
Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

*Implementation of the Consolidated
Assistance Program*

SL 2007-323, SEC 7.18(b)

HB 1473, 2007 Budget Act

Date Due: January 15, 2008

Report #31

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2007-2008

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

HOWARD N. LEE
Chairman :: Raleigh

KATHY A. TAFT
Greenville

ROBERT "TOM" SPEED
Boone

WAYNE MCDEVITT
Vice Chair :: Asheville

KEVIN D. HOWELL
Raleigh

MELISSA E. BARTLETT
Raleigh

BEVERLY PERDUE
Lieutenant Governor :: New Bern

SHIRLEY E. HARRIS
Troy

JOHN A. TATE III
Charlotte

RICHARD MOORE
State Treasurer :: Kittrell

EULADA P. WATT
Charlotte

PATRICIA N. WILLOUGHBY
Raleigh

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent
301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, NC Public Schools administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Robert Logan, Associate State Superintendent :: Office of Innovation and School Transformation
6301 Mail Service Center :: Raleigh, NC 27699-6301 :: Telephone 919-807-3200 :: Fax 919-807-4065

Visit us on the Web:: www.ncpublicschools.org

Table of Contents

I.	Project Briefing	1
II.	Assistance Redesign Project.....	4
III	Appendix	9

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the Implementation of the Consolidated Assistance Program

Executive Summary

Session Law 2007-323 requires the State Board of Education to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 2008 on any restructuring of the Consolidated Assistance Program.

The following pages provide an overview of the Consolidated Assistance Program to date.

Project Briefing – November 1, 2007

North Carolina's Framework for Comprehensive Support for Districts and Schools

This Project Briefing Report presents the rationale underlying the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) new strategy for delivering support services to North Carolina's public schools. It provides a high-level introduction to the new framework NCDPI is rolling out. And it touches on how the new approach will promote collaboration within NCDPI to more effectively promote achievement in the public education system.

Reviewing Recent History

Pioneering work in school assistance. Since the 1996-1997 school year, North Carolina educators have used the state's school accountability program – the ABCs of Public Education – to identify low-performing local public schools and to assign assistance teams to help these schools improve student achievement. At the time, few other states were attempting to intervene and assist individual public schools in this way.

Higher standards drive increasing need for assistance. A decade later, the NCDPI continues to provide assistance to low-performing public schools, identified through the ABCs of Public Education, mandates from Governor Mike Easley and Judge Howard Manning, and No Child Left Behind. But the demand for state assistance is outpacing NCDPI's ability to serve. Since the 2004-2005 school year, for example, the number of public schools with performance composite scores below 50 percent proficiency has more than doubled, and the number of schools in AYP School Improvement status¹ has grown 60 percent.

A focus on continuous improvement. Because of the large increase in the scale and scope of assistance needed by North Carolina's public schools, it became clear to NCDPI leadership early in 2007 that the current method of delivering assistance was no longer adequate. Instead, a more proactive, coordinated and comprehensive approach would be required to drive sustainable improvements across the state's public education system – and the idea for the assistance redesign effort was born.

¹ Any school that misses any of its AYP targets for two consecutive years in the same subject is identified as a school in AYP School Improvement status.

Moving to a Comprehensive Framework

The objectives for redesigning its assistance to public schools are threefold:

- Unite and thereby strengthen the NCDPI's assistance efforts to promote student achievement throughout North Carolina's public education system;
- Leverage best practices – both national and international – to take assistance to the next level and ensure sustainable improvement; and
- Make the NCDPI more entrepreneurial, more innovative, and more responsive to public school and district needs.

Thanks to funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the NCDPI was able to bring The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a leading global management consulting firm, on board to collaborate in creating a new framework for delivering support services to North Carolina's public schools and districts. Since May 2007, BCG consultants have worked with over 40 NCDPI staff to design a more proactive, coordinated and comprehensive approach to supporting – and promoting student achievement in – the North Carolina public education system. Throughout this process, the NCDPI/BCG project team sought the input of nearly 700 educators, administrators, nonprofit leaders, and experts across the state.

The new framework for comprehensive support to North Carolina public school districts and schools, which builds on what the NCDPI has learned over the past decade, creates a proactive, coordinated and comprehensive plan for partnering with and delivering support services to local public schools and school districts.

The core features of the framework are:

- **Shifting to a district-focused approach.** Traditionally, the NCDPI has invested most of its resources into effecting change at the school level. Under the new framework, state support will be heavily focused on building capabilities at the district level. By shifting support to the districts, the NCDPI has a better chance of implementing system-wide improvements in North Carolina public schools, and thereby creating more scalable and sustainable improvements over time.
- **Tailoring support services to meet unique needs.** The support services that NCDPI provides will be customized to meet the specific needs of each public school and district it serves. The NCDPI will employ a comprehensive needs assessment process to assess both district-level (top-down) and school-level (bottom-up) needs.
- **Making the state the orchestrator of support services.** Whereas in the past, NCDPI directly provided the bulk of assistance to public schools, the new framework positions the state as more of a broker of both internal and external support services.

The new framework will change the very essence of state-provided support for public schools and districts, as illustrated below:

A Paradigm Shift in NCDPI's Support for the Public Education System

Current Approach	New Framework
 Reactive, compliance-driven assistance	 Proactive, prevention- and compliance-driven assistance
 Hierarchical relationship with schools and districts	 Collaborative partnership with schools and districts
 Fragmented, trigger-based support	 Coordinated, assessment-based support
 Predefined assistance services	 Customized support services
 Lack of monitoring or tracking	 Periodic review of assistance

This framework, which is being piloted on a limited basis in the 2007–2008 school year in Lexington City and Columbus counties, will be more fully implemented in the 2008–2009 school year.

Assessing What the New Framework Means for NCDPI

The new framework represents a paradigm shift in how the state provides support services to public schools and districts in North Carolina. It will set a benchmark for how states can effectively transform chronically underperforming public schools and districts, while raising the bar for student achievement in all school systems. We anticipate that our new approach will again position North Carolina as a national leader at the forefront of educational reform.

Delivering support services under the new framework means changing the way that NCDPI carries out its business. And that means structuring ourselves in a new way. While these changes most directly affect divisions within Curriculum, Instruction and Technology and Innovation & School Transformation, there are likely implications across the agency, with a shift toward a more collaborative, service-oriented, and responsive organization, ready to meet current and emerging public school and district needs.



Assistance Redesign Project

JLEOC Report

January 15, 2008

Progress to Date

With design elements largely finalized, committees are now focused on pilot rollout and planning for full launch in SY08-09

Pilot is now officially underway in two districts

- Contracts signed with both Columbus County and Lexington City leadership
- Plans in place to conduct guided needs assessments in both LEAs and in Tier 5 schools

Given timing and related staffing issues, agreed to disproportionately focus pilot elements on Screen, Assess, and Monitor activities

Several other major initiatives running in parallel with implementation planning/rollout

- Developing revised three-year projections for expansion budget request
- Redesigning the organization to enable the new strategy
- Planning for transition of project management responsibilities

Project quickly moving

244944-00-NC DPI SC Meeting-18Dec07-RG-ATL-v7.pdf

All committees continue to deliver results

Screen & Monitor	Assess	Support
Developed framework for conducting focus group sessions	Finalized rubrics for LEA and school comprehensive needs assessment tools	Revised protocol and structure for Operational and Agency Roundtable meetings
Completed survey for monitoring/evaluating individual support services	Developed protocol for LEA needs assessment	Partnered with North Carolina Community College and launched online support clearinghouse
Completed survey for monitoring/evaluating support personnel	Initiated evaluation of potential third party partnerships • Edison Alliance • Cambridge Education	Refined financial estimates and budget required to staff new field organization
Launched second pulse check and developed process for analyzing results	Conducted site visit and observations of school quality reviews at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	Developed vision and work plan for Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and formative assessment services

