

1994

The Development of a Plan to Prepare for the Quality Review Visit Under the Illinois Public School Recognition System

Michael L. Stivers

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The Development of a Plan to Prepare for the Quality

Review Visit Under the Illinois Public School

Recognition System

(TITLE)

BY

Michael L. Stivers

FIELD EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

July, 1994

YEAR

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The Development of a Plan
To Prepare for the Quality Review Visit
Under the Illinois Public School
Recognition System
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Abstract

This study examined the development of a School Improvement Plan for the Oblong School District in preparation for a Quality Review visit. The Illinois State Board of Education was mandated by legislation passed in 1984 and 1992 to evaluate the School Improvement Plan of each school district in Illinois. The steps taken to properly prepare for the Quality Review visit were documented in the study. The recommendations detailed in the paper were developed at the completion of the Quality Review visit and reflect the suggestions of the Quality Review Team. The suggestions outlined in the study should make the process much easier to understand and allow a principal to put together a much better plan. Following the recommendations outlined in this paper should enhance the chances of a school receiving a passing designation by the Quality Review Team.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A special thanks to my wife, Penny, for her many hours of assistance in helping me receive my Specialist's Degree.

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Chapter I

Overview

Introduction

As the principal of an elementary school scheduled for a Quality Review visit on March 23, 1994, the author was overwhelmed by the immense work that lay ahead. In the initial stages of preparation for the Quality Review visit to the Oblong School District, the lack of adequate, concrete information available for use quickly became evident. Although the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) published a profuse volume of papers thoroughly describing the various phases of the Illinois Public School Accreditation Process, limited information was available clarifying the process a school district should follow when developing the School Improvement Plan needed for the state's Quality Review visit. During the summer of 1993, the ISBE began to distribute data that provided more specific information regarding the requirements expected to be presented in a school district's School Improvement Plan. The supplying of this information eased the preparation process by creating a framework for school districts to follow in the development of their School Improvement Plans.

The Oblong School District underwent a Quality Review Visit in March, 1994. Documenting the dilemmas encountered during the preparation for the Quality Review visit and consultation with ISBE officials throughout this same preparation phase enabled the author to develop a plan that will provide assistance to other school administrators preparing for their Quality Review visit.

Problem

The specific problem addressed by the study is delineating specifically what a principal and building staff must do to effectively prepare for a Quality Review visit with the assumption that a "meets" designation will result from the visit. This designation means that the school has met the ISBE's current requirements for their School Improvement Plan.

Assumptions

In order to make accurate and informative suggestions in helping a school prepare for the Quality Review visit, it is assumed that the ISBE will not make any significant changes to the Illinois Public School Recognition Process.

Limitations

The ISBE is continually devising more documents and computer software to assist school districts in their preparation and storage of data. The material available to the Oblong School District on the date of its visit will be documented later in this field study. Material available to districts in the future will have to be evaluated by the individual schools as to its value.

Operational Definitions

Designations. A school which undergoes quality review will be assigned an Exceeds, Meets, or Does Not Meet designation based upon the scores received on its School Improvement Plan.

Quality Review. The school visitation process in which representatives of the State Board of Education ascertain and/or verify information regarding a school and assign a designation to the school (i.e. Meets, Does Not Meet, Exceeds).

Illinois Public School Accreditation Process. Each public school in Illinois shall participate annually in a School Accreditation Process, whereby evidence is provided for each of its schools as to operational compliance, meeting student performance and school improvement standards, and, if applicable, participation in the state assessment.

Design of the Study

This is a qualitative study which documented how a principal can effectively develop the seven step School Improvement Plan for the Illinois Public School Accreditation Plan. The design was based on utilizing the materials and information from the Illinois State Board of Education. This was coupled with the researcher's actual experience of preparing the School Improvement Plan for Oblong Elementary School and experiencing it's Quality Review visit.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

National Perspective

There have been many states that have been implementing outcomes-based education over the past few years. There are both strong proponents and strong opponents of outcomes-based education.

Before stating the pros and cons of outcomes-based education, a brief explanation of the term is necessary. It begins with the premise that all students can learn, and follows with several basic strategies. The school should define what students are to learn (the desired outcomes), and then measure the students' progress based upon their actual achievement. The teachers should then meet the needs of their students with different teaching methods, giving their students enough time and assistance to reach their potential (Zlatos, 1993).

These strategies of outcomes-based education shifted the emphasis from what teachers have taught to what students have learned. Theoretically, to the researcher, outcomes-based education looks to be an idea which could be supported by many people.

William G. Spady, Director of the High Success Network, of Eagle, Colorado, is a proponent of outcomes-based education. Spady has critiqued the present educational system by saying, "You have an Agricultural-Age calendar driving an Industrial-Age delivery system in a Bureaucratic-Age culture" (Zlatos, 1993, p. 13).

Spady has identified four principles which he believes are the core of outcome-based education. The first is called clarity of focus. This means at the end of their schooling, students will successfully demonstrate the results of a curriculum design, an instructional delivery, and an assessment design which meets their needs. The second

principle is called expanded opportunity. This means students get an expanded number of opportunities to demonstrate, at a very high level, whatever they are expected to learn. High expectations is the third principle. This means getting rid of the bell curve and expecting all students to perform significantly well at the end of their schooling. The last principle is called "design down." This principle requires the curriculum to be designed back from where the schools want students to end up upon graduation (Brandt, 1993).

Spady also feels there are two changes which must be met if a system is to be seriously considered as outcome-based. The school must stop being time-based and curriculum-based (Brandt, 1993). This means the traditional 45 minute class periods should be eliminated and a block of time should be inserted to teach one or more subjects at a time. The curriculum should also be modified to allow the teacher to teach the way the students learn. That is, if one method of instruction fails, try another until the students learn the material.

The general theories of outcome-based education have been put into practice in many school districts. School officials in Johnson City, New York, are proponents of outcomes-based education and has made it a part of their school system since 1971. Johnson City established five outcomes: (a) self-esteem, (b) thinking and understanding academics, (c) problem solving and decision making, (d) being a self-directed learner, (e) and concern for others. Techniques used by teachers in Johnson City represent a variety of approaches such as cooperative learning, performance-based testing, hands-on instruction, and student input to help reach the designated outcomes (Zlatos, 1993).

Personnel in Johnson City point out the district's success with outcomes-based education through the following statistics: (a) the dropout rate has fallen from seven % a year to a range between 2%-4%, and (b) the district also had 60 % to 70% of its

students receive a prestigious Regents diploma, as compared to a previous number of 45% and a state average of 40% (Zlatos, 1993).

