IL-EMPOWER

School Improvement in Tier 3 and Tier 4 Schools

CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE
cecwweb.org
Outcomes

• Review the basic components and requirements of IL-EMPOWER

• Develop an understanding of how CEC approaches school improvement and the vital role of a Needs Assessment in school improvement.

• Learn about the partnership opportunities with CEC through the Individual and Network Pathways.
IL-EMPOWER

- IL-EMPOWER is the Illinois name given to the structure that will address low performing schools as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- IL-EMPOWER is the new statewide structure through which schools will be able to select a Learning Partner(s) and access school improvement services.
ISBE ON IL-EMPOWER

From ISBE.net:

■ “…empower schools with greater choice and voice in the school improvement process.”

■ “IL-EMPOWER gives schools resources to focus on the needs of the whole child. Knowing the whole child is created equally from the child’s school, community, and home.”
IL-EMPOWER – THE BASICS

- **Tier 4 Schools** will be required to participate in IL-EMPOWER including selecting a “Learning Partner” to support their improvement plan and work.

- **Tier 4 Schools = lowest - performing**
  ~lowest 5% of schools

- **Learning Partners =**
  Providers approved by ISBE for IL-EMPOWER
NEW ESSA ACCOUNTABILITY

■ **Tier 1: Exemplary School:** A school that has no underperforming subgroups, a graduation rate of greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.

■ **Tier 2: Commendable School:** A school that has no underperforming subgroups and a graduation rate above 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.

■ **Tier 3: Underperforming School:** A school in which one or more subgroup is performing at or below the level of the “all students” group in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools.

■ **Tier 4: Lowest-Performing School:** A school that is in the lowest performing 5 percent Title I schools in Illinois and those high schools that have a graduation rate of 67 percent or less.
PARTICIPATION BY STATUS

■ Tier 1: Exemplary School and Tier 2: Commendable School - May apply to be an IL-EMPOWER Learning Partner for Tier 3 and Tier 4 schools in the future.

■ Tier 3: Underperforming School - School must complete an improvement plan approved by its district. School may access IL-EMPOWER funds if they complete a needs assessment. Schools may choose an approved Learning Partner.

■ Tier 4: Lowest-Performing School - School must participate in IL-EMPOWER including a required Needs Assessment process, choose an approved Learning Partner(s), and have its improvement plan approved by ISBE. Funding available.
THE PROCESS

■ Schools will use a needs assessment to determine opportunities for growth and set targets for improvement.

■ The needs assessment is based upon the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Quality Framework

■ The needs assessment helps identify opportunities for improvement in one or more of the Areas:
  • Governance and Management
  • Curriculum and Instruction
  • Climate and Culture
Beginning in 1987, The Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) incorporated a needs assessment as a formal part of our pathway to support schools and districts to positively impact instructional practices and empower students through learning and in a collaborative process.
An important first step in school improvement practice is assessing current structures and processes to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
The Three Anchors

CEC believes that difficult, day to day improvement efforts can only be sustained through the collaborative and aligned work of the three anchors.
Research: Educator collaboration and partnership positively impact student performance.

School Improvement = District Improvement
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment to Change</th>
<th>Data Readiness</th>
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CEC’S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Improving Systems
- Engaging Learners
- Supporting Leaders
- Building Collaboration
IBAM Quality Framework Standards

- **Standard I**: Continuous Improvement
- **Standard II**: Culture and Climate
- **Standard III**: Shared Leadership
- **Standard IV**: Governance, Management and Operations
- **Standard V**: Educator and Employee Quality
- **Standard VI**: Family and Community Engagement
- **Standard VII**: Student and Learning Development
IL-EMPOWER Planning Year: Needs Assessment and School Improvement Plan Development

I. Getting Ready
II. Self-Assessment
III. Identifying Priorities
IV. Focusing Direction
V. Building Collaborative Teams
VI. Deepening Learning
VII. Securing Accountability
“Just as a doctor’s prescribed course of treatment fails if the patient’s condition has been diagnosed incorrectly, a school intervention will fail if it addresses the wrong problem,” writes The Alliance for Excellent Education (2017).

- An effective needs assessment helps schools determine their most critical challenges and interventions to overcome those challenges.

