



A DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Well-Being, Academic, and Life Skill Development for Supportive Student Learning Environments



REGION 17 COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

The Region 17 Comprehensive Center, serving Idaho and Montana, is one of 19 regional centers across the nation that help state education agencies to implement, scale, and sustain evidence-based policies, programs, and practices that support improved educator and student outcomes. Operated by Education Northwest, the Region 17 Comprehensive Center partners with state education agencies to provide high-quality technical assistance, build collaborative relationships, support local educational agencies to make systemic changes, and disseminate research-based practices.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction to Student Well-Being, Academic, and Life Skill Development** 3
 - Intent of the WALSD District Self-Assessment 3
 - Design of the WALSD District Self-Assessment 4

- Section 1. Foundational (System Capacity and Alignment With Schools)** 5

- Section 2. Implementation**..... 7

- Section 3. Student Participation and Engagement** 8

- Section 4. Partnerships** 9

- References** 11

- Resources** 12

INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT WELL-BEING, ACADEMIC, AND LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There are many life skills that all students need to be healthy and productive adults. Students learn these skills dynamically through social interactions with family, adults, peers, and the environment around them (Aspen Institute, 2019). Life skills are first learned at home and later supported in school. In addition to teaching academic content, educators and administrators teach and model skills that help students succeed in school, career, and life. These include goal setting, relationship and communication skills, social awareness, self-awareness, and self-management.

Districts and schools that implement programs related to student well-being, academic, and life skill development (WALSD) improve school climate, academics, and discipline (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The programs also have significant effects on how students function in school and work as well as their emotional and mental health, even into adulthood (Hawkins et al., 2005).

Supporting a positive instructional environment where students can learn and practice well-being, academic, and life skills is a process, not a program. It is important to align and integrate efforts across districts and within schools to allow continuous growth among students and school community members. Collaboratively developing, managing, and supporting a WALSD vision builds ownership and ensures that WALSD programs and practices align with the district's system efforts.

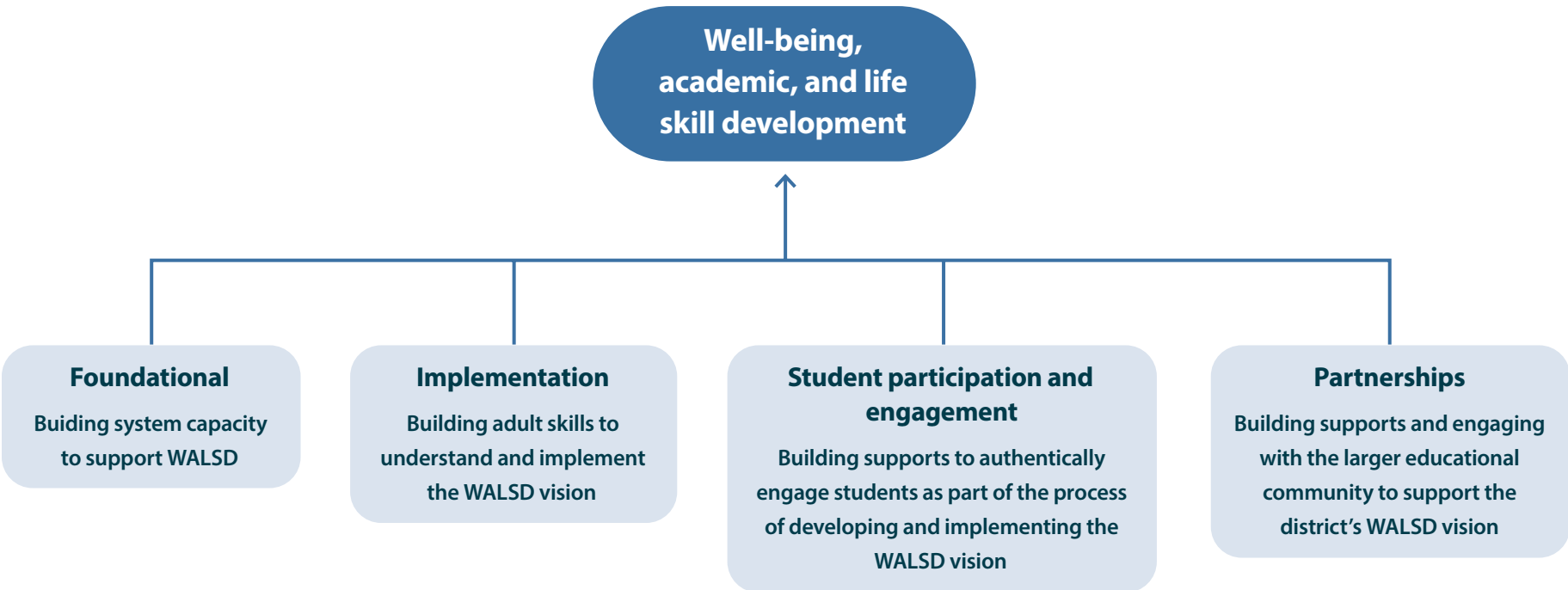
Intent of the WALSD District Self-Assessment

