

Essential Element 3: Organization and Structure



An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development.

Young adolescents learn and develop best in a school that is organized and structured to promote academic achievement and personal development.

Standards-focused schools with middle-level grades are organized to promote academic excellence and personal development, to establish within staff and students a feeling of belonging and a sense of personal identification with the school and its purposes, and to help young adolescents make a successful transition from the elementary grades to the high school grades and from childhood to adolescence.

A standards-focused school that enrolls young adolescents should:

- 3.1** Have teacher teams sharing responsibility for the education and personal development of a common group of students.
- 3.2** Have common planning time for those teachers and teacher teams sharing responsibility for a common group of students.
- 3.3** Have schedules with flexible time assignments within blocks of time to encourage interdisciplinary programs and the creative use of time.
- 3.4** Contain at least three of the four middle grades (the four middle grades being grades 5, 6, 7, and 8).
- 3.5** Have comparatively small enrollments so that every student is viewed as an individual and receives personal attention. When the school population is large, have "houses" or schools-within-schools to promote a sense of family, to reduce the feeling of anonymity and isolation among students, and to engage within staff, students, and the community a feeling of belonging and personal identification with the school and with its purposes.
- 3.6** Be structured to create close, sustained relationships between students and teachers.
- 3.7** Ensure that all students, staff, parents, and families feel secure, valued and respected as significant contributors to the school community.
- 3.8** Provide, for those students needing additional help to meet the State's standards, opportunities for additional time, instruction, and personal support (e.g., after school, before school, summer school, reduced class size, tutoring, pupil personnel services, etc.).
- 3.9** Provide a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.10** Provide opportunities for students to participate in youth service, community service and/or service learning activities.
- 3.11** Encourage active parent involvement through a variety of activities.
- 3.12** Establish ties with the school community that strengthen connections between school/education and career opportunities.
- 3.13** Promote and encourage appropriate participation of pupils with disabilities in all curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.14** Have students with disabilities or other special needs, as well as their programs and services, integrated throughout the school building to ensure access to the same instruction as their peers.
- 3.15** Provide support services such as guidance, counseling, and health-related services to all students.
- 3.16** Integrate technology into the educational program so that it supports student learning in a purposeful way.
- 3.17** Provide a gradual transition from the more self-contained classrooms of the elementary school to the more departmentalized structure of the high school, providing students with opportunities for increasingly independent learning experiences and responsibilities within a safe and structured environment.

3. An organization and structure that supports both academic excellence and personal development.				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<i>3.a The degree to which middle level grades are configured to promote the Essential Elements of a middle level program (grades 5-8)</i>	There is no deliberate configuration to support a middle level program.	The middle level program is limited to two grade levels.	The middle level program includes three of the four middle level grades.	There is a 5-8 middle grade configuration designed to promote a middle level program.
<i>3.b The degree to which the middle level program is structured to promote a sense of belonging to reduce the feeling of anonymity and isolation among students.</i>	<p>a. There are no interdisciplinary teams.</p> <p>b. A sense of self-contained communities, i.e. houses, is missing.</p> <p>c. Staff actions do not promote a sense of community or belonging.</p>	<p>a. The school program recognizes that teams should exist, but efforts to create effective interdisciplinary teams are minimal or ineffective.</p> <p>b. A sense of team community is based on cosmetic effects in the building.</p> <p>c. Students and staff share instructional space with other teams but there is little or no investment in creating a sense of community or meeting individual student needs.</p>	<p>a. The school program is organized with effective interdisciplinary teams.</p> <p>b. The layout of the school suggests the presence of a team community.</p> <p>c. The school organization promotes team unity and a group identity for all students and staff.</p>	<p>a. The school program is organized with students and staff playing active roles in effective interdisciplinary teams.</p> <p>b. The sense of team community is established through strategic layout and arrangement in the building.</p> <p>c. The school organization promotes a sense of family and ensures that students are viewed as individuals and receive personal attention. There is synergy between practices and behaviors and a clear sense of identity.</p>

Comments:

3. An organization and structure that supports both academic excellence and personal development (con't).

Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><i>3.c The degree to which the teams in the school are structured to create close, sustained relationships between students and teachers.</i></p>	<p>i. The school is not organized in teams that promote the academic, social and emotional development of the group as a whole.</p> <p>ii. The focus of the school organization is solely on the delivery of instruction to the exclusion of creating close sustained relationships.</p>	<p>i. The school is organized in teams and houses that don't function as teams.</p> <p>ii. The focus of the school organization is to provide academic support with the creation of close sustained relationships left to individual teachers/staff.</p>	<p>i. The school is organized in teams that function collaboratively for academic purposes.</p> <p>ii. The focus of the school organization is to provide academic support. Personal/social needs of adolescents are addressed but not purposefully linked.</p>	<p>i. The school is organized in teams that promote the academic, social and emotional development of the group as a whole.</p> <p>ii. The focus of the program/school organization is to connect adult staff to individual students and their needs in an effort to provide academic support and address the personal/social/academic needs of adolescents.</p>
<p><i>3.d The degree to which the school provides, for those students needing additional help to meet the State's standards, opportunities for additional services based on time, instruction, and personal support (e.g., after school, before school, summer school, reduced class size, tutoring, pupil personnel services)</i></p>	<p>i. The school provides limited formal opportunities for additional instruction for those students needing additional help in meeting the State's standards.</p> <p>ii. There is no written plan for delivering additional services nor are such services based on student achievement data.</p>	<p>i. Non-assigned student time is scheduled with instructional and non-instructional staff other than team teachers for students who need additional help.</p> <p>ii. There is a written plan for providing additional services, which are offered at the expense of other classes such as exploratories or specials. These services function separately from class work and may or may not be taught by qualified staff.</p>	<p>i. Non-assigned student time is scheduled for all students with appropriately certified instructional staff and may or may not be the team teachers.</p> <p>ii. There is a written plan for providing additional services which are offered by qualified staff and based on individual needs as reflected in selected content areas, i.e. math, ELA.</p>	<p>i. Non-assigned student time is scheduled for all students with qualified and effective teachers for the purpose of enrichment and/or academic support.</p> <p>ii. There is a coherent plan for delivering additional services based on student achievement and personal data. These additional services are data-driven and consistent with current class work, targeted to the individual needs of the students and offered without sacrificing current programs.</p>

Comments:

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Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><i>3.e The degree to which the school establishes ties with the school community that strengthens connections between school/ education and career opportunities.</i></p>	<p>i. The school organization does not recognize the school-to-work connection.</p> <p>ii. The school is separate from the business world and formal learning is assumed to exist only within school walls.</p>	<p>i. The school organization formally acknowledges the school-to- work connection by using isolated assignments and activities that expose students to the world of work outside school.</p> <p>ii. The school invites participation of outside community through sporadic guest speakers and/or once a year field trips without integrating activities into the curriculum.</p>	<p>i. The school organization encourages and develops school-to-work connections through career exploration done by individuals, teams or departments.</p> <p>ii. Students participate in limited career development opportunities and understand the varied post high school learning experiences that include business, vocational and higher education.</p> <p>iii. Family and community members share talents and skills to enhance curriculum and instruction with real world experiences in selected subjects and for very specific purposes.</p>	<p>i. The school organization promotes and encourages school-to-work connections and career exploration through an integrated curriculum approach that identifies, recognizes and creates experiences that connect their schoolwork with possible career choices.</p> <p>ii. Students have full access to career development opportunities in a variety of post high school learning locations through coordinated school experiences.</p> <p>iii. The school utilizes the talents and skills of family, community and business partners to promote an education that routinely extends beyond the school.</p>

Comments:

3. An organization and structure that supports both academic excellence and personal development (con't).				
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<p><i>3.f The degree to which the school promotes and encourages appropriate participation of pupils with disabilities in all curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.</i></p>	<p>i. Most students with disabilities have access to the curriculum. Selected students with disabilities have little or no access due to the way their disability is ignored by the program.</p> <p>ii. Students with disabilities are grouped homogeneously by teams and in an isolated fashion.</p> <p>iii. Teachers rarely differentiate instruction as a means of meeting the needs of their students.</p> <p>iv. Students with disabilities do not participate in any curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>i. All students with disabilities have formal access to the curriculum.</p> <p>ii. Students with disabilities are grouped homogeneously by team, but teachers may, at times, group students by interest, style or using other criteria.</p> <p>iii. Teachers differentiate assessments as a means of meeting the needs of their students by providing students with choices on how to present their work.</p> <p>iv. Few students with disabilities participate in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>i. Students access to the curriculum is facilitated by the use of heterogeneous classes or by the reconfiguring of teams or teachers to classes.</p> <p>ii. Students, including students with disabilities, are grouped primarily heterogeneously by team.</p> <p>iii. Teachers use various instructional and assessment strategies designed to meet the needs of different students.</p> <p>iv. A majority of students with disabilities actively participate in curricular, co-and extra-curricular activities.but only with the encouragement of the special ed. staff.</p>	<p>i. Students' access with the curriculum is maximized by flexible grouping and varied teaching and co-teaching arrangements.</p> <p>ii. All students are grouped heterogeneously by team.</p> <p>iii. Teachers tap students' varied strengths and styles using a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to meet the needs of all of their students including those with disabilities.</p> <p>iv. The school staff promotes and encourages the participation of all students in curricular, co-and extra-curricular activities regardless of their circumstances.</p>

Comments:

