CHAPTER 7
Interpreting and Using Data

During the needs assessment process, your team may spend a considerable amount of time gathering information and data about your school's current policies and procedures, needs, and strengths, as perceived by the school’s faculty, students, and parents. As the process of information gathering is completed, the team will begin to compile the information to formulate an SRS Plan, guided by a strategic planning process. This process provides your team with a framework for developing a plan tailored to your school's identified needs. A “Strategic Planning Outline” can be found in the Tools section at the end of this Guide.

This chapter will assist your team in drawing conclusions related to the data for your school, and then prioritizing them. The next chapter will address ways to scan for effective practices which might address the areas identified for improvement. Finally, these will be incorporated into a plan which takes into account available resources as well as identified needs.

Before proceeding, it may be helpful to have in mind a planning process.

Steps in the Strategic Planning Process

There are five steps in a strategic planning process leading to the development of an SRS Plan.

1. *Identifying the Focus.* A brief statement of the topics that the team wishes to address— one at each of the three levels of action.

2. *Brainstorming Strategies.* Use data, as well as a scan of promising practices, programs to identify possible action steps at each level.
3. **Selecting Plan Components.** Prioritize potential action steps within each level, and match them to available resources. Identify which actions will be implemented, and how that will happen.

4. **Developing Details of Implementation.** Develop a time line and identify responsibility for the implementation steps necessary to put the plan in place.

5. **Documenting Plan Effects.** Define what changes would be expected, and how they would be measured if the plan is implemented.

This chapter will assist the team with the first of these steps, “Identifying the Focus”.

### What is a focus statement?

Based on consideration of all the data, the team will shape their school’s primary needs into a focus statement. While the vision statement acts as an overarching statement of desired outcomes, the focus statements help the team to identify a course of action. In order to develop a focus statement it will be important for the team to closely examine all of the data it has gathered, and to use that data to draw conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of programming in this school at each level of action in the SRS Framework. There should be at least one focus statement for each of the three levels of action in the SRS Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Focus Statements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We will create a climate of civility that involves every aspect of the school day.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Creating a positive climate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We need to promote conflict de-escalation strategies for all students and staff in order to diminish arguments and verbal aggression in students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Creating a positive climate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We need to add more alternative consequences to our student discipline plan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Early Identification and Intervention/Effective Responses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We need to provide academic supports to students who are struggling.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Early identification and Intervention)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We need to develop better communication between agencies such as police, social services, parole/ probation which serve our students with chronic behavior problems.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Effective responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We need to review and update our crisis planning, and provide practice or drills which will test and permit improvements in the plan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Effective responses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The focus statements should be as brief, direct and clear as possible, but should include enough information so that the team’s intentions are clear and unambiguous. They should be worded in such a way that the outcomes of the statements for the school are identified.

**How do we use our data to establish a focus for our efforts?**

At this point, the team might use the “Planning Data Availability Worksheet” to systematically examine all of the data the team has gathered and reviewed. In guiding the team through the process of identifying a focus, the facilitator may ask the team to consider a number of questions:

- What are the elements of strengths that are already in place in our school?
- What are the most important concerns that have emerged from our needs assessment?
- What area or areas, if the school could get them under control or if given attention, would most improve school safety or climate?
- Can we prioritize these concerns in terms of:
  - Importance: Relative strength of the concern as expressed by the school community, and as reflected in team discussion?
  - Feasibility: Are there some issues that the team/school can address more effectively than others?
- If implemented will these focus statements permit us to achieve our vision?

**How do we interpret the data?**

The facilitator leads the team through an exploration of the each of the types of data that the team has gathered. The data will provide important information about areas of strength and need for their school. Although it is impossible to explain in detail the various ways the team might examine and address its data, some suggestions for looking at the data might be helpful. In examining the data, teams should note:
• **Individual types of data that the team feels are particularly significant.**
  The team may find certain types of data (for example the absence data, safety survey data or office referral data) as particularly significant. These might be noted, with discussion about why they seem significant. What do these most significant or important types of data tell the team?

• **Within a particular type of data, what are the significant elements?**
  Many of the types of data the team has gathered may have many pieces or elements, and many ways to be displayed. Within these larger data sets, which parts seem most significant? On the SRS Safety Survey or other available survey data, it may be useful to look at scale means. Often this data is most valuable, not as an estimate of how our school compares to other school, but in identifying relative areas of strength and weakness. For example, the mean rating on the Personal Safety Scale may be relatively high (indicating little concern or problem), but the mean score on the Incivility/Disruption Scale might be substantially lower, indicating a relative area of weakness. Or, for example in office referral data, the types or locations of incidents may be the most salient feature.

