources

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## School Readiness Assessment

Read each readiness criteria carefully and select the statement that best reflects your school's current status.

Criteria	Answer options (circle one)
<b>Consistent School Leadership</b> New leadership could affect schoolwide improvement through staff focusing on learning the expectations of the new leader and the new leader adjusting to the new school.	A) Our principal has been the principal at this school for more than 1 year. B) Our principal was a teacher (or other staff member) of this school for more than 2 years, just not in the principal role. C) Our principal was new to this school last year (or is new this year).
<b>Existing School Leadership Team</b> A school leadership team guides and evaluates the use of research-based strategies, develops educational plans for the school, ensures that all voices are heard regarding student needs, and evaluates the effectiveness of the school's educational programs and initiatives in terms of impact on student achievement.	A) We have a leadership team in place (or have identified a team), and the team has met (or has a set plan to meet). B) We have a leadership team in place (or have identified a team), but there is no current schedule of or plan for meetings. C) We have not identified a leadership team.
<b>Moderate Levels of Teacher Turnover</b> High turnover limits teachers' experience with the research-based principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide, hindering successful implementation.	A) Our average full-time teacher tenure is greater than 5 years. B) Our average full-time teacher tenure is between 3 years and 5 years. C) Our average full-time teacher tenure is less than 3 years.
<b>Response to Intervention Processes</b> Response to intervention (RTI) is a framework for delivering targeted, enhanced instruction to students who require more intense levels of instruction than what is provided through general instruction. Frameworks such as RTI provide a structure within which to employ Middle School Matters principles and practices.	A) We use well-documented RTI practices and processes across content areas. B) We use (or plan to use) RTI practices and processes in some content areas but need to improve documentation. C) We do not use RTI in our school.

<p><b>Support for School Improvement</b></p> <p>A willingness to be innovative and employ with fidelity the research-based principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide is crucial to success.</p>	<p>A) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing <b>Middle School Matters</b> principles and practices, and the majority of staff members support implementation.</p> <p>B) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing <b>Middle School Matters</b> principles and practices, and a few staff members support implementation.</p> <p>C) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing <b>Middle School Matters</b> principles and practices, and the majority of staff members do not support implementation.</p>
<p><b>Data Management Tools</b></p> <p>Data management tools, such as student dashboards and early warning indicator systems, can be used to understand the effect of Middle School Matters principles and practices on student achievement.</p>	<p>A) We have a data management tool(s) and understand how it is used.</p> <p>B) We have a data management tool(s); however, no discussions have taken place to understand its use.</p> <p>C) We do not have a data management tool.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Feedback Process</b></p> <p>It is helpful to identify existing data management (assessment and feedback) processes that school staff members are familiar with and that could be used to understand the impact of Middle School Matters principles and practices on school improvement and student achievement.</p>	<p>A) We have data management and use processes in place, including clear documentation of and training on those processes.</p> <p>B) We have data management and use processes in place but have not documented those processes and/or trained staff.</p> <p>C) We do not have an assessment and feedback process in place.</p>
<p><b>Community and Family Engagement Programs</b></p> <p>Research suggests that community and family involvement is critical for academic success, especially for struggling students. Such programs usually can help schools with some of the research-based practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide.</p>	<p>A) Community and family engagement programs are in place at our school or partner with our school or district.</p> <p>B) Either a community engagement program or family engagement program (but not both) is in place at our school or partners with our school or district.</p> <p>C) Our school and district neither have in place nor partner with community engagement and family engagement programs.</p>
<p><b>After-School Programs</b></p> <p>Research suggests that after-school enrichment is a critical component of academic success, especially for struggling students. Such programs typically use research-based principles and practices, particularly those in the Extended Learning content dimension of the Middle School Matters Field Guide.</p>	<p>A) An after-school program is in place at our school (or in affiliation with our school), and we provide transportation for participating students.</p> <p>B) An after-school program is in place at our school (or in affiliation with our school), but we do not provide transportation for participating students.</p> <p>C) Our school does not have the resources or infrastructure for after-school programs.</p>

**Teacher Planning Time**

Research suggests that planning time is critical for the successful implementation of new initiatives such as the principles and practices found in the Middle School Matters Field Guide.

- A) We have dedicated planning time during the school day for teachers (either team planning time or both individual and team planning time).
- B) We have dedicated individual teacher planning time during the school day but no team planning time.
- C) We do not include teacher planning time during the school day.



## Response Guidance

<b>Consistent School Leadership</b> New leadership could affect schoolwide improvement through staff focusing on learning the expectations of the new leader and the new leader adjusting to the new school. <sup>8-11, 22, 35, 36</sup>	
Selected answer	Information related to the selected answer
A) Our principal has been the principal at this school for more than 1 year.	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school has consistent school leadership.</p> <p>All successful enterprises, including educational systems, need effective leaders to provide direction. Districts and schools need <i>stable</i>, empirically informed, fair-minded, and objective decision-makers who can inspire excellence, allocate resources, and ensure the school appropriately engages with the community. Districts and schools also need the capacity to measure progress and undertake midcourse corrections when necessary.</p> <p>Schools that have such stable leadership often have a strong and supportive culture with consistent expectations for instruction, behavior, achievement, and learning during and after the school day. In addition, trust and working relationships have already been built between school leadership and the staff, so that innovative practices are well received and, therefore, more likely to succeed.</p>
B) Our principal was a teacher (or other staff member) of this school for more than 2 years, just not in the principal role.	<p>You have indicated that your school leadership is fairly new and may still be in the process of setting expectations and the school culture.</p> <p>All successful enterprises, including educational systems, need effective leaders to provide direction. Districts and schools need <i>stable</i>, empirically informed, fair-minded, and objective decision-makers who can inspire excellence, allocate resources, and ensure the school appropriately engages with the community. Districts and schools also need the capacity to measure progress and undertake midcourse corrections when necessary.</p> <p>Schools that have such stable leadership often have a strong and supportive culture with consistent expectations for instruction, behavior, achievement, and learning during and after the school day. In addition, trust and working relationships have already been built between school leadership and the staff, so that innovative practices are well received and, therefore, more likely to succeed.</p> <div>           Think about the current culture of your school. Is there an acceptable level of trust between leadership and staff for the successful implementation of research-based practices?         </div>

