



The Professional Learning Center

*Regional Special Education Technical Assistance & Support Centers*

# School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment

***Draft***

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The *School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment* was developed by Measurement Incorporated and the Non-District Specialists of the New York State Regional Special Education Technical Assistance and Support Centers (RSE-TASC) under contract to the New York State Department of Education (Contract No. C00437). The content and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of NYSED.

# **RSE-TASC Professional Learning Center**

## **School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment**

### *Assessing the Readiness to—and Future Planning for—School Change: A Self-Assessment Tool for Schools and School Districts*

#### **Background and Description**

The *School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment* is a comprehensive, voluntary instrument designed to assist schools in examining their readiness to implement change with a critical eye toward self-reflection. The instrument identifies activities, processes, and collaborations that, when present, lays the foundation blocks for implementing significant and meaningful change in a school. A central premise of this self-assessment is that all schools have strengths upon which to build and, through ongoing reflection, can identify existing effective features and practices and use them as cornerstones for promoting broad-based change. Another premise is that schools can learn from each other by sharing information on what constitutes readiness to implement change—both from the standpoint of what currently supports change and what can be done in the future to advance schools' readiness to implement change.

The School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment is structured around *Quality Indicators*—a comprehensive framework developed through an in-depth, collaborative process involving an extensive review of the literature on school change and related fields, and feedback from schools. Although, the indicators encompass some of the key elements of a school's readiness to undertake change, they go beyond by capturing what might be considered an ideal or model framework for understand change readiness.

Altogether, 47 quality indicators are included in the instrument. They address five areas of school readiness to change: Relevance and Meaning, Consensus and Ownership, Scope and Culture, Structure and Coherence, Focus, Attention and Letting Go. Also included are examples of evidence (i.e., “look-fors”) that school staff can use to determine whether or not the quality indicators are in place.

As with any framework of this type, it is important to remember that the quality indicators are not carved in stone. At the time of development, they were based on an extensive review of the research literature related to change readiness, and the best thinking of the RSE-TASC and PLC team. Nevertheless, high quality is a moving target, and continuous improvement can only be maintained if practitioners continue to examine what they are doing, explore creative strategies, and share their knowledge and experience.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the *School Readiness to Change Self-Assessment* is to promote continuous improvement. The tool provides school administrators and key staff, in collaboration with other stakeholders, the opportunity to use a common set of research-based indicators to assess a school's readiness to implement change

that can, in turn, be used to help plan, design, and execute strategies to implement meaningful change at the school level. In addition, as a *working tool*, the self-assessment instrument offers a structure for conversation/internal dialogue about:

- strengths and opportunities for change efforts;
- areas to focus on for future change;
- progress that has been made over time;
- strategies that could be considered models of effective practice to support change; and
- areas where further technical assistance may be needed to improve practice.

The process of the self-assessment also provides intangible value beyond written reports or assessments because it

- builds commitment and ownership on the part of the school-level staff who participate in the process;
- promotes team building and consensus among school leaders;
- increases the capacity for strategic thinking in the field school improvement; and
- builds an understanding of a model for school readiness to implement change.

## Directions for Use

To complete the self-assessment, schools are asked to review the quality indicators for each of the five readiness areas and then, based on supporting evidence (i.e., “look-fors”), make an overall determination about the level of readiness using the 5-point rating scale described below.

Rating	Rubric
1. Not Ready	Our school is not showing any (or hardly any) of the indicators in this readiness area. We need significant support to move our <i>readiness-to-make-change</i> forward.
2. Minimal Readiness	Our school is showing some of the indicators in this readiness area, but most of them are in the early stage. Substantial work is needed to prepare our school to undertake change
3. Moderate Readiness	Our school is showing most of the indicators in this readiness area, but we need some support and assistance to be ready to implement change.
4. Complete Readiness	Our school is showing most of the indicators in this readiness area. We need little to no special help or support to undertake change.
5. Exemplary Readiness	Our school is showing all of the indicators in this readiness area. We understand and can articulate the importance of school readiness when considering change. We could serve as a model for other schools.