• **Important trends in the data.** What generalizations can we make about changes through time in the pattern of responses? For example, some of the pilot schools observed that, even though respondents felt that their schools were safe in general, mean scores on the Sense of Belongingness Scale in their school system decreased consistently from 3rd grade through 12th grade. As a result, the middle and high school teams in that system included a focus on increasing belongingness as a key component in their plan. Another school that has tracked office referral data might notice that the overall number of referrals for insubordination has decreased over the past year, while other types of behavior have increased or stayed the same. These data lead to questions about what may be the causes of these changes through time, and how they might be influenced positively by the implementation of SRS plans.
• **Discrepancies between student, staff and parent perceptions.**

   It should not be surprising that students, staff, and parents will have differing perspectives on the safety and climate of their school, and where such data is available (such as on safety or climate surveys) may provide useful information to a team as they move through the strategic planning process. For example, one of the pilot schools found that 91.8% of staff indicated that teachers care about student learning, whereas only 42% of students and 44.8% of parents agreed with this statement. Such results may motivate a team to consider programs to improve school climate as well as communication. In this case, the team concluded that they had no reason to doubt teacher caring, but needed to find ways to more effectively communicate caring to students at the school.

• **Important themes in the data.** What generalizations can we make about the pattern of responses? For example, some of the pilot schools observed

   Once all of the data has been reviewed by the team and any salient features identified, it is now the time to summarize both the strengths and weaknesses which have been perceived related to each level of the SRS framework. Much like a summary of data on an individual student, the data can be summarized in a brief report, with a series of focus statements at each level identified.

   Once the summary of the data and the related focus statements are completed, the team can begin to prioritize the focus statements at each level, attempting to identify the one or two which the team feels deserve highest priority.

   The outcome of this activity will be a written document which summarizes the data examined, calling attention to the elements of the data which the team thought were important, and a series of prioritized focus statement at each of the three levels of intervention in the SRS Framework.
Communicate Focus Statements

Once drafted the team might also communicate the focus statements with faculty, staff, parents and students to determine if they agree about the perceived priorities for improvement. This can be done formally or informally.

Role of the Facilitator in Strategic Planning

The facilitator leads the team through a process of summarizing the data, identifying the school’s strengths and needs, and developing strategies to address those needs. During the process, the facilitator encourages the team to utilize all available sources of data. Using all the data will help ensure that the SRS team has a clear understanding of the school’s needs.

Scheduling and Timekeeping. Translating the results of the needs assessment into a school plan is an intensive process. Some schools may wish to experiment with different scheduling alternatives to allow themselves more uninterrupted time for this part of the process. Some of the pilot schools, for example, chose to replace several shorter meetings with half-day and whole day workshops in order to complete the strategic planning process.

With a limited amount of time to complete the strategic planning process, it is both important and challenging to stay on track. Faced with complex issues and a variety of opinions on how to address those issues, it is inevitable that teams occasionally get sidetracked and have difficulty refocusing. When discussion seems to get bogged down in irrelevant (or even relevant) details, it will be important for the facilitator to redirect the conversation back to the task at hand. The facilitator might pose questions such as:

- Where are we in the process? What are we trying to accomplish at this point?
- Are the details that seem to be bogging the discussion down really critical to decide at this point? Can we make a general decision and come back to these details later?
- Even if we do need a decision, will moving on to another task allow us to return to this issue with a fresher perspective?
• Is there any way we can come to consensus on this?”

While it is sometimes difficult to enforce time management issues, in the end the team will feel better about its functioning if it can complete its activities and come to closure in the time allotted.
SUMMARY CHAPTER 7 - INTERPRETING AND USING DATA

Purpose
- To develop an overall summary of the data for this school, identifying the pieces of data that the team feels are most significant.
- To develop a series of focus statements at each of the three levels of intervention of the SRS Framework that identifies and responds to the school’s most critical needs at each level.
- To establish a framework that can be used by the team as a guide for selecting intervention strategies for the SRS Plan.

Materials
- Copies for all team members of the SRS Vision and Mission Statements.
- Copies of Strategic Planning Outline (See Tools).
- A copy of the completed Planning Data Availability Worksheet (Tools).
- Copies for all team members of all pertinent data gathered at this school.

