Self-Assessment: School Climate, Culture, and Partnerships

Middle School Matters Institute
An initiative of the George W. Bush Institute in partnership with
The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk

ABOUT THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Before developing specific implementation goals, educators must take stock of which research-based practices are already in place and which practices are lacking or need improvement. This template guides users through a self-reflection process for **school climate, culture, and partnerships** practices implemented school wide. Users should follow these steps for **each principle**.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Convene a Middle School Matters Leadership team and set aside 1-2 hours for the self-assessment.

Step 2: Gather all available data (see page 4).

Step 3: Assess current instructional practices, using data gathered in step 2, and indicate which instructional traits are implemented: a) consistently, b) inconsistently, or c) not at all.

Consult the MSM Field Guide for more information:

https://greatmiddleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/4b_FieldGuide_SchoolClimate.pdf

Step 4: Summarize assessment results and determine the level of implementation according to the rubric (adapted from Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005).

1. **No Implementation:** No evidence of implementation.

2. **Exploration:** Willingness to implement, but little to no evidence of actual implementation. May be in planning stage.

3. **Initial Implementation:** Evidence indicates that implementation has begun but is largely inconsistent.

4. **Full Implementation:** Strong evidence of implementation of all or most of the traits and practices.

5. **Sustainability:** Strong evidence of implementation with processes in place for continued implementation in the future.

NEXT STEPS: GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLANNING

After conducting this self-assessment, select a few key principles to focus on for the upcoming school year. Using the MSMI Action Plan Template (https://greatmiddleschools.org/msmi-implementation-and-action-plan-templates/), develop measurable goals with specific action steps and deadlines for each chosen principle.

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Date: _____ School _____ District _____

Participating team members: _____

SOURCES OF DATA:

STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA

- ☐ Attendance data
- ☐ Classroom behavior data
- ☐ Discipline referral data
- ☐ Course passing rates for ELA, math, science, and social studies
- ☐ Grade retention data

PROGRAM DATA

- ☐ School vision, mission, and goals
- ☐ Common planning time structures and sample agendas
- ☐ Staff meeting attendance records and agendas
- ☐ Leadership team meeting attendance records and agendas
- ☐ Positive behavior interventions and supports
- ☐ Records/samples of school wide parent communication
- ☐ Documentation of partnerships with community-based programs

SURVEY DATA

- ☐ Staff survey instruments and data
- ☐ Student survey instruments and data
- ☐ Parent survey instruments and data

Principle 1: Create a *can do* school culture marked by a shared mission among the staff members that centers on academic achievement and a shared belief that they can collectively enable students to succeed.

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 1: Organize the school around teams of teachers working collectively with a common set of students that is stable and of a manageable number.
☐	☐	☐	a) Teams of teachers share a common, manageable group of students.
☐	☐	☐	b) Teams are provided with a common work time. Expectations are clear for the use of this time.
☐	☐	☐	c) Teachers receive training on how to work as a team and gain access to information on effective practices.
☐	☐	☐	d) Teams are empowered to analyze student achievement data. Mechanisms are in place for teachers to acquire additional supports for students.
Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 2: Establish a distributive leadership structure so that all key stakeholders are involved in school decision making and committed to do what it takes to raise student achievement, with time and effort invested in mission building among the staff.
☐	☐	☐	a) Principals empower teams by establishing clear parameters under which they can exercise authority (e.g., establishing incentive systems for students, scheduling peer-based observations).
☐	☐	☐	b) One teacher serves as the team leader who is responsible for organizing and facilitating teacher team meetings and serving on school wide leadership committees.
☐	☐	☐	c) Principals hold team leaders and their teams accountable for productive and focused collaborative work and gains in student achievement.

Principle 1: Create a *can do* school culture marked by a shared mission among the staff members that centers on academic achievement and a shared belief that they can collectively enable students to succeed.

Insert Total	Insert Total	Insert Total	Current Level of Implementation
_____	_____	_____	☐ Level 1: No Implementation
			☐ Level 2: Exploration
			☐ Level 3: Initial Implementation
			☐ Level 4: Full Implementation
			☐ Level 5: Sustainability

			Principle 2: Create a school environment in which mutually supportive relationships between students, teachers, and parents can develop.
Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	**Practice 1: Use surveys to gather information on school climate and culture.**
☐	☐	☐	a) The school uses a validated instrument to annually survey students, teachers, and parents about their views on the school climate and culture, their sense of belonging, and the effort they put forth.
Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	**Practice 2: Use teams of parents, teachers, administrators, and students to analyze survey data and to create and implement action plans based on the needs the survey identified.**
☐	☐	☐	a) Teams of parents, students, teachers, and administrators use survey data to create annual goals and action plans focused on improving student-teacher-family relationships.
Insert Total	Insert Total	Insert Total	**Current Level of Implementation**
_____	_____	_____	☐ Level 1: No Implementation ☐ Level 2: Exploration ☐ Level 3: Initial Implementation ☐ Level 4: Full Implementation ☐ Level 5: Sustainability

Principle 3: Engage in school wide efforts to increase student attendance, promote positive behaviors, and increase student efforts (where needed).

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 1: Measure and analyze data on chronic absenteeism, suspensions, and sustained mild misbehavior.

