Improving Student Access to Academic Content

Focused Approach Planning Guide*

What is the best way to use focused planning time?

First, decide on a:

Facilitator _____   Time Keeper _____
Recorder _____

Second, determine which focused approach activity makes sense for your team:
(check the appropriate activity)

☐ **Share and Compare** …ideas, strategies, information that team members gathered from Workshop presenters. Discuss the implications for your school.

☐ **Assess** …your school's practices and set priorities.

☐ **Analyze** …how your school is managing forward progress related to improving student access to academic content.

☐ **Review and Refine** …a particular initiative (data-driven decision-making; differentiated Instruction, effective accommodations.)

☐ **Plan a Next Step** …(for those teams who know what they want to do, have determined why it's a priority; and are in the position to implement and evaluate a next step.)

☐ **Network** …with another team to share information, arrange visits, coordinate a staff development opportunity…

Third, consider using a graphic organizer to reflect your thinking, problem solving and planning. This packet includes a graphic organizer that corresponds with each planning activity listed above.

Fourth, share your ideas and plans with others by e-mailing posting your planning sheets/graphic organizers for colleagues to see.

*These templates were originally developed by A. Ford, 1995.

Share and Compare

…ideas, strategies, and information that team members gathered from workshop presenters. Discuss the implications for your school.

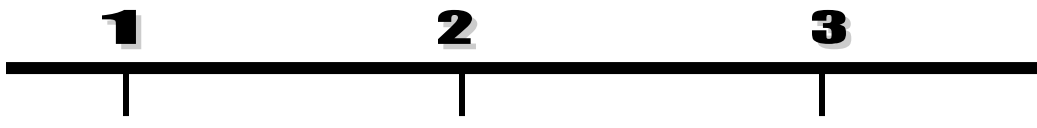**What ideas and strategies have we gathered?**
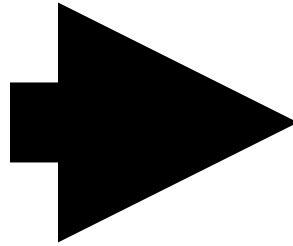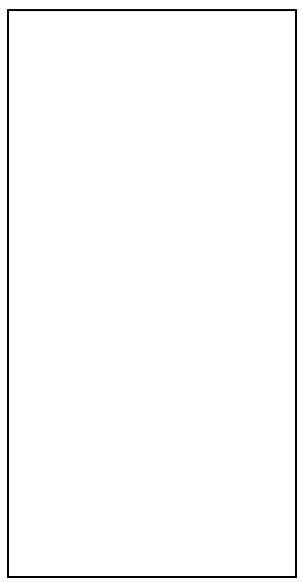
Implications for our school?

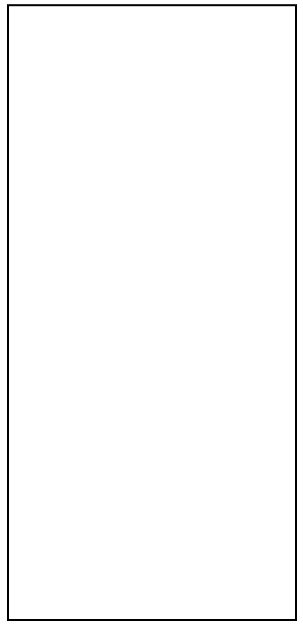## Assess …your school's practices and set priorities.

Where are we in terms of……………

Effective Accommodations

1

- majority of instruction is delivered to whole class; lecture format

- parallel & alternative activities used extensively; accommodations are not routinely made

- no mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations needed for individual students

- assessments inappropriate for measuring student growth and/or not used to improve instruction

2

- variety of instructional modes used, although not always sure that the full range of learners are meaningfully engaged

- accommodations are made

- mechanism in place for planning and sharing information about accommodations

- variety of assessments used to measure student progress

3

- rich, accommodating curriculum in place that allows for active/ meaningful engagement of a diverse group of learners

- accommodations are made routinely, including individualized expectations; students become more accountable for own learning & modifications.

- effective/efficient mechanism for communicating adaptations needed for individual students including how students with IEP's will be graded

- multiple measures are used (i.e., portfolios, performance assessment) to chart student progress and improve instruction

Planning Priorities:

Differentiated Instruction

1

- We focus primarily on student IEP Objectives when we set goals for a student's participation in inclusive classes.

- General educators plan and deliver instruction & special educators adopt primarily a support role.

- Some teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, and instructional materials throughout the year.

- Learning in most classrooms is fairly Traditional/didactic.

2

- In some subject areas, we set academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards.

- Some teachers co-plan and co-teach some of the time

- Many teachers provide a range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & instructional materials throughout the year.