### *Directions for Use of the Notes Section*

Each readiness to change area and indicators is accompanied by a section for *Notes*. This section may be used to record other information that can expand upon the school’s readiness in a given area. For example, a school may use the Notes section to

- provide statements about progress, e.g., “our school is in the minimal readiness stae, but we have a commitment to move forward”;
- provide more information and greater detail on readiness factors—i.e., going beyond the listed indicators;

- describe strengths, weaknesses, and plans for increase readiness; and/or
- provide an explanation as to why the school does not show the presence of a certain indicator, e.g., “This indicator is not applicable to our school.”

## Recommended Steps

The following steps are recommended to conduct the School Readiness to Change self-assessment.

1. **Identify and recruit the key stakeholders to complete the self-assessment.** A variety of approaches to conducting this step can prove effective. One possibility is to have a representative team of school-level decision-makers complete the self-assessment as a group. Another approach is to have individual stakeholders fill out the tool separately, and then have the individual results compiled for group discussion and self-assessment completion. Yet a third way is to have the instrument completed by one or two people who are most knowledgeable of the school and its current performance. Regardless of the approach used, however, it is important to enlist input from key stakeholder groups.
2. **Review supporting evidence and data.** Sources of evidence can include the school plans, reports, minutes of meetings, mission/vision statements, policies, written documentation and data gathered through interviews with stakeholders, monitoring tools, the school’s professional development plan, progress reports, and so forth. We have provided examples of evidence/look-fors that would be appropriate for each readiness area
3. **Complete the self-assessment.** Carefully read each indicator then place a checkmark (✓) in the box provided if you feel that the indicator is present (and you have evidence to support this). Review the individual assessments and provide a final rating for the readiness area by circling or highlighting the appropriate number or table cell. Use the Notes section to record any explanatory or expanded information about the school’s readiness status. Once you have rated the five major readiness to implement change areas, transfer your ratings to the Summary Form, on page 16.
4. **Reflect on the self-assessment.** Upon completion of the self-assessment, schools should engage key stakeholders in reflection about the readiness of the school to undertake change. Through thoughtful discussion, stakeholders should then determine which areas may require support to improve its readiness to change.

## In Conclusion

It is important to remember that *readiness to change* is a moving target. Schools should consider completing the Self-Assessment, along with the summary form, on an ongoing basis to review and document their readiness to change efforts.

Table 1. Relevance and Meaning

Relevance and Meaning Quality Indicators					Check if Present
1. The proposed change aligns with the organization’s core values and mission					<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Data is available to justify the need for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff has had the opportunity to dialogue about the reasons for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Staff have expressed the need for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The change is not being forced upon the school/district by a crisis.					<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Stakeholders have a clear vision of what change(s) will look like*					<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Staff understand the positive impact of proposed change(s) (i.e., benefits)*					<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Community constituents evidence that “needs/values” have been considered					<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Strong supporter* of “change” (*staff) endorse proposed revisions					<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Key staff are “on-board” with change proposed					<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Rating:	<b>1</b> Not Ready	<b>2</b> Minimal Readiness	<b>3</b> Moderate Readiness	<b>4</b> Complete Readiness	<b>5</b> Exemplary Readiness
NOTES (evidence of accomplishments, related data/criteria, key stakeholders involved, critical issues, Web site, etc.):					

\*Indicators that are repeated in more than one category

**Relevance and Meaning Indicators: Possible Evidence or “Look fors”:**

1. Records/Documentation of a district/agency/school vision statement describing a desired state of performance
2. Records/Documentation showing problem area(s)/ issue(s). For example, meeting minutes describing ongoing problem with a critical school function, (e.g., attendance, safety, etc.).
3. Multi-year statistics/data demonstrating substantial gaps in desired performance level(s)
4. Survey results, meeting summaries, etc. that show staff interest in/desire for change
5. Survey results, meeting summaries, etc. show that staff and other key stakeholders have a specific understanding of what the change will “look like” \*
6. Formal process(s) in place to systematically and regularly seek staff input, and for staff to raise questions/concerns about substantive matters
7. Informal processes in place that allow staff to provide input, raise questions/concerns about substantive matters

