



2023-2024 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for
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2023-2024 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Schools

James T Alton Middle School
Danielle Cassady
100 Country Club Road
Vine Grove, Kentucky, 40175
United States of America

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Understanding Continuous Improvement: The Needs Assessment for Schools

The Needs Assessment Diagnostic will facilitate the use of multiple sources of data to determine the current reality and establish a foundation for decision-making around school goals and strategies. Once completed, the diagnostic will lead to priorities to be addressed in the comprehensive school improvement plan to build staff capacity and increase student achievement. The needs assessment is to be conducted annually as an essential part of the continuous improvement process and precedes the development of strategic goals (i.e. desired state).

While the focus of continuous improvement is student performance, the work must be guided by the aspects of teaching and learning that affect performance. An effective improvement process should address the contributing factors creating the learning environment (inputs) and the performance data (outcomes).

The needs assessment provides the framework for all schools to clearly and honestly identify their most critical areas for improvement that will be addressed later in the planning process through the development of goals, objectives, strategies and activities. 703 KAR 2:225 requires, as part of continuous improvement planning for schools, each school to complete the needs assessment between October 1 and November 1 of each year and include: (1) a description of the data reviewed and the process used to develop the needs assessment; (2) a review of the previous plan and its implementation to inform development of the new plan; and, (3) perception data gathered from the administration of a valid and reliable measure of teaching and learning conditions.

Protocol

1. Clearly detail the process used for reviewing, analyzing and applying data results to determine the priorities from this year's needs assessment. Include names of school councils, leadership teams and stakeholder groups involved, a timeline of the process, the specific data reviewed, and how the meetings are documented.

James T. Alton Middle School utilizes data and the results for improving teacher instruction and student learning. The PEG writing program is used for progress monitoring in writing. Language arts teachers use this data to pinpoint skill deficits and to create mini-lessons to address problems of practice. JTA also uses IReady data to monitor student progress in reading and math. The students take the initial diagnostic in the fall, and then there are two follow-up diagnostics administered in the winter and the spring. The results of these diagnostics are used to monitor student growth over the course of the year and to place students in necessary intervention classes or ESS to recoup lost skills. This assessment data is also shared with all stakeholders, including our SBDM council throughout the year. KSA state assessment data was recently released. This information will be shared with all stakeholders, including the SBDM council. Teachers, in collaboration with administrators, will analyze the results of this data in PLCs and will continue to do so throughout the year. In PLCs, teachers look for trends in the data and examine instructional strategies that have worked for groups of students as well as

individuals. They collaborate to improve instruction by examining alignment to the standards, rigor, and the effect size of different instructional strategies. Particular attention is paid to gap groups and strategies that can be used to increase their growth. All individual student scores (PEG, KSA, IReady) are shared with students and parents. The information is sent home with progress reports and/or grade cards. Parents also have the opportunity on parent/teacher nights to go over the assessment scores and compare to past years data and grade level benchmarks. Students receive goal setting sheets in the fall and meet with their reading and math teachers to set realistic goals for improvement. In the spring, every student will have a conference with an administrator to goal set for the final IReady diagnostic end of year state assessment. Administration also keeps track of students who are failing and in need of academic interventions for credit recovery; this list is updated weekly. A/B honor roll is calculated every trimester.

In addition to achievement data, JTA looks at behavior/discipline data, attendance, and grades routinely. Our PBIS committee meets monthly to go over student data and plan incentives to improve in these areas. In addition, they look at individual student behavior to determine a "best fit" intervention for students in need of supplemental instruction in behavior. Administration works closely with our Youth Service Center Coordinator to plan our truancy diversion program to improve attendance. Students complete a social emotional wellness survey at the beginning of the year. The results of that survey, combined with Universal Screener data and feedback from the counseling office are used to determine counseling interventions for students.

Review of Previous Plan

2. Summarize the implementation of the goals, objectives, strategies and activities from the previous year's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). What was successful? How does it inform this year's plan?

Goal 1 was to increase the percentage of students proficient in reading and math.

We used district ESSER money to allocate a reading and math interventionist to deliver targeted interventions to students who were below the 16th percentile.

Reading and math teachers completed progress monitoring for all students using the IReady MyPath program in their Enhancement classes. They used this data to set goals with students routinely. Achievement data was collected through IReady and state assessments and teachers analyzed that data in PLCs to determine how the data would impact their instruction. Special education teachers were trained in Orton Gillingham strategies to increase reading comprehension and fluency.

Unfortunately, the IReady MyPath program that was purchased to address these skill deficits was not been implemented with complete fidelity. As a result, our reading scores actually went down from 46% scoring proficient in 2022 to 44% proficient in 2023. Our math scores went up from 36% scoring proficient in 2022 to 39% scoring proficient in 2023.