<p>C) Our principal was new to this school last year (or is new this year).</p>	<p>You have indicated that your principal is new and may be in the process of setting expectations and the school culture.</p> <p>All successful enterprises, including educational systems, need effective leaders to provide direction. Districts and schools need <i>stable</i>, empirically informed, fair-minded, and objective decision-makers who can inspire excellence, allocate resources, and ensure the school appropriately engages with the community. Districts and schools also need the capacity to measure progress and undertake midcourse corrections when necessary.</p> <p>Schools that have such stable leadership often have a strong and supportive culture with consistent expectations for instruction, behavior, achievement, and learning during and after the school day. In addition, trust and working relationships have already been built between school leadership and the staff, so that innovative practices are well received and, therefore, more likely to succeed.</p> <p>As a new principal for your school, understanding staff and teacher perspectives is important prior to large-scale change. In addition, gaining a deep understanding of the history of the school in terms of change, turnover, and initiatives should be a priority for your principal to heighten awareness of potential reactions to large-scale change.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #007bff; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>If you are still interested in implementing the principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide, think about the culture of your school. Is there an acceptable level of trust between leadership and staff for successful implementation of the research-based practices? Are current expectations of the principal clear?</p> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Existing School Leadership Team</b></p> <p>A school leadership team guides and evaluates the use of research-based strategies, develops educational plans for the school, ensures that all voices are heard regarding student needs, and evaluates the effectiveness of the school's educational programs and initiatives in terms of impact on student achievement.<sup>8, 35, 38, 41, 44, 51</sup></p>	
<p><b>Selected answer</b></p> <p>A) We have a leadership team in place (or have identified a team), and the team has met (or has a set plan to meet).</p>	<p><b>Information related to the selected answer</b></p> <p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school has identified a leadership team. What follows are some recommendations for an effective leadership team.</p> <p>By using a team approach to leadership, your school leadership most likely embraces both <i>collective</i> and <i>distributive</i> leadership practices. <i>Collective</i> leadership refers to the extent to which education leaders ensure that multiple stakeholders within and outside the school have an influence. Further, collective leadership joins the power of parents, community, and schools for the benefit of the student. Including teachers, administrators, students, and parents in planning and decision-making has been found to substantially improve student outcomes.</p>

	<p><i>Distributive</i> leadership involves asking, assigning, or expecting capable and knowledgeable stakeholders to assume certain leadership roles. By distributing tasks and responsibilities to others, the leader develops a culture of collegiality, professionalism, and collaboration to improve instruction and maximize student achievement. Teachers value the extent to which principals invite, value, and act upon input from teachers and put in place organizational structures to facilitate the process (e.g., school-based management teams, grade-level teams, subject-level teams).</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Complete Resource A: Leadership Team Template.</p> <p>For suggestions of potential members, see Middle School Matters Field Guide Appendix E2: Who to Involve Resources, including the Checklist for Middle School Matters School Leadership Team Member Qualities.</p> </div>
<p>B) We have a leadership team in place (or have identified a team), but there is no current schedule of or plan for meetings.</p>	<p>You have indicated that a leadership team has been identified but has not yet developed a schedule of or plan for meetings. What follows are some recommendations for an effective leadership team.</p> <p>By using a team approach to leadership, your school leadership most likely embraces both <i>collective</i> and <i>distributive</i> leadership practices. <i>Collective</i> leadership refers to the extent to which education leaders ensure that multiple stakeholders within and outside the school have an influence. Further, collective leadership joins the power of parents, community, and schools for the benefit of the student. Including teachers, administrators, students, and parents in planning and decision-making has been found to substantially improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Principals who work collaboratively with individuals and teams of teachers ask questions, explore data, and engage their faculty and community to accomplish school goals. These principals recognize that collaboration builds trust and fosters an environment where improving instructional practices and enhancing student achievement are shared responsibilities of the entire school community.</p> <p><i>Distributive</i> leadership involves asking, assigning, or expecting capable and knowledgeable stakeholders to assume certain leadership roles. By distributing tasks and responsibilities to others, the leader develops a culture of collegiality, professionalism, and collaboration to improve instruction and maximize student achievement. Teachers value the extent to which principals invite, value, and act upon input from teachers and put in place organizational structures to facilitate the process (e.g., school-based management teams, grade-level teams, subject-level teams).</p> <p>In dealing with the dynamic, complex challenges in schools, successful school leaders must delegate leadership responsibilities to capable persons. By evaluating the talent, knowledge, and skills of their personnel and support staff, leaders can nurture and develop the leadership capabilities of others, create professional teams, and select individuals and groups with which to work collaboratively to increase teaching abilities and student learning.</p>

	<p>Thinking about your current team, complete Resource A: Leadership Team Template. Think about developing a plan and schedule for team meetings. Query team members about the most convenient potential meeting times and days.</p> <p>For suggestions of potential members to include, see Middle School Matters Field Guide Appendix E2: Who to Involve Resources, including the Checklist for Middle School Matters School Leadership Team Member Qualities.</p>
C) We have not identified a leadership team.	<p>You have indicated that you do not currently have a leadership team at your school.</p> <p>Shared decision-making is important to the success of the Middle School Matters program. Setting the expectation that teachers, school leaders, and the community play an active role in the decision-making process for the school encourages motivation and commitment to change and develops future leaders. It is not feasible to involve everyone in every decision, so it is helpful to have a core set of leaders who represent the needs and interests of teachers, instructional leaders, parents, and the community. Principals in Middle School Matters schools establish a leadership team to develop the Middle School Matters implementation plan. The leadership team and the principal monitor staff commitment and address barriers to implementation. To improve implementation, leadership team members can share concerns of the staff, parents, students, and community during team meetings.</p> <p>School leadership should embrace both <i>collective</i> and <i>distributive</i> leadership practices. <i>Collective</i> leadership refers to the extent to which education leaders ensure that multiple stakeholders within and outside the school have an influence. Further, collective leadership joins the power of parents, community, and schools for the benefit of the student. Including teachers, administrators, students, and parents in planning and decision-making has been found to substantially improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Principals who work collaboratively with individuals and teams of teachers ask questions, explore data, and engage their faculty and community to accomplish school goals. These principals recognize that collaboration builds trust and fosters an environment where improving instructional practices and enhancing student achievement are shared responsibilities of the entire school community.</p> <p><i>Distributive</i> leadership involves asking, assigning, or expecting capable and knowledgeable stakeholders to assume certain leadership roles. By distributing tasks and responsibilities to others, the leader develops a culture of collegiality, professionalism, and collaboration to improve instruction and maximize student achievement. Teachers value the extent to which principals invite, value, and act upon input from teachers and put in place organizational structures to facilitate the process (e.g., school-based management teams, grade-level teams, subject-level teams).</p>