Overall project has achieved major milestones

Synthesis of milestones achieved since previous Steering Committee meeting

Pilot

- Held “practice” Operational Roundtable for Columbus County
- Signed contracts and held initial conversations with leadership in both LEAs
- Conducted guided LEA needs assessment in Columbus County

Staffing

- Obtained OSBM approval and secured funding for 30 personnel for SY07-08 assistance plan and 6 positions for pilot roll-out
- Established tracking tool to provide transparency on hiring progress

Budget

- Refined assumptions and budget estimates initially projected at 9/14 Steering Committee meeting
- Held discussions with key stakeholders to solicit consensus on assumptions/drivers
- Developed scenarios for consideration in finalizing budget projections

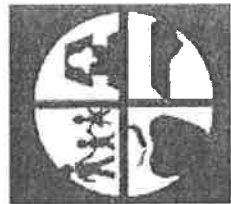
Reorganization

- Finalized high-level organizational blueprint
- Hosted two all-agency meetings to discuss reorganization initiative
- Developed set of FAQs to foster leadership alignment on key topics
- Released applications and initiated interviewing process for new roles

Transition

- Hired Full-time project manager

APPENDIX



North Carolina Public Schools Assistance Redesign Project

Building a Framework for Comprehensive Support for Districts and Schools

December 05, 2007

Rationale for project: A clear need for assistance to evolve

Increased demand from school districts and schools for more and different types of support from the state

Growing number of school districts and schools classified by state and federal criteria as “needing improvement”

Mandate from NC General Assembly to create a framework for consolidated and comprehensive support for districts and schools

Key objectives of this project

- 1 Build upon lessons learned over the past ten years of providing school assistance**
- 2 Leverage best practices, both nationally and internationally, to take the DPI assistance model to the next level**
- 3 Streamline/aggregate the various DPI assistance efforts that are now underway (K-8, high-school, district)**
- 4 Build DPI's capacity to adapt to evolving school district and school needs**
- 5 Support schools in helping All students to graduate from High School 21st Century Future-Ready**

To develop the vision, the team consulted nearly 700 external stakeholders to solicit inputs and feedback

Outreach to external stakeholders	Participants
Discussions with nonprofit leaders, experts, and legislators • Individual interviews • Conference call with Stakeholder Advisory Council	 22 8
Site visits and interviews with school and district leaders • Interviews with superintendents and central office leaders • Interviews with principals • Interviews with teachers • Three conference calls open to all superintendents • One-on-one discussions with Durham & Wake County superintendents • Teacher focus groups with participants at Teacher Academies in Robeson County and at Appalachian State University	 28 24 24 ~14 2 ~50
Presentations at key meetings • Committee of Practitioners meeting • <i>Leandro</i> district leaders at Quarterly Conference • District instructional leaders at Quarterly Conference • North Carolina Commission on Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps • Former assistance team members at Quarterly Conference • Corrective Action district leaders at Quarterly Conference • DPI FBS Conference – Superintendents Update • DPI FBS Conference – All Participants Update • DPI Luncheon with newly appointed superintendents	 ~20 ~45 ~75 ~10 ~30 ~30 ~40 ~250 ~20
TOTAL	~692

Feedback from stakeholders about the proposed vision for the assistance was generally positive...

Sample quotes

"I have reviewed the new state assistance model and find it to be outstanding. I plan to use part of the model to develop a local framework for assistance at the local school/district level."

--Superintendent

"I am thrilled with the general direction of the new assistance model."

--Stakeholder advisory council member

"I am glad to see a three year model....We need more time with assistance at the district."

--Superintendent

"Need coaches that can model, join with support, and withdraw when capacity is built."