- Learning in most classrooms is sometimes active; students often Seem engaged.

3

- We set rigorous academic goals for students based both on IEP objectives and on grade-level standards.

- In general, educators use a wide range of collaborative teaching structures & view themselves as members of a common team.

- Most all Teachers provide a wide range of lesson formats, teaching strategies, & Instructional materials across the days, weeks, and months of the year.

- Teachers use a rich array of games, activities, & active learning structures; students often seem excited about learning.

Where are we in terms of……………

Data-Driven Decision-making:			**Planning Priorities**

1   **2**   **3**

1	2	3
- Only state test results are used to monitor learning; Data is reviewed annually using this year's scores; general ed. staff study overall results, excluding scores of students with disabilities.	- General & special Ed staff review state test results together& target areas for improvement; SWDs are considered the responsibility of the special Ed staff.	- Student learning data includes multiple sources, both formative & summative; trends for multiple years, progress of student cohorts & students with disabilities.
- Strategies for school improvement are chosen from packaged menu, recommended by administrators, external providers, etc.; voted on by staff.	- Strategies are researched by study groups of staff; none considered without data to provide evidence of Effectiveness.	-Strategies for improvement researched by study groups of staff; none considered without data to provide evidence of effectiveness & Comparison to current context, practices and root causes; combined strategies will affect all students, all staff
- Leaders assume that initial training Assures implementation; external Processes (e,g, packaged walk-Through) monitor implementation.	Leaders & staff agree on indicators of implementation and methods for gathering Evidence.	-Evidence of implementation is gathered frequently, shared with all staff; used to adjust school planning & professional Development.
- IEP goals are developed without reference to standards& benchmarks.	- IEP goals are developed with reference to standards, but through separate process and documentation from general ed.	-IEP goals are drawn from a clearly articulated set of essential benchmarks generated through general ed. Curriculum processes.
- Teachers rely on textbook-related Test,s, record grades, notify special ed staff about SWD's struggles, and move on.	-Teacher teams develop assessments based on prioritized grade/ course standards/benchmarks	-Formative assessments are used often to assess students' progress towards proficiency on essential standards; Results Are used at least b-weekly for planning.
- Interventions replace regular instruction and prevent SWDs from ongoing participation with the regular curriculum.	-Interventions supplement regular instruction & extend opportunity to learn (i.e., expand learning time.)	-Teacher teams (including special ed. staff) collaboratively create & deliver interventions & enrichments to support growth of all learners.

Evaluating Accommodation Use and Decision-Making		

1   **2**   **3**

1	2	3
- Majority of instruction and Assessment presented through One or two modes	- Additional modes of presentation are available, but have limited availability; students use them sporadically	- Multiple modes of presentation available & used by students; advanced technologies are used and integrated within instruction and assessment
- Students typically must respond to instruction and assessment in a particular way that is not very flexible	- There are additional modes in which students can respond, but have limited availability and/or students make use of them sporadically	- Multiple modes of response available and used by students; advanced technologies are used and integrated within instruction and assessment
- Students are typically expected to be self-motivated & have limited choice of activities and projects to demonstrate their knowledge	- Some supports are available to enhance student motivation	- Students can choose specific topics to investigate and there are systems of support in place to ensure they are motivated & engaged
- Instructional and assessment accommodations are rarely tailored to individual need & often based on disability type. The need for accommodations is not based on instructional/assessment goals	- Some effort is made to ensure accommodations are individualized; however, they are not frequently evaluated or examined and they determined based on specific instructional/testing goals or unique student characteristics	- The unique characteristics& needs of individual students determine the accommodations; the student's unique needs are often re-examined & changes made; accommodations are based on instructional/testing goals & effects on student learning are systematically evaluated
- Limited involvement in accommodation decision-making by one or more of the following groups: general educator, special educator, parent, student	- General educators, special educator, parent, student are knowledgeable about the decision-made, but not active participants in the decision-making process	- The student's general educator(s), special educator, parents, and the student is actively involved in accommodation decision-making
- No clear process is evident for ensuring general educators are aware of and/or address individual student's accommodation needs	- A communication process is in place/available but not adequately implemented to ensure student accommodation needs are addressed	-A clear process is used to communicate & ensure full implementation of accommodations during instruction & assessment.