Procedure
Facilitator uses worksheets to guide team through a process to:
- Review all available data.
  > Identify significant data
  > Identify school’s strengths and weaknesses
  > Identify trends through time where possible
  > Look for important themes.
  > Note discrepancies between student, staff, and parent perceptions.
  > Identifying school’s needs.
- Create a series of focus statements identifying the most critical need to be addressed at each level of the SRS Framework. The focus statement serves as a guide in selecting the most appropriate practices, strategies and interventions.
- Communicate these with faculty, staff and parents to ensure validity.

Time
- Teams can expect to spend 1-3 hours working on this activity, or more depending on the amount of data available.
Overview

The most widely used responses to problems of school discipline and school violence have not always been shown to be effective. In order to increase the probability of choosing the best options it is important to gain at least a basic understanding of those strategies, programs, and interventions which have been found to be effective in preventing school violence and improving student behavior in various schools. It is also important to know about commonly used strategies, and the degree to which research supports or does not support their effectiveness. Understanding the range of ideas other have tried greatly increases the options available to the team in considering ideas for a school to improve behavior and safety. The purpose of this chapter is to identify how school teams may review practices and programs which might be available or described in the literature, and which may address the needs identified in the focus statements created in the preceding chapter.

Why review promising practices?

Knowledge that a practice has been shown by research to be effective does not guarantee that a given intervention will work in a specific school or community. Many factors will affect the effectiveness of a particular intervention, such as the degree to which it has been faithfully and completely implemented, whether the circumstances in your school are similar to the ones where the research was conducted, etc. However, knowing that an intervention has been shown to be effective in at least some circumstances makes it much more likely that it will also be effective in your school.
Just as importantly, knowing about best practices provides a starting place for the school’s efforts and may help keep the team from “reinventing the wheel.”

Effective practices provide team members with an overview of empirically supported practices in the area of violence prevention. Although some of the strategies may be familiar, others may be new to team members. In addition to providing a knowledge base for team members, the fact sheets provide ideas for the strategic planning process. Teams can utilize their knowledge to design or select programs that will best address their school’s needs.

**What are “evidence based” practices?**

Knowledge that a practice has been shown by research …..

In the team meetings set aside for reviewing effective practices, the team will select a number of strategies to review, based upon what team members feel may be most relevant to the needs of their school. Materials pertaining to those strategies will be shared, and discussion will focus on whether and how each particular strategy could work at this school.

**What is the Safe & Responsive Schools Resource Guide?**

The Safe & Responsive Schools Resource Guide contains an outline of many of the topics that have been identified across schools as being potentially important to promoting positive behavior, and preventing violence in schools. Sheets, as well as other resources pertinent to the topics a set of relevant articles, Power Point Presentations, and a Resource list. Each module provides an overview of the research in a specific area, as well as additional resources that the team can use to learn more about the topic or specific programs. Best Practices Modules address Bullying Prevention, Peer Mediation, Character Education, Mentoring, Anger Management, Using Early Warning Signs, Parent Involvement, and Conflict Resolution. The Best Practices Modules can be found in Section III.*
What are the Safe & Responsive Schools Fact Sheets?

The SRS Fact Sheets, contained within each module, are summations of the research concerning various interventions, strategies or programs that have been identified as being potentially valuable to schools. The topics address prominent strategies which are potentially important components of a school plan to address prevent violence or reduce inappropriate behavior. The fact sheet topics are categorized according to the three levels of action in the SRS Framework, although some may in fact have components which cut across levels. Many of these have evidence to support their effectiveness; others have These interventions, strategies or programs shown to be effective in addressing issues of school violence and school discipline. Each fact sheet provides an overview of a particular violence prevention strategy (e.g., peer mediation, mentoring), a very brief summary of the research about the effectiveness of the strategy, and some brief indications of the steps that might be necessary to implement this strategy.

How Should We Use the SRS Fact Sheets?

When developing their school plan, teams can use the SRS Fact Sheets and related reference materials to research interventions or strategies that they may wish to implement in their school. The team may choose to review as many fact sheets and articles as they wish, but should at a minimum review several from each of the three levels of intervention: Creating a Positive Climate, Early Identification and Intervention, and Effective Responses.

Using the results from the data analysis and the focus statements created in the last chapter, the team may be able to prioritize its discussion around practices and programs which address those focus statements. This step is important in part because there may not be time to cover all topic equally thoroughly. Just as importantly, not all of the fact sheets in the Guide will pertain to the needs of the team’s school. For
instance, a school with a well-established and effective peer mediation program would probably not want to spend time discussing the Peer Mediation fact sheet.

