

Continuous Improvement Continuums Self-Assessment Process Protocol

Materials

One poster sized copy of the *Information and Analysis Continuum* and the *Student Achievement Continuum*.

Tape or pins to hang the posters on the wall.

Letter or legal sized copies (1 per participant plus 1 for each team – *you may want to have extra copies available*) of the *Information and Analysis* and the *Student Achievement Continuums*.

Copies of the Action Plan (1 per participant – *you may want to have extra copies available*).

Colored dots (dark colors are more visible – 6 dots per participant).

Hang the enlarged posters of the *Information Analysis* and *Student Achievement Continuums* hanging in the room. Explain where the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* came from (pp. 193-194), that they represent the theoretical flow of continuous improvement, going from reactive (1) to proactive (5).

Step 1. Establish ground rules for the assessment. We want to make sure everyone understands that the conversation is safe and confidential. Also clarify why it is important to do this activity (pp. 193-194).

Step 2. Introduce the first of the *Continuums*—*Information and Analysis*. Hand out copies (letter or legal size pages) of the *Information and Analysis Continuum*. Ask participants to independently read the *Information and Analysis Continuous Improvement Continuum* and see if they can recognize where their *school or district* is right now, with respect to *Approach, Implementation, and Outcome*. Ask them to read left to right with a one and move to a five. Keep the group moving and try to avoid rewording the descriptions of the continuum. Also ask them to select a whole number, as opposed to a “between” number like 2.5. Ask each participant to circle the box that best represents their district for *Approach, Implementation, and Outcome* on the continuum.

Step 3. Direct participants to walk over to the *Information and Analysis Continuum* on the wall and place a colorful dot where they believe their school/district is with respect to *Approach, Implementation, and Outcome*. We call this “dotmocracy.” Dots should be placed in the boxes and not on the lines. There should not be any 2.5’s, etc.

Step 4. After everyone has placed her or his dot, review what you see. Focusing on *Approach*, ask for discussion of why staff thought their school/district was a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. You may want to ask questions such as, “Why a 3 and not a 4?”, “If you marked a 2, what kept you from marking your school/district as a 3?”, etc.

Step 5. After the large group discussion, ask each school/district team to discuss their ratings on *Approach* for the *Information and Analysis Continuum*. Ask each team to take a new copy (letter or legal size page) of the *Information and Analysis Continuum* and come to a consensus regarding school’s or district’s *Approach* to *Information and Analysis*. Have each team circle their consensus decision on the new sheet.

PLEASE NOTE: Make sure everyone knows the emphasis is on *consensus* and not just a vote. We want everyone to win! We want the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* to add a sense of urgency for improvement. To that end, do not let staff members average their scores or rate themselves too high. Averaging the scores does not inspire change—especially on the first

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assessment. If the discussion hangs between two numbers, go to the lower number, and write solid next steps to become the next number. Periodic (regular) assessment sessions will help staff see that they are making progress. We recommend assessing on the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* at least once a year.

Step 6. Continue the same process with *Implementation* and *Outcome* on the *Information and Analysis Continuum*.

Step 7. When consensus on the three sections is complete, ask for the Next Steps. "What do we need to do to move up? Or to become the next solid number?" Distribute the Action Planning form and have teams record their next steps on the Action Planning Form.

Step 8. Continue and repeat the same process with the *Student Achievement Continuum*.

Step 9. Summarize the activity and ask participants what they thought about the activity and how they might use this in their districts to assess their continuous school improvement processes and progress towards meeting their goals. Ask volunteer participants to share their action plans.