- The Center for School Turnaround recommends the use of external review and supports for diagnosis and planning for school improvement.
Needs Assessment typically includes:

- Students
- Staff
- Parents
- Community

Needs Assessment typically uses a variety of methods to reach stakeholders:

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- School and Community Asset Mapping
CEC adapts its research-based, targeted support to the needs and capacities of the local system. This takes more time, effort and expertise, but the results are clear.

CEC’s approach to customized assistance to schools, districts, and states helps to build the collaborative structures, processes and cultures needed for learning success and the evidence-based, informed practices that are most likely to positively impact the local setting.
Recommended Steps in the Needs Assessment Process

**Phase I:** Getting Ready
(Establishing Collaborative Commitment)

**Phase II:** Self-Assessment
(Diagnosing Needs)

**Phase III:** Identify Priorities
(Setting Direction)
The importance of Phase I is to:

- Ensure that stakeholders of the school are familiar with the “IBAM Quality Framework”.
- Ensure those stakeholders see the “big picture” for school improvement.
- Ensure a representative team is put together to lead needs assessment and school improvement.
**Phase I: Getting Ready**
(Establishing Collaborative Commitment)

**School Expectations**

1. Develop a shared understanding of school designation and the “IBAM Quality Framework” to inform district and school collaboration.

2. Develop a shared understanding of the purpose of a Needs Assessment aligned to the standards and indicators of “IBAM Quality Framework”.

3. Select a Needs Assessment Team that is representative and supports stakeholder engagement.

**CEC Supports**

1. CEC facilitates the development of a shared understanding of school designation and the “IBAM Quality Framework”.

2. CEC shares the theory behind whole systems school improvement beginning with collaborative commitment and diagnosing needs.

3. CEC assists in selecting a Needs Assessment Team that is representative and supports broad stakeholder engagement including labor and management.
The importance of Phase II is to begin the diagnostic work of the Needs Assessment team by:

- Complete a self-assessment.
- Collect, organize, and discuss the results of the self-assessment.
- Begin to identify evidence to support the results.
Phase II: Self-Assessment (Diagnosing Needs)

School Expectations
1. Members of the Needs Assessment team complete a self-assessment based on the IBAM Quality Framework individually.
2. Share and interpret collective results.
3. Begin to identify evidence to support results.

CEC Supports
1. CEC provides an electronic Needs Assessment tool based on the IBAM Quality Framework for individual self-assessment.
2. CEC presents collective results and facilitates a data discussion among the Needs Assessment Team.
3. CEC guides evidence collection to support consensus results.
The importance of Phase III is to:

- Engage stakeholders in a reflective process to identify school strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Compare school identified strengths and opportunities for improvement with the CEC team’s findings.
- Prioritize opportunities for improvement.
Phase III: Engaging Stakeholders
(Diagnosing Needs / Setting Direction)

School Expectations:
1. Engage stakeholders in a reflective process to identify school strengths and opportunities for improvement.
2. Compare school identified strengths and opportunities for improvement with the CEC team’s findings.
3. Prioritize opportunities for improvement.

CEC Support:
1. CEC team conducts a listening visit to engage stakeholders in a reflective process to identify school strengths and opportunities for improvement.
2. CEC supports Needs Assessment team to compare prioritized opportunities for improvement against the CEC team’s summary.
3. CEC facilitates the identification of strengths and opportunities for improvement with a larger stakeholder group.
Needs Assessment and School Improvement Plan Development for IL-EMPOWER Planning Year
Recommended Steps in the Improvement Process

**Phase IV:** Focusing Direction - PLAN

**Phase V:** Building Collaborative Teams - DO

**Phase VI:** Deepening Learning - STUDY

**Phase VII:** Securing Accountability - ACT
Fullan’s Coherence Framework
The importance of Phase IV is to:

- Analyze root causes of school strengths and prioritized opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure that the school addresses the most urgent, most impactful opportunities for improvement to ensure successful learning for all students.
- Determine a clear and manageable focus for school improvement and a strategy for communicating the goals to all stakeholders.
School Expectations:

1. Dig deeper into prioritized opportunities for improvement by gathering and analyzing data. (If needed, gather and analyze additional perceptual and quantitative data as needed.)
2. Ready a team to identify root causes of school strengths and opportunities for improvement prioritized areas.
3. Identify root causes of school strengths and opportunities for improvement in prioritized areas.
4. Write school improvement goal(s).

