



Tool for Assessing Promising Practices

October 14, 2015

The LCAP can be a powerful strategic document to help school board members, in collaboration with members of the community and district staff, identify challenges, set goals, and align resources to meet those goals. As the Local Control Funding Formula Collaborative Working group continues to share best practices for meeting strategic needs, there is a need for members of the Collaborative, the CSBA and school boards to evaluate these practices to determine their applicability to a specific district. To help with this challenge, the CSBA and CA Fwd have identified several important elements of a promising practice and offer here a tool for assessing promising practices based on defined qualitative criteria.

The tool is intended to be a reflective and information tool for use by:

- A. Members of the Collaborative and CSBA to evaluate whether what a Collaborative member is proposing as a "best practice" from their district merits being designated a "Promising Practice" and thus appearing on CSBA's LCFF Collaborative website or online repository.
- B. School boards to:
 - a. Evaluate the applicability of a published Promising Practice for adoption by their district, and
 - b. Evaluate (for their own purpose) the strength of specific strategies they have included in their own LCAP.

The elements included in this tool are:

1. **Clear, Measurable, and Differentiated Goals:** A measure of how well the promising practice establishes clear, measurable, and ambitious goals; clear metrics for measuring those goals; and how well these goals are differentiated for special student populations.
2. **Evidence of Effectiveness:** A measure of the current evidence that exists demonstrating the effectiveness of the promising practice, including data, previous results, and relevant research.
3. **State Priority:** An assessment of how well the promising practice addresses one or several state priorities and whether such a priority is of strategic importance to the district.
4. **District Applicability:** An assessment of how relevant the promising practice is to the demographics and geography of the district, and how sustainable and cost-efficient such a practice is given district resources, costs, and potential impact on students.

The first two elements, "Clear, Measurable, and Differentiated Goals" and "Evidence of Effectiveness", can be objectively scored for statewide comparison along a five (5) point continuum, ranging from (1) – a "weak" application of that particular element, to (5) – identifying an "exemplary" practice that holds significant "promise". For these elements, we provide a scoring rubric. The last two elements, "State Priority" and "District Applicability", are important considerations for individual districts to evaluate on a case by case basis. For these elements, we provide a set of key questions and recommendations for districts to consider.



ELEMENT 1: CLEAR, MEASURABLE, AND DIFFERENTIATED GOALS

This is a measure of how well the promising practice sets clear, measurable, and ambitious goals. In addition a promising practice should establish clear metrics for measuring those goals, including collecting baseline data to ensure progress and setting clear timelines. These metrics should also be based on readily available data. As closing the achievement gap continues to be a priority and challenge across California, these goals should also be differentiated for all relevant student subgroups.

Element 1: Clear, Measurable, and Differentiated Goals				
(1) Weak	(2) Basic	(3) Moderate	(4) Strong	(5) Exemplar
The promising practice does not establish clear and measurable goals OR Sets goals but lacks a clear timeline.	The promising practice establishes clear and measurable goals AND Includes a clear timeline for meeting goals.	All of the requirements for a Basic score AND Includes baseline data to ensure goals are ambitious	All of the requirements for a Moderate score AND Differentiates outcome goals for all relevant* student subgroups, including but not limited to, English learners, foster youth, homeless students, low-income students, Latino/Hispanic students, and African American/Black students.	All of the requirements for a Strong score AND Differentiates strategies to meet the goals for each relevant student subgroup, where applicable** .

* **Relevant** student subgroups should be determined in the context of the promising practice and the demographics of the district. For example a promising practice meant to improve district-wide literacy should consider differentiating goals for all significant student subgroups present in the district. On the other hand, a promising practice focused English learner reclassification might be more limited in selecting subgroup goals.

** **Applicable** means that the differentiation makes sense at improving outcomes for the specific student subgroup. For example, a strategy meant to provide after school career counseling could benefit from providing transportation to low-income students. When differentiation in strategy is not applicable, the district should articulate how the practice, without differentiation, can produce outcomes for a student subgroup.

Recommendation: Promising practices with a Strong (4) or Exemplar (5) rating in “Clear, Measurable, and Differentiated Goals” should be considered for implementation.



ELEMENT 2: EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

This is a measure of the existing evidence for the promising practice, including data, previous results, and relevant research. This measure will help school board members determine the likelihood that the practice will have the desired outcomes on student achievement. While the gold standard for evidence-based practices should be a 5 (exemplar), we should be reminded that the education field currently lacks evidence related to some of the biggest challenges facing districts. While school board members should prioritize the strategies with the strongest evidence, in many cases, the most innovative and promising practices might be rated as low as 2 (limited). In these cases, the goal would be to implement these promising practices with the goal of gathering evidence to eventually move it along the spectrum.

Element 2: Evidence of Effectiveness				
(1) Weak	(2) Basic	(3) Moderate	(4) Strong	(5) Exemplar
The promising practice does not have a strong theory of change*.	The promising practice has a strong theory of change*.	The promising practice has a strong theory of change* AND Has evidence of promise, including observations and limited data.	The promising practice has been implemented in several district school sites with strong evidence of success, including impact studies, and data pointing to student achievement.	The promising practice has been implemented in several district school sites with strong evidence of success including impact studies, and data pointing to student achievement AND Has undergone a long-term rigorous study published in a peer reviewed journal.

