Portfolio and Capstone Guidebook

Asia Society – Partnership for Global Learning
Capstone Work Group, January 2015

The information for the capstone project was created by the Graduation Guidelines Capstone Work Group. For a list of the members of the work group or for a copy of the Capstone and Portfolio Guidebook, click here.

Evaluate and Enhance

During evaluation, stakeholders will use collected data to identify program strengths and areas for improvement toward achieving portfolio and capstone goals.. The evaluation process (see Diagram 5 below) will also identify implications for systems, instruction, and resources/tools. By implementing a robust evaluation process, districts and schools should see an increase in program effectiveness, bringing the portfolio and/or capstone project closer to the school or district's desired vision.

Diagram 5: Evaluation Process

The evaluation team organizes the collected data in a form that helps gauge progress towards meeting the school or district's portfolio and/or capstone project goals. Recall the sample goal from the **Design** section:

By May 2015, 80% of seniors will have scored proficient or above in the communication domain of the portfolio defense.

In this example, the evaluation team would determine the percentage of seniors who scored proficient or beyond in the communication domain of the portfolio defense. This team would also prepare disaggregated data for subgroups of students (Gifted and talented, English Language Learners, Special Education) to identify patterns and achievement gaps among different populations,

Multiple perspectives lead to diverse questions, interpretations, and hypotheses. It will be important for the evaluation team to engage stakeholders outside the evaluation team in the review of data.   Each point of view will help to make sense of the data and ultimately inform enhancements to the initiative design and implementation. To foster an efficient, collaborative review of data, it may be helpful to use an established protocol to review and interpret data. The School Reform Initiative's **ATLAS Looking at Data** protocol (see **Appendix G**) provides an effective process for reviewing and interpreting data.

Review and Analyze Data

Stakeholders should compare actual performance against desired outcomes. Consider the previous mentioned sample goal. If it is revealed that 90% of seniors score proficient or above in the communication domain of the portfolio defense, then it is important to recognize and celebrate the success. And at that point, it is possible to identity effective practices that lead that success. However, if only 50% of seniors scored proficient or above in the communication domain of the portfolio defense, then the evaluation team can look for patterns and formulate questions that will help them consider/revise/reevaluate current practices in curriculum, instruction, and support.

Interpret Results

Stakeholders need to examine how school/district systems, processes, and tools contribute to variation in student performance. The evaluation team may consider using a modified ***Success Analysis Protocol: Project Version*** (see ***Appendix H***) to pinpoint the practices that led to student success. Just as important is identifying ineffective processes and practices. For example, if the team discovers that English Language Learners performed significantly below other populations, it will be important to review the supports the school/district has provided for these students. It may be valuable to collect additional information to help interpret student performance data. The evaluation team may consider conducting a focus group with students to help determine the effectiveness of resources and supports.

Adjust design and implementation

Stakeholders need to determine how they can use their findings to improve student performance, They also need to identify which practices need to be continued, including instructional and systemic changes that will address gaps. For example, if students did not meet the target for proficiency in communication, stakeholders may want to think about what changes can be made to improve students' public speaking skills. Are there faculty members with public speaking expertise that could share instructional strategies and lessons to other staff? It will be important to build on school and staff strengths.

Finally, the implementation plan should be revised annually, using the findings from the evaluation process. For example, if in 2014-1015, 50% of seniors scored proficient or beyond in the communication domain of the portfolio defense, then a new S.M.A.R.T goal may be:

> By May 2016, 60% of seniors will have scored proficient or beyond in the communication domain of the portfolio defense.

It is important to update the action plan to articulate revised strategies or practices the school/district will implement in the upcoming year to meet the identified goals. Clearly articulating the supports and resources that students and staff will need to achieve the goal leads to success.