	<p>In dealing with the dynamic, complex challenges in schools, successful school leaders must delegate leadership responsibilities to capable persons. By evaluating the talent, knowledge, and skills of their personnel and support staff, leaders can nurture and develop the leadership capabilities of others, create professional teams, and select individuals and groups with which to work collaboratively to increase teaching abilities and student learning.</p> <div> <p>Review the School Leadership content dimension of the Middle School Matters Field Guide.</p> <p>Think about developing your school's leadership team. Which people and what positions should you include on your leadership team? Think about the varying perspectives and skills you want to take advantage of.</p> <p>Complete Resource A: Leadership Team Template. Think about developing a plan and schedule for team meetings. Query team members about the most convenient potential meeting times and days.</p> <p>For suggestions of potential members, see Middle School Matters Field Guide Appendix E2: Who to Involve Resources, including the Checklist for Middle School Matters School Leadership Team Member Qualities.</p> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderate Levels of Teacher Turnover</b></p> <p>High turnover limits teachers' experience with the research-based principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide, hindering successful implementation.<sup>8, 12, 22, 26, 28, 36</sup></p>	
<b>Selected answer</b>	<b>Information related to the selected answer</b>
A) Our average full-time teacher tenure is greater than 5 years.	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that the average full-time teacher tenure is greater than 5 years.</p> <p>Schools with less teacher turnover maintain institutional and instructional knowledge and are more likely to have positive relationships between school leadership and district leadership. A school in this position may have teachers and staff members ready to collaborate to implement programs such as Middle School Matters.</p>
B) Our average full-time teacher tenure is between 3 years and 5 years.	<p>You have indicated that the average full-time teacher tenure is between 3 years and 5 years.</p> <p>Schools with less teacher turnover maintain institutional and instructional knowledge and are more likely to have positive relationships between school leadership and district leadership. A school in this position may have teachers and staff members ready to collaborate to implement programs such as Middle School Matters.</p> <p>It is well documented that turnover hurts staff cohesion, staff interactions, school climate, and the shared sense of community in schools (even when overall teacher effectiveness remains constant). Staff cohesion and community have also been found to relate to student engagement and achievement. In addition, more recent studies have found</p>

	<p>relationships between teacher turnover and student achievement (i.e., loss of collegiality among the staff members who stay at the school or loss of institutional knowledge); however, the specific mechanisms through which these relationships occur are not yet known.</p> <p>When schools and districts face high staff turnover, institutional memory is lost and resources as well as attention are spent on the hiring process. Teacher turnover also presents challenges to the successful and coherent implementation of ongoing and new instructional programs and initiatives. Time must be spent on bringing new teachers “up to speed.” The outcome is staff members feeling like they continuously start over, rather than make progress toward goals.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Consider the current culture of your school. Is there an appropriate amount of institutional knowledge and the necessary collaborative community for the success of an evidence-based instructional change?</p> </div>
<p>C) Our average full-time teacher tenure is less than 3 years.</p>	<p>You have indicated that the average full-time teacher tenure is less than 3 years.</p> <p>Schools with less teacher turnover maintain institutional and instructional knowledge and are more likely to have positive relationships between school leadership and district leadership. A school in this position may have teachers and staff members ready to collaborate to implement programs such as Middle School Matters.</p> <p>It is well documented that turnover hurts staff cohesion, staff interactions, school climate, and the shared sense of community in schools (even when overall teacher effectiveness remains constant). Staff cohesion and community have also been found to relate to student engagement and achievement. In addition, more recent studies have found relationships between teacher turnover and student achievement (i.e., loss of collegiality among the staff members who stay at the school or loss of institutional knowledge); however, the specific mechanisms through which these relationships occur are not yet known.</p> <p>When schools and districts face high staff turnover, institutional memory is lost and resources as well as attention are spent on the hiring process. Teacher turnover also presents challenges to the successful and coherent implementation of ongoing and new instructional programs and initiatives. Time must be spent on bringing new teachers “up to speed.” The outcome is staff members feeling like they continuously start over, rather than make progress toward goals.</p>

	<p>If you are still interested in implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices, review the School Leadership and Effective Teachers content dimensions of the Middle School Matters Field Guide.</p> <p>Next, consider the culture of your school. How much time, energy, and resources do school and district leaders devote to hiring and bringing new teachers up to speed? Is there an appropriate amount of institutional knowledge and the necessary collaborative community for the success of an evidence-based instructional change?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Response to Intervention Processes</b></p> <p>Response to intervention (RTI) is a framework for delivering targeted, enhanced instruction to students who require more intense levels of instruction than what is provided through general instruction. Frameworks such as RTI provide a structure within which to employ Middle School Matters principles and practices.<sup>17, 18, 23, 46</sup></p>	
<b>Selected answer</b>	<b>Information related to the selected answer</b>
A) We use well-documented RTI practices and processes across content areas.	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that RTI practices are currently in use across content areas at your school and that documentation for such practices and processes is available.</p> <p>RTI is a schoolwide organizational framework for providing instructional support to students at risk for academic difficulties. RTI allows leaders, teachers, and staff members to make data-driven instructional decisions that meet all students' needs. RTI models can be implemented in any content area where universal screening (i.e., screening of all students in the school for at-risk status) is possible.</p> <p>Several of the principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide are based on or adapted from RTI processes, including tiered levels of instructional support. Some components may be an easy transition when well-documented RTI processes are already in place across content areas.</p> <p>Consider attaching RTI documentation to your other records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how RTI is used in your school.</p>



<p>B) We use (or plan to use) RTI practices and processes in some content areas but need to improve documentation.</p>	<p>You have indicated that RTI is currently used in your school but not consistently or with thorough documentation.</p> <p>RTI is a schoolwide organizational framework for providing instructional support to students at risk for academic difficulties. RTI allows leaders, teachers, and staff members to make data-driven instructional decisions that meet all students' needs. RTI models can be implemented in any content area where universal screening (i.e., screening of all students in the school for at-risk status) is possible.</p> <div data-bbox="514 422 1848 950" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 15px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Several of the principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide are based on or adapted from RTI processes, including tiered levels of instructional support. (For more information on RTI, see the National Center on Response to Intervention at <a href="http://www.rti4success.org">www.rti4success.org</a> and The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk Response to Intervention Institute at <a href="http://www.meadowscenter.org/institutes/response-to-intervention-institute">www.meadowscenter.org/institutes/response-to-intervention-institute</a>.)</p> <p>Think about the reasons that RTI practices are not currently used in all content areas at your school. Is it possible to begin to implement RTI in these other content areas? Why or why not? Why have the RTI processes currently in place not been documented, so that consistent practices can be conducted throughout the school?</p> <p>After considering the questions above, make appropriate changes to your use and documentation of RTI. It is recommended to attach RTI documentation to your other records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how RTI is used in your school.</p> </div>
<p>C) We do not use RTI in our school.</p>	<p>You have indicated that RTI is not currently used in your school.</p> <p>RTI is a schoolwide organizational framework for providing instructional support to students at risk for academic difficulties. RTI allows leaders, teachers, and staff members to make data-driven instructional decisions that meet all students' needs. RTI models can be implemented in any content area where universal screening (i.e., screening of all students in the school for at-risk status) is possible.</p> <p>This framework typically has three tiers of increasing instructional intensity. Tier I is the research-based (where possible) core classroom instruction all students receive. Although not all experts agree on the characteristics of Tier I, most agree that it should include differentiated instruction for students with difficulties. Universal screening of all students, regardless of content area proficiency, to determine students likely to need instruction beyond Tier I is a critical feature of RTI.</p>



