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## **Section 3: Focusing on Reporting**

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## SECTION 3: FOCUSING ON REPORTING

### Content Issues and Timelines



We need to identify what we are striving to achieve before deciding how to measure whether we are achieving it.



1. *Improving outcomes, especially for less successful learners*
2. *Strengthening links among schools, families, and communities*
3. *Strengthening school planning and reporting*
4. *Improving professional learning opportunities for educators*
5. *Strengthening pathways among secondary schools, post-secondary education, and work*
6. *Linking policy and practice to research and evidence*

Manitoba Education,  
Citizenship and Youth  
(2002-2006)

### Drafting the School Plan

A Comprehensive School Plan includes the following (see sample table of contents, Section 1, page 1.6):

- **A school mission statement:** a general description of purpose that reflects a school community's educational values and beliefs. As the foundation of the School Plan, it serves to focus and guide school initiatives. A school's mission statement reflects the school division's or district's mission statement, if one exists.
- **School profile:** statements that identify the unique characteristics of the school, such as population, grade levels, programs, and geographic or demographic details.
- **School priorities:** statements that identify areas requiring further development, improvement, or change during the school year. They are broad outcomes statements that specify what the school intends to achieve in areas such as curriculum, instruction, learning environment, and school conduct. These are linked to published departmental priorities available online at [www.edu.gov.mb/strategy.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb/strategy.html).

As priorities form the basis for major school initiatives over the year, they should be kept to a manageable number. Priorities require a common meaning, communicating the same intended outcome to everyone. They should be mutually compatible and attainable.

Schools receiving categorical grants for unique student populations also state major goals for these populations (e.g., English as a Second Language, Student Support Grants Program, Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant, Early Childhood Development Initiative, and Grants for French Language Programs).

- **Outcomes:** These are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant products or processes that are time-related (SMART). Outcomes link directly to the priorities and strategies.
- **Strategies for creating a supportive learning environment:** These make up an outline of how the school plans to accomplish outcomes and address school goals (e.g., activities, instructional practices, practices for evaluating and reporting student achievement, and strategies for eliminating bias and discrimination).
- **Professional development activities:** These are collected in a summary of plans for major professional development activities to help achieve specified goals.
- **Parental and community involvement initiatives:** These are included in a summary of major activities that are being undertaken to involve parents and the community in the education process.
- A summary of the school's budget.
- Detailed outcome information relating to the implementation of the previous year's plan.

The previous items represent the minimum requirements for a Comprehensive School Plan. A school community, however, may choose to incorporate additional issues of local importance in its plan. Appendix A lists additional, significant issues that some Manitoba schools have addressed in their plans (see page A3).

By comparison, the minimum requirements for an Annual School Plan are

- school mission statement
- school profile
- planning process
- division/district priorities
- school priorities for the current year
- results of expected outcomes from the previous year
- outcomes for the current year, including strategies, indicators, and supportive data sources

### Language of Planning

It is important to clarify the vocabulary related to planning as early in the process as possible so that people involved in planning have a clear and common understanding about their use of planning language.

All levels of the education system rely on planning to organize and structure activities. Some planners use certain words differently than others or use them in a different context. To address the need for a common understanding of language, a glossary of commonly used terms is included in Appendix B (page A5).

Recognize that agreement related to language use is often a challenge. People may use the same word in different contexts to mean different things or different words in the same context to mean the same thing. The glossary reflects a common reference point. Adding terminology common to a division or school may assist planners in clarifying key issues.



### Case Study: Golden Prairie School



**June 2:** The Planning Committee assisted Principal Miller in collating and structuring the Annual School Plan for the upcoming year. The professional development plans for the new year, the parental and community initiatives, and the strategies for creating a supportive learning environment were linked and added to the May information.

*Focus: Drafting the School Plan*

A subgroup was assigned the task of proofreading and editing the plan and the report that summarizes key elements of the plan.

Detailed information regarding the implementation of last year's plan was added by the principal.

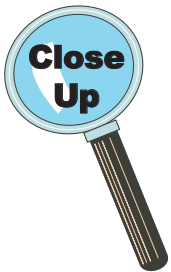
## Sharing the Draft Plan and Finalizing the Plan



Once the draft School Plan has been reviewed by the planning team, presentation of the draft to a pre-selected range of staff and community members for feedback is critical. The following guidelines for an effective draft document review process may assist planning teams in obtaining helpful feedback in an organized manner.

1. Pre-select diverse members of staff and the community who are willing to act as reviewers.
2. Inform reviewers of important guidelines:
  - a) Timelines for the distribution of the draft and the return of the draft are final. No late reviews will be considered.
  - b) Reviewers' feedback will be considered in the writing of the final version of the document.
  - c) Complete revisions are not possible.
  - d) Feedback must be focused on clarity of expression for each component of the plan.

Once feedback has been reviewed and edits have been made by a subcommittee of the planning team, the School Plan should be considered final. Key elements of the plan should be highlighted in preparation for the annual School Planning Report.



### Case Study: Golden Prairie School



The draft Annual School Plan was distributed to all teaching staff and two community members in June for their feedback. A subcommittee was struck to collate the feedback, edit the plan, and summarize key elements for the School Planning Report within a two-week time frame.

*Focus: Sharing the Draft Plan and Finalizing the Plan*

The subcommittee submitted the final School Plan to Principal Miller with the highlights in preparation for the School Planning Report.

## Forming an Implementation Plan

*Tip:* The most efficient implementation strategy is to create an action plan indicating the tasks that need to be accomplished, by whom, and when.

## Focusing on Plan Implementation

This process is parallel to the planning cycle of: effective classroom teachers as they differentiate instruction; resource teachers as they monitor progress on Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Intervention Plans; and student services personnel as they co-ordinate support for students at risk. By transferring these skills to the school planning process and linking school-level outcomes to those at the individual, classroom, and division/district level, the ability of the education system to respond to change is strengthened.

Once priorities and outcomes have been established, it is critical to obtain plan approval.

If school staff, students, parents, community members, and divisional/district representatives have been continually involved in or informed throughout the planning process, then the presentation of a draft of the completed School Plan should contain no surprises. Special meetings held with the school community to present the draft and receive feedback assist in promoting the ownership and support that are critical to successful implementation. Only initiatives that have a broad base of support are likely to be implemented and sustained. Approval of the School Plan by the school community and, subsequently, the school board signifies a transition from planning to implementation of the plan.

Once the School Plan has been approved, a well-designed action plan initiates the activities to implement specified priorities and outcomes. Subcommittees may be established to develop an implementation plan with appropriate strategies for accomplishing priorities. Invite staff, parents, and community members who will carry out initiatives to participate in planning those initiatives.

An implementation plan (sometimes referred to as an action plan) identifies the specific tasks to be accomplished, the criteria or means by which the accomplishment of tasks is to be measured or observed, the resources necessary to accomplish the tasks, and the person(s) responsible for achieving each task.

## Further Reading

Barth, R.S. *Improving Schools from Within*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

Fullan, Michael. *Change Forces: The Sequel*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press, 1999.

Sergiovanni, Thomas I. *The Lifeworld of Leadership: Creating Culture, Community and Personal Meaning in Our Schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000.