

PD Readiness Assessment Facilitation Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Readiness Assessment Overview	3
Readiness Assessment Use Cases	4
PD Readiness Assessment Rubric/Guide	5
PD System Map	6
Sample Readiness Assessment Report	