In the researchers opinion, it seems that outcomes-based education may be the shot boost that education needs for improvement. However, there is a side of outcome-based education that opponents have been successful in attacking.

Peg Luksik, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Parents Commission, is one of the best-known critics of outcomes-based education. Luksik states, "The outcomes are so absolutely vague. What is the achievement standard for graduation, how do you test it, and how do you remediate it" (Zlatos, 1993, p. 14). Luksik states that another common criticism is, "Many people have complained about the state not adequately teaching academics. Let's see them do that part right before they expand their role" (Zlatos, 1993, p. 14).

There is also the question of cost to consider in making this big of a change to the educational system. Points which must be taken into account are training teachers, changing the curriculum, and shifting to performance-based tests (Zlatos, 1993).

The real core of the opposition's criticism of outcome-based education may have been stated best by Anita Hoge, a member of Ms. Luksik's team. Hoge said, "Whoever is in control of the outcomes controls the whole system and really controls people" (Harp, 1993).

The reality of states and schools changing to an outcomes-based education system is quickly becoming a political issue. The controversial content of value-oriented outcomes, state mandates, and revision of curriculum materials force both state and school leaders to make a tough choice. They must ask themselves to what extent they plan to participate in outcome-based education.

Background

The responsibilities facing school districts in Illinois as they prepare for the Quality Review visit is the result of two different pieces of legislation. Although there was a time span of seven years between the two actions, the legislation fits nicely together to create the Illinois Public School Recognition System.

The 1985 educational reform legislation was the first piece of the present process. This action addressed nearly every aspect of schooling and provided a unique opportunity for local school districts and the State Board of Education to work cooperatively to improve education in Illinois. One of the most important pieces of the legislation, one which has long-range implications for learning and teaching in Illinois schools, provides for the development of learning goals and assessment systems at both the state and local levels.

Specifically, Public Act 84-126, effective August 1, 1985, amended The School Code of Illinois to include, for the first time in the state's history, a definition of schooling and a requirement that the goals for learning be identified and assessed. Clearly, the law requires the following:

1. The State Board of Education must establish goals consistent with the primary purpose of schooling. The legislation defines the primary purpose of schooling as the transmission of knowledge and culture through which children learn in areas necessary to their continuing development: language arts, mathematics, biological and physical sciences, social sciences, fine arts, and physical development and health .
2. Local school districts must establish student learning objectives which are consistent with the primary purpose of schooling and which meet or exceed goals established by the State Board.

3. School districts must also establish local goals for excellence in education.

4. The State Board must establish assessment procedures for local school districts.

This includes the establishment of a common month for testing in each school year, the development of state test items to be included along with each of the district assessments, and development of model assessment procedures which school districts may elect to use.

5. School districts must assess student learning to determine the degree to which local goals and objectives are being met. This assessment is required at least at Grades 3, 6, 8 and 10, with the initial year for assessment staggered according to learning area and grade level.

6. School districts must develop local plans for improvement in those areas where local goals and objectives are not being met.

7. School districts must disseminate the local goals and objectives to the public, along with information on the degree to which they are being achieved and, if not, what appropriate corrective actions are being taken by the district.

8. The State Board must approve the local school district objectives, assessment systems, plans for improvement, and public reporting procedures.

During the next several years, beginning in 1987, school districts were required to submit their objectives for student learning to the State Board of Education. These objectives were to meet or exceed the State Goals for Learning and also identify local goals for excellence in education.

This legislation, that was enacted in 1985, was significant for many reasons. One, however, seems to rise above the others. This legislation required the State Board of Education to adopt State Goals for Learning in each of six primary areas: language arts,

mathematics, biological and physical sciences, social sciences, fine arts, and physical development and health (ISBE, 1985).

In the spring of 1992, the General Assembly unanimously passed HB 885. This legislation created an integrated system, in which the state and local schools work in a partnership to meet both the requirements of outcome-based accountability and the goals for school improvement. A school's recognition is defined by the extent to which the school demonstrates that it serves all students and that all students are learning. The State Goals for Learning which were adopted in the 1985 reform package provide the underlying framework for defining and assessing student learning outcomes, and evaluating the school's improvement efforts. Illinois Public School Recognition System has been put in place by the state legislature. This system is a partnership between the state and each local school district. The result is to show that all students in the district are being served and all students are learning.

The Illinois Public School Recognition System is made up of three independently operating components which determine a school's designation for recognition. These components are: (a) compliance with facilities, staffing, and program specifications as specified by statute and rules: (b) evidence that all students meet performance standards and are served by a comprehensive school improvement plan: and (c) school results on the state assessment.

The first component of the designation reflects a school's compliance with the various specific provisions of the law and Illinois State Board of Education rules. Prior to HB 885, compliance with facilities, staffing and program requirements was the sole basis for school recognition.

The second component of the designation requires schools to document, over a period of time, the extent to which students are meeting local standards for student performance based on the State Goals for Learning. This component also requires schools to show how well students are being served through a comprehensive school improvement system. The school must provide evidence of the following:

1. Learning outcomes are consistent with the State Goals for Learning.
2. The achievement of outcomes is measured in a reliable and valid manner.
3. Appropriate performance levels are established.
4. Appropriate expectations for improvement are established.
5. Comprehensive results document what students know and are able to do.
6. Assessment information is interpreted according to local learning outcomes and standards of student performance.
7. Assessment results are used to make adjustments in curriculum, instruction, assessment or other aspects of schooling to meet the needs of all students in reaching specified outcomes.

The third component of the designation reflects school performance on the state assessment, the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP), administered each year at designated grades. Standards have been established to define what it means for a student to exceed, meet, and not meet the State Goals for Learning in reading, mathematics, and writing. Standards for science and social studies were developed before the 1993 test administration. These standards include comprehensive operational definitions of the goals and cutoff points on the IGAP scales. This component of a school's designation will depend upon the proportion of its student scores which exceed, meet, or fail to meet the

standards. Designations for the three components of the Illinois Public School Recognition System are then to be assigned for each school district in the state.

Schools must first meet the facilities, staffing, and program criteria stated in the law and rules. If a school is found to be in noncompliance, it will be given a specified length of time to correct the deficiencies.

Standards for the second component will be applied during the on-site Quality Review. A school will be evaluated according to specific performance and improvement criteria and assigned one of four possible classifications: Exceeds, Meets, Does Not Fully Meet, and Does Not Meet.