Tier II involves more intensive instruction, often delivered to small groups two or three times per week. It should be provided in addition to regular whole-class instruction (Tier I). Tier II often comprises targeted instruction in specific content area skills. People such as the classroom teacher, a classroom aide, an instructional specialist, or a tutor can provide Tier II instruction outside the student's regular classroom. Student progress is monitored frequently to determine whether the student no longer needs Tier II, should continue with Tier II, or should continue to Tier III.

Tier III involves even more intensive instruction, typically individualized and possibly delivered one-on-one. The distinction between Tier II and Tier III intervention is primarily the intensity, represented by the size of instructional group, amount of instructional time, and number and type of school personnel involved. Tier III instruction is also provided in addition to regular classroom instruction, often daily. Additional personnel such as school psychologists or special education specialists may be incorporated. Student progress is monitored frequently to determine whether students should continue with Tier III, move back to Tier II, or be formally recommended for special education services.

The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) approved schools' use of alternative methods for determining student eligibility for special education services. IDEA encourages schools to intervene as soon as they expect a student might experience academic or behavioral difficulties, rather than after performance falls well below grade level. RTI is not only a process for determining special education eligibility, but also a schoolwide model for helping students struggling academically. Underpinning RTI is intensive early intervention to prevent later academic failure.

Several of the principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide are based on or adapted from RTI processes, including tiered levels of instructional support. (For more information on RTI, see the National Center on Response to Intervention at [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org) and The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk Response to Intervention Institute at [www.meadowscenter.org/institutes/response-to-intervention-institute](http://www.meadowscenter.org/institutes/response-to-intervention-institute).)

Explore RTI and work through any concerns or questions before implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices. Some questions to consider are provided in Resource B: Response to Intervention Thought Questions.

Once you have considered the questions in Resource B, create a school strategy for the use and documentation of RTI in your school. It is recommended to attach RTI documentation to your other records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how RTI is used in your school.

## Support for School Improvement

A willingness to be innovative and employ with fidelity the research-based principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide is crucial to success.<sup>7, 16, 19, 22, 34, 36, 53</sup>

Selected answer	Information related to the selected answer
<p>A) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices, and the majority of staff members support implementation.</p>	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school already has the leadership team and school staff's support and buy-in for Middle School Matters implementation.</p> <p>Successful implementation involves more than simply selecting effective programs and placing them in a school. Ongoing, earnest attention must be given to linking a program to school and district goals, making the program a visible part of the culture and practices of the school, and carefully planning and carrying out the program as intended. Factors ranging from organizational issues to personal beliefs and experiences influence fidelity of implementation of a program or initiative. It is important that new initiatives or programs do not come across as being "done to" a school and the staff, but rather "done in collaboration with" the school staff.</p> <p>High levels of morale, good communication, and a sense of ownership lead to program success. Buy-in can be fostered by including implementers in the planning process, providing training and other technical support, and scheduling regular meetings to discuss problems. Practitioners are more likely to implement a program with fidelity when they recognize a specific need for the innovation, believe the innovation will produce desired benefits, feel confident in their ability to do what is expected (self-efficacy), and have the requisite skills.</p>
<p>B) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices, and a few staff members support implementation.</p>	<p>You have indicated that discussions about Middle School Matters implementation have occurred but that support for implementation is not yet widespread.</p> <p>Successful implementation involves more than simply selecting effective programs and placing them in a school. Ongoing, earnest attention must be given to linking a program to school and district goals, making the program a visible part of the culture and practices of the school, and carefully planning and carrying out the program as intended. Factors ranging from organizational issues to personal beliefs and experiences influence fidelity of implementation of a program or initiative. It is important that new initiatives or programs do not come across as being "done to" a school and the staff, but rather "done in collaboration with" the school staff.</p> <p>Program integration cannot occur unless the attitude of the school staff and the culture of the school and district are receptive to innovation. There may be differing philosophies regarding the need for the program; however, these differences can be overcome when all members of the school community agree on the need for change and the relevance of the program or initiative and are involved in the planning process. The support, motivation, and buy-in of staff members are crucial to implementation success. It is important that school leadership understand the readiness of the staff to receive and work on new initiatives and programs before implementation.</p>

	<p>High levels of morale, good communication, and a sense of ownership lead to program success. Buy-in can be fostered by including implementers in the planning process, providing training and other technical support, and scheduling regular meetings to discuss problems. Practitioners are more likely to implement a program with fidelity when they recognize a specific need for the innovation, believe the innovation will produce desired benefits, feel confident in their ability to do what is expected (self-efficacy), and have the requisite skills.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Call a staff meeting to discuss implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices. Consider involving teachers or other staff members who support implementation. Ask one or two of those teachers and staff members to share why they are excited to participate and how they think Middle School Matters will help the school. (For more information on Middle School Matters, visit the George W. Bush Center website at <a href="http://www.bushcenter.org/education-reform/middle-school-matters">www.bushcenter.org/education-reform/middle-school-matters</a>.) Suggested talking points for the meeting with teachers and other staff members can be found in Resource C.</p> <p>For additional information, see the Organization section of the Introduction to the Middle School Matters Field Guide and Chapter 3: Roadmap for School Leaders.</p> </div>
<p>C) Our staff and leadership team have discussed implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices, and the majority of staff members do not support implementation.</p>	<p>You have indicated that discussions about Middle School Matters implementation have occurred but that support for implementation is still needed.</p> <p>Successful implementation involves more than simply selecting effective programs and placing them in a school. Ongoing, earnest attention must be given to linking a program to school and district goals, making the program a visible part of the culture and practices of the school, and carefully planning and carrying out the program as intended. Factors ranging from organizational issues to personal beliefs and experiences influence fidelity of implementation of a program or initiative. It is important that new initiatives or programs do not come across as being “done to” a school and the staff, but rather “done in collaboration with” the school staff.</p> <p>Program integration cannot occur unless the attitude of the school staff and the culture of the school and district are receptive to innovation. There may be differing philosophies regarding the need for the program; however, these differences can be overcome when all members of the school community agree on the need for change and the relevance of the program or initiative and are involved in the planning process. The support, motivation, and buy-in of staff members are crucial to implementation success. It is important that school leadership understand the readiness of the staff to receive and work on new initiatives and programs before implementation.</p> <p>High levels of morale, good communication, and a sense of ownership lead to program success. Buy-in can be fostered by including implementers in the planning process, providing training and other technical support, and scheduling regular meetings to discuss problems. Practitioners are more likely to implement a program with fidelity when they</p>