**Should each team member read every fact sheet and article?**

If possible, it is ideal for each team member to read the selected fact sheets. However, an alternate and more time-efficient strategy is for each selected fact sheet to be assigned to one or more team members for prior review. That individual or individuals will then be responsible for reading the materials in the module and doing any other outside research (e.g. reviewing websites) they wish to do on the topic. For example, the team member(s) responsible for the Bullying Prevention module might look at the information on Bullying prevention provided in the Guide, visit a few websites, and perhaps contact a school in the area that has already implemented a Bullying Prevention program to get information on that school’s experience with the program. Then, the team member(s) will bring back what they have learned to a team meeting for discussion. The team should plan to spend about 30 minutes discussing each module.

**Other Resources: Evidence-Based Strategies for Violence Prevention**

The fact sheets represent examples of best practices in violence prevention, strategies that have proven successful in other schools in reducing violence and disruption and teaching students alternatives to violence for solving problems. The team may feel, however, that it needs to consider a broader range of options as possible components of its school plan.

Thus, the resources for Best Practices Review also include a section from the recently released report by the U. S. Surgeon General, *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General*. The report in its entirety can be viewed on or downloaded from the world-wide web at [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/report.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/report.html) or ordered from the Surgeon General’s office by faxing in the order form included in the resource packet.
In the Best Practices Resource section, we have reprinted one section of Chapter 5 of the Surgeon General’s report, and Appendix 5-B, providing descriptions found by the Surgeon General’s office to be exemplary, evidence-based programs. If the team wishes to consider these strategies, the facilitator or one of the team members should print out Appendix 5 of the report:

www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter5/appendix5b.html

and bring copies for all team members. Note that the appendix is comprised of four sections (Model Programs: Violence Prevention, Model Programs: Risk Prevention, Promising Programs: Violence Prevention and Promising Programs: Risk Prevention) and is approximately 28 pages long. Given the length of the material, it will probably be most efficient to distribute this material one to two meetings prior to the meeting at which the team wishes to consider it.

Matching Strategies to Identified Needs?

As the team considers the Safe and Responsive Schools modules and/or the evidence-based strategies in the Surgeon General’s report, it is important to evaluate each possible strategy as to its usefulness and feasibility for one’s own school. Regardless of how well an intervention has worked elsewhere, it simply may not be a good match for the particular circumstance of this school at this time. Thus, in considering best practices, the team will engage in a discussion about each strategy they have chosen to consider.

*The following questions can be used to guide the group discussion:*

- How does the team feel about the approach?
- Has anyone had personal experience with it? Has it been tried at our school?
- Is this something that might work at our school?
- What considerations would be most important if we were to choose to do this at our school?
- Does anyone want to get us more information on this topic?
Best practices review is scheduled across two meetings. The team should plan to spend about 30 minutes reviewing each module. If the team elects to consider evidence-based strategies from the Surgeon General’s report, the team may wish to take one or more blocks of thirty minutes for that consideration.

**SUMMARY: BEST PRACTICES REVIEW**

- SRS team uses the Safe Schools Survey and the School Practices Survey results to select Best Practices Modules.

- **Choose at least one strategy from each area:** Creating the Climate, Early Identification and Intervention, and Effective Response.

- Team members or a representative read and review modules.

- Team members should spend time discussing the feasibility of the various strategies and resources needed to implement the strategy.

**Resources**

- Strategic Planning: Developing a Focus (C1).

- Best Practices Modules (Section III).
The team is now ready to develop its SRS Plan! At this point, the team will use the information gathered from the needs assessment and promising practices review to create a plan of action designed to fit your school. During plan development, the team will brainstorm to generate ideas, select components to address climate, early identification and intervention and effective responses. The team will then refine these components to create a plan that is both comprehensive and doable.

I. Identifying Resources

Here the team needs to determine the availability of resources, and may wish to add a component to its plan to seek additional resources.

Special Education Funds or Grants

Safe and Drug Free School Funds or Grants

Statewide Behavioral Initiative Funds or Grants
MEETING 9: BRAINSTORMING OPTIONS FOR THE PLAN

Purpose
- To generate a list of options that address the concerns raised by the needs assessment.
- To develop the basis (or outline) for a Safe and Responsive Schools Plan that can be shared with other faculty and administration for feedback.

Procedure
Facilitator uses worksheets to guide team through:
- Brainstorming Process.
  - Review criteria for SRS Plan.
  - Review Rules of Brainstorming.
  - Monitor time spent for brainstorms in each area.
- Report back to faculty and administration before next phase for feedback.
  - Survey Results.
  - Focus Statement.
  - Strategy Brainstorm.

Time
- Teams can expect to spend 1.5 hours working on this activity.
Purpose

How does brainstorming contribute to the process?

