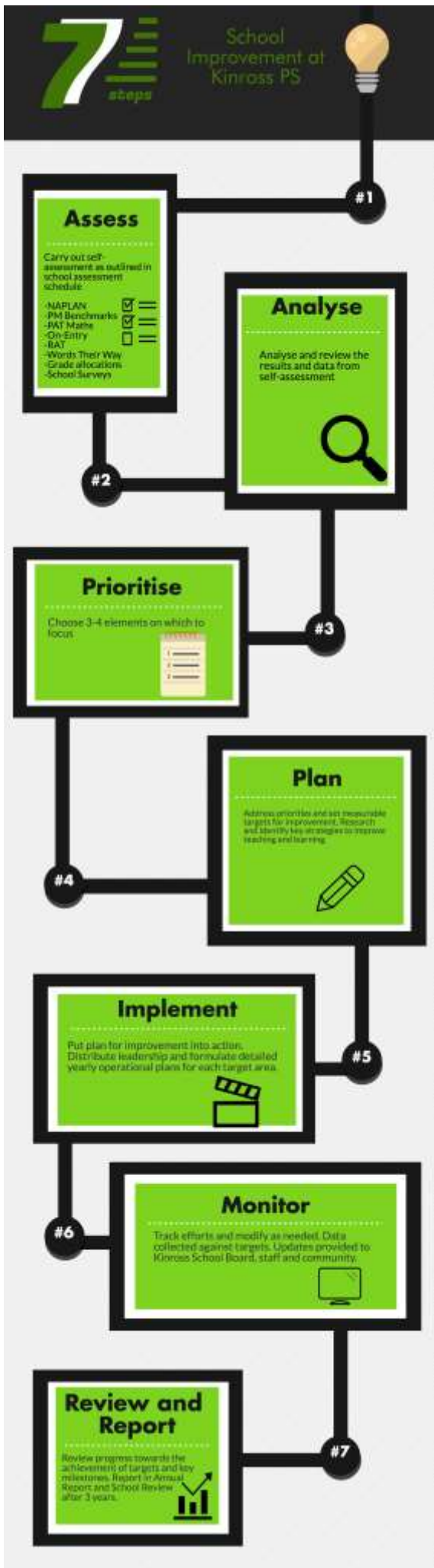




School Improvement Policy



School Improvement Policy

Every school is required to seek continual improvement and account for its performance by undertaking self-assessment, planning for improvement, reporting on performance and progress and participating in, and acting on, review processes.

Principals are accountable to the Director Schools for the performance of their school and teachers are accountable to the principal for the progress of their students.

Principals, in collaboration with school staff are required to undertake self-assessment that results in judgements about the standards of student achievement and the effectiveness of school processes in maximising student achievement.

Principals, in collaboration with school staff are required to undertake school planning processes that include the development of a School Business Plan, operational planning and classroom planning.

Principals, in collaboration with school staff are required to publish annually a School Report that describes the school's performance and report on legislative and designated policy and program requirements.

Principals, in collaboration with school staff are required to participate in and actively respond to school review processes including Standards Reviews and, as required, reviews conducted by the Expert Review Group.

The graphic represented here clearly outlines the cycle Kinross PS follows in the development of the Kinross PS Business Plan. These steps are fluid and ongoing and the school moves forwards and backwards through these in the life of the School Business Plan.

All key stakeholders are involved in each of these steps including the leadership team, staff, School Board and members of the school community.

Target Setting

Rationale

The Department of Education's High Performance High Care Strategic Plan requires schools to set high expectations and targets for the specific progress of students (or groups) based on rigorous analysis of data.

Self-evaluation, using performance data and other information, leading to sustained self-improvement is at the core of school business. Effective self-evaluation, and the actions that flow from it, should deliver educational improvement for all students.

Setting clear targets for improved standards should make school improvement planning more effective; targets provide solid measures against which to judge progress, and can help to raise teachers' and children's expectations of what can be achieved.

Targets should be realistic yet challenging.

Key Considerations and Questions

Targets should be:

1. Clearly expressed and quantified
 - Will it be clear if the targets have been achieved?
 - What methods of measurement and types of data could be used?
 - Are they linked explicitly to priority areas?
2. Informed by an accurate evaluation of what is currently being achieved
 - What is the current level of achievement for the school as a whole?
 - Has this improved or declined over recent years?
 - Are some groups/classes/subjects/year groups achieving more or less than others?
 - What explanations are there for any differences in levels of achievement?
 - What do other comparable schools achieve?
 - How are we performing against the state and nationally?
3. Time-bound.
 - Is it clear when the target is to be achieved?
 - Are the time limits realistic and appropriate?