\*Repeated evidence statements

Table 2. Consensus and Ownership

Consensus and Ownership Quality Indicators					Check if Present
1. Staff express ownership for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Staff are willing to commit time and energy toward making the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff believe the change will lead to significant and positive results*					<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Staff are strong supporters of the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There is shared responsibility and collective trust for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Staff arrive at change via group inquiry and participation- evidence exists to support this; parents/community/students					<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Staff display communication style of dialogue and debate					<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Staff display ability to express cogent recommendations for change					<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Staff are afforded and utilized opportunities to reflect, improve/change practices informally and formally					<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Staff are afforded and utilize opportunities to express concerns, fears, reservations around the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Rating:	<b>1</b> Not Ready	<b>2</b> Minimal Readiness	<b>3</b> Moderate Readiness	<b>4</b> Complete Readiness	<b>5</b> Exemplary Readiness
NOTES (evidence of accomplishments, related data/criteria, key stakeholders involved, critical issues, Web site, etc.):					

\*Indicators that are repeated in more than one category

### **Consensus and Ownership Indicators: Possible Evidence or “Look fors”:**

1. Records/Documentation of a district/agency/school vision statement describing a desired state of performance \*
2. Results from surveys, focus groups, “town hall” meetings, etc. that staff understand and support the change
3. Results from surveys, focus groups, “town hall” meetings, etc. that key stakeholders felt that they had a “say” in decision to seek change.
4. Testimonials showing staff satisfaction with working conditions in the school/agency (e.g., results of surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other feedback mechanisms)
5. There are formal process(s) in place to systematically and regularly seek staff input, and for staff to raise questions/concerns about substantive matters
6. District/School/Agency has officially and unofficially communicated the importance of and strategies for XYZ change to various stakeholder groups including district personnel and school/agency staff \*
7. Staff use effective communication techniques i.e., dialogue, debate, discourse as it relates to schools’ mission or change effort and/or continuous improvement \*
8. There are formal, systemic professional development opportunities available to staff

\*Repeated evidence statements

**Table 3. Scope and Culture**

Scope and Culture Quality Indicators					Check if Present
1. Staff understand and embrace the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
2. School leaders have been respectful and sensitive in helping staff make sense of this change over time					<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The change aligns well with other initiatives					<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The proposed change will not overwhelm the current workload of staff					<input type="checkbox"/>
5. School leaders model the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Parents are regularly and meaningfully engaged					<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Staff have a vision of what change will look like: that includes indicators of success*					<input type="checkbox"/>
8. There is a system to monitor progress					<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There is time allocated for analyzing data and evaluating progress					<input type="checkbox"/>
10. There is a culture of equality and collaboration: communication and safety (physical and emotional)					<input type="checkbox"/>
11. School's focus is on student outcomes					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Final Rating:</b>	<b>1</b> Not Ready	<b>2</b> Minimal Readiness	<b>3</b> Moderate Readiness	<b>4</b> Complete Readiness	<b>5</b> Exemplary Readiness
NOTES (evidence of accomplishments, related data/criteria, key stakeholders involved, critical issues, Web site, etc.):					

\*Indicators that are repeated in more than one category

## Scope and Culture Indicators: Possible Evidence or “Look fors”:

1. Testimonials about opportunities for staff to talk about needed change
2. Testimonials about staff’s ability to be successful undertaking new things
3. Testimonials that school leader(s) are using the language of the change (i.e., announcements, emails, meetings, etc.).
4. Records/Documentation that substitute staff can be used to free teachers up to meet, participate in training, etc.
5. Results from surveys, focus groups, “town hall” meetings, etc. that staff understand and support the change
6. Records/Documentation of parent participation in meetings or discussions about substantive issues affecting the school
7. Records/Documentation of strategic planning policies and procedures (who, what, how, when, etc.)
8. Sample staff work schedule(s) showing no additional time commitments
9. Survey results, meeting summaries, etc. show that staff and other key stakeholders have a specific understanding of what the change will “look like” \*
10. Staff use effective communication techniques i.e., dialogue, debate, discourse as it relates to schools’ mission or change effort and/or continuous improvement \*

