Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the School Improvement Process

2016 Georgia Federal Programs Conference

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The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement.
What Will We Cover Today?

- What is comprehensive needs assessment?
- GaDOE’s comprehensive needs assessment process
- Prepare for a comprehensive needs assessment
- The importance of collaboration
- The data collection and analysis
- Identifying root causes
What is a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)?

• A **needs assessment** is the *first step* in **developing** a schoolwide/district wide or school improvement plan. It is a process of looking at data and information about the school/district to develop a clear picture and understanding of what is and has been occurring at the school/district.

• A **needs assessment** is a **process** to help school district teams learn about the areas they are good at (strengths) and the areas in need of improving (challenges).
Why the Need for a CNA?

- Requested from District Directors across Georgia
- Compile Federal Programs needs assessment into one tool
- SEA can extract information from the comprehensive tool for reporting
- Collaboration among all departments (Title I, Title II, Title III, Special Ed, etc.)
GaDOE’s CNA Process

1. Needs Assessment Planning and Preparation
   1.1 Focus the needs assessment
   1.2 Establish the team
   1.3 Create a project plan

2. Needs Assessment Implementation
   2.1 Identify and collect data
   2.2 Data analysis
   2.3 Prioritize needs

3. Reporting and Next Steps
   3.1 Meet local (school/district) requirements
   3.2 Meet GaDOE school planning requirements
   3.3 Meet GaDOE district planning requirements
   3.4 Communicate with additional stakeholders
   3.5 Apply findings to additional programming and improvement needs
   3.6 Transition from needs assessment to planning and implementation of improvement efforts
1. CNA Planning and Preparation

- Collaboration across all departments
- Establishing the CNA team
  - Who should be involved?
  - Responsibilities for each member
1.2 Establish the Team

Who should participate in the needs assessment process?
## 1.2 Possible Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Directors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Administrators</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analyst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Establish the Team

Where are you with Collaboration?

Continuum of Active Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Decisions</th>
<th>Informing Level</th>
<th>Networking Level</th>
<th>Collaborating Level</th>
<th>Transforming Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key actions and behaviors that require your attention</td>
<td>Sharing/Disseminating: One-way communication</td>
<td>Exchanging: Two-way communication</td>
<td>Engaging: Working together on the issue over time</td>
<td>Committing to approach issues through engagement and consensus building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalesce the stakeholders around the issue</td>
<td>Convener/lead agency identifies the issue and disseminates information in ways that encourage participation.</td>
<td>A forum is used to bring a core group of stakeholders together with the intent of gathering feedback to inform decisions on the issue.</td>
<td>The core group expands to include a wide array of stakeholders who unite and take joint action on the issue.</td>
<td>There is a unified and unwavering focus on the issue. Trust and respect are evident, even when there are differences of opinion. The group processes align toward a shared goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure relevant participation</td>
<td>Convener/lead agency identifies stakeholder representatives, and informs them of opportunities to participate.</td>
<td>A core group of stakeholders works with the convener to identify/create an infrastructure for meaningful participation and shared learning.</td>
<td>The expanded group of stakeholders recognizes and values the work of others needed to achieve meaningful outcomes.</td>
<td>Broad stakeholder networks share ownership and influence in achieving the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translate work into ways that others participate</td>
<td>Convener/lead agency asks stakeholder representatives to disseminate information on the issue.</td>
<td>A core group of stakeholders uses the infrastructure to exchange information about the changes that are occurring.</td>
<td>The expanded group of stakeholders involves their networks in bridging knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Broad stakeholder networks support their constituents throughout the practice change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate what is changing by actively doing work with the stakeholders</td>
<td>Convener/lead agency asks the stakeholder representatives to convey the benefit in making changes throughout their networks.</td>
<td>A core group of stakeholders use the infrastructure to exchange information about the changes that are occurring.</td>
<td>The expanded group of stakeholders shares the stories of changes achieved because the networks are more engaged in bridging knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Broad stakeholder networks exchange stories of practice change and outcomes. They communicate the changes in ways that advance acceptance and the changes are enthusiastically embraced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate what is changing by actively doing the work</td>
<td>Stakeholder representatives invite others to participate in discussions on the changes being experienced.</td>
<td>A core group of stakeholders intentionally share stories, exchange information, and suggest ideas for action.</td>
<td>The expanded group of stakeholders embraces shared leadership and participates in joint work across the networks.</td>
<td>Within broad stakeholder networks, excellent examples of practice change are routinely observable.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Project Management
Plan and Structure

• Needs assessments can be lengthy and complex. It is important to have a project plan to guide efforts and keep the assessment on track. Components of the plan may include:
  • Scope and purpose of work
  • Timeline
  • Deliverables
  • Target audience
  • Constraints and limitations
  • Team members roles and responsibilities
2. CNA Implementation

2.1 Identify and collect data
2.2 Data analysis
2.3 Prioritize needs
2.1 Identify and Collect Data: Data Sources

**Quantitative**
- Surveys
- Student performance data
- Student/Teacher demographics
- Attendance data
- Graduation/Dropout data
- Discipline data
- Budgets
- Census and community data

**Qualitative**
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations
- Document analysis
- Strategic planning documents
- Feedback from suggestion boxes

Adapted from: WestEd (2008).
2.2 Data Analysis: Quantitative Analysis

• There are multiple statistical methods that can be used during a needs assessment:
  • Chi-square tests
  • t tests
  • Analysis of variance (ANOVA)
  • Correlation
  • Regression
  • Factor analysis

• In almost every case, you will only need to perform very basic calculations of frequencies (counts) and averages (mean, median, mode)
2.2 Data Analysis: Qualitative Analysis

• A single quote or observation is not enough to determine a pattern or trend
• A pattern or trend should be evident across multiple sources or types of data or across time
• **Triangulation:** The use of multiple data types or sources to test the validity of findings
### 2.2 Data Analysis:

**Root Cause Analysis**

- **Purpose of RCA** is to determine:
  - What happened and why it happened
  - A course of action to reduce the likelihood of it happening again

- **Three basic types of causes:**
  - Human
  - Organizational
  - Physical

- **Resource:** Leading a Team to Analyze Root Causes Using Quality Tools (GLISI)
  - Five Whys Analysis
  - Fishbone Diagram
  - Affinity Diagram

2.3 Prioritizing Needs

• What needs were identified during the data analysis process?
• Which needs are the most urgent? The most likely to lead to the desired improvements?

• Approaches to prioritizing:
  • *Rank ordering* - used in less complex situations
  • *Multiple criteria approach* - used when needs are more complex and are judged against criteria that address importance and feasibility
  • *Disaggregated prioritization* - involves rank ordering the criteria to be used, then a need is judged by each of the criteria, beginning with the highest-ranked criteria first (this technique simplifies the prioritization process, because criteria are addressed one at a time)
  • *Risk assessment* – used to examine the needs relative to the risk of not addressing them (useful in situations where not addressing a need is related to a risk of major importance)

• How does this process look within your district?

Adapted from: WestEd (2008).
3. Reporting and Next Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning and Preparation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Reporting and Next Steps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>Title I</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Title II</td>
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<td>SDE</td>
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<td>FY17</td>
<td>Title I / Title II / SpEd / MEP / SDE</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>Title I / Title II / SpEd / MEP / SDE</td>
<td>(Goal)</td>
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Activity/Conversation: Addressing Challenges to Success

Two common challenges facing districts during a CNA are effective collaboration and identifying root causes.

How can we:

• Identify potential pain points and begin to address them before we begin the CNA process?
• Address challenges to collaboration if they arise?
• Ensure the needs identified during our CNA are actual root causes?
References and Resources


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