
Sustainability Planning

Coalition of Community Schools National

Forum

June 24, 2002

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Introduction

1. Key elements of sustainability
2. A framework for sustainability planning
3. Sustainability self-assessment

Key Elements of Sustainability

1. Vision
2. Results orientation
3. Strategic financing orientation
4. Adaptability to changing conditions
5. Broad base of community support
6. Key champions
7. Strong internal systems
8. Sustainability plan

1. Vision

- Know what you want to sustain
- Know how your initiative fits within the larger community
- Know what you mean by sustainability
 - Scope of activities
 - Scale of operation
 - Timeline

2. Results Orientation

- Adopt a results framework
- Be clear about the results you want to achieve for children, families, community, and community systems
- Use indicators to track status of children and families across the community
- Use performance measures to track your own work and improve performance

3. Strategic Financing Orientation

- What are the expected fiscal needs?
- Make the best use of existing resources (funding and in-kind)
- Maximize available sources of revenue
- Create greater flexibility in categorical funding
- Create public-private partnerships
- Explore new state and local revenue sources

4. Adaptability to Changing Conditions

- Monitor announced opportunities for funding
- Consider new ways to frame your work to interest different funders
- Identify opportunities to improve policy climate
- Participate in collaborative advocacy to encourage change
- Work to improve ability to participate in these efforts

5. Broad Base of Community Support

- Develop a plan to create a desired identity
- Nurture a community presences and support
- Encourage family involvement
- Support public education and engagement
- Build partnerships that foster collaboration rather than competition

6. Key Champions

- Identify key decision makers and opinion leaders
- Develop an effective outreach plan
- Cultivate a broad base of champions
 - Elected leaders
 - Business leaders
 - Peers
 - Community leaders
 - Philanthropists

7. Strong Internal Systems

- Know and involve the people you need to carry out your mission: staff, board, volunteers, etc.
- Develop strong fiscal management, accounting, information, and personnel systems
- Use those systems to review strategies, make changes as needed

8. Sustainability Plan

- Develop a comprehensive plan that takes account of short- and long-term needs
- Identify challenges and/or obstacles
- Identify strategies to garner needed resources and overcome challenges
- Identify and communicate with key partners

Planning for Sustainability

- What do you want to sustain?
- What do you mean by sustainability?
- What resources do you have to help you accomplish that goal?
- What are the barriers: political, technical, fiscal, bureaucratic?
- What are viable strategies to achieve your goals?

Self-Assessment Tool

- Diagnostic tool to help you:
 - assess progress
 - identify internal strengths and weaknesses
external opportunities and threats
 - determine where to target scarce resources
- Organized by elements; rank your progress toward a desired state
- First step in developing a sustainability plan



Using the Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool in Your Community

- Define initiative
- Be clear that leaders of the initiative agree upon what they want to sustain
- Determine who to have at the table -- can be a subcommittee
- Determine if there are issues that must be addressed in more private settings
- Prepare group for the process -- no surprises

Using the Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool in Your Community

- Create an agreed-upon process to deal with issues that arise
- Consider using a facilitator
- Effective format:
 - Initial discussion to explain concepts
 - Complete the self-assessment
 - Develop and prioritize next steps
- Use work you have already done -- don't reinvent

Key Lessons

- Think broadly
- Focus on sustainability from the beginning
- Develop a portfolio of funding sources
- Remember that this is a long-term process: target resources strategically
- Balance short-term vs. long-term strategies

Next Steps

- Get Help - Create Sustainability Committee
- Sustainability Planning
 - Complete Self-Assessment and identify two elements for improvement
 - Target 3-5 potential funding sources, timelines and actions steps
- Target 3 potential champions and strategies for engaging
- Create routine for finding funding

Additional Resources

* **Coming Soon**

- Sustainability Planning Workbook

- Resources on financing and sustainability available at:

www.financeproject.org/osthome.htm