Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

6.7 *The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 6.7 is about the leader/leadership team approaching communication to constituents in a systematic manner with either a universally understood or written communication procedure to be used for major initiatives. An understanding exists that communication is essential in creating a sense of community and moving the institution towards its vision and mission. With this realization the leader/leadership team knows communication must take place with regular frequency using a wide variety of communication tools such as paper, email, social media, videos, individual conversations, presentations to groups, etc.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions for school leaders to ask to help frame this item:

- Does evidence exist to demonstrate that an organized approach to communication is taking place in the school? For example, are communication patterns for what groups should be contacted, the means of communication to be used, and in what order specific constituents are contacted in writing?

- Does evidence exist that communication on major initiatives takes place prior to, during, and after implementation?

- Does the leader/leadership team state the reason(s) why the initiative is taking place and what success will look like?

- What evidence is there that communication means and methods are matched to the intended audience?

- Does communication relate back to the school's vision and mission?

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- Does communication frequently relate back to the school's strategic plan and goals?

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the leader/leadership team clearly demonstrates that communication is very important and regularly puts out communication about specific initiatives prior to, during, and after implementation. Many communication tools such as newsletters, bulletins, emails, social media, etc. are used; the communication tools are matched to targeted audiences. The communications are linked back to the school's vision and mission.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the leadership team has a written communication plan/procedure that includes target audiences matched to specific means of communications. Communication takes place prior to, during, and after implementation of an initiative. The leader/leadership team has defined what success looks like for the initiative and how it ties back to the school's vision and mission and includes this in communications. The leader/leadership team shares an understanding with all stakeholders that communication is key in creating a sense of community for the school.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the leader/leadership team understands that communication is important and regularly communicates information to constituents; however, there is no agreed upon plan, so communication may be incomplete, convey an inconsistent message, not appropriately targeted to audiences, and not clearly linked to mission and vision.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

the leader/leadership team fails to realize the critical importance of regular and systematic communication in reaching its vision and mission. The communication pattern is irregular and ineffective in reaching stakeholder audiences. There is little or no monitoring of school communication

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IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Acknowledge that communication to constituents is important.
- Develop a process and procedure for communicating new initiatives.
- Communicate new initiatives in the early stages of implementation to all stakeholders using a limited but strategic number of communication tools.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Begin to identify target audiences and use a wide range of communication tools to contact stakeholders.
- Communicate needs that support initiatives prior to, during and after implementation.
- Align communication of initiatives with the school's vision and mission.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Identify all target audiences and match them with specific communication tools for greatest effect.
- Relate initiatives back to the school's vision and mission routinely and consistently.
- Implement a communication plan that incorporates procedures on how often to communicate, with whom to communicate, and why communication is essential.
- Emphasize and implement the process for annual monitoring, assessing, and revising of the appropriate strategies to achieve maximum effectiveness in communication with all constituents.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Communication

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