	<p>recognize a specific need for the innovation, believe the innovation will produce desired benefits, feel confident in their ability to do what is expected (self-efficacy), and have the requisite skills.</p> <div> <p>Call a staff meeting to discuss the potential of implementing Middle School Matters principles and practices. Consider sharing why you are excited to participate and how you think Middle School Matters will help your school. (For more information on Middle School Matters, visit the George W. Bush Center website at <a href="http://www.bushcenter.org/education-reform/middle-school-matters">www.bushcenter.org/education-reform/middle-school-matters</a>.) Suggested talking points for the meeting with teachers and other staff members can be found in Resource C.</p> <p>For additional information, see the Organization section of the Introduction to the Middle School Matters Field Guide and Chapter 3: Roadmap for School Leaders.</p> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Data Management Tools</b></p> <p>Data management tools, such as student dashboards and early warning indicator systems, can be used to understand the effect of Middle School Matters principles and practices on student achievement.<sup>25, 39, 48-50</sup></p>	
<b>Selected answer</b>	<b>Information related to the selected answer</b>
A) We have a data management tool(s) and understand how it is used.	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school already has data management tools in place and understands how they are currently used.</p> <p>Data related to attendance, grades, formative assessment, discipline, and other indicators of student performance and engagement are critical to making informed decisions regarding instruction and intervention. Effective data management tools can provide quick access to timely, relevant data and constant visual reminders of gaps between goals and student performance. Some technology allows users to present data in preformed reports. Given the right tools and training, teachers can analyze data to identify struggling students and their specific learning challenges.</p> <div> <p>Consider attaching to your school records information about your data systems and tools and how they inform decision-making. The purpose of retaining such information is so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how data and data tools are used in your school.</p> </div>

<p>B) We have a data management tool(s); however, no discussions have taken place to understand its use.</p>	<p>You have indicated that your school already has data management tools in place but may not yet understand how such tools are currently used.</p> <p>Data related to attendance, grades, formative assessment, discipline, and other indicators of student performance and engagement are critical to making informed decisions regarding instruction and intervention. Effective data management tools can provide quick access to timely, relevant data and constant visual reminders of gaps between goals and student performance. Some technology allows users to present data in preformed reports. Given the right tools and training, teachers can analyze data to identify struggling students and their specific learning challenges.</p> <div data-bbox="512 516 1831 737"> <p>A recommended four-step process to understanding and documenting how such tools are used in your school is provided in Resource D: Four-Step Data-Use Process.</p> <p>Consider attaching to your school records information about your data systems and tools and how they inform decision-making. The purpose of retaining such information is so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how data and data tools are used in your school.</p> </div>
<p>C) We do not have a data management tool.</p>	<p>You have indicated that your school does not currently use data management tools.</p> <p>Schools have been collecting data for decades, but most school district leaders only recently discovered the power of data for school improvement. By understanding and using the student data already being collected in your school, teachers and staff members can systematically work to narrow achievement gaps; improve teacher quality; improve curriculum development; identify the root causes of student learning difficulties; identify and share best practices; and communicate more effectively with families, the community, and students. Such focused use of data can also help schools prioritize and direct limited resources to identified areas of need.</p> <p>Data related to attendance, grades, formative assessment, discipline, and other indicators of student performance and engagement are critical to making informed decisions regarding instruction and intervention. Effective data management tools can provide quick access to timely, relevant data and constant visual reminders of gaps between goals and student performance. Some technology allows users to present data in preformed reports. Given the right tools and training, teachers can analyze data to identify struggling students and their specific learning challenges.</p>

	<p>A recommended four-step process to understanding and documenting how such tools are used in your school is provided in Resource D: Four-Step Data-Use Process.</p> <p>Consider attaching to your records information about data systems and tools and how they inform decision-making. The purpose of retaining such information is so that school and district staff members and evaluators of your program can have a more complete understanding of how your school uses data and data tools.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment and Feedback Process</b></p> <p>It is helpful to identify existing data management (assessment and feedback) processes that school staff members are familiar with and that could be used to understand the impact of Middle School Matters principles and practices on school improvement and student achievement.<sup>1, 2, 4, 6, 15, 24, 37</sup></p>	
<b>Selected answer</b>	<b>Information related to the selected answer</b>
A) We have data management and use processes in place, including clear documentation of and training on those processes.	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school already has data management and use processes in place, including clear documentation of and training on those processes.</p> <p>Establishing clear norms and expectations for using data for assessment and feedback is critical to effective data-driven decision-making. Frequent communication of these norms and expectations facilitates productive collaboration and assists in building trusting relationships through honest, open dialogue to achieve common goals.</p> <p>Consider attaching assessment and feedback process documentation (including training plans) to your school records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how your school uses assessment and feedback processes and training.</p>
B) We have data management and use processes in place but have not documented those processes and/or trained staff.	<p>You have indicated that your school already has data management and use processes in place but does not yet have clear documentation of and training on those processes.</p> <p>Establishing clear norms and expectations for using data for assessment and feedback is critical to effective data-driven decision-making. Frequent communication of these norms and expectations to a range of stakeholders facilitates productive collaboration and assists in building trusting relationships through honest, open dialogue to achieve common goals.</p>