Using the results of your school’s needs assessment, the team has identified strengths and needs for your school in the area of school violence prevention and generated a focus for your plan. In the next step, the team will choose specific programs and strategies for the plan. These strategies provide a set of options from which the team will eventually select components for the plan.

Activities

How does the brainstorming process work?

Brainstorming enables the team to generate a wide variety of options, increasing the choices available for the team to consider. Worksheets guiding the brainstorming process may be found in Resources C3.

The team will spend some time (for example 15 minutes) brainstorming for each of the three components:

- *Creating a Positive Climate*.
- *Early Identification/Intervention*.
- *Effective Responses*.

Select a recorder to write ideas on flipchart sheets. At the top of each of three flipchart sheets, write the title of the component (a scribe should be assigned for recording options on the flipchart). During the fifteen minute brainstorm for that component, team members attempt to generate as many options as possible in that area that address the needs identified in the school’s focus. Tape completed sheets to the wall nearby for consideration by the team.

*What is the role of the facilitator during the brainstorming phase?*

During this phase, the facilitator leads the team through the brainstorming process, and makes sure the team stays within the time limits allotted for each activity. Specific responsibilities of the facilitator for this session are:

I. Outline the Criteria for the Plan
Chapter 8 - Scanning for Effective Practices

Prior to the beginning of the brainstorming process, the facilitator should outline the criteria for the completed plan:

- The plan will need to include at least one strategy from each of the three components. Review the definition of and examples for each component. Note to the team that, although the components are helpful in planning, in practice there may be overlap, and some strategies may apply across more than one of the three components.
- The plan does not need to be comprehensive at first, but can be expanded later.
- Make use of available resources, such as pre-existing programs.

II. Outline Rules of Brainstorming

The facilitator should also remind the team that brainstorming is a very effective and efficient method of generating ideas if the ground rules are adhered to.

- Generate as many alternatives as possible.
- Avoid critiquing one’s own or others’ ideas
- Work off one another's brainstorms.
- Brainstorms do not have to be limited to new programs, established programs and programs that have previously been tried are acceptable as well.
- Record all ideas on the flip chart.

III. Enforce Rules of Brainstorming and Time Limits

Individuals will almost always begin to critique their own or others’ ideas. Gently but firmly remind team members that the purpose of this process is to generate as many ideas as possible. Team members should focus on one component (e.g., Creating the Climate) at a time. It is essential that you make sure that brainstorming strategies are generated for each of the three components.

Sharing Brainstorms with the School Community

The last part of this part of the process is reporting the results back to the faculty and administration for feedback. If the team has not presented the survey previously, your team will share:

- Survey results
- The focus statement
- The strategies generated by the brainstorming process.

When communicating survey results, remember to explain to your colleagues what the data mean. You may also wish to highlight trends and discrepancies in the data. This is the first opportunity that the team has to share its collective vision for school safety and violence prevention with the rest of the school. You may find that your colleagues interpret the survey results in a different way than did the team. This is also a good opportunity to seek additional possible brainstorms or strategies for the plan. Feedback from the broader school community will be invaluable in refining your initial planning. It is also highly important in the long run to ensure that others remain informed, invested, and involved in the process. Again, look for opportunities to share with faculty, as well as with students, parents, and the community.
SUMMARY: BRAINSTORMING OPTIONS FOR THE PLAN

- Following the identification of the school’s strengths and needs based on the needs assessments, the next step is to choose specific programs and strategies.

- The criteria for the SRS school plan includes at least one strategy from each of the three components:
  
  > Creating a Positive Climate.
  > Early Identification/Intervention.
  > Effective Responses.

- Through brainstorming the team generates a wide variety of options for each of the three components.

- The next step in the process is to report back to the school community for feedback. Share the results of the surveys, explaining the data as necessary, the focus statement, and the ideas for specific strategies generated in the brainstorming session.

Resources

- Developing the School Plan (C2).

- Brainstorming Strategies (C3).
MEETING 10: SELECTING COMPONENTS FOR THE SAFE & RESPONSIVE SCHOOL PLAN

Purpose
- To identify at least one strategy in each of the three components *Creating the Climate, Early Identification and Intervention, and Effective Response* that can be implemented next year.
- To provide the basis for a Safe and Responsive Schools Plan.

Materials
- Copies of the worksheets Selecting Plan Components (C4).
- Flip chart strategy brainstorm results from previous meeting or typed copies of brainstorms for all team members.

Procedure
Facilitator uses worksheets to guide team through:
- Team Planning.
  > If necessary, revise focus statement and strategy brainstorms based on school feedback.
  > Select most promising strategies.
  > Reach group consensus.
  > Overall review.