☐	☐	☐	a) The school leadership team and teachers analyze attendance data at the grade and classroom levels disaggregated by three specific groups:
			    1. Students who attend nearly every day
			    2. Students missing 10%–19% of school days
			    3. Students missing 20% or more of school days

☐	☐	☐	b) The school leadership team and teachers analyze discipline data at the grade and classroom levels disaggregated by three specific groups:
			    1. Sustained mild misbehavior
			    2. Office referrals
			    3. In-school and out-of-school suspensions

☐	☐	☐	c) The school leadership team and teachers identify patterns and trends and create action plans accordingly.
Consistently	**Inconsistently**	**Not at All**	**Practice 2: When chronic absenteeism and student misbehavior are at significant levels, implement evidence-based, whole-school strategies to prevent and reduce these behaviors.**
☐	☐	☐	a) There is a school wide, common expectation for what defines good attendance and appropriate behavior.
☐	☐	☐	b) Students who exhibit good attendance and behavior are publicly recognized.
☐	☐	☐	c) There is a consistent response to poor attendance and behavior.
☐	☐	☐	d) Teachers and staff reach out to students with poor attendance to let them know they are missed, learn more about why they are absent, and help them solve any challenges.
☐	☐	☐	e) Good attendance is recognized on an individual and class level.

Principle 3: Engage in school wide efforts to increase student attendance, promote positive behaviors, and increase student efforts (where needed).

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 2: When chronic absenteeism and student misbehavior are at significant levels, implement evidence-based, whole-school strategies to prevent and reduce these behaviors.
☐	☐	☐	f) Students are provided an opportunity to make up missed assignments.
☐	☐	☐	g) Students are surveyed about their reasons for missing school, any concerns they may have about school safety, and their level of engagement in school.
☐	☐	☐	h) Teachers and staff identify clusters of students that have more negative feelings about their experience at school than other students to problem solve issues that may be specific to their experiences as a group.
Insert Total	Insert Total	Insert Total	**Current Level of Implementation**
_____	_____	_____	☐ Level 1: No Implementation ☐ Level 2: Exploration ☐ Level 3: Initial Implementation ☐ Level 4: Full Implementation ☐ Level 5: Sustainability

Principle 4: Focus the school-family partnership on communicating to students the importance of high academic and educational aspirations and showing the steps that need to be taken to actualize these aspirations.

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 1: Provide parents, supportive adults, and students with information on the important role the middle grades play in high school readiness, high school graduation, and postsecondary success.
☐	☐	☐	a) Parents, supportive adults, and students are informed through multiple channels about start-of-year meetings, report card conferences, and similar school events.
☐	☐	☐	b) The school provides parents, supportive adults, and students with information on the important role of the middle grades in high school readiness, graduation, and postsecondary success early and often.
☐	☐	☐	c) The school emphasizes the importance of attendance, behavior, and good work habits in the middle grades to prepare for the future.
Consistently	**Inconsistently**	**Not at All**	**Practice 2: Create and provide parents and students with ready access to high school readiness benchmarks.**
☐	☐	☐	a) The school provides parents, supportive adults, and students with a set of easy-to-understand benchmarks for high school readiness. For example: 1. Missing 5 or fewer days in a year 2. Maintaining a B or better course average 3. Engaging in positive academic and social behaviors
☐	☐	☐	b) The school informs parents and students when students are off track for high school readiness. For example: 1. Missing 20 or more days in a year 2. Failing core courses 3. Exhibiting sustained misbehavior
☐	☐	☐	c) The school provides parents, supportive adults, and students with tips for improvement related to the benchmarks for high school readiness.

Principle 4: Focus the school-family partnership on communicating to students the importance of high academic and educational aspirations and showing the steps that need to be taken to actualize these aspirations.

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 3: Make adult participation a critical part of your process.
☐	☐	☐	a) The school has a system to foster parental and supportive adult participation that recognizes their interests and accommodates real-world constraints.
☐	☐	☐	b) Action teams are formed—comprised of parents, teachers, school leadership, students and community members—to identify key needs that can be enhanced through parental and/or community involvement.
☐	☐	☐	c) Team members develop action plans based on evidence-based practice, distribute roles and responsibilities for implementation, and meet regularly to review progress and adjust actions.
Insert Total	Insert Total	Insert Total	Current Level of Implementation
_____	_____	_____	☐ Level 1: No Implementation ☐ Level 2: Exploration ☐ Level 3: Initial Implementation ☐ Level 4: Full Implementation ☐ Level 5: Sustainability

Principle 5: Conduct student-need and asset analyses and select community partners and support based on student need. Design and manage a plan to link community supports to success in school and use common metrics to gauge their impact.

Consistently	Inconsistently	Not at All	Practice 1: Create and maintain on-site, in-school coordination and monitoring of community support programs.
☐	☐	☐	a) The school has on-site, in-school coordination of community support programs.
☐	☐	☐	b) The programs are selected based on an analysis of student needs.
☐	☐	☐	c) Students are accurately matched with the right support program and at the right level of intensity.
☐	☐	☐	d) The school closely monitors and evaluates these programs for student participation and outcomes.
☐	☐	☐	e) All partners align their outcome measures against a common set of metrics linked to student success in school.
Insert Total	Insert Total	Insert Total	**Current Level of Implementation**
_____	_____	_____	☐ Level 1: No Implementation ☐ Level 2: Exploration ☐ Level 3: Initial Implementation ☐ Level 4: Full Implementation ☐ Level 5: Sustainability