Standards for the third component will also be applied during a school's Quality Review visit. The State Board will use the school's IGAP results from the previous year to assign a school a designation of Exceeds, Meets (high, middle, or low), or Does Not Meet based on the student's performances.

In summary, each component will be assigned independently and the resulting designation will contain three separate statements. For example, a school's designation might be Compliance -- yes; State assessment -- Meets; Local performance and Improvement -- Meets. No school will be eligible to receive recognition status without the presence of all three components: compliance, local performance and improvement, and school performance on the IGAP.

Illinois Perspective

The Illinois accreditation process incorporates several aspects of outcome-based education. In general, though, the Illinois Public School Accreditation Process has been supported by even Pennsylvania's most outspoken outcome-based critics.

In Illinois, the state sets standards for achievement in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. Some term the Illinois program to be an accountability system rather than an outcome-based education model. The system measures schoolwide performance, while setting improvement targets. The State then assists schools which fall below the expectation levels (Harp, 1993).

The State of Illinois has intentionally avoided becoming ensnared in the outcome-based education controversy. The Illinois State Board of Education does not use the term outcome based education in any of it's published literature. This same Board made a conscious effort, when developing the Illinois Public School Accreditation Plan, to avoid the controversial components of outcome-based education (R. Schaljo, personal communication, October 25, 1993).

Chapter III

Results

The preparation process that a principal must go through in order to prepare for a Quality Review visit is very complex and laborious. This study was designed to make this process less complicated.

Prior to the onset of any work on the School Improvement Plan itself, two extremely important factors need to be considered by the principal. In order to be organized, the principal must gain as much understanding of the Quality Review process as possible. Having a strong knowledge of the Quality Review process is vital. In addition, he/she must build a strong school-based support system. Although input from other individuals is often necessary during the development of the School Improvement Plan, the school-based support system should consist of three main groups: the superintendent, the school board members, and the district's staff. The successful development of a total plan depends upon the cooperation of these specific groups of people.

Having a sound knowledge of the Quality Review process will enable the principal to assist the superintendent, the school board members, and the staff in viewing the Illinois Public School Accreditation Plan as a process that will strengthen the education received by all students in the district. If any of these three groups view the process as simply another "project" from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that will never be of any importance in future years, the overall success of the School Improvement Plan can be greatly weakened.

In many school districts the superintendents have only recently begun to understand the seriousness with which the ISBE views this project. In many instances, reluctance by superintendents to realize the importance of the Quality Review visit has prevented them

from lending their support and influence to the School Improvement Plan's development. As the Quality Review visits continue, more superintendents are lending their support to the principals during the preparation and the development of the school district's School Improvement Plan.

Support from the superintendent will assist the principal not only in sharing information regarding the Quality Review process with the school board, but also in helping the school board to become a proponent of its development as well. A school board that has an understanding of the value of the Illinois Public School Accreditation Plan is more likely to support its development monetarily and also with released work time for staff. The total amount of funds and work time necessary to complete this process are both enormous.

When the school board and superintendent work together, they can also be very important sources in establishing positive public relations with the local community. Community support can benefit the school district during the plan's development. A community that is aware of the process is much more valuable when the principal requires its help and input regarding the School Improvement Plan. Without assistance from the community, the point total that a school district can receive on the scoring scale becomes limited.

The third and most important group in the development of a School Improvement Plan is the district's staff. Enlisting the support of the staff members requires that they are informed of the process and its importance. Sharing the information can be accomplished by first inservicing the entire staff and then providing select staff members with released time to attend workshops on the Illinois Public School Accreditation Plan. Best candidates

for additional workshop training are those staff members who are interested in the process and those who are influential with their peers.

As the staff receives exposure to the development of a School Improvement Plan, the principal must undertake the most important phase of the entire process. This stage necessitates the development of a plan, which can best be devised by using materials constructed by the ISBE. The ISBE documents, when properly studied, allow the principal's school district to reach the "meets" designation. These documents, however, are so complex that a principal might waste hundreds of hours wandering aimlessly through the process, unless a plan is first constructed. Studying the documents and deciding upon a direction for the school district to follow is the only way in which a plan can be developed.

The plan's design will be based upon the date that the school district is to undergo the Quality Review visit. The date of the visit becomes important because the timing dictates the total points that a school district must score in order to receive a "Meets" designation. The "Meets" designation is of importance to a school district because an "Exceeds" designation is nearly impossible to attain under the ISBE's present point structure. Any school district that has a Quality Review visit prior to October 1, 1995, must receive at least 32 points to be a meets school district. A Quality Review visit after October 1, 1995, necessitates a point total of 50 points to receive the same designation. Therefore, a request by the school district for the ISBE to make a Quality Review visit during the 1994-1995 school year would be prudent.

Prior to embarking on the development of a School Improvement Plan, the principal must understand that the ISBE views the entire process as a school district performing a self-study of each building in the district. Instead of examining materials and

information within a school building's files, the Quality Review Team will study the building's School Improvement Plan through an audit process. The burden is placed upon the school district to provide the required information in a logical format for the Quality Review Team to study.

Developing the Plan

When developing a building School Improvement Plan, the principal should begin his preparation with the ISBE document entitled, Assignment of Point Values for the Student Performance and School Improvement Determination (November, 1993). This document can be found in a larger edition published by the ISBE entitled The State Board's rules for Public School Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision (November, 1993). Each of the 16 components that make up the School Improvement Plan are contained within this large document. As a principal becomes more familiar with this instrument, through reading and studying the document many times over, highlighting the differences between the various requirements in each section is advised. Evaluating the building's documentation that has been previously completed gives the principal an indication of which point totals are attainable and which components will need additional documentation to attain the desired point total. In addition, working with the glossary found in Section 1, Appendix C during this time is important. Specific terms contain requirements that must be followed in order for the building to qualify for the point total desired.

An example of a principal using these terms in setting up a plan for the school can be shown by the term, "consultative". When "consultative" is used in any of the sections of the School Improvement Plan, a school must obtain input from four different groups. Students, parents, staff, and community must all be solicited. If a school planned on attaining a point total in outcomes (2-1) and in standards (2-2) that both require the

process to be consultative, then the principal should plan meetings with each group and address both Sections 2-1 and 2-2 at the same time. This example of studying the terms and their requirements prior to beginning a school's plan is repeated with many other terms in the glossary. An understanding of a term's demand on the principal's plan allows meetings to be held and the correct documentation and procedures to be followed. The need for additional meetings to be held in order to fulfill a section's requirement that had been overlooked at an earlier meeting is prevented.