Every school district implements a variety of tools, strategies, programs, and partnerships that create a multi-faceted system for supporting students and educators in developing well-being, academic, and life skills. In these efforts, districts respond to the needs and assets of school communities while maintaining a districtwide vision of success. The intent of this self-assessment is to support districts in identifying areas of growth and success while undertaking or expanding WALSD supports across their systems. This self-assessment is intended for use by district leaders and teams that address school culture and climate (for example, improving horizontal and vertical alignment of instruction; improving relationships, school climate, and alignment across a vision, mission, and strategic plan). The Region 17 Comprehensive Center suggests using this self-assessment with a team of community members who are invested in student and district success to guide reflection and engage in collaborative planning. We suggest discussing each element as a team and determining what evidence is available in your district to support your position. This self-assessment is not intended to be used for evaluation purposes.

Design of the WALSD District Self-Assessment

The self-assessment is organized into four sections: foundational, implementation, student participation and engagement, and partnerships. Each section has subsections to draw attention to elements that are necessary for high-quality implementation across a district. The WALSD self-assessment uses active implementation frameworks (Fixsen et al., 2005; Metz & Bartley, 2012) to identify current practices and areas of growth.

Figure 1. WALSD District Self-Assessment Sections and Purposes



SECTION 1. FOUNDATIONAL (SYSTEM CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT WITH SCHOOLS)

The foundational section focuses on building the system capacity to support WALSD. When completing this section of the self-assessment, consider the elements of a shared WALSD vision, team development, resources, strategies, policies, and data to support quality implementation.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Shared WALSD Vision	The staff* recognizes a need for a shared vision for student well-being, academic, and life skill development.	The staff is starting to build consensus for a shared vision with students, staff members, families, and community members across the education system.	A shared WALSD vision statement is created with input from students, staff members, families, and community members.	The co-constructed shared vision statement is routinely communicated in various contexts with multiple examples shared across students, families, communities, and the staff.
WALSD Team Development	The staff is exploring what a WALSD team could look like and engage in a reflection process to determine readiness for implementation.	Leaders organize a cross-departmental WALSD team including representatives from student groups, families, schools, staff roles, and the community.	The cross-departmental WALSD team develops roles and tasks to support and implement the district’s shared WALSD vision.	The cross-departmental WALSD team includes school and district staff members, students, families, and community members who actively participate in planning and decision-making.
WALSD Resource Allocation	The staff acknowledges a need for intentional resource allocation to support the WALSD vision.	The staff identifies district and building practices regarding funding resources and considers areas of alignment.	Leaders prioritize and allocate funding for resources (including time and materials) to implement WALSD across multiple schools.	All schools have secure and sustainable allocations for funding, staff, strategic planning, scheduling, and policy.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
District and School Policy	The staff acknowledges challenges that exist with current policies.	The WALSD team identifies policies that do and do not align with the WALSD vision.	The WALSD team engages a committee of students, staff members, families, and community members to revise and adopt new policies based on strategic priorities and data.	Leaders implement policy changes, and the WALSD team continues to reflect upon and adapt policies.
Continuous Improvement	The staff recognizes a need to have stronger data systems related to WALSD.	The WALSD team engages in a data-informed review of current WALSD practices and student outcomes to identify existing strengths and challenges.	Leadership and the WALSD team begin to monitor and review data using a plan, do, study, act protocol.	The district actively uses data for WALSD implementation fidelity and improvement.

* Throughout this self-assessment, the term “staff” refers to both district-level and building-level staff.

SECTION 2. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation section focuses on building adult skills to understand and implement the WALSD vision. In using this self-assessment, consider the elements of strategies and programs, universal professional learning, staff understanding and awareness, job-embedded and targeted professional learning, and reflection and identification of next steps.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Staff Knowledge	The staff discusses WALSD strategies and benefits in formal or informal conversations.	The WALSD team develops a plan to engage all staff members in understanding the importance of WALSD and identifies WALSD champions.	The majority of the staff are engaged in understanding the district's WALSD vision and aligning it to their current work.	The majority of the staff actively champion the WALSD vision and are skilled in using WALSD practices.
Universal Professional Learning	Interested staff members have access to sporadic WALSD training.	The WALSD team plans universal (systemwide) professional learning to align with the district WALSD vision.	All staff members (including the instructional and support staff) within the district are trained.	The district has organized and implemented a systematic approach to universal professional learning needs, including orientation for all new staff members.
Ongoing Job-Embedded Support	The staff is aware of differing needs in understanding and implementing WALSD skills for themselves and for students.	The WALSD team develops a plan to provide training and supports to educators and staff members, recognizing differing roles and skill sets.	The staff implements a coordinated plan to support individuals in their WALSD knowledge and implementation.	The district has an aligned system to mentor and support staff members.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Strategies and Programs	The staff identifies a need to implement or improve WALSD (including teaching materials for students and training resources for adults, including families).	The WALSD team begins to identify, vet, adapt, or develop materials, programs, strategies, and screeners.	The staff begins to use and align strategies and programs that align to the district WALSD vision, including assessments, programs, and strategies.	The district uses a tiered system of instruction and support to address the WALSD needs of all learners.

SECTION 3. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The student participation and engagement section focuses on building supports to authentically engage students as part of the process of developing and implementing the district’s WALSD vision. When completing this section of the self-assessment, consider the elements of infrastructure for student input and engagement and student knowledge.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Infrastructure for Student Input and Engagement	The staff identifies the need for student input and recognizes how it correlates to engagement and WALSD.	The WALSD team examines the district’s commitment to student involvement and plans to explore best practices in student engagement.	The staff identifies collaborative student engagement as a high priority and supports multiple pathways for student input aligned with the district’s WALSD vision.	The district actively uses student input in decision-making at the classroom, building, and district levels.
Student Knowledge	Students may discuss WALSD strategies as benefits in formal or informal conversations.	The staff develops a plan to engage all students in understanding WALSD in a manner that honors family values and priorities.	The majority of students are engaged in understanding and practicing WALSD, as evidenced by teacher and counselor feedback.	The majority of students understand and articulate why WALSD is important and actively practice WALSD. The number of behavioral referrals in the district has decreased.

SECTION 4. PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership section focuses on building supports and engaging with the larger educational community to support the district’s WALSD vision. In completing this section of the self-assessment, consider the elements of partnerships with families and community members.

	Exploration	Planning	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
Partnerships With Families	The staff acknowledges the importance of family participation and engagement.	The WALSD team gathers input from families about the best strategies for engagement and partnership.	The WALSD team collects and synthesizes input from families to create a plan for collaborative family partnerships using a mechanism for ongoing feedback, including innovative ideas brought forth by families.	The district implements strategies for two-way communication and engaging families in WALSD activities.
Partnerships With Community Members	The staff identifies community organizations that may play an active role with students and families related to WALSD.	The WALSD team examines current collaborations and identifies areas to strengthen partner involvement in alignment with the district’s WALSD vision.	The WALSD team seeks collaborative, ongoing input from community members and community organizations to support the district’s WALSD vision.	Community organizations and community members are engaged throughout the district to play meaningful roles in providing services that build student and adult skills (including after-school programs, internships, professional development workshops, services, and enrichment).

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