

Using Assessment and Evaluation to drive School Improvement

Principals' Conference
Jamaica Independent Schools' Association
Conference and Retreat 2011

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Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort
Thursday, April 14, 2011

A School Improvement Plan:

Is a road map that...

- sets out changes a school needs to make to improve achievement levels
- Shows how and when these changes are made.
- Helps principals, teachers, and school stakeholders address questions:
 - “What will we focus on now?”
 - “What are your expectations for improvement?”

A School Improvement Plan:

Is a road map that...

- Encourages staff and parents to monitor student achievement levels and other factors, such as the school environment
- Uses reliable data on student performance to respond to the needs of students, teachers, and parents
- Allows the public to hold schools accountable for student success

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Terms

Terms such as – **assessments, tests, measurements** and **evaluations** are often used interchangeably

It is important to distinguish among these terms and to know how they are applied to educational situations



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Assessments

Assessments are a combination of qualitative and quantitative attributes – observations, responses. It is a broader term than tests or measurement as not all assessments yield measurements

We are always being assessed not only in the classroom but in everyday life

- What people say
- Their facial expressions
- Their choice of words

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Tests

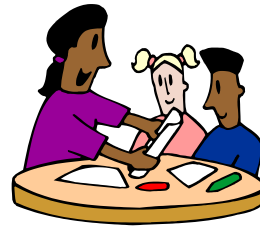
Tests are narrower than assessments –

- These are instruments or a systematic process used for observing and describing characteristics
- The descriptions are usually numerical or some classified structure
- They provide information about individual students; attainment of goals/standards by schools
- Survey tests – assess impact of educational effort by describing

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Measurement



Measurement is a procedure for assigning a **score** to a specified attribute or characteristic.

- Resulting scores maintain the order that exists among persons being measured
 - Number /grade assignment
 - Scale to rate quality of product

(Nitko, 2001)

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Evaluation

Evaluation is making a value judgment about the worth of a product or performance – is this student worthy of promotion/acceptance?

- Gather information / review / compare to known quality standards
- Leads to decisions /course of action

We are always evaluating:

- Reactions to what people say and do
- We study and compare and decide on an action

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Evaluation and School Improvement

These are important – we need to:

1. Have clear goals about your vision for student development
2. Know if you are meeting goals and performing according to expectations
3. Analyze instruction and assessment practices to identify targets for improvement
4. Create an action plan to meet goals
5. Be clear about standards and attaining these

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Critical Beliefs

We must believe in, value, and be committed to:

- Student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
- The proposition that all students can achieve high standards of learning
- Collaborative problem solving with staff and stakeholders
- Ongoing collection and analysis of data

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Critical Beliefs (contd.)

We must believe in, value, and be committed to:

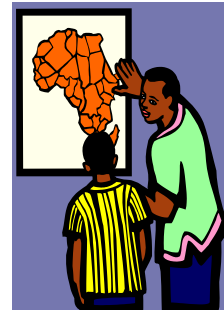
- Data-driven decision making
- Life long learning for self and others
- Focus and alignment to achieve goals
- Doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

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10 Traits of Highly Successful Schools

- A strong, knowledgeable principal
- Superior teachers
- Motivated Students
- Involved and committed parents
- Strong standards of learning
- Solid academic curriculum
- High levels of achievement of students
- An academically focused mission
- Strong, open communication
- A safe environment for all



Elaine McEwan

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The Big Picture National Expectations

Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC) School Inspections for School Improvement

Inspection indicators are a structured a set of eight questions about the educational provision and performance of every school.

JTC – School Inspection Questions

1. How effectively is the school led and managed by the Board, the principal and senior management team and middle leadership?
2. How effectively does the teaching support the students' learning?
3. How well do students perform in national and/or regional tests and assessments? (For infants: in relation to age-related expectations)
4. How much progress do students make in relation to their starting points?
5. How good is the students' personal and social development?
6. How effectively does the school use the human and material resources at its disposal to help the students achieve as well as they can?
7. How well do the curriculum and any enhancement programmes meet the needs of the students?
8. How well does the school ensure everyone's security, health, safety and well-being?

School Improvement - Group Activity

1. Each member reads the questions, reflects and identifies at least **1 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat** as these relate to his/her school (5 minutes)
2. Share with a partner – document new ideas (5 minutes)
3. Partners share in large group
4. Group focuses on a specific area for improvement and state how principals collect and interpret data, create structures, activities and timelines for school improvement (20 minutes)

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Group Roles

Roles:

1. **Leader** - Makes sure that every voice is heard and focuses work around the learning task
2. **Recorder** - compiles group members' ideas for the whole class to see during the presentation
3. **Time Keeper** - encourages the group to stay on task and announces time
4. **Presenter** - presents the group's finished work
5. **Everyone** – listens, reflects and contributes to the discussion and presentation points

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Some Questions to consider

What are the:

1. Performance targets?
2. Areas of focus and implementation strategies?
3. Indicators of success?
4. Time lines and responsibility for implementing strategies
5. Checkpoints for status updates and opportunities for revisions.
6. Is the process open and transparent?
7. Who will contribute to the planning process and in what capacity?

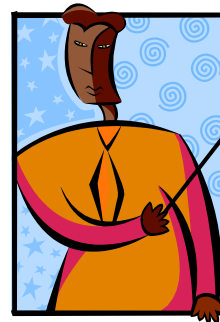
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Presentations

On Flip Chart –

Display key **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats** and focus of the School Improvement Plan



Groups present (2 minutes each) –

- State focus area and recommend school improvement structures, activities and timelines

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