A principal preparing a plan should also consider a change from the use of learning objectives to that of learning outcomes. The narrower and more specific learning objectives were first developed years ago with the school's Learning Assessment Plan (L.A.P.). The learning outcomes, which are broader and more general in scope than learning objectives, might be developed by combining several objectives into one outcome. A strong recommendation for undertaking this conversion to outcomes as a school develops its School Improvement Plan is that learning outcomes will be required of all schools by October 1, 1995. Obviously, school staff members that use outcomes as they develop a School Improvement Plan will have no need to revise their plan in 1995 to exchange learning objectives for learning outcomes.

After making a thorough evaluation of the Student Performance and School Improvement Designation document, a principal will be able to transfer this knowledge and information to the Scoring Scale Table. The Scoring Scale Table is a rubric which allows the principal to identify the point totals of all 16 parts of the School Improvement Plan. The 1985 requirements along with the new 1995 requirements are both shown on this table. A principal can mark the point value of each section on the rubric and arrive at a point total by adding the value of all of the sections. Ascertaining the point total

allows the principal to determine which designation the building will set as its goal. The point ranges at the bottom of the table designate the categories for a school as: does not meet, does not fully meet, meets, or exceeds.

Determining this designation will dictate if the principal needs to reevaluate areas in which a higher point total can be reached. If so, a principal would then need to carefully read the performance document again, paying particular attention to the requirements and terminology. Reevaluating and studying will allow the principal to develop a plan that has a point total that contains a point cushion. If the Quality Review Team disagrees with the principal's assessment for a particular section's point value in one of the 16 areas, receiving a lower point total would still allow the school to reach the "Meets" designation.

Involvement of Staff

After the principal has developed a satisfactory plan and is prepared to start actively working on the process, the time for the professional staff's involvement has been reached. In order for the staff to be of help, a principal must take into consideration the type of classroom taught by various staff members. Most likely, the use of the benchmark grades in the Quality Review process at the primary grade level will involve self-contained classrooms. As a result, all of the teachers at each grade level will be involved in the development process, with many teachers being held responsible for more than one fundamental learning area.

On the other hand, buildings such as a junior high or a high school will most likely have departmental instruction. This type of instruction lends itself to a much easier organization of staff. Departmentalized teachers can work on the fundamental learning areas that pertain to their particular subject area.

A principal who is responsible for a building that houses self-contained classrooms might want to consider the following scheme in preparation for work on the School Improvement Plan.

An initial meeting attended by all teachers allows them to agree on the curriculum structure in each of the fundamental learning areas, at each grade level. After the teachers have an understanding of what their peers are working on in each of the fundamental learning areas, they will be able to act as spokespersons for that grade level, regarding a specific learning area. This type of organization essentially creates "department heads " for each of the fundamental learning areas at each grade level. The importance of creating department heads lies in the fact that the teachers are required to attend only the meetings for the learning areas in which they are spokespersons. Without this type of organization, the staff members would be constantly attending meetings, since they might teach many of the subjects in the various fundamental learning areas.

After the staff members in the building are organized as to the curriculum coordination at each grade level and in each fundamental learning area, they need to be introduced to the parts of the School Improvement Plan on which they will commence working. These will be the components of outcomes (2-1), standards (2-2), and expectations (2-3). These three areas cannot be successfully constructed without input and direction from the teachers.

Staff members will have many questions and much confusion as they begin work on these sections. Inservicing the teachers as a group will be the most efficient as far as time constraints are concerned. These meetings should include discussions of the terminology, an explanation of the requirements of each component, and a strategy for completing each component.

The principal will not have an answer to each question asked by staff members because of the complexity of the whole process. However, this again points out why the principal must have a plan in mind before setting the process in motion. Indecision on the part of the principal or work that must be redone because instructions were incorrect the first time will not create confidence among the staff about the leadership directing this massive project.

Tips for the Sixteen Components

It is impossible to place all of the information needed for the development of a quality School Improvement Plan in this study. However, there are suggestions listed in regard to each of the sixteen components which comprise the School Improvement Plan which the author found successful during his preparation at Oblong.

1-1

1. The School Report Card which each school receives with its IGAP results contains a great deal of the information needed in this component and 1-2.
2. Make sure a rationale is given for the groups selected for disaggregation.
3. Maintain documentation of demographic information, disaggregate groups, and rationale for the groups selected.

1-2

1. Understand that in order to receive three points on this component, a school must meet the requirements of the first and the second sections of the key or the third and fourth sections.
2. In connection with the previous statement, the term compelling is also used in this section.

3. Construct surveys which obtain input from students, staff, and community about the school.
4. Document the process even if required to be informal rather than formal.

2 - 1

1. This may be the most important component in the School Improvement Plan as far as obtaining the desired point total. This component contains the prerequisite for attaining any given point total on the next section, 2-2. Although Section 2-1 only sets the prerequisite on Section 2-2, it really effects many more sections as will soon be shown.
2. The Quality Review teams are currently very liberal in their interpretation of the outcomes being presented by school districts. When schools must have outcomes instead of objectives for their School Improvement Plan, then the requirements for the development of those outcomes may be much tougher to meet. Principals should closely monitor future reports and information from the ISBE regarding outcomes in order to properly prepare their plan in this very important component.

2 - 2

1. It should be noted that the score a school receives on this component will act as a prerequisite, and limit the score a school may receive on several subsequent components. Expectations (2-3), coordination of assessment instruments (3-1), compilation and analysis of assessment data (4-2), and evaluation of student performance (5-1) have their scores limited by standards (2-2).
2. Be aware of the terms formal and consultative.

2 - 3

1. There should be documentation for the process followed even though it might not be necessary to be formal, systematic, or consultative.

3 - 1

1. The requirements for a school preparing its plan prior to October, 1995, do not necessitate two assessment instruments. A school is also exempted from needing to show variety and diversity with its instruments. If a school does not need the higher point total on this component, it would be wise to take a lower point value and spend time and effort elsewhere.

3-2, 3-3, and 3-4

1. These components may be met with relative ease as long as a school does not need to use a second assessment instrument beyond a norm referenced test. A norm referenced test instrument will have documentation as to its validity, reliability, and nondiscrimination. Should a school need to provide a second assessment instrument, then the requirements of these three components need much more attention.

4 - 1

1. Documentation containing a breakdown of data for the benchmark grades, as well as the disaggregate groups, is important for showing data sufficiency. This data should be compiled in an orderly format, as it will be consulted frequently throughout the Quality Review process.

