

COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM

The following information has been adapted from the Comprehensive School Reform Guidance, July 26, 2002, United States Department of Education.

A comprehensive school reform program is one that addresses each of the following 11 components in a comprehensive and integrated design.

1. Proven methods and strategies based on scientifically based research:

A comprehensive school reform program employs proven strategies and methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on scientifically-based research and effective practices and have been replicated successfully in schools.

This component emphasizes the need for schools, in designing their comprehensive reform program, to employ proven strategies and methods that are grounded in scientifically-based research in core academic subjects, especially mathematics and reading. Staying focused on academic achievement, building a comprehensive program that supports it, and emphasizing “what works” in the classroom are important elements of a successful comprehensive design.

2. Comprehensive design: A comprehensive design for effective school functioning integrates instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management. By addressing the needs identified through a school needs assessment, it aligns the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development into a plan for schoolwide change. The ultimate goal of this design is to enable all students to meet challenging state content and student academic achievement standards.

3. Professional development: The program provides high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training. The professional development involves proven, innovative strategies that are both cost effective and easily accessible and ensures that teachers are able to use state assessments and challenging state academic content standards to improve instructional practice and student academic achievement.

Well-designed professional development activities increase all teachers’ knowledge of both the academic subjects they teach and effective instructional strategies that are grounded in scientifically-based research. They include strategies such as partnerships with institutions of higher education and address such topics as the use of data and assessment; the use of technology; and improving the instruction of special needs children.

This professional development is intensive, sustained over time, and classroom focused. Those who participate in professional development also help to design it, and the design is well integrated with school and division educational improvement plans. The professional development component is regularly evaluated to gauge its impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved achievement.

- 4. Measurable goals and benchmarks:** A comprehensive school reform program includes measurable goals for student academic achievement and establishes benchmarks for meeting those goals. These goals should be linked to the state's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- 5. Support within the school:** Teachers, principals, administrators, and other staff throughout the school support the program in a CSR school. They demonstrate this support by, among other activities, understanding and embracing the school's comprehensive reform program, focusing on continuous improvement of classroom instruction, and participating in professional development.
- 6. Support for teachers and principals:** A CSR program provides support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts. The program encourages teamwork and the celebration of accomplishments. These and other means of support are part of the school's comprehensive design.
- 7. Parental and community involvement:** The program provides for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities. In addressing this component, school personnel create strategies that are consistent with the parental involvement requirements of Title I, Part A. (See section 1118 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.) School staff pay special attention to building parents' capacity for involvement and design ways in which parents can be brought into the instructional program and contribute to the academic achievement of their children.
- 8. External technical support and assistance:** The program uses high-quality external support and assistance from an entity that has experience and expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement, which may include an institution of higher education. A Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) will be selected and trained by the Department of Education and employed by the school division to work with each school on a regular basis. These individuals will offer on-site support during the full implementation period of the project.
- 9. Annual evaluation:** The program ensures accountability by including a plan for the annual evaluation of the implementation of school reforms and the student results achieved. The evaluation helps ensure that the school is making progress

toward achieving its measurable goals and benchmarks and that necessary adjustments and improvements will be made to the reform strategies.

10. Coordination of resources: The comprehensive program should identify federal, state, local, and private financial and other resources that schools can use to coordinate services that support and sustain comprehensive school reform.

11. Strategies that improve academic achievement: The program must meet one of the following requirements:

- The program has been found, through scientifically-based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students;
- or*
- The program has been found to have strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children.

Using all 11 components, schools must create a comprehensive, integrated reform program that affects all subjects, all teachers, and all children in the school.