Targets Defined

Targets are measures, or indicators, of what the school wants to achieve in terms of improvement in performance. They can cover, not just literacy and numeracy, but a wide range of aspects of school performance, such as attendance, disciplinary incidents, parental or community involvement in school life, or staff training. All targets, however, share common characteristics: they must be: SMART

S	Specific Be specific about the end result who? what? where? when? which? why?
M	Measurable Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress How will I know I have achieved it?
A	Achievable Targets should be action-orientated and attainable Aim to be ambitious-set high expectations
R	Realistic and Relevant within the availability of resources, knowledge and time Linked to school context and priorities
T	Timely what is the time frame for achieving the goal? A target date and milestones help keep things on track

Targets identified will set the direction for the Kinross PS Business Plan.

Progress in relation to the achievement of these targets will be monitored regularly and all staff are accountable to working to achieve them.

School Business Plan

Schools plan by making evidence-driven decisions about the actions required to maximise student achievement. School planning responds to student and community needs, addresses policy requirements, accommodates departmental imperatives and engages all school staff.

There are three levels of school planning:

- School Business Plan (Strategic Plan)
- Operational planning
- Classroom planning

The Delivery and Performance Agreement highlights the fact that the principal is accountable for ensuring that there is an effective Business Plan that outlines long-term strategic planning put in place to achieve the school's student achievement improvement targets.

The Business Plan describes the key focus areas and strategies that are intended to have maximum impact on overall school performance. The plan has the same time span as the Delivery and Performance Agreement, and is endorsed by the School Board and signed by the Chair of the Board.

Vision / Purpose

- Describes the ethos and culture of the school.
- Explains what the school stands for, and what makes it distinctive.
- Indicates desired achievement for students and for the school.
- Highlights areas such as school culture, academic programs, teaching practice, community involvement, community pride, a safe learning environment, student development etc.

Context

- Outlines factors that impact on student achievement.
- Describes special considerations that might impact on the school during and beyond the next three years.

Overview of Self-Assessment areas (*refer to the School Improvement and Accountability Framework*)

- Academic student performance.
- Non-academic data (attendance, behaviour, retention).
- Examination of data from the School Performance Monitoring System.
- Prerequisites for successful students: teaching, learning environment.
- Enablers for successful students: leadership, relationships, resources.

Key Focus Areas and Operational Strategies

Outlines key areas that were identified through the school's self-assessment and emphasises strategies to achieve student performance improvement targets and/or improvement in teaching, learning, environment, leadership, relationships and resources.

Typically, focus areas and operational strategies might include:

- input from the School Board pertaining to school focus areas;
- alignment with the Department's Plan for Public Schools;

- programs for which schools receive additional funding or endorsed specialist programs being delivered by the school, as outlined in the Delivery and Performance Agreement;
- major strategies to achieve student performance improvement targets;
- milestones;
- measurement of progress; and
- specific timelines.

Detailed operational plans, which are completed annually, are internal school plans. These outline improvement strategies in more detail; and include the resources assigned to each focus area.

Differences between Strategic and Operational Planning

Differences between Strategic and Operational Planning

Characteristic	School Plan (Strategic Plan)	Operational Planning
Definition	<i>Establishes overall objectives for the school in relation to school context</i>	<i>Supports the School Plan by specifying details of how school objectives will be achieved</i>
Audience	Public (School Council endorsed)	Internal
Purpose	Strategic (what?)	Active (how and who?)
Content	Overview	Details
Length	Succinct (max. 8 x A4 pages)	Longer
Components	Prescribed in policy	School-determined
Focus	Whole school	Sub-components
Period	Typically, a number of years	Typically, annual

School Planning Process

The process of school planning is arguably more important than the planning documents themselves. While it is important to document planning decisions (the School Plan is a public record of this), the effectiveness of the school planning process is best measured by the extent to which all members of the school community understand the school's purpose, have contributed to establishing the schools targets, understand what these mean and are actively implementing and supporting what has been planned.

Because school planning should be focused on improved student outcomes and because teachers will have the greatest school-level influence on student achievement, school planning must be connected to the what, how and when of classroom practice. Unless key elements of the School Business Plan and operational planning live and breathe in the daily work of teachers, then it is unlikely that planning goals will be achieved.

It is therefore critical that teachers are deeply involved in shaping school planning and are committed to achieving agreed outcomes. This will be demonstrated through classroom planning and performance management.