	<p>Effective data use for assessment and feedback requires building the capacity of the entire school community to use data to drive decision-making. This capacity building can be accomplished through professional development, teacher planning meetings, and examples of how to use data to guide instruction. Professional development must be connected with the school staff's daily work, so they see the value and relevance of data to their jobs.</p> <p>Providing structured time for staff members to collaborate in analyzing data is essential. Considering that time for collaboration is often limited, such time must be used effectively. To maximize team efficiency and productivity, explicit roles and protocols should be developed.</p> <p>Data facilitators or coaches can help teachers identify struggling students and develop appropriate action plans. By modeling the use of data to gauge progress toward learning goals, data facilitators can develop teachers' confidence and appreciation of data's value in managing student performance. Data-use modeling can occur during monthly meetings with teachers to discuss student performance data, identify trends, and consider appropriate responses.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #0070C0; border-radius: 15px; padding: 15px; background-color: #D9E1F2;"> <p>Think about the processes in place at your school for using data for assessment and feedback purposes. Do all staff members understand these processes? Draft documentation for ideal implementation of these norms and expectations and compare these ideal levels to current implementation.</p> <p>Next, think about the training in place (or that might be necessary if not yet in place) for staff members to reach the newly documented norms and expectations. Is structured time already set aside for collaborative analysis of data? If not, think about how to incorporate structured time for staff to analyze data in a collaborative environment. Finally, is someone in your school already serving as a data facilitator or coach? If not, consider designating one. (See Appendix E2: Who to Involve Resources of the Middle School Matters Field Guide for information pertaining to data facilitators.)</p> <p>Consider attaching assessment and feedback process documentation (including training plans) to your school records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how assessment and feedback processes and training are used in your school.</p> </div>
C) We do not have an assessment and feedback process in place.	<p>You have indicated that your school does not have data management and use processes in place.</p> <p>Establishing clear norms and expectations for using data for assessment and feedback is critical to effective data-driven decision-making. Frequent communication of these norms and expectations facilitates productive collaboration and assists in building trusting relationships through honest, open dialogue to achieve common goals.</p>



	<p>Effective data use for assessment and feedback requires building the capacity of the entire school community to use data to drive decision-making. This capacity building can be accomplished through professional development, teacher planning meetings, and examples of how to use data to guide instruction. Professional development must be connected with the school staff's daily work, so they see the value and relevance of data to their jobs.</p> <p>Providing structured time for staff members to collaborate in analyzing data is essential. Considering that time for collaboration is often limited, such time must be used effectively. To maximize team efficiency and productivity, explicit roles and protocols should be developed.</p> <p>Data facilitators or coaches can help teachers identify struggling students and develop appropriate action plans. By modeling the use of data to gauge progress toward learning goals, data facilitators can develop teachers' confidence and appreciation of data's value in managing student performance. Data-use modeling can occur during monthly meetings with teachers to discuss student performance data, identify trends, and consider appropriate responses.</p> <div data-bbox="514 646 1852 1031" style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Document the norms and expectations for data use that should be in place at your school. Think about the training needed for staff members to reach these norms and expectations. Next, think about how to incorporate structured time for staff to analyze data in a collaborative environment. Finally, consider including a data facilitator or data coach to support your staff's data use pertaining to assessment and feedback. (See Appendix E2: Who to Involve Resources of the Middle School Matters Field Guide for information pertaining to data facilitators.)</p> <p>Consider attaching assessment and feedback process documentation (including training plans) to your school records, so that other school and district staff members, as well as evaluators of your program, can have a more complete understanding of how assessment and feedback processes and training are used in your school.</p> </div>
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## Community and Family Engagement Programs

Research suggests that community and family involvement is critical for academic success, especially for struggling students. Such programs usually can help schools with some of the research-based practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide.<sup>3, 21, 27, 38, 40, 41, 45</sup>

Selected answer	Information related to the selected answer
<p>A) Community and family engagement programs are in place at our school or partner with our school or district.</p>	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school already participates in (or provides) community and family engagement programs.</p> <p>Due to the diversity of student populations and the challenges today’s educators face, schools can no longer work in isolation—family and community involvement is vital for success. Family engagement can begin by schools communicating their high academic expectations for students. Family engagement programs educate parents and other family members on the steps that students need to take to succeed. Such education also conveys how families can support their children in completing these steps.</p> <p>Students and their families may have needs that the school cannot meet; therefore, it is important to match community resources and partnerships with student needs and to leverage these resources to support families and students. These resources might include an on-site coordinator who monitors student participation and its impact on student outcomes to ensure that the right students get the right supports with the required intensity. Schools with such programs also integrate community supports into the school day and ensure that the supports directly link to student needs.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Consider the family and community programs and partnerships with which your school is involved. What other community organizations could support your students and families? What other educational opportunities could your school provide for families to support student achievement and a sense of community?</p> </div>
<p>B) Either a community engagement or family engagement program (but not both) is in place at our school or partners with our school or district.</p>	<p>You have indicated that your school currently engages in either community or family programs but not both.</p> <p>Due to the diversity of student populations and the challenges today’s educators face, schools can no longer work in isolation—family and community involvement is vital for success. Family engagement can begin by schools communicating their high academic expectations for students. Family engagement programs educate parents and other family members on the steps that students need to take to succeed. Such education also conveys how families can support their children in completing these steps.</p> <p>Students and their families may have needs that the school cannot meet; therefore, it is important to match community resources and partnerships with students’ needs and to leverage these resources to support families and students.</p>

Consider the family and community programs and partnerships with which your school is involved. What other community organizations could support your students and families? What other educational opportunities could your school provide for families to support student achievement and a sense of community within the school? Review the School, Family, and Community Partnerships content dimension in the Middle School Matters Field Guide for more information.

***If your school does not participate in a family engagement program,*** consider the benefits described above for such a program. In early adolescence, students need to hear a consistent message from school and home that attending school, behaving appropriately, and working to their potential keeps them on the pathway to success as an adult. Parents have goals and aspirations for their children; however, sometimes parents and students lack an understanding of what is needed to improve current academic performance and prepare for postsecondary success. This work with parents involves two-way communication to connect the goals of the family, the needs of the student, and what is needed for success in the middle grades and beyond.

Think about some ways that your school could begin to provide family engagement programs that communicate the school's high academic expectations for students.

***If your school does not participate in a community engagement program,*** consider the benefits described above for such a program. Too often, community supports are not integrated into the school day or directly linked with student needs. Schools often make too many community partners, believing that any support will help. By not selecting supports against an analysis of student needs or holding community support organizations to common outcomes, changes in student outcomes are often minimal and, at times, more distracting than beneficial. Schools should invest in coordinating this community support and involvement.

Think about some ways that your school could begin to provide community engagement programs. Such programs might include an on-site coordinator who monitors student participation and related changes in student outcomes to ensure that the right students get the right supports with the intensity required. Your school might also take steps to integrate community supports into the school day and ensure that the supports directly link to student needs.