CEC Support:

1. CEC facilitates and processes to support a data team in collecting, analyzing and displaying data.
2. CEC provides supports to ensure a healthy and trusting environment for data and root cause analysis.
3. CEC facilitates the identification of root causes through a research-based approach.
4. CEC provides tools to develop a school improvement goal(s) that has robust measures and targets to set the stage for action planning.
Phase V: Building Collaborative Culture

The importance of Phase V is to:

- Ensure school and district decision-making and communication structures are effective and efficient.
- Ensure there are systematic processes for continuous improvement with aligned improvement goals throughout the system.
- Ensure that relationships among stakeholders are positive, respectful, and supportive.
- Ensure voice, engagement, and input from stakeholders.
Phase V: Building Collaborative Culture

School Expectations:
1. Review current leadership structures and committees.
2. Develop plans to improve collaborative structures and processes to facilitate school improvement success.
3. Support teams to become highly effective by renewing purpose, roles & responsibilities, membership, decision-making and communication.

CEC Support:
1. CEC helps to assess the strengths and opportunities of the current leadership structures and processes.
2. CEC develops a targeted plan including training and coaching to improve collaborative leadership within the school and district.
3. CEC coaches teams and team leaders to establish and develop high functioning teams. CEC assists to develop alignment from the district to the school to the teams.
The importance of Phase VI is to:

- Select research-based instructional strategies have been matched to improvement goals.
- Ensure strategies address the academic, behavioral and social emotional priorities for each learner.
- Develop an ambitious and achievable professional learning plan that provides and protects time for collaboration and reflection on practice among teachers and support staff.
School Expectations:
1. Investigate and select effective practices matched to improvement goals in prioritized areas.
2. Translate selected strategies into action plans with a manageable number of tasks.
3. Develop professional learning calendar and plans to support the selected schoolwide strategies.

CEC Support:
1. CEC will support the research for effective practices focused on the whole child.
2. CEC facilitates and provides templates to develop action plans with clear success criteria.
3. CEC supports the development of professional learning plan that supports adult learning practices and maximizes effective use of time.

Phase VI: Deepening Learning
The importance of Phase VII is to:

- Make sure there is reflective, data-driven discussion to answer the question, “Are we making a difference and how do we know?”
- Ensure the system embraces actions that are impactful and adjusts or abandons when actions are not impactful.
- Ensure results are being reported to stakeholders.
**School Expectations:**

1. Develop a progress monitoring and reporting system for selected strategies.
2. Strategy teams collect and analyze data to monitor progress on implementation and results.
3. Make necessary adjustments to ensure a return on the investment (results!) of the strategy work.

**CEC Support:**

1. CEC provides teams with templates to assist in establishing monitoring systems.
2. CEC supports teams to use their established monitoring systems to continuously improve to answer the question, “Are we making a difference and how do we know?”
3. CEC assists to abandon what does not work and embrace what makes a difference.
Partnering with CEC...

**Individual Pathway**
- 11 days (self-paced) through June
- On-site (full day, half day and 2 hour increments)
- Includes CEC Listening Visit
- Works through all seven phases

**Network Pathway**
- 5 full days in regional network learning environment through April (dates TBD-beginning in late October)
- CEC Listening Visit in individual districts on a mutually agreed upon date
- Works through first five phases
“Finding the Power in IL-EMPOWER”

1. **Overview**

2. **Supporting Structures and Systems** - at the state and district level, including assistance from proven outside providers, to jump-start improvement efforts.

3. **Culture Shifts** - that engages all stakeholders, spurs intensive transformation, and rallies the school community around a clear and compelling improvement strategy.

4. **Improvement Leadership** - at the state, district, and school levels that prioritizes improvement efforts and has the desire, capacity, and authority to execute the plan.

5. **Instructional Transformation** - that responds to student needs with rigorous, evidence-based interventions and modifies practices based on data.

6. **Talent Management** - to recruit, develop, and retain high quality educators and build a collaborative team.

Additional Resources:
CEC Web Series
https://www.cecweb.org/finding-the-power-in-il-empower/
Learn more about CEC Programs & Services

- Improving Systems
- Supporting Leaders
- Evaluating Impact
- Strengthening Classrooms
- Building Collaboration
- Transforming Schools

Visit cecweb.org/programs-services
Let’s talk

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