

# **CHARACTER EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

## **Indicators and Standards for Improving Schools (ISIS)**

### **Steps in the Self-Study / Needs Assessment Process<sup>1</sup>**

The ISIS is a process that allows a school or district to review its character education and social development programs using a rubric which is structured through a set of standards which includes all of the main aspects of school reform. Reading through the rubrics for each standard should be instructional by itself or it could be used in conjunction with the Eleven Principles of Character Education standards of the Character Education Partnership.

The following are the recommended steps to take to use the ISIS process as a school/district assessment process in the context of an action planning framework:

1. Establish a school/district Character Education Advisory Board. The advisory board could be an expansion of an existing board or committee, a subcommittee of an existing board of education standing committee, or an entirely new group. It must include representation from students, parents, community members, and faith-based representatives as well as school administrators and staff.
2. Collect and begin a review of the district's current character education and related programs. Take a comprehensive approach and try to account for the many different policies, programs and activities that may contribute to character education and social/emotional learning prek-12 (for example, don't forget peer mediation programs, codes of student conduct and after-school programs).
3. Review the Character Education Indicators and Standards for Improving Schools (CE/ISIS ) and determine what additional data you need to collect to gain a better perspective on the current status of district programs and determine how you will obtain the data for review by the advisory board.

### **How to Use the CE/ISIS Tool**

#### **Holistic Scoring Steps**

Once a school district needs assessment team has collected available data, the CE/ISIS is used to assess the status of the current character education program.

- The scoring process consists of assigning a single performance level rating (1 to 4) based on an overall view of an indicator.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the New Jersey Department of Education Indicators and Standards for Improving Schools needs assessment process.

- It is an inferential process in which the advisory board draws some overall data and evidence-based conclusions based on the specific performance level criteria about the school's performance.
- Those involved should carefully review the indicator statement to determine how thoroughly the relevant performance level criteria meet the indicator.
- The indicators should be assessed as a whole—it is important to resist averaging the performance level criteria in the rows.
- Those involved should strive to reach consensus.
- Not all criteria statements in a given performance level must be applicable in order for the indicator to receive a performance score. Some criteria statements may not be applicable or the information or data necessary to make a decision is not available. If data is not available at this time, it may be necessary to collect it in the future.

### **Step 1 – Review the Performance Level Categories**

- 4 Exemplary level of development and implementation
- 3 Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation
- 2 Limited development or partial implementation
- 1 Little or no development and implementation

### **Step 2 – Obtain a Holistic View of the Selected Performance Level Criteria**

- Read the indicator and performance level criteria (information in the rows) by yourself.
- Discuss your thoughts with the advisory board.
- Based on the advisory board's findings, select the appropriate criteria statement(s) in the performance levels.
- Summarize the advisory board's selected criteria statements in order to obtain a holistic view.

### **Step 3 – Assign the Final Performance Level Rating to the Indicator**

- Review the data and evidence to support the performance level.
- Review the language of the indicator to determine which performance level (1 to 4) the selected criteria represent.
- Assign the performance level (1 to 4) to the indicator.
- Record the assigned performance level on the CE/ISIS Summary Rating Form provided by the NJCCE.

After the advisory board selects the level of implementation or performance for a specific standard they believe is most reflective of the district's data and evidence contained in the district's profile, they then use this determination to develop a plan

for action. By proceeding in this way, an advisory board can assess the district's level of performance for each standard and associated indicators to determine what needs to be done to address a need, and build the three-year operational plan to address those needs.

After the three-year operational plan is created, the ISIS and the needs assessment process will be used each year to monitor progress toward goals, determine effectiveness of current actions, and make changes and plan accordingly.