<p>C) Our school and district neither have in place nor partner with community engagement and family engagement programs.</p>	<p>You have indicated that your school does not provide or participate in family or community engagement programs.</p> <p>Due to the diversity of student populations and the challenges today’s educators face, schools can no longer work in isolation—family and community involvement is vital for success. Engagement programs between community, families, and schools are important to maximize learning opportunities and success for students. Family engagement can begin by schools communicating their high academic expectations for students. Family engagement programs educate parents and other family members on the steps that students need to take to succeed. Such education also conveys how families can support their children in completing these steps.</p> <p>Students and their families may have needs that the school cannot meet; therefore, it is important to match community resources and partnerships with students’ needs and to leverage these resources to support families and students.</p>
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Consider the family and community programs and partnerships with which your school is involved. What other community organizations could support your students and families? What other educational opportunities could your school could provide for families to support student achievement and a sense of community within the school? Review the School, Family, and Community Partnerships content dimension in the Middle School Matters Field Guide for more information.

**Family engagement programs:** Consider the benefits described above for such a program. In early adolescence, students need to hear a consistent message from school and home that attending school, behaving appropriately, and working to their potential keeps them on the pathway to success as an adult. Parents have goals and aspirations for their children; however, sometimes parents and students lack an understanding of what is needed to improve current academic performance and prepare for postsecondary success. This work with parents involves two-way communication to connect the goals of the family, the needs of the student, and what is needed for success in the middle grades and beyond.

Think about some ways that your school could begin to provide family engagement programs that communicate the school's high academic expectations for students.

**Community engagement programs:** Consider the benefits described above for such a program. Too often, community supports are not integrated into the school day or directly linked with student needs. Schools often make too many community partners, believing any support will help. By not selecting supports against an analysis of student needs or holding community support organizations to common outcomes, changes in student outcomes are often minimal and, at times, more distracting than beneficial. Schools should invest in coordinating this community support and involvement.

Think about some ways that your school could begin to provide community engagement programs. Such programs might include an on-site coordinator who monitors student participation and related changes in student outcomes to ensure that the right students get the right supports with the intensity required. Your school might also take steps to integrate community supports into the school day and ensure that the supports directly link to student needs.

## After-School Programs

Research suggests that after-school enrichment is a critical component of academic success, especially for struggling students. Such programs typically use research-based principles and practices, particularly those in the Extended Learning content dimension of the Middle School Matters Field Guide.<sup>3, 14, 20, 30-32, 42, 43</sup>

Selected answer	Information related to the selected answer
<p>A) An after-school program is in place at our school (or in affiliation with our school), and we provide transportation for participating students.</p>	<p>Congratulations! You have indicated that your school provides students with an after-school program and transportation home from the program.</p> <p>The best extended-learning opportunities connect (or align) with the academic program students already participate in during the regular school day. This alignment might include important deadlines (e.g., student project due dates) or other key academic activities. To encourage participation, extended-learning programs should be geared toward meeting the needs of students, and both parents and the community should be aware of the programs.</p> <p>When extended-learning programs provide transportation for students, attendance improves. Inadequate or unsafe transportation can be a barrier to youth participation in such programs.</p>
<p>B) An after-school program is in place at our school (or in affiliation with our school), but we do not provide transportation for participating students.</p>	<p>You have indicated that your school provides an after-school program but does not provide transportation home from the program.</p> <p>The best extended-learning opportunities connect (or align) with the academic program students already participate in during the regular school day. This alignment might include important deadlines (e.g., student project due dates) or other key academic activities. To encourage participation, extended-learning programs should be geared toward meeting the needs of students, and both parents and the community should be aware of the programs.</p> <p>Transportation is a major cost for an extended-learning program, but transportation is a significant safety and logistical concern for families. Inadequate or unsafe transportation can be a barrier to youth participation in such programs. Attendance in programs often declines or becomes sporadic for some children, depending on when parents can arrange transportation.</p>

	<p>Think about your after-school programs. Do they align with the school day? What content is delivered in your programs? How might the alignment with the school day be improved? Are engaging learning experiences that meet the needs of students provided?</p> <p>Partnerships involving after-school programs, local transportation authorities, school bus systems, pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups, and other community-based agencies can reduce the transportation barriers of students attending extended-learning programs. Think about some of these types of organizations in your community. Consider discussing potential partnerships with one of these organizations to offer a cost-effective, reliable transportation option for your extended-learning students.</p>
C) Our school does not have the resources or infrastructure for after-school programs.	<p>You have indicated that your school does not provide an after-school program for your students.</p> <p>After-school programs provide safe educational opportunities for students outside of traditional school hours. Extended-learning programs are important to the well being of students with no parent or adult in the home before or after school.</p> <p>The time after school is especially critical for students in the middle grades. At this time, students are least likely to be supervised and most likely to become involved in dangerous behaviors, such as drugs, alcohol, and crime. Alternatively, out-of-school time can be a positive opportunity for middle grades students to enrich their learning and/or social experiences. Extended-learning programs can reduce risky behaviors in middle grades students and increase their achievement.</p> <p>The best extended-learning opportunities connect (or align) with the academic program students already participate in during the regular school day. This alignment might include important deadlines (e.g., student project due dates) or other key academic activities. To encourage participation, extended-learning programs should be geared toward meeting the needs of students, and both parents and the community should be aware of the programs.</p> <p>Transportation is a major cost for an extended-learning program, but transportation is a significant safety and logistical concern for families. Inadequate or unsafe transportation can be a barrier to youth participation in such programs. Attendance in programs often declines or becomes sporadic for some children, depending on when parents can arrange transportation.</p>

	<p>If resources and infrastructure are a concern, schools can partner with community organizations to begin an extended-learning program. Consider nearby schools, libraries, recreation centers, daycare centers, universities and colleges, and similar entities. Do these organizations have space for an extended-learning program? Could you collaborate with other schools that have yet to begin an extended-learning program?</p> <p>Partnerships involving after-school programs, local transportation authorities, school bus systems, pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups, and other community-based agencies can reduce the transportation barriers of students attending extended-learning programs. Consider discussing potential partnerships with one of these organizations to offer a cost-effective, reliable transportation option for your extended-learning students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Teacher Planning Time</b></p> <p>Research suggests that planning time is critical for the successful implementation of new initiatives such as the principles and practices found in the Middle School Matters Field Guide.<sup>5, 12, 13, 29, 33, 47, 52</sup></p>	
<b>Selected answer</b>	<b>Information related to the selected answer</b>
A) We have dedicated planning time during the school day for teachers (either team planning time or both individual and team planning time).	<p>Congratulations! You indicated that your school already provides dedicated planning time during the school day for teachers that includes team planning or both individual and team planning.</p> <p>Individual teacher planning is a key part of effective teaching. During planning time, teachers not only prepare for upcoming classes and subject matter, but also read and respond to student work, assign grades, and diagnose learning progress. During individual planning time, teachers can talk to or e-mail parents, special education teachers, or others who share responsibility for their students.</p> <p>Team planning (or common planning) most often includes a group of teachers from different subject areas who share the same students planning and working together. Providing regular time for common planning has been found to improve both student outcomes and teacher perceptions of the school climate.</p>
B) We have dedicated individual teacher planning time during the school day but no team planning time.	<p>You indicated that your school provides dedicated individual planning time during the school day for teachers but does not offer team planning opportunities.</p> <p>Individual teacher planning is a key part of effective teaching. During planning time, teachers not only prepare for upcoming classes and subject matter, but also read and respond to student work, assign grades, and diagnose learning progress. During individual planning time, teachers can talk to or e-mail parents, special education teachers, or others who share responsibility for their students.</p>

