

School Inquiry Process Map

The following school inquiry process map is intended as an aid to conducting an integrated school-improvement process that includes a self-study, an external review, or both. We encourage you to create your own timeline for this process, taking into consideration the following:

- The self-study process is an ongoing component of a larger school-improvement process.

Although demanding in its initial year, a self-study can become easier in subsequent years, once an infrastructure and

culture of continuous improvement is created to support your school-improvement strategy. Over time, the process of identifying school needs and the strategies for addressing them can become a normal part of school operation.

- The frequency with which schools receive external visits in your system and the time schools are given to prepare for and follow up on an external visit can vary.

Review cycles range from every three years to every ten years. Preparation time ranges from three months to twenty-eight months. Create your timeline and work plan according to your school, district, or state review requirements.

Appendix D

NOTE: Time permitted to complete the school inquiry process described in this map varies from site to site. For those seeking to conduct a self-study on their own, outside of an externally coordinated process, we suggest that six to eight months be provided to complete the self-study.

Conducting a Self-Study

Date	Task	Date	Task
	Form School-Improvement Team (SIT)		Conduct the Self-Study
	Select SIT members		Establish desired outcomes for student achievement
	Select SIT coordinator		Select your essential question(s)
	Conduct SIT orientation		Name all data that already exists
	Obtain Needed Resources		Decide what additional data is needed or can be collected with the resources obtainable
	Select and set aside time to meet and plan regularly (e.g., weekly, monthly, etc.)		Delegate data collection tasks among SIT members and remaining faculty
	Define method of communication between SIT and faculty		Collect data
	Map out skills to conduct self-study		Define areas or groups data should be separated into (e.g., by anticipated graduation year, by department, by years at school, by gender, by first language spoken, etc.)
	Identify skills within school community required to complete review and obtain them		Disaggregate data
	Make sure SIT members are dedicated and committed to coordinating the self-study and external review team visit		Identify and acknowledge potential limitations and biases of data collected
	Choose standards of practice and evaluation measures		Compare data sets to each other, looking for multiple data sources to inform the portrait of your school
	Choose focus areas		Look for trends
	Determine standards of practice		Meet as a school or school community to discuss conclusions
	Choose appropriate performance indicators		Draw conclusions
	Choose appropriate rubrics		

Preparing for an External Review

Date	Task	Date	Task
	Prepare Documentation		Meet with External Review Team Representatives
	Clarify documentation requirements (self-study results, portfolio, etc.)		Set/negotiate schedule for visit
	Clarify purpose of documentation and its primary audience(s)		Contact members of the school community that the ERT would like to meet with during the visit
	Select documentation method and format		Clarify with the ERT what additional documents they may want to review that aren't included in your self-study documentation
	Delegate tasks for documentation		Gather additional documents (if any) needed
	Gather documentation		Collect and assemble all documents
	Plan Logistics		Place documents in a central place accessible to the ERT
	Secure private in-school workspace or conference room for external visit		Prepare School Community for External Visit
	Arrange for provision of meals for external review team (ERT) members (if necessary)		Conduct staff orientation
	Obtain directions to the school and a phone number where ERT members can get calls in case of an emergency		Conduct student orientation
	Send out parent notification of visit and obtain parent permissions for classroom observation (if necessary)		

After a Self-Study or External Review

Date	Task	Date	Task
	Analyze Conclusions		Share Conclusions
	Decipher conclusions cited in report of the School-Improvement Team (SIT) or External Review Team (ERT)		Name the audiences (e.g., parents, students, media, etc.) you would like to inform of conclusions reached through the school inquiry process
	Interpret and analyze SIT or ERT report		Determine how school inquiry process conclusions will be communicated
	Compare SIT and ERT conclusions		Execute communication strategy
	Select and Prioritize Actions		Plan to Evaluate Impact on Practice and Student Outcomes
	Map and take stock of assets (e.g., knowledge, skills, time, etc.) accessible to the school to implement an action plan		Document the baseline of the school's practices/outcomes
	Build action plan from internal and external review conclusions and recommendations as well as the school's school improvement plan		Decide how you will measure improvement in school practices/outcomes
	If necessary, prepare response to the ERT's report that includes actions that will be taken based upon the review		Develop a timeline for evaluating improvement and for the next self-study cycle