Time
- Teams can expect to spend one hour working on this activity. *Seems like it would be longer?*
Focus

How does this step fit into the process?

To this point, the team has used the data from your school to generate a focus for the plan, and a list of possible options in each of the three areas. At this meeting, the team will review the focus statement and consider strategies in light of input from colleagues. Most importantly, the facilitator will lead the team through a process to select a single intervention in each area that will form the core of your school’s Safe and Responsive School Plan.

Activities

Updating Focus Statement and Strategy Brainstorms Based on School Feedback

Between the previous meeting and this one, the team will have presented the plan to their colleagues for feedback. The first item on this week’s agenda then is to review the plan in light of that feedback. This discussion is important in making sure that the opinions of the rest of the school community are incorporated into the plan. Did the faculty and administration agree with the overall focus of the plan? If not, what additions should be made? In terms of specific strategies, which did your colleagues like best? Were there any additions or deletions to the list of strategies during the feedback session.

It is important that the facilitator bring to this meeting the results of the brainstorm from the previous meeting, either on the original flipcharts, or typed for each member.

Selecting Most Promising Strategies

After discussing the feedback from colleagues, each team member should take ten minutes to consider the list of strategies in each area. Each person will choose and rank their top five “favorite” choices in each area (e.g., there will be a total of 15 ranked favorite strategies for each individual). In making their choices, team members should consider the following questions:
• Is this strategy consistent with our overall focus?
• Will this strategy or intervention work at our school?
• Is this something I would like to see us do at this school?
• Do we have sufficient resources to implement this strategy (e.g. personnel, financial, time)?

Reaching Group Consensus

Next, the team reconvenes as a group to consider these favorite strategies, going through the rankings as a “vote” for overall team favorites. It may be most useful for the facilitator to simply use the flipchart list from the previous week and go down the list, taking a show of hands for each strategy and recording the number of votes each strategy received. The three top vote getters in each area are retained as the core of the SRS Plan.

To ensure that all team members are comfortable with the results of this process, the facilitator will lead a discussion about the selected strategies after the voting process. Is everyone comfortable with the results of the vote? Are there some strategies that received fewer votes that could be folded into one of our top three strategies? In case these interventions do not work out as planned, do we wish to choose a “backup” strategy in each area? Finally, enter the top choice (and, if desired, the backup strategy) on the bottom row of each column of the planning form as the initial elements for the plan for next year.

Overall Review

Up until this point in the process, the team has been focusing on the “nuts and bolts” of transforming the ideas proposed during the brainstorming session into a manageable form. At this point, however, it is time for the team to step back and evaluate their satisfaction with the results. The facilitator should lead the team through a five or ten minute review (Do you mean 5-10 minutes for each strategy – if not I think you need approx. 20 minutes) of the focus and chosen strategies, responding to several key questions.
• Are we happy with this focus and these strategies? In other words, if we were to successfully implement this plan, would it address the issues or problems we have identified at our school?
• How well do the strategies we have chosen fit our school focus?
• Will this plan “fly” at our school? Will teachers, administrators, and parents see this as an important intervention that is also practical to implement here?

**SUMMARY: SELECTING COMPONENTS FOR THE PLAN**

- Update focus statement and strategy brainstorms based on feedback from school community.
- Individual members select top five choices in each area (total of 15 selections).
- Team reaches a consensus on top three choices (one in each area).
- Team reviews choices.

**Resources**

- Selecting Plan Components (C4).
Chapter 10
IMPLEMENTING & EVALUATING THE PLAN

Now that the team has selected components for the SRS plan, the next step is to put the plan into action. This Chapter will detail considerations with regard to plan implementation. In order for a plan to be put into action and to work effectively and efficiently, the “nuts and bolts” need to be ironed out. It is necessary to clearly map out when and where and how strategies will be implemented and who will have responsibility for each step.

Describing the activities of the plan

In some ways, translating plans into actions is the most important part of this process, but it can also be the most difficult and frustrating. Making sure the plan is carried out is a complex process that requires thinking about change in general, and the realities of your school in particular. There is no one right way to develop an action plan. The questions below and the strategic planning worksheets are valuable to the team in developing the action plan, but our experience suggests that teams do not progress to action steps in a linear fashion. It is not necessary to go through the activities in a step-by-step fashion, but it is important to be sure that all the relevant questions are considered.

Since there will be three different components of the plan (Creating the Climate, Early Identification and Intervention, and Effective Responses), some teams have found it more efficient to break into three subcommittees for this portion of the
planning process. Each subcommittee defines the scope of the activities and the resources needed for one of the three components, and then reports back to the full committee with its portion of the action plan.

