

Reviewing the Draft District Plan for Quality

Strengthening Plan Clarity and Assessing the Plan as a Whole

Why This Step is Important: As the draft plan nears completion—with strategic objectives, initiatives, and outcome measures identified—it is important to provide structured opportunities for the planning team to review, revise, and refine the developing plan. When teams first begin the work of identifying strategic objectives and initiatives, they are grappling with their analysis and understanding of the data used in the planning process and with team members’ individual perspectives. They are focused on the big picture of the plan’s content and on getting that content right. As a result, first draft strategic initiatives and outcomes often act as shorthand placeholders that require additional development.

Structured review opportunities allow the planning team to further develop the initiatives and outcomes set in the draft plan. Such opportunities also allow the team to revise the district plan so that it more accurately represents and communicates to the public the work that is to be done. When the team reviews the draft plan for quality, for example, work that was initially represented as eight strategic initiatives may be consolidated to four. Strategic initiatives that were listed as nouns can be reframed with verbs that better represent the work to be done. It is at this stage, for example, that “Inclusion” can become “Design an effective inclusion model that benefits all students,” or that “Differentiated Instruction” can become “Implement a professional learning system for instructional improvement.” During a quality review, the planning team can also step back to see and evaluate the draft plan as a whole, and ensure that it meets their expectations.

The Process for Conducting a Quality Review: Two *Planning for Success* activities that can support a planning team as it reviews a draft plan and revises it to create the final plan are a strategic objective/strategic initiative revision and a quality review.

1. *Strategic objective/strategic initiative revision:* In a planning team meeting, organize into small groups, one for each strategic objective. As a small group, review the strategic objective’s draft initiatives. Consider whether the initiatives, as structured, accurately represent the work to be done for this objective. Discuss whether to add, eliminate, or consolidate draft initiatives. Review the presentation of initiatives, and revise initiative descriptions as necessary so that initiatives begin with a verb and include adequate detail. Small groups may use the Strategic Objective/Strategic Initiative Revision Worksheet to record the final changes they recommend to the plan. Small groups share the revised initiatives with the whole group, and the whole group strives for consensus on final plan revisions. The time required for this work can range from 1.5 to 2.5 hours.
2. *Quality review:* In a planning team meeting, organize into small groups. As a small group, discuss the assigned quality review question(s) and record the group’s responses on the District Plan Quality Review Feedback Form. Small groups share any proposed revisions with the whole group, and the whole group strives for consensus on final plan revisions. The time required for this work can range from 1.5 to 2.5 hours, depending on the small group structure and assignment of questions.

Text for Facilitator Presentation Slides: Some suggested text for conducting a quality review of the plan draft is included below.

Slide 1: Strategic Objectives/Initiatives Revision

- Organize into strategic objective groups
- Identify a facilitator and recorder
- Review the strategic objective's draft strategic initiatives
- Add, eliminate, or consolidate initiatives as necessary
- Rewrite objectives and initiatives to include verbs and detail
- Share small group work with whole group
- Discuss as whole group

Slide 2: Draft Plan Quality Review

- Stepping back to assess the emerging plan

Slide 3: Quality Review Process

- Organize into [X] small groups
- Identify a facilitator
- Identify a recorder
 - Use the District Plan Quality Review Feedback Form to record group work
- Share small group work with whole group
- Discuss as whole group

Slide 3: Quality Review Questions

1. Does the plan reflect the common vision themes?
2. Are the strategic initiatives actionable?
3. In what ways do initiatives touch the classroom, changing what happens between teachers and students?
4. Will the outcomes provide meaningful measures of plan success and are they SMART?
5. In what ways does the plan reflect a mix of problem solving and innovation for the district?
6. Will this plan provide the level and type of improvement the community seeks?

Strategic Objective/Strategic Initiative Revision Worksheet

Purpose: Many draft strategic objectives and initiatives may be broad and/or stated as nouns (example: “differentiated instruction,” “tiered system of support”). Rewrite strategic objectives and initiatives, as necessary, to make them—and the actions they represent—as clear and accessible to a public audience as possible. Use a verb to frame each one and provide critical detail to convey a sense of “why” (example: “Design an effective inclusion model that benefits all students”). Use this worksheet to record revisions your team would like to make to the final plan.

Revised Strategic Objective: _____

Current Strategic Initiative	Revised Strategic Initiative

District Plan Quality Review Feedback Form

Purpose: Use this worksheet to record comments and questions when conducting a quality review of a district plan draft.

1. Does the plan reflect the common vision themes that emerged during the planning process?

2. Are the strategic initiatives actionable? Is it clear what action the district will take?

Please record specific questions or suggestions for improvement, if any, for individual initiatives.

3. In what ways do these initiatives touch the classroom, changing what happens between teachers and students?

4. Will the outcomes provide meaningful measures of plan success? Are they SMART (specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous and results-focused; timed and tracked)? Please record specific questions or suggestions for improvement, if any, for individual outcomes.

5. In what ways does the plan offer a mix of problem solving and innovation for the district?

6. Will this plan provide the level and type of improvement the community seeks?