Goal 2 was to increase the percentage of students scoring proficient in science, social studies, and combined writing. To do this, we implemented monthly team PLCs where teachers could discuss instructional strategies and analyze student data to inform instruction in their classrooms as well as ensure alignment between

standards, learning targets, and assessment measures. Unfortunately, in science scores declined significantly. They went from 30% of students scoring proficient in 2022 to 23% of students scoring proficient in 2023. Social Studies did much better. We were able to increase our scores from 36% scoring proficient in 2022 to 43% in 2023. Our writing scores continue to be an area of strength for JTA. We went from 57% of students scoring proficient in 2022 to 60% scoring proficient in 2023.

Our next goal was to reduce the number of students with IEPs scoring novice in reading and math. To address this, we focused on providing professional development to collaborative teams to improve instruction in the collab classroom. Teachers were given time to plan and were provided with planning strategies and collaborative models. Time in SpEd. PLCs was spent on improving instruction rather than housekeeping issues. The goal was to reduce the percentage of students with IEPs to 20% or less in both reading and math. While we were able to reduce the percentage of students scoring novice, unfortunately we are still not close to achieving this goal. In reading and math we still have 52% of students with IEPs scoring novice. Clearly, much more work needs to be done in this area.

Finally our last goal was to increase our school climate indicator by 1 point and our school safety indicator by 2 points. To do this we surveyed teachers, parents, and students periodically throughout the year to receive feedback and recommendations to improve school climate. We also collaborated with parents, students, staff, and local law enforcement to improve safety measures. For example, we replaced all of our locks to the outside doors to enable key fob entrance for staff, and we wrapped our windows and doors to provide added security by diminishing visibility from the outside. We also made sure that every classroom was labeled with the teacher's name and room number. Unfortunately, this did not produce the results we were hoping for. Our school climate score went down by .2 and our safety score went down by 1 point.

Trends

3. Analyzing data trends from the previous two academic years, which academic, cultural and behavioral measures remain significant areas for improvement?

Example of Trends

- The number of behavior referrals increased from 204 in 2021-22 to 288 in 2022-23.
- From 2021 to 2023, the school saw an 11% increase in novice scores in reading among students in the achievement gap.

The number of behavior referrals increased to 1, 672 referrals in 2022. This is mostly due to the fact that we implemented a new PBIS system which tracks school-wide points for students and requires students to see an administrator once they reach their 5th point. While this system does generate more behavior referrals, we are seeing a decline in the number of serious offenses because students are seen earlier and more often, and staff is able to intervene quicker with an appropriate intervention.

Last year's overall attendance rate was 94.12% for the year. Already this year we are seeing an increase in attendance. So far JTA has about at 95% attendance rate for the 2023-2024 academic year.

The overall mean on the employee engagement survey went up quite a bit last year. At the end of 2022 the mean on the Studer teacher engagement survey was a 3.61; that score at the end of 2023 was 4.33. The lowest scoring areas were in allocation of resources and regular exchange of ideas. The overall mean on the parent satisfaction survey also went up over the last year. In 2022 the average mean for the family engagement survey was 3.28. For 2023 that mean went up to 3.8, which is a significant gain. Even so, the lowest scoring areas remain consistent, with parents indicating that they wish for more communication from school to home about how their children are doing academically (3.10), and they wish for more positive communication (2.88).

Academically, scores are trending positively. The actual performance of students scoring on grade level as measured by the IReady diagnostic went up by 14.67% in reading and 17.67% in math. In science, the goal was to increase the percentage of students scoring at proficiency 30% to 32% as measure by the end of year KSA assessment. The score actually dropped dramatically to 23% scoring proficient. This puts JTA behind on reaching its 3 year goal of 39.9% proficient. The goals for social studies was to increase 37% of students reaching proficiency to 40%. JTA surpassed that goal, with 44% of students scoring proficient. Writing continues to be an area of strength for JTA. The combined writing scores for JTA last year were 60% proficient, which is up from 54% from the previous year.

Our scores for students with IEPs as measured by KSA did go up this year, and we were able to remove our TSI classification for students with IEPs. However, as mentioned before, there is still a significant gap between students with disabilities and their peers. This is an area in which we will continue to strive for improvement.

Current State

4. Plainly state the current condition of the school using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of outcome data. Cite the source of data used.

Example of Current Academic State:

- Thirty-four percent (34%) of students in the achievement gap scored proficient on Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) in reading.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) of our students scored proficient in math compared to the state average of 57%.

Example of Non-Academic Current State:

- Teacher attendance rate was 84% for the 2022-23 academic year.
- Survey results and perception data indicated 62% of the school's teachers received adequate professional development.

The overall attendance rate for students last year was 94.12%. So far this year, our attendance rate is slightly higher at 95%. Staff attendance last year was 92.55, which is up from the year before (90.6). So far this year, staff attendance is 93.84%. This is still lower than we would like, but it is trending in the positive direction.

We currently have 4 retired teachers who are filling certified staffing positions. We also have 1 long-term substitute who is not yet certified and 2 teachers who will soon go on maternity leave.