	<p>Team planning (or common planning) most often includes a group of teachers from different subject areas who share the same students planning and working together to better support and understand the educational needs of those students. Providing regular time for common planning has been found to improve both student outcomes and teacher perceptions of the school climate and job satisfaction. Further, schools that foster respectful and mutually supportive relationships and interactions among teachers ultimately are supportive and engaging for students.</p> <p>Team planning time should focus on lesson plans, student progress, problems, and the integration across subjects of a central theme to solidify learning for students.</p> <div>Which teachers at your school have a majority of the same students throughout the day? Is there a time (even 20–30 minutes) that these teachers could share information to support these students? Could these teachers align central themes across content areas to enrich learning?</div>
C) We do not include teacher planning time during the school day.	<p>You indicated that your school does not provide dedicated individual planning time or team planning opportunities for teachers during the school day.</p> <p>Individual teacher planning is a key part of effective teaching. During planning time, teachers not only prepare for upcoming classes and subject matter, but also read and respond to student work, assign grades, and diagnose learning progress. During individual planning, teachers can talk to or e-mail parents, special education teachers, or others. When teachers do not have dedicated time to address and complete such important tasks, evenings and weekends must be used, which can lead to low levels of job satisfaction, teacher burnout, and low quality of lessons delivered to students.</p> <p>Team planning (or common planning) most often includes a group of teachers from different subject areas who share the same students planning and working together to better support and understand the educational needs of those students. Providing regular time for common planning has been found to improve both student outcomes and teacher perceptions of the school climate and job satisfaction. Further, schools that foster respectful and mutually supportive relationships and interactions among teachers ultimately are supportive and engaging for students.</p> <p>Team planning time should focus on lesson plans, student progress, problems, and the integration across subjects of a central theme to solidify learning for students.</p> <div>To help you think about developing a strategy to include teacher planning time during the school day, answer the questions in Resource E: Planning Time Thought Questions.</div>



## **Guidance Resources**

Resource A: Leadership Team Template

Resource B: Response to Intervention Thought Questions

Resource C: Talking Points for Teacher and Staff Informational Meeting

Resource D: Four-Step Data-Use Process

Resource E: Planning Time Thought Questions

Resource F: References

### Resource A: Leadership Team Template

Leadership team member name	Reason for selection to leadership team	Current position	Current leadership responsibilities	Leadership team responsibilities

## **Resource B: Response to Intervention Thought Questions**

Some questions to consider about the response to intervention (RTI) framework:

- What school-level resources and supports promote RTI implementation?
- What district support and resources for RTI implementation are available?
- What resources not currently available will be needed for implementation of RTI?
- How will you emphasize the use of student and classroom data (allot time, provide professional development, etc.)?
- How will you empower staff to lead implementation of RTI practices with fidelity?
- What goals do you want to achieve and how do you think RTI will help you achieve them?
- How will RTI help you to promote the learning goals of your students?
- Who will be responsible for the documentation of your RTI practices and processes, so that your process can be clearly communicated and followed?

## Resource C: Talking Points for Teacher and Staff Informational Meeting

Below are several talking points to highlight when discussing implementation of principles and practices in the Middle School Matters Field Guide with your teachers and school staff members.

- We completed an **online readiness assessment** to ensure that we are capable of implementing this program before we invest the time and effort.
- The Middle School Matters Research Platform is grounded in **research-based evidence** and reflects the most rigorous evidence to date across the included content dimensions.
- The **nation's leading educational researchers** created the Middle School Matters Research Platform.
- The Middle School Matters Field Guide includes **thought-provoking questions** to more fully understand the research-based practices at our school.
- The Middle School Matters Field Guide includes tools to help us **benchmark** the recommended **practices we already implement**.
- The **principles and practices** in the Middle School Matters Field Guide do not make up a curriculum. Instead, they **build on the professional knowledge and expertise** that our teachers already bring to the table.

## Resource D: Four-Step Data Use Process

1. Begin by reviewing the Performance Management content dimension of the Middle School Matters Field Guide. (If you do not have a data management system in place, continue reading Step 1 below. If you do have a system in place, continue to Step 2.)

Often, data management systems are purchased and maintained at the district level.

Inquire with your district whether purchased tools are in use at other schools.

- If so, visit the schools to learn about the tools and determine whether your school would benefit from using one or more of the tools.
- If not, offer to be a pilot school to test such tools for your district.

2. Once a system is in place at your school, determine who will use the data in your school and how they will use the data.

Begin by investigating whether individuals in your school currently explore and analyze data related to attendance, grades, formative assessment, discipline, and other indicators of student performance and engagement.

- Is anyone looking into this type of data at your school?
- If so, who?
- How have they been collecting such information?

3. Document the results of your inquiry.

If data analysis is not part of decision-making at your school, consider the following:

- Who is in the best position to lead this effort?
- What time during the school day could be used to investigate the data?
- Are particular teachers or staff members interested in leading investigations of student data?

4. Begin to develop process documentation.

Include the following:

- How data should be used in your school
- How data use can become integral to teaching and learning at your school

## **Resource E: Planning Time Thought Questions**

- General questions concerning the availability of planning time:
  - Could alternating times across the school day be reserved for individual planning, so that grade-level teachers could take care of administrative work with parents, teachers, and students?
  - How can your school emphasize to teachers the importance of such planning time?
- Team planning questions:
  - Which teachers have mostly the same students throughout the day?
  - Could a time (20–30 minutes) be identified for these teachers to share information to support their shared students?
  - Could these teachers align central themes or issues across content areas to enrich student learning?

## Resource F: References

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