* A theory of change explains the process by which a promising practice will deliver desired short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. It outlines the links between outcomes and actions¹.

Recommendation: Promising practices with a Moderate (3), Strong (4), or Exemplar (5) rating in “Evidence of Effectiveness” should be considered for implementation.

¹ http://www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/ToCBasics.pdf



ELEMENT 3: STATE PRIORITY

This is a determination of how well the practice addresses one or several state priorities. While a good promising practice should directly address at least one state priority, we believe that such a priority should also represent a strategic challenge faced by the district. For example, a district with high rates of truancy in high school would be warranted in seeking out a promising practice that addresses “Priority 5: Pupil Engagement”.

State Priorities		
Conditions of Learning	Pupil Outcomes	Engagement
<p>Priority 1: The degree to which the teachers of the school district are appropriately assigned in accordance with Section 44258.9 and fully credentialed in the subject areas. For the pupils they are teaching, every pupil in the school district has sufficient access to the standards-aligned instructional materials as determined pursuant to Section 60119. School facilities are maintained in good repair as specified in subdivision (d) of Section 17002.</p> <p>Priority 2: Implementation of the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board, including how the programs and services will enable English learners to access the Common Core academic content standards adopted pursuant to Section 60605.8, and the English-language development standards adopted pursuant to Section 60811.3 for purposes of gaining academic content knowledge and English-language proficiency.</p> <p>Priority 7: The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study that includes all of the subject areas described in Section 51210 and subdivisions (a) to (i), inclusive,</p>	<p>Priority 4: Pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Statewide assessments administered pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 60640) of Chapter 5 of Part 33 or any subsequent assessment, as certified by the State Board. b) The Academic Performance Index, as described in Section 52052. c) The percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the University of California and the California State University, or career technical education sequences or clusters of courses that satisfy the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 52302, subdivision (a) of Section 52372.5, or paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) of Section 54692, and align with State Board-approved career technical education standards and frameworks. d) The percentage of English-learner pupils who make progress toward English proficiency as measured by the California English Language Development Test or any subsequent 	<p>Priority 3: Parental involvement, including efforts the school district makes to seek parent input in making decisions for the school district and each individual school site, and including how the school district will promote parental participation in programs for unduplicated pupils and individuals with exceptional needs.</p> <p>Priority 5: Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) School attendance rates. b) Chronic absenteeism rates. c) Middle school dropout rates, as described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 52052.1. d) High school dropout rates. e) High school graduation rates. <p>Priority 6: School climate, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pupil suspension rates. b) Pupil expulsion rates. c) Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness.



State Priorities		
Conditions of Learning	Pupil Outcomes	Engagement
<p>of Section 51220, as applicable, including the programs and services developed and provided to unduplicated pupils and individuals with exceptional needs, and the program and services that are provided to benefit these pupils as a result of the funding received pursuant to Section 42238.02, as implemented by Section 42238.03.</p> <p>Priority 9 (for county offices of education): Coordination of instruction of expelled pupils pursuant to Education Code section 48926.</p> <p>Priority 10 (for county offices of education): Coordination of services, including working with the county child welfare agency to share information, responding to the needs of the juvenile court system, and ensuring transfer of health and education records.</p>	<p>assessment of English proficiency, as certified by the State Board.</p> <p>e) The English-learner reclassification rate.</p> <p>f) The percentage of pupils who have passed an Advanced Placement examination with a score of 3 or higher.</p> <p>g) The percentage of pupils who participate in and demonstrate college preparedness pursuant to the Early Assessment Program, as described in Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 99300) of Part 65 of Division 14 of Title 3, or any subsequent assessment of college preparedness.</p> <p>Priority 8: Pupil outcomes, if available, in the subject areas described in Section 51210 and subdivisions (a) to (i), inclusive, of Section 51220, as applicable.</p>	

Key Questions

1. Does the promising practice directly address at least one state priority or locally defined priority?
2. Is there a clear link between the promising practice and its impact on the priority?
3. Does the priority identified address a strategic challenge faced by the district? If so, what evidence exists that demonstrates this priority to be a strategic challenge?

Recommendation: Promising practices that meet the following “State Priority” criteria should be considered for implementation: a) directly addresses a priority of strategic challenge to the district; and b) has a clear impact link between the practice and the priority.



ELEMENT 4: DISTRICT APPLICABILITY

This is a determination of how well the promising practice is relevant to the demographics, geography, and resources of the considering district. In other words, this element should help school board members determine whether the district has the capacity for the practice to be successful. Ideal promising practices should be relevant enough to the demographics and geography of the district to have the highest probability of success.

Key Questions

1. Is the promising practice and the population that it is aimed to support relevant to the demographics of the district?
2. Is the promising practice and its particular service delivery relevant to the geography and size of the district?
3. Are the resources required to successfully implement and sustain the promising practice available in the district?
4. Are the resources required cost-efficient considering alternatives and the potential impact on students?

Recommendation: Promising practices that meet the following “District Applicability” criteria should be considered for implementation: a) the student population that the practice is aimed to support is relevant to the district demographics; b) the service delivery method of the practice is relevant to the geography and size of the district; c) the resources required to implement and sustain the practice are available and cost-efficient considering potential impact on students and other options.