The combined reading and math scores as measured by the KSA end of year assessment went up this year for all students by .9, with the status going from a 57.9 to a 58.6. Math scores went up from 52.4 to 55.8 for an overall increase of 3.4 points. Reading on the other hand went down by 1.7 points. Reading scores went from 63 to 61.3. This is concerning considering the district's scores went up by 2.6 points. JTA was able to show an increase in its students with IEPs. Their overall score went from 29.6 to 34.3, for an overall gain of 4.7, so JTA was able to reduce the achievement gap for students with disabilities and remove the TSI classification for students with disabilities.

Social studies and writing also made significant gains this year. Social studies went from 55.4 to 59.3 and writing went from 73.2 to 76.5. Writing is by far our strongest area, and we have already met our goal of increasing that score to 70 by 2025. Unfortunately, our science scores went down from 51 to 49.2, for a 1.8 drop.

IReady has been our constant measure of student achievement for the last 2 years because KPREP was not mandatory in 2021. As of the last IReady diagnostic that was administered in August, 38% of our students are on grade level in reading, and 24% are on grade level in math. The breakdown of reading scores is 6th grade = 39% proficient; 7th grade = 32% proficient; and 8th grade = 42% proficient. The breakdown of math scores is 6th grade = 32% proficient; 7th grade = 19% proficient; and 8th grade = 22% proficient. Last year students in math were able to grow to 36.67% proficient from 19% proficient at the beginning of the year. In reading, students went from 34.33% proficient to 49% proficient.

The performance of our disability with IEP group is still a major concern. They continue to under perform compared to all students. 52% of these students are novice readers as compared to 28% of students overall. 52% of this group is also scoring novice in math compared to 33% of all students. We are examining data in PLCs and looking at best practice strategies to improve instruction for ALL students. We are also examining IEPs, modifications and accommodations, placement, and teacher expectations for our disability population.

Priorities/Concerns

5. Clearly and concisely identify the greatest areas of weakness using precise numbers and percentages.

NOTE: These priorities will be thoroughly addressed in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) diagnostic and template.

Example: Sixty-eight percent (68%) of students in the achievement gap scored below proficiency on the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) in reading as opposed to just 12% of non-gap learners.

Attendance is an area of concern for JTA. While our attendance has improved some over the last couple of years, we still have quite a few students who are truant.

These same students tend to score novice in all areas of the KSA test. Getting these students to attend school regularly will help our scores quite a bit.

The most recent KSA data indicates the following: JTA underperformed compared to the district in both reading (61.3) and science (49.2). Our scores also declined from the previous year in both of these areas. While our math scores are higher than the district average, and they are trending up, we still have 33% of our students scoring novice on the end of year state assessment. For these reasons, reading and math continue to be an area of focus for JTA. Science is another weakness for JTA. Our scores are trending down, and we lost ground last year (-1.8 points), whereas the rest of the district made gains (+.9). I believe one reason for this is our inability to find good quality certified science teachers. We currently have 2 retired teachers teaching science. James T Alton's success at improving science scores will be determined by our ability to fill these positions with quality teachers.

Finally, our scores for students with disabilities increased in every area of the test this year. However, we still have 52% of students with IEPs scoring novice in reading and math, 54% scoring novice in writing, 85% scoring novice in social studies, and 32% scoring novice in science. Clearly, more needs to be done to support these students.

Strengths/Leverages

6. Plainly state, using precise numbers and percentages revealed by current data, the strengths and leverages of the school. Explain how they may be utilized to improve areas of concern listed above.

Example: Reading achievement has increased from 37% proficient to its current rate of 58%. The systems of support we implemented for reading can be adapted to address our low performance in math.

The most recent KPREP data indicates the following: JTA outperformed the district and state's Proficient/Distinguished percentages in writing. Our combined writing score is a 76.5, while the districts is 68.6. We only have 13% of students scoring novice in writing, whereas in other areas there is more than double the percentage of students scoring novice. The systems of support we implemented for writing can definitely be adapted to address our low performance in reading, math and science.

Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Environment

7 . Consider the processes, practices and conditions evident in the teaching and learning environment as identified in the six Key Core Work Processes outlined below:

[KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards](#)

[KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction](#)

[KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy](#)

[KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results](#)

[KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support](#)

[KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture](#)

Utilizing implementation data, perception data, and current policies and practices:

a. Complete the [Key Elements Template](#).

- **b. Upload your completed template in the attachment area directly below.**

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment Name

 Key Elements

8. After analyzing the Key Elements of your teaching and learning environment, which processes, practices or conditions will the school focus its resources and efforts upon in order to produce the desired changes?

Note that all processes, practices and conditions can be linked to the six Key Core Work Processes.

NOTE: These elements will be thoroughly addressed in the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CSIP) diagnostic and template.

KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards; KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction;
KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy; KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data

Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)
 2023 School Key Elements		•
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