Scope of the plan

In order to make the plan “doable,” the team has to answer a series of logistical questions. The following are some of the questions that need to be considered, though the team may generate more during the course of discussion:

- Will we be developing this strategy ourselves, or using an already-available program?
- If we are using an intervention or program that is already available, how will we decide which program to implement?
- If our own, who will be responsible for development?
- How many classrooms (or in which areas) will this part of the plan be implemented in?
- Which teachers or other staff will be involved? Which grade levels?
- What is our timeline for implementation?

Resources Available/Needed

It is difficult to prescribe a linear process through which the team will go in considering what is needed to implement its plan. By the end of the discussion, however, it is important that the team have considered important questions in each of the following areas:

- **Training:** Will training be needed? Who will provide the training and how will it be funded?
• **Staffing:** Will new staff be required? Will staff release time be required? How much and how often?

• **Funding:** Does the plan require funds for materials or staff time? How much and where do we get them?

• **Public Relations:** To what extent will we have to “sell” this plan to others (e.g. faculty, parents/community, school board)? Who are the “key players” that must be sold on the plan?

**Action Plan**

To make sure it gets done, someone has to do it! Given how busy we all are, assigning responsibility can be difficult. Before the team can consider its plan finished, it must have specified who is going to do what and when it is going to be done. The facilitator can help ensure this happens by directing the team’s attention to the following questions (or making sure that each subcommittee considers these questions):

- What is our timeline for implementation?
- Any remaining planning before presentation?
- How will this be presented? To whom?
- Who will handle the “nuts and bolts” of implementation?
- What are our action steps?
- Who is responsible for each action step?

After the SRS plan has been developed and implementation has begun, it is important for the SRS team to monitor the plan on an on-going basis and to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Evaluation affords the team the opportunity to see what is working well and what needs to be changed. The team can then “tweak” the plan as needed. In addition to evaluating the plan, it is also important
that team members be given the opportunity to evaluate the team process. This allows the facilitator and the team to use this feedback to improve and enhance team functioning.
Chapter 8 - Scanning for Effective Practices

Evaluation: How do we know the plan is working?

In order to see if your plan is making a difference in your school, developing an evaluation is critical. Evaluation helps the team determine whether or not the plan is working, and what changes need to be made to make the plan more effective. Two pertinent questions that your team should consider are:

- **What are we expecting to change as a result of this plan?**
  
  Drawing a diagram depicting the change you expect to see may help the team brainstorm ideas on data collection and evaluation. Basically, the team will need to come up with specific issues (in behavior, attitude, etc.) that they think the plan will address, and what these changes will look like at the school (e.g., less fighting, reduced name-calling).

- **How will we know that change is happening?**
  
  To address this question, the team will need to decide a) what information would convince them that change is taking place, and b) how this data should be collected. Examples may include monitoring discipline referrals, administering feedback surveys or conducting focus groups with students, staff and parents to assess their perception of positive change. The team will need to specify: (1) who will collect this data; (2) how often the data will be collected; and (3) how often the team will consider the data.

Worksheets to guide the team through this process may be found in Resources C6.

**Ongoing implementation**

The team also needs to make decisions on logistical issues surrounding the ongoing implementations of plan. The following considerations should be addressed:

- How often will the team meet?

- Who is responsible if a problem arises and must be addressed immediately?

- How can we get parents and students involved?
Evaluating Team Functioning

Through the efforts and commitment of the SRS team, the strategic planning process was carried out and a plan developed and put into action. Just as it is important to evaluate your SRS plan throughout its implementation so too is it important to evaluate and monitor team functioning. What do team members view as working, or not working, for the team? How can team functioning be improved? By gathering this feedback from team members, the facilitator, or the team as a whole, can evaluate how the team is functioning, what the team’s strengths are and what the team’s needs might be. Depending upon the composition and dynamics of the team, the facilitator might decide to have an open focus group discussion with the team members or may have team members complete anonymous feedback surveys. Either way, the facilitator should constructively use the feedback given by team members to improve and optimize the team process.

Sharing the Plan

Your team has worked hard in creating a plan for a Safe and Responsive School. The Needs Assessment has led to a review of Best Practices and Strategic Planning has led to a vision, focus statement and action plan. The planning team has researched, analyzed and engaged in group discussions. The next steps include bringing the school community on board and planning for team activities for next year.