--Stakeholder advisory council member

Diagnostic phase yielded a robust set of guiding principles for designing the framework for comprehensive support

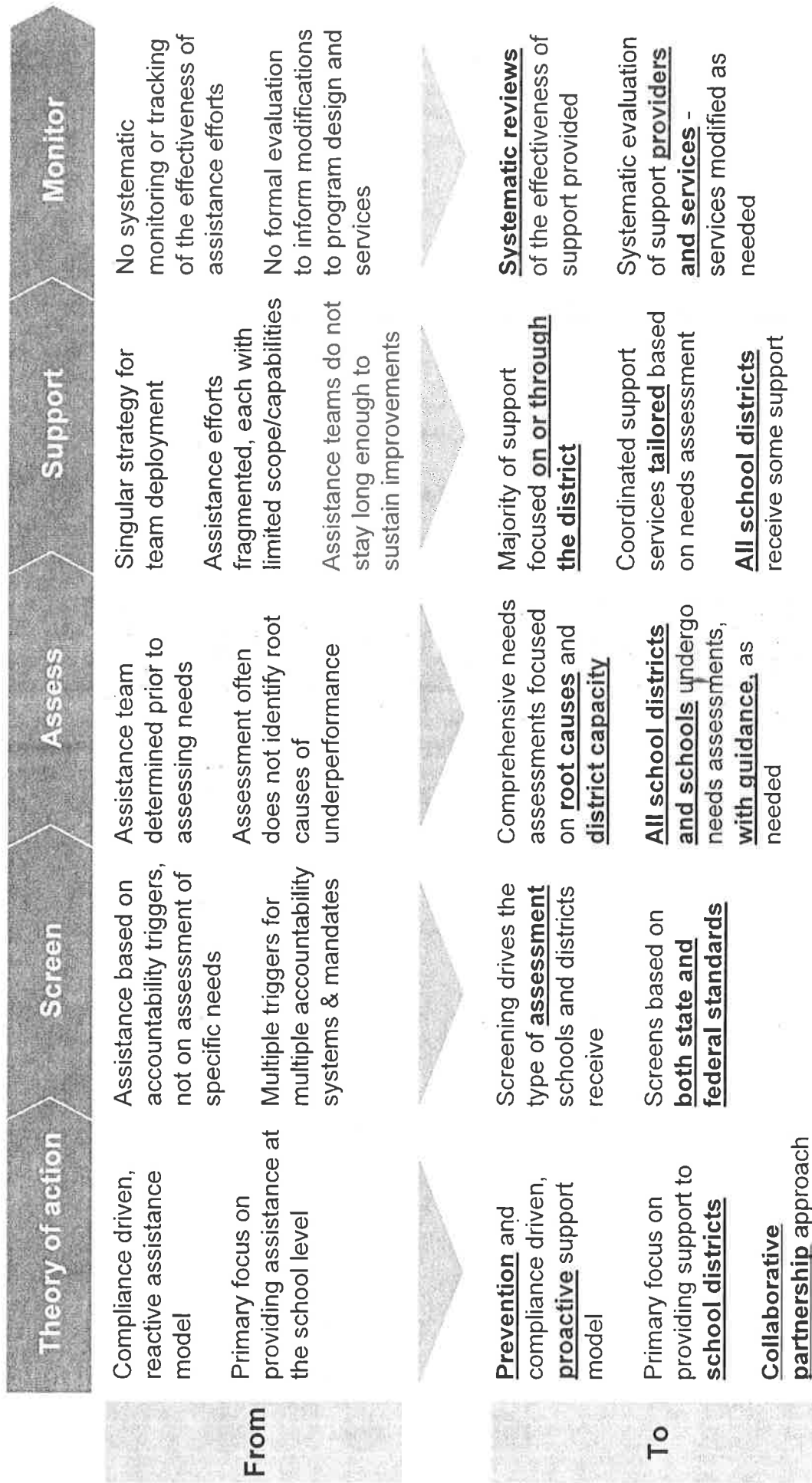
What DPI support efforts should focus on

- 1 Focus on assessing needs and understanding root causes
- 2 Customize support offerings that improve instruction
- 3 Provide seamless and coordinated assistance to schools/districts
- 4 Create effective incentives and consequences for schools and districts

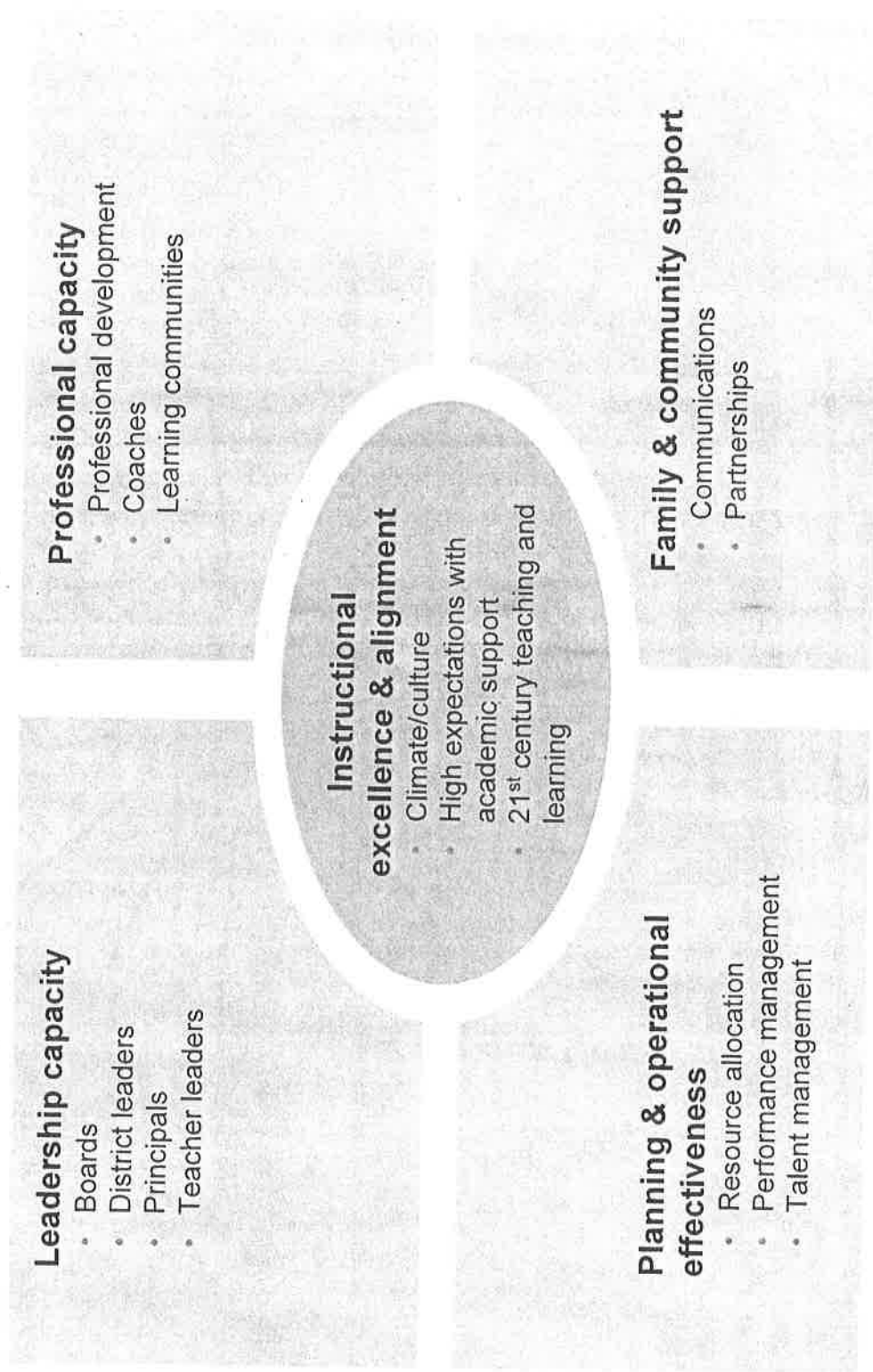
How DPI should go about providing support to districts and schools

- 5 Create scalable solutions
- 6 Intervene at areas/times of highest impact
- 7 Pursue sustainable solutions
- 8 Rigorously monitor, evaluate, and measure programs
- 9 Offer customer focused service
- 10 Build credibility and expand capabilities of DPI over time

The new framework implies a real paradigm shift for DPI



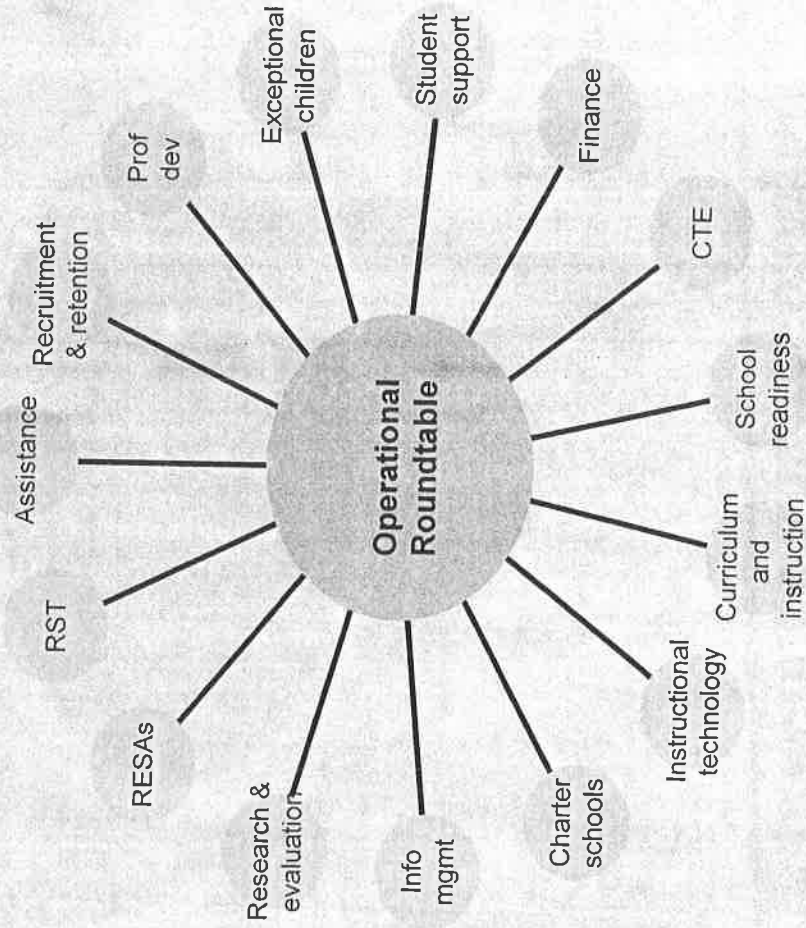
Framework for comprehensive needs assessment is based on best practices and research



Note: Please see appendix to view summaries of best practice frameworks considered in research
Source: Literature and research review; project team research and analysis

Operational Roundtables will coordinate support resources and services within the regions

Key functional areas for inclusion



1. RST=Regional Support Team; DTC=District Transformation Coach; STC=School Transformation Coach

Districts and Schools Supported 2007-08

	<u>Number</u>
High Schools	77
Middle Schools	36
Elementary Schools	<u>20</u>
	133
Districts	26

Services Provided

2007-08

1 Leadership Facilitator:

Equivalent of one day a week

2 Professional Development:

Center for Leadership Development
or Mid-Continent Research for
Education and Learning (McREL)
8-12 days

3 Instructional Facilitators:

Upon request to assist classroom
teachers

4 Framework for Action:

Revision of School Improvement
Plan to target support to struggling
students

5 Reform/Redesign Plan:

High School only

2007-08 Comprehensive Support to Districts and Schools Pilot

**Columbus County Schools
Dr. Dan Strickland
Superintendent**

**Lexington City Schools
Dr. Rebecca Bloxam
Superintendent**