4 - 2

1. The documentation format should readily indicate the percentage of students who met the standards for the total population as well as the disaggregate groups.

5 - 1

1. This is the only component which has two prerequisites for a point value assignment. Besides the 2-2 qualification mentioned earlier, this component must also meet the point requirement from 4-1.
2. Any assessment instrument may be used to show improvement.

5 - 2

1. The point total desired on this component will again dictate the difficulty involved. If a school tries for three or four points, it must be sure to be formal and/or consultative.

6 - 1

1. Unless a point total of three is desired, a school need not be formal and consultative. Annual review of expectations for possible changes is the major criteria.

6 - 2

1. This is not a particularly difficult section in which to achieve an adequate point total. The importance of this component lies in its value to a school. The School Improvement Plan should revolve around this component as far as a school district evaluating what is being done educationally in each building.

7 - 1

1. A plan on reporting to the parents, community, and school board as to how the students are being served and how well they are achieving must be devised. The requirements as to the involvement in this reporting are dictated by the point total desired.

Chapter IV

Summary and Recommendations

The results of the Quality Review visit to observe the School Improvement Plan of the Oblong School District was very successful. The official documentation from the ISBE had not yet returned to the district at the time this study was completed. However, at the exit meeting which was held at the end of the visit, the Quality Review Team felt that the school had met all of the 1984 requirements. This, in effect, meant that the Oblong Schools were assured of scoring at least 32 points, and were going to be a "Meets" school. The review team also felt that several components were beyond the 1984 requirements and would actually allow Oblong to score in the 36-38 range.

The review team felt the one area the school district should give more attention to was the results of the different documentation in Oblong's School Improvement Plan. The review team felt that the plan had excellent documentation throughout the seven parts. The team felt that the school district should have taken a more "global" approach in the plan's presentation by explaining the action the school was going to take as a result of the information which had been documented.

Summary

The ISBE has put together a process which schools may follow in order to create a School Improvement Plan. It is highly likely that a school district which puts together a hard working team can be successful in attaining a "Meets" designation.

The fact that surfaced as this author worked on Oblong's School Improvement Plan was how difficult it was going to be to move to the next level - 50 points. Oblong now has a solid foundation in place in order to move on towards the new "Meets" designation. Even with this advantage, it will take a new plan and a lot of hours to reach the new goal.

A school which will undergo its initial visit after October 1, 1995, must be working very hard at this time in order to have any chance of becoming a "Meets" school. There are components which must have historical data available in order to receive a higher point total needed for the 50 points. Other components will need to be in place for at least a little time in order to develop continuity and to allow a school to develop timelines for meeting annual requirements of the School Improvement Plan.

Recommendations

There are several points which became evident to this author as work on the School Improvement Plan began in Oblong. The points which are important to any school preparing for a Quality Review visit are:

1. Develop a plan for undertaking each of the 16 components. This is the single most important point of the whole process. The hours involved in the planning stage will be more than rewarded by the quality of the product at completion and the time saved actually working on the School Improvement Plan.
2. Teachers must attend workshops and become as knowledgeable as possible about the terminology and the process as a whole. The stages of the plan dealing with outcomes, standards, and expectations must have teacher input. Teachers who have an understanding of the process and can see its benefits are of great importance to a successful plan.
3. Document everything done during the process. Meetings, workshops, handouts, and anything which has to do with the School Improvement Plan should have documents which explain what was done at those functions.
4. Study the definitions listed within the key for the point total that needs to be attained on each component. A clear understanding of terms such as formal and

consultative prevents a principal from needing to rework a component because the proper method was not used the first time.

5. Try to implement the ISBE's understanding of an outcome. In order to receive a meets designation after October 1, 1995, it will be necessary to have outcomes developed in great depth. The ISBE has not given much documentation to information regarding the development of an outcome.

6. Make every effort to have the ISBE schedule a Quality Review visit before October 1, 1995. The necessary points for a "Meets" designation rises from 32 points to 50 points after that date. The work needed to reach the new point total will be much more difficult to attain.

7. High School staff members should establish benchmark grades based upon their curriculum requirements. If a student is not required to take a math class beyond the tenth grade, it would not be wise to establish twelfth grade as the benchmark grade for math assessment.

8. Administrators should become knowledgeable of the waivers and their restrictions which are available from the ISBE if their schools are to be visited after October 1, 1995. These waivers are very important to a school district if it is not completely finished with the School Improvement Plan or wants to modify its presentation.

9. The ISBE has not clarified its position on the types of assessments which a school must use. In order to be safe, it would be wise to make at least one of the school's assessments for each standard a "complex generated" type.

References

- Brandt, R. (1993). On outcome-based education: a conversation with Bill Spady. Educational Leadership, 66-70.
- Harp, L. (1993). Pa. parent becomes a mother of "outcomes" revolt. Education Week, 18-21.
- ISBE (1985). Overview of Public Act 84-126, Springfield, IL, Illinois State Board of Education.
- Zlatos, B. (1993). Outcomes-based outrage. The Executive Educator, 12-16.

Appendix A

A Highlighted Version of Differences Between the Point Values of the School Improvement Components

1 Analysis of Existing Conditions

1-1 Description of student population, identification of significant groups in the population relevant to learning outcomes and consideration of attendance variables.

1 There is little of no evidence that demographic information is maintained on the student population of the school for the purpose of identifying significant groups in the population of learners to be monitored for performance.

2 Demographic information on the student population of the school **is limited**.

* Gender, racial, or socio-economic groups of other groups in the student population which warrant description or emerge as a result of analysis of data are identified.

* Student attendance, truancy, mobility, retention, and expulsion rates are maintained. Graduation and dropout rates are maintained for high schools. There is no evidence that these performance indicators are consulted when considering factors which may affect student learning.

3 The total student population of the school is described in terms of characteristics which may affect student learning. All students are accounted for.

* Gender, racial, or socio-economic groups or other groups in the student population which warrant description or emerge as a result of analysis of data **whose performance data will be disaggregated** are identified.

* **A rationale is documented for the selection of identified groups within the student population.**

* Student attendance, truancy, mobility, retention, and expulsion rates are maintained. Graduation and dropout rates are maintained for high schools. **These performance indicators are informally consulted when considering factors which may affect student learning.**

4 The total student population of the school is described in terms of characteristics which may affect student learning. All students are accounted for.

* Gender, racial, or socio-economic groups of other groups in the student population which warrant description or emerge as a result of analysis of data whose performance data will be disaggregated are identified.