Creating an Accessible Format

Once your team has completed all the necessary decisions in putting together your school’s plan, it is will be necessary to translate it into a format that can be shared with the entire school community.
Examples of school plans designed by schools previously involved in the Safe and Responsive Schools Project appear in Resources D1.

Questions to ask when creating a format:

- What will be clear and easy to understand?
- Is there sufficient level of detail to understand the plan (yet not so much as to be overwhelming)?
- What type of format will be inviting to others?
- Is the format of the plan self-explanatory?
- Is there room for changes in the plan?

Presenting the Plan

In order to create support and enthusiasm for the plan it is necessary to share it in an interactive format with all the constituencies involved with its implementation.

- Staff meetings, brown bag lunches, department meetings are all opportune times to share the plan and address questions and concerns from colleagues.

- Student council meetings, student clubs and class meetings that involve all students in groups small enough where questions can be asked and answered is also of utmost importance.

- Parents can be informed through letters written by teachers and students, phone trees, open house discussions, parent teacher meetings, PTO/PTA, as well as through the school newsletter. Open meetings or hearings can also be used.

- The community can be informed through newspaper articles, local news coverage, and information booths at supermarkets or malls.
Positive publicity is important to the project to create support, understanding and possible resources for volunteers, expertise and funding.

**Looking Towards Next Year**

Before the end of the school year the team needs to make some logistical decisions about its own functioning for the next school year:

- How often will the team meet?
- Will the team meet before the next school year?
- Will the team continue to use the same format or is it necessary to create sub-committees?
- Would it be best to add new members and how would that be accomplished?

Additional questions for the team to consider regarding implementation, assessment and involvement of the school community are:

- How will the transition from planning to implementation affect the team?
- How will assessment of the plan’s implementation be incorporated?
- Are there additional ways to work with other existing programs at your school?
- How will communication with the school community continue?

Change is a process. It transforms us as often as it transforms that which we are trying to change. The plan the team has developed is almost certain to change as it is implemented. While it will continue to serve as a guide, a resource, and a reminder of our values, it will likely look very different by the end of next year. These changes, and the obstacles that create those changes, may in fact result in a plan that is stronger and more responsive to this particular school. Just as the causes of school violence and disruption are complex and multifaceted, so too must be the process by which we try to prevent violence.
SUMMARY CHAPTER 10 – IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Purpose
- To develop an overall summary of the data for this school, identifying the pieces of data that the team feels are most significant.
- To develop a series of focus statements at each of the three levels of intervention of the SRS Framework that identifies and responds to the school’s most critical needs at each level.
- To establish a framework that can be used by the team as a guide for selecting intervention strategies for the SRS Plan.

Materials
- Copies for all team members of the SRS Vision and Mission Statements.
- Copies of Strategic Planning Outline (See Tools).
- A copy of the completed Planning Data Availability Worksheet (Tools).
- Copies for all team members of all pertinent data gathered at this school.

Procedure
Facilitator uses worksheets to guide team through a process to:
- Review all available data.
  > Identify significant data
  > Identify school’s strengths and weaknesses
  > Identify trends through time where possible
  > Look for important themes.
  > Note discrepancies between student, staff, and parent perceptions.
  > Identifying school’s needs.
- Create a series of focus statements identifying the most critical need to be addressed at each level of the SRS Framework. The focus statement serves as a guide in selecting the most appropriate practices, strategies, and interventions.
- Communicate these with faculty, staff and parents to ensure validity.

Time
- Teams can expect to spend 1-3 hours working on this activity, or more depending on the amount of data available.
SUMMARY: DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Team can split into subcommittees to address the three components of the plan.
- Team decides on logistical issues regarding the scope of the plan.
- Team outlines the resources that are needed to successfully implement the plan, as well as resources that are available in the school.
- Team develops implementation schedule.
- Assign specific responsibilities to specific people.

Resources

- Brainstorming Strategies (C3).
- Selecting Plan Components (C4).
- Developing Details of the Safe and Responsive Schools Plan (C5).

SUMMARY: DOCUMENTING PLAN EFFECTS

- To document plan effects, the team will seek to answer two questions:
  > What are we expecting to change as a result of this plan?
  > How will we know that change is happening?

- Data collection and evaluation is critical in assessing the SRS Plan.

- Logistical decisions on implementation need to be made.

- Feedback from team members with regard to the process is also important and can help refine team functioning.

Resources

- Documenting Plan Effects (C6).
- Team Feedback Survey (    ).


Swearer, S. M. Nebraska Bullying Prevention and Intervention Project. Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Educational Psychology.


Kelly et al., 1986??

Surgeon general best practice review. Does this need to be in the references?


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