

Comprehensive Planning Process

The Comprehensive Planning (CP) process contains six sections. Those sections are Profile, Core Foundations, Assurances, Needs Assessment, Action Planning and Plan Submission. CP is a continuous process used to ensure that all students are achieving at high levels. All LEAs can create better environments so that more students are successful. Continuous planning of Local Educational Agencies is essential to providing increased student performance and quality results. Innovative, exemplary, and research-based programs, coupled with staff development, focused and aligned resources, and public participation in planning, are critical factors in districts that demonstrate continuous growth.

High performing LEAs with varied demographic conditions have shown they share common characteristics. These nine characteristics are strongly correlated to consistently high performing educational institutions. As planning teams go through the CP process, they will look for the presence of these characteristics. The characteristics are:

Clear and Shared Focus

Everybody knows where they are going and why. The vision is shared—everybody is involved and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The vision is developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent focus.

High Standards and Expectations

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and that they can teach all students. There is recognition of barriers for some students to overcome, but the barriers are not insurmountable. Students become engaged in an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Effective Leadership

Effective leadership is required to implement change processes within the district. This leadership takes many forms. Principals often play this role, but so do teachers and other staff, including those in the district office. Effective leaders advocate, nurture, and sustain a culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is constant collaboration and communication between and among teachers of all grades. Everybody is involved and connected, including parents and members of the community, to solve problems and create solutions.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards

Curriculum is aligned with local, state and national standards. Research-based materials and teaching and learning strategies are implemented. There is a clear understanding of the assessment system, what is measured in various assessments and how it is measured.

Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning are continually adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessment are used to improve student performances and also to improve the instructional program.

Focused Professional Development

Professional development for all educators is aligned with the district's common focus, objectives, and high expectations. It is ongoing and based on high need areas.

Supportive Learning Environment

The district has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff, and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

High Levels of Community and Parent Involvement

There is a sense that all educational stakeholders have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in districts. Parents, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

The following key principles form the basis for the Comprehensive Planning Process:

- The superintendent/CEO must be at the helm of this process—without support and leadership of the superintendent/CEO the planning process lacks the leverage that is needed for change to occur in a learner environment.
- Key members of the staff, and representatives of as many other stakeholder groups as possible, should participate and/or be aware of the planning process. The more of the community that is “in the loop,” the better the chances the district will achieve 100% “buy-in” by the entire community.
- A representative group of stakeholders can do the bulk of the work if results and updates are reported back on a regular basis to the full planning team and other stakeholders; especially as critical decision points are reached.
- Decisions about CP goals and solutions must be based on careful consideration of multiple sources of data and research.
- Comprehensive planning is a journey of continuous planning that demands ongoing monitoring and adjustment of programs and processes.
- Comprehensive planning in student outcomes is directly related to what happens in the classroom. Teachers must be willing to be reflective about their practice and relentless in attempts to meet the needs of every student.
- The written plan document is only as good as the quality of thought, effort, and the degree of “buy in” by staff.