* A rationale is documented for the selection of identified groups within the student population **based on formal and systematic identification procedures.**

* Student attendance, truancy, mobility, retention, and expulsion rates are maintained. Graduation and dropout rates are maintained for high schools. These performance indicators are **formally and systematically consulted** when considering factors which may affect student learning.

1-2 Perceived student needs derived from staff and/or the community and community characteristics which may affect student learning.

1 There is little or no evidence that inquiry is conducted on the needs of students in the school related to learning outcomes as perceived by school staff and the school community or on community characteristics which may affect student learning.

2 **Evidence exists** that information on the needs of students in the school related to learning outcomes as perceived by school staff and the school community is **occasionally and informally elicited.**

* **Evidence exists** that **informal inquiry** is conducted to explain how community characteristics may affect student learning.

3 **Compelling** evidence exists that information on the needs of **all** students in the school related to learning outcomes as perceived by school staff and school community representatives is **formally and systematically collected.**

* Evidence exists that informal inquiry is conducted to explain how community characteristics may affect student learning; **or**

* Evidence exists that information on the needs of **all** students in the school related to learning outcomes as perceived by school staff and school community representatives is occasionally and informally elicited.

* **Compelling** evidence exists that **formal** inquiry is conducted to explain how community characteristics may affect student learning.

4 **Compelling** evidence exists that information on the needs of all students in the school related to learning outcomes as perceived by school staff and school community representatives is formally and systematically collected.

- * **Compelling** evidence exists that formal inquiry is conducted to explain how community characteristics may affect student learning.

2 Learning Outcomes, Standards, and Expectations

2-1 Learning Outcomes

- 1 There is little or no evidence that learning outcomes have been developed.
- 2 Comprehensive learning outcomes aligned with some State Goals for Learning exist for the school and are written in some fundamental learning areas for at least 2 grades for a 1-8 attendance center or for at least one grade for a middle school/junior high, high school or primary attendance center with fewer than 8 grades.
 - * The process for developing learning outcomes is informal and limited in participation of school staff and in communication with students, parents and the school community.
 - * Alignment of curriculum with learning outcomes is informal and not systematic.
- 3 Comprehensive learning outcomes aligned with **all required** State Goals for Learning exist for the school and are written in **all** fundamental learning areas for at least 2 grades for a K-8 attendance center or for at least one grade for a middle school/junior high, high school, or primary attendance center with fewer than eight grades.
 - * The process for developing learning outcomes is informal and limited in participation of school staff and in communication with students, parents and the school community.
 - * There is **some alignment** of the curriculum with learning outcomes.
- 4 Comprehensive learning outcomes aligned with **all** the State Goals for Learning exist

for the school and are written in all fundamental learning areas for at least 2 grades for a 1-8 attendance center or for at least one grade for a middle school/junior high, high school, or primary attendance center with fewer than eight grades.

* **Learning outcomes address the content of State Goal(s) for Learning; are broader in focus than a learning objective; probe the range and depth of thinking skills appropriate to the State Goal(s) for Learning; and are amenable to assessment.**

* The process for developing learning outcomes **includes a systematic review cycle** and includes participation of school staff and communication with students, parents, and the school community **in the deliberative process. Both the rationale for this process and the rationale for the resulting learning outcomes are evident.**

* There is formal and systematic alignment of the curriculum with learning outcomes.

5 Comprehensive learning outcomes aligned with all State Goals for Learning exist for the school and are written in all fundamental learning areas for at least **50% of the grades at the attendance center.**

* Learning outcomes address the content of State Goal(s) for Learning; are broader in focus than a learning objective; probe the range and depth of thinking skills appropriate to the State Goal(s) for Learning; and are amenable to assessment. **Some learning outcomes integrate fundamental learning areas when appropriate and reflect problems and tasks outside the classroom.**

* The process for developing learning outcomes includes a systematic review cycle and includes participation of school staff and communication with students, parents, and the school community in the deliberative process. Both the rationale for this process and the

rationale for the resulting learning outcomes are evident.

- * There is formal and systematic alignment of the curriculum with learning outcomes.

6 For elementary, middle schools and junior high school, comprehensive learning outcomes aligned with all State Goals for Learning are written in all fundamental learning areas **for all grades.**

- * For high schools, learning outcomes aligned with the State Goals for Learning are written in all fundamental learning areas. There is comprehensive coverage of all State Goals for Learning in all fundamental learning areas **throughout the scope of the high school program.**

- * Learning outcomes address the content of the State Goal(s) for Learning; are broader in focus than a learning objective; probe the range and depth of thinking skills appropriate to the State Goal(s) for Learning; and are amenable to assessment.

Learning outcomes integrate fundamental learning areas when appropriate and reflect problems and tasks outside the classroom.

- * The process for developing learning outcomes includes a systematic review cycle and includes participation of school staff and communication with students, parents, and the school community in the deliberative process. Both the rationale for this process and the rationale for the resulting learning outcomes are evident.

- * There is formal and systematic alignment of the curriculum with learning outcomes.

2-2 Standards

1 There is little or no evidence that standards for the school exist for learning outcomes; or

* Standards that do exist are incorrectly stated.

2 Standards for the school exist for some learning outcomes and are stated in a manner which demarcates whether a student is to be included in the expectation group, i.e., the percentage of students who are expected to achieve the learning outcome.

3 Standards for the school exist for **all** learning outcomes and are **written as a cut-score on a single assessment instrument or procedure, or on items from a single assessment instrument or procedure.**

* **Points awarded for learning outcomes (2-1) are three (3) or more.**

* **There is a formal and consultative process for setting standards. Both the rationale for this process and the rationale for the standards are evident.**

4 Standards exist for the school for all learning outcomes in **all fundamental learning areas** and are written as cut-scores or minimum criteria on a variety of assessment instruments or procedures that address the scope, content, and specificity of the learning outcome.

* Points awarded for learning outcomes (2-1) are **four (4) or more.**

* There is a formal, consultative process for the school for setting standards. Both a rationale for the process **which includes consultation of previous performance data** and a rationale for the standards are evident.

5 Standards exist for the school for all learning outcomes i all fundamental learning areas and are written as cut-scores or minimum criteria on a variety of assessment instruments or procedures that address the scope, content, and specificity of the learning process.

* Points awarded for learning outcomes (2-1) **are five (5)**.

* There is a formal, consultative process for the school for setting standards. Both a rationale for this process which includes consultation of previous performance data and a rationale for the standards are evident.

6 Standards exist for the school for all learning outcomes in all fundamental learning areas and are written as cut-scores or minimum criteria on a variety of assessment instruments or procedures that address the scope, content, and specificity of the learning outcome.

* Points awarded for learning outcomes (2-1) **are six (6)**.

* There is a formal, consultative process for the school for setting standards. Both a rationale for this process which includes consultation of previous performance data and a rationale for the standards are evident.

2-3 Expectations

1 There is little or no evidence that expectations have been established for the school.

2 Expectations exist for the school for learning outcomes in some fundamental learning areas in the form of the percent of students expected to achieve learning outcomes.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are two (2) or more.

3 Expectations exist for the school for each learning outcome in **each** fundamental learning area in the form of the percent of students expected to **meet the standard for that** learning outcome.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) **are three (3) or more.**

* **There is a process for the school for establishing expectations and a rationale for this process.**

4 Expectations exist for the school for each learning outcome in each fundamental learning area in the form of the percent of students expected to meet the standard for that learning outcome.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **four (4) or more.**

* There is a **formal, systematic, and consultative** process for the school for establishing expectations and a rationale for this process.

3 Assessment Systems

3-1 Coordination of assessment instruments and procedures with learning outcomes

1 There is little or no evidence that learning outcomes for the school are assessed by assessment instruments and procedures.

2 Learning outcomes for the school in all required fundamental learning areas are assessed by assessment instruments and procedures administered at least at benchmark grades.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are two (2) or more.

3 **All** learning outcomes for the school **for all** fundamental learning areas are assessed by a **variety of** assessment instruments and procedures **that address the scope, content, and specificity of the learning outcome** and are administered to students at least at benchmark grades.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **four (4) or more**.

* **The rationale for choosing or developing each instrument or procedure for the school is evident.**

4 All learning outcomes for the school in all fundamental learning areas are assessed by a variety of assessment instruments and procedures that address the scope, content, and specificity of the learning outcome and are administered to students at least at benchmark grades.

* **Assessment instruments and procedures are clearly diverse in type for all standards for learning outcomes.**

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **five (5) or more**.

* The rationale for choosing or developing each instrument or procedure is evident.

3-2 Validity of Assessment Instruments and Procedures

1 There is little or no evidence for the school:

* that there are sufficient assessment instruments and procedures to measure achievement of all outcomes; and/or

* that assessment instruments and procedures measure knowledge and skills beyond specific tasks or questions to provide accurate information for making judgments about the progress of students toward achieving learning outcomes.

2 Claims for constant validity are documented for instruments and procedures used to measure achievement of learning outcomes for the school.

* **There is evidence** that there are instruments and procedures sufficient to measure all learning outcomes; and that assessment instruments and procedures measure knowledge and skills beyond specific tasks or questions to provide accurate information for making judgments about the progress of students toward achieving learning outcomes.

3 Claims for content validity are documented for all instruments and procedures used to set standards for achievement of learning outcomes for the school.

* There is **compelling** evidence that there are instruments and procedures sufficient to measure all learning outcomes; and

* that assessment instruments and procedures measure knowledge and skills beyond specific tasks or questions about the progress of students toward achieving learning outcomes.

3-3 Reliability of assessment instruments and procedures

1 Reliability claims are documented for assessment instruments and procedures used to set standards for achievement of learning outcomes for the school for some but not all assessment instruments and procedures.

* There is no evidence that these instruments and procedures are administered, scored, and interpreted in a uniform manner by qualified staff.

2 Reliability claims are documented for assessment instruments and procedures used to set standards for achievement of **all** learning outcomes for the school in **all required fundamental learning areas**.

* **Evidence is provided** that these instruments and procedures are administered, scored, and interpreted in a uniform manner by qualified staff.

3 Reliability claims are documented for assessment instruments and procedures used to set standards for achievement of all learning outcomes for the school in all fundamental learning areas.

* **Formal procedures are documented** for the administration, scoring, and interpretation of all assessment instruments and procedures in a uniform manner by qualified staff.

3-4 Nondiscriminatory assessment instruments and procedures

1 There is no evidence that steps have been taken to ensure that instruments and procedures used to set standards for learning outcomes for the school are nondiscriminatory regarding racial or gender differences or student disabilities.

2 **Evidence is provided** in the claims for nondiscrimination regarding racial and gender differences and student disabilities for all assessment instruments and procedures used to set standards **for achievement** of learning outcomes.

4 Analysis of Student Performance Data

4-1 Compilation and analysis of assessment data

1 There is little or no systematic collection, comparison or weighting of assessment data for the school, nor is there an indication of the percent of students who met standards for learning outcomes for fundamental learning areas.

2 There is **systematic** collection, comparison and weighting of assessment data for the school **with an indication of** the percent of students who met standards for **some but not all** learning outcomes for **all** fundamental learning areas.

* **Points awarded for standards (2-2) are two (2) or more.**

3 There is systematic collection, comparison and weighting of assessment data for the school with an indication of the percent of students who met standards for **all** learning outcomes for all fundamental learning areas.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **four (4) or more.**

* **A process for identifying strengths and weaknesses of the student population of the school is evident.**

* **Disaggregation of data for groups in the student population of the school identified by special program inclusion is conducted for all learning outcomes for the same grades.**

* **A process for identifying strengths and weaknesses of groups identified for data disaggregation in the student population of the school is evident.**

* **Participants in data analysis are identified.**

4 There is systematic collection, comparison and weighting of assessment data for the school with an indication of the percent of students who met standards for all learning outcomes in all fundamental learning areas.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are four (4) or more.

* A **formal** process for identifying strengths and weaknesses of the student population of the school is **in place**.

* Disaggregation of data for **identified** groups in the student population of the school **is conducted for all learning outcomes**.

* A **formal** process for identifying strengths and weaknesses of groups identified for data disaggregation in the student population of the school is evident.

* Participants in data analysis are identified.

4-2 Data sufficiency for decision-making

1 Data for the school are insufficient to make decisions regarding student progress for each learning outcome.

2 **Only limited** data are available for the school **based on results from valid, reliable, and nondiscriminatory assessment instruments and procedures for learning outcomes** to make decisions regarding student progress for each learning outcome, **including that of any groups in the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis**.

* **These data for the school are used to track student achievement over time in the fundamental learning areas.**

3 The **data** available for the school are based on results from **a variety of** valid, reliable, and nondiscriminatory assessment instruments and procedures **used to set standards** for learning outcomes.

* **There is a complete data set for the school which states student performance on each dimension of a standard and student performance in meeting the standard sufficient** to make decisions regarding student progress for each learning outcome, including that of groups in the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis.

* **All students in the school at least in the benchmark grades or in the instructional group are accounted for.**

* These data are used to track student achievement over time in the fundamental learning areas.

5 Evaluation of Student Performance and School Programs

5-1 Evaluation of student performance by standard

1 There is little or no evidence that student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes is improving over time in the fundamental learning areas.

2* There is evidence that improvement in student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has occurred over time in some fundamental learning areas.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are two (2) or more.

* Points awarded for data sufficiency (4-2) are two (2) or more.

3* There is evidence that improvement in student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has occurred over time in **each** fundamental learning area **for the student population and for groups in the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis.**

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **three (3) or more.**

* Points awarded for data sufficiency (4-2) are two (2) or more.

4* There is evidence that improvement in student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has occurred over time in each fundamental learning area for the student population and for groups in the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis.

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **four (4) or more.**

* Points awarded for data sufficiency (4-2) are **three (3) or more.**

5* There is **compelling** evidence that improvement in student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has occurred over time in each fundamental learning area for the student population and for groups in the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis.

* **Student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has been maintained relative to those standards for learning outcomes where improvement was not evidenced.**

* Points awarded for standards (2-2) are **five (5) or more.**

* Points awarded for data sufficiency (4-2) are three (3) or more.

6* There is compelling evidence that improvement in student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has occurred over time **for a majority of learning outcomes** in each fundamental learning area for the student population and for groups in

the student population identified for disaggregate data analysis.

- * Student performance in meeting standards for learning outcomes has been maintained relative to those standards for learning outcomes where improvement was not evidenced.
- * Points awarded for standards (2-2) are five (5) or more.
- * Points awarded for data sufficiency (4-2) are **four (4)**.
- * **Point values 2 through 6 will be doubled in calculating the total points for a school.**

5-2 Program evaluation

1 There is little or no evidence of program evaluation for the school based on student performance on learning outcomes.

2 Evidence exists that there is program evaluation for the school that identifies probable causes for students' failure to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

* There is no evidence of formal program evaluation that identifies probable causes for the failure of students in identified groups in the student population to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

3 Evidence exists that there is **formal** program evaluation for the school that identifies probable causes for students' failure to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

* **Evidence exists that there is** formal program evaluation for the school that identifies probable causes for the failure of students in identified groups in the student population to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

4 **Compelling** evidence exists that there is formal program evaluation for the school that identifies probable causes for students' failure to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

* **Compelling** evidence exists that there is formal program evaluation that identifies probable causes for the failure of students in identified groups in the student population to meet standards for learning outcomes (if applicable).

* **Consideration is given to proposals for what can be done differently to better identify probable causes for students' failure to meet standards for learning outcomes.**

6 Establishing New Expectations and Program Improvements

6-1 Annual review of expectations

1 Expectations which exist for the school are not subject to annual review.

2 Expectations which exist for the school are subject to annual review and revision, if warranted based on student performance data and data trends for the school.

3 Expectations which exist for the school are subject to **review/revision through a systematic, formal, and consultative process utilizing** student performance data and data trends for the school.

6-2 Activities planned to increase student performance to meet new or existing expectations and consideration of changes in demographics or instruction in establishing expectations

1 There is little or no evidence that changes in curriculum, instruction, staff development, organizational structure, etc., for the school will be implemented in order to improve the achievement of students in meeting standards for learning outcomes or to effect other improvements in student learning at the school.

* There is little or no evidence of planned strategies for improving the performance of students in the school who have not met standards for learning outcomes for the school.

* There is little or no evidence of planned strategies for improving student attendance, truancy, graduation rates, and the climate of the school to enhance instructional efforts.

2 There is evidence that changes in curriculum, instruction, staff development, organizational structure, etc., will be implemented for the school in order to improve the achievement of students in meeting standards for learning outcomes or to effect other improvements in student learning at the school.

* These changes are incremental and are not directed by student performance data for the school.

* There are no formally planned strategies for improving the performance of students who have not met standards for learning outcomes for the school.

* Informal consideration is given to possible changes in demographics and instruction.

* There is evidence of planned strategies for improving student attendance, truancy, graduation rates, and the climate of the school to enhance instructional efforts.

3 There is **compelling** evidence that changes in curriculum, instruction, staff development, organizational structure, etc., for the school will be implemented in order to improve the achievement of students in meeting standards for learning outcomes or to effect other improvements in student learning at the school.

- * These changes are incremental and are **directed** by student performance data for the school.

- * There **are** planned strategies for improving the performance of students who have not met standards for learning outcomes for the school.

- * Informal consideration is given to possible changes in demographics and instruction.

- * There is evidence of planned strategies for improving student attendance, truancy, graduation rates, and the climate of the school to enhance instructional efforts.

4 There is compelling evidence that changes in curriculum, instruction, staff development, organizational structure, etc., for the school will be implemented in order to improve the achievement of students in meeting standards for learning outcomes or to effect other improvements in student learning at the school.

- * These changes are **systematic** and are directed by student performance data for the school.

- * There are **formal** planned strategies for improving the performance of students who have not met standards for learning outcomes for the school.

- * **Formal** consideration is given to possible changes in demographics and instruction.

- * There is **compelling** evidence of **formal** planned strategies for improving student attendance, truancy, graduation rates, and the climate of the school to enhance instructional efforts.

7 Reporting to the Public

7-1 Regular communication is conducted with the school board, parents of students, and local media on student progress towards meeting the standards for achieving learning outcomes

1 There is no evidence of regular communication with the school board, parents of students, and local media on student progress towards meeting the standards for achieving learning outcomes.

2 Information describing how students of the school are being served and how well they are achieving relative to standards for learning outcomes is available.

* Some audiences are addressed; partial information is presented in some communication formats.

* There is no evidence that procedures are in place to help audiences to understand the information provided.

3 Information describing how students of the school are being served and how well they are achieving relative to standards for learning outcomes is available.

* **All audiences are addressed and timetables are established for releasing information to audiences.**

* **People are identified to provide information on student progress toward meeting standards for achieving learning outcomes.**

* **Information is complete in all communication formats.**

* There is **evidence** that **limited** procedures are in place to help students to understand the information provided.

4 Information describing how students of the school are being served and how well they are achieving relative to standards for learning outcomes is available.

* All audiences are addressed and timetables are established for releasing information to audiences.

* Information is complete in all communication formats.

* **Systematic** procedures are in place to assist the audiences **interpret** and understand the information provided.

* People responsible for providing information on student progress in meeting standards for learning outcomes are **qualified and provided appropriate training**.