\*Repeated evidence statements

Table 4. Structure and Coherence

Structure and Coherence Quality Indicators					Check if Present
1. The right stakeholders have participated in the decision for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
2. School leaders at all levels have identified roles they can play to support the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff understand how future decisions will be made around the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are appropriate resources to define the vision and implement the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Appropriate communication processes are in place to guide the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Consideration has been given to how the change fits with initiatives/processes already in place.					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Final Rating:</b>	<b>1</b> Not Ready	<b>2</b> Minimal Readiness	<b>3</b> Moderate Readiness	<b>4</b> Complete Readiness	<b>5</b> Exemplary Readiness
NOTES (evidence of accomplishments, related data/criteria, key stakeholders involved, critical issues, Web site, etc.):					

\*Indicators that are repeated in more than one category

**Structure and Coherence Indicators: Possible Evidence or “Look fors”:**

1. Records/Documentation showing that there is a formal governance or leadership structure at the school level charged with managing/leading the overall educational program
2. List of governance/leadership team members representing key stakeholder groups (i.e., teachers, parents, administrators, etc.)
3. List of sub-committee(s) or groups charged with developing/revising policies, procedures, guidelines, expectations, etc.
4. Descriptions of all key job responsibilities and duties for all core roles in the district and school
5. Records/Documentation showing that key stakeholders had opportunity to (and did) participate in decision-making process
6. Records/Documentation of work agreement(s); terms of performance; and the support that will be provided.
7. Policies and procedures for assessing/judging the extent to which responsibilities are met for each role
8. Records/Documentation of resources allocated for ongoing management of educational program and related activities including a budget amount for doing so
9. Data systems/Software is available that would enable the management of data and information on school performance

\*Repeated evidence statements

Table 5. Focus, Attention and Letting Go

Focus, Attention and Letting Go					Check if Present
1. There is a clear understanding by staff of what the change is going to be*					<input type="checkbox"/>
2. There is a reasonable timeline established for the change to support its full implementation					<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff have determined what past initiatives/practices can be let go in order to make room for the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are indicators established for this change to identify early successes*					<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Appropriate technologies are available to support the change					<input type="checkbox"/>
6. There is/are shared decision making team(s)					<input type="checkbox"/>
7. There is/are data systems in place for both behavior and academics					<input type="checkbox"/>
8. There is a curriculum (curriculum map)					<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There is a shared understanding of all governing bodies (Venn diagram)					<input type="checkbox"/>
10. There is a clear understanding by staff regarding a multi-tiered system of support (Behavior/Academics)					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Final Rating:</b>	<b>1</b> Not Ready	<b>2</b> Minimal Readiness	<b>3</b> Moderate Readiness	<b>4</b> Complete Readiness	<b>5</b> Exemplary Readiness
NOTES (evidence of accomplishments, related data/criteria, key stakeholders involved, critical issues, Web site, etc.):					

\*Indicators that are repeated in more than one category

**Focus, Attention, and Letting Go Indicators: Possible Evidence or “Look fors”:**

1. Records/Documentation of a district/agency/school vision statement describing a desired state of performance
2. District/School has officially and unofficially communicated the importance of and strategies for XYZ change to various stakeholder groups including district personnel and school staff \*
3. Staff use effective communication techniques i.e., dialogue, debate, discourse as it relates to schools’ mission or change effort and/or continuous improvement \*

\* Repeated evidence statements

Table 6. Final Rating Summary Form

Readiness Area / Quality Indicators	Final Rating: Level of Readiness				
1. Relevance and Meaning	1 None	2 Minimal	3 Moderate	4 Complete	5 Exemplary
2. Consensus and Ownership	1 None	2 Minimal	3 Moderate	4 Complete	5 Exemplary
3. Scope and Culture	1 None	2 Minimal	3 Moderate	4 Complete	5 Exemplary
4. Structure and Coherence	1 None	2 Minimal	3 Moderate	4 Complete	5 Exemplary
5. Focus, Attention, Letting Go	1 None	2 Minimal	3 Moderate	4 Complete	5 Exemplary