

School Boards: How to Reach Them & How to Teach Them

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Overview of Workshop

- School Board 101
 - Review guidelines
 - Share evaluation design system that focuses on local school board priorities & utilizes readily available data in your school system
 - Share template to structure evaluation
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School Board 101

- Single board, several individuals
 - Boards mean well
 - Boards are heavily dependent upon school superintendent for info
 - Boards evolve & change
 - Complex & changing dynamics
 - Accountability & results
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Guideline #1

- Determine what the priorities of your school district are & design an outcome evaluation system that will demonstrate how your SSW services contribute to at least one of those priorities.
 - School board goals
 - School district strategic plan
 - Individual board member priorities
 - Reaching AYP
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Guideline #2

- Identify what state or federal mandates your services meet.
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Homeless students
 - What else?
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Guideline #3

- Calculate the revenues your SSW services generate for your school district.
 - Average daily attendance
 - State aid for special education
 - Medicaid for SBS
 - School meals
 - Grants
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Guideline #4

- Determine what data is already collected & available. Use that whenever possible.
 - Attendance, tardies
 - Suspensions, detentions
 - Classroom conduct
 - Referrals
 - Other systems
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Guideline #5

- Design your outcome evaluation system to match the scope of your SSW services.
 - Individual
 - Small group
 - Classroom
 - School
 - District/community
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Guideline #6

- When designing your outcome evaluation system, be sure to involve others in the school-community who will be involved in providing & gathering the data.
 - Secretaries
 - Central office IT
 - PSL Officer
 - Any data-gatekeepers
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Guideline #7

- Make sure the variables you decide to evaluate are the correct ones, i.e., the variables will accurately reflect changes in the behaviors, knowledge, and/or skills the school social work service is designed to impact.
 - Direct
 - Indirect
 - Need high face validity
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Guideline #8

- Whenever possible, gather data on multiple variables from multiple sources.
 - "Don't put all of your eggs into one basket."
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Guideline #9

- Do not try to evaluate everything you do. Rather, select at least one part of what you do to evaluate & do it well.
 - Your data needs to stand up to scrutiny.
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Guideline #10

- Keep the KIS rule in mind: Keep It Simple. Your outcome evaluation system should be simple, easy to implement, & based upon common sense evident to people outside pupil services & education.
 - Consider your audience
 - Use simple pre-post data comparisons
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Guideline #11

- Make sure your evaluation does not treat groups differently.
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Culture
 - Race
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion
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Guideline #12

- Make sure any instrument(s) used will accurately measure the targeted behaviors, knowledge, and/or skills.
 1. Use existing data
 2. Use evidence-based tools
 3. Use simple checklists
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Guideline #13

- Share your evaluation results with the **administration**, school board & community at least annually.
 - Share your data as part of your annual evaluation.
 - Your success can help your supervisor look good to her/his supervisor & the School Board.
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Guideline #13

- Share your evaluation results with the administration, **school board** & community at least annually.
 - "Don't wait until the wolf is at the door."
 - KISS
 - 1-2 page summary
 - "Connect the dots"
 - No verbal diarrhea or edu-babble
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Guideline #13

- Share your evaluation results with the administration, **school board** & community at least annually.
 - Use bullet points & graphics to communicate major data changes.
 - Share what supports Board priorities!
 - Don't forget mandates & revenues.
 - "There are 3 kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, & then there's statistics." Mark Twain
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Guideline #13

- Share your evaluation results with the administration, **school board** & community at least annually.
 - Be ready for questions & requests for more info, but don't fill any silence.
 - Who delivers the message?
 - If not you, find a champion who will tell your story.

Guideline #13

- Share your evaluation results with the administration, school board & **community** at least annually.
 - School district website
 - Brochures
 - Media
 - Use to build support for & access to services

Guideline #14

- Use your evaluation data to improve your SSW services.
 - Are you using evidence-based practices & strategies?
 - Are you implementing a strategy in an effective manner?
 - Would efforts targeting systemic change yield more benefit?
- Another application of RtI

Process vs. Outcome Evaluation

- Process (or formative) evaluation documents:
 - What you do &
 - How busy you are.
- Outcome (or summative) evaluation documents the impact of your services.
 - This is what school boards & administrators want.

Traditional outcome evaluation

1. Operationally define the service or program.
 2. Identify the desired outcome(s) that will be measured.
 3. Identify/select/develop empirically sound methods to measure change.
 4. Gather & analyze data.
- Time & resource consuming**

Strategic outcome evaluation

- Step #1 – Who is your audience?**
 - What stakeholders are you trying to influence?
 - What established priorities or goals does your audience have?
 - What does your audience value?
 - To whom will you present your data?

District goals & strategic plans

- Increase attendance
- Implement behavioral RtI/PBIS
- Provide services to **all** students
- Develop community partnerships
- Improve communication & relationships with families
- Improve school climate

Strategic outcome evaluation

- Step #2 – Which one of your audience’s established priorities or goals do your SSW services tangibly & significantly impact?
 - Must have high face validity to average person
 - Not necessary for your services to be the sole impact

Strategic outcome evaluation

- Step #3 – What data does your school system presently collect that can help document progress on your audience’s priorities & goals?
 - What data is available to you?
 - What data is easily obtainable?
 - Court the datakeepers.

Strategic outcome evaluation

- Step #4 – Which of the identified data are appropriate indicators of the success or progress of one or more of your SSW services?
 - Must have high face validity to average person
 - May reflect only a small portion of your services – that’s OK

Strategic outcome evaluation

- Step #5 – Which of the identified data indicators from Step #4 that a) address 1 or more of your audience’s priorities & b) are significantly & tangibly impacted by 1 or more of your SSW services, will you use & analyze?
 - Which are the easiest to access?
 - Which will be most compelling to your audience?
 - Which are most impacted by your services?

Closing Comments

- Strategic outcome evaluation focuses on:
 - Audience priorities & changes in data sets
 - NOT** services or programs
- Strategic outcome evaluation works regardless of:
 - What SSW services you provide
 - What data you track

Closing Comments

- Strategic outcome evaluation works retroactively
 - Start small, refine your evaluation plan & then go to scale
 - Written plan can help promote commitment & support
 - See template
 - Questions?
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