Summarize Planning Priorities:

Top Planning Priorities	**Day/Time Allotment For Planning**
1.	1. _____
2.	2. _____
3.	3. _____
4.	4. _____

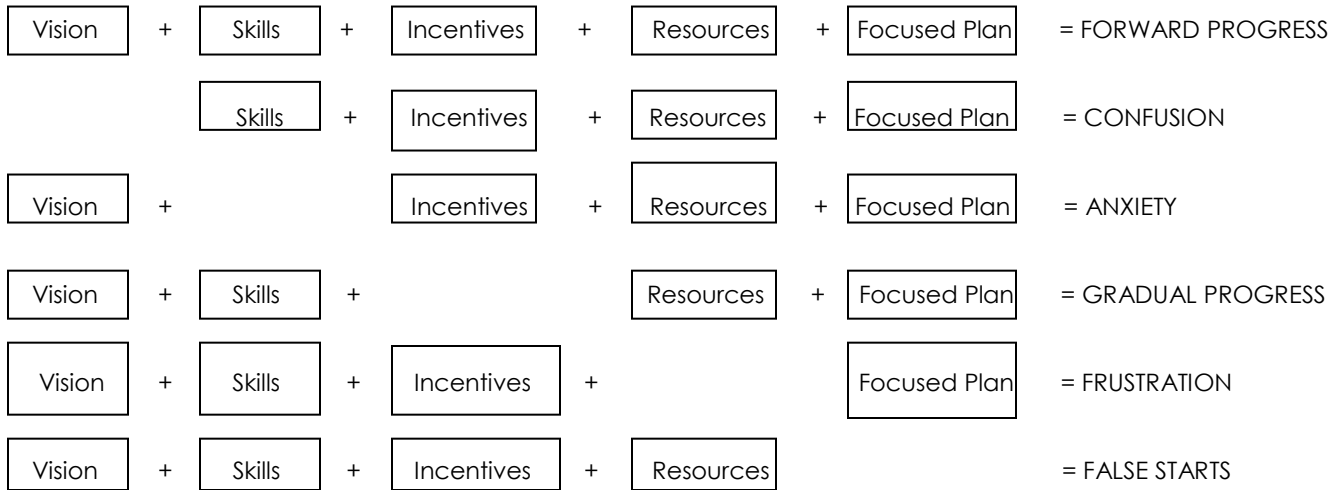Use the planning packets to address these priorities.

Additional notes and comments.

Analyze …how your school is managing forward progress related to improving student access to academic content.

1. Identify the scenario which best describes the level of forward progress in your school:

Managing Forward Progress

Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= FORWARD PROGRESS
		Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= CONFUSION
Vision	+			Incentives	+	Resources	+	Focused Plan	= ANXIETY
Vision	+	Skills	+			Resources	+	Focused Plan	= GRADUAL PROGRESS
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+			Focused Plan	= FRUSTRATION
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources			= FALSE STARTS

2. List one or two focused actions your team will take to improve student access to academic content.

3. List the resources and incentives available to you (or those that you can reasonably secure) as you move forward with your plans to improve access to academic content.

Review and Refine ...progress on data-driven decision-making, differentiated instruction, effective accommodations.

| Improving Student Access to Academic Content |

	Continue	Start	Stop
Data-driven Decision-Making			
Differentiated Instruction			
Effective Accommodations			

7

Continue-Start-Stop

What is it?

The Continue-Start-Stop tool is a series of questions that teams can ask as they review their meeting, planning, problem solving, or other work procedures.

When is it best used?

Use the Continue-Start-Stop tool when you want to get clearer about factors that may be helping or hindering, and provides a means of collecting suggestions for making changes that will help you work more effectively.

How is it done?

1. Review the Initiative you have identified. What did you set out to accomplish?

2. What evidence do you have to show that your procedures worked or didn't work?

3. Based on this evidence, what do you recommend that you:

    Continue, doing (because our evidence shows that it is working well):

    Start, or consider doing (because other evidence suggests that it will produce better results):

    Stop, or cease doing (because our evidence shows that it is not working):

The **Continue-Start-Stop** technique is but one approach to strategic and reflective inquiry. Another set of questions that can be used in reflecting on a focused approach process includes:

Here is what we *assumed* would work:

Here is what we *learned*:

Here is what we will do based on what we learned:

Source: Douglas S. Flemming & Barbara A. Flemming, school Strategies and Options, P.O. Box 1705, 218 Northfield Road, Lunenburg, Massachusetts 01462. reprinted with Permission.

Plan a Next Step

What's Next? (be specific when you describe your next step):

Why is this Important?

Here's how it looks <u>now</u>… ➡	Here's how we want it to look <u>in the future</u>…	These are the steps that will get us there…	Who will initiate & take the lead on each…	Timeline

Network

...with another school team to share information, arrange visits, coordinate a staff development opportunity

Creating a log of new contacts...

Who?	What expertise might be shared?	Other Information

*This tool is from the following publication: Beloin, K. S., & Berndt, S. (2012). *The focused approach planning guide: Tools to improve student access.* Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.
http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/focused_approach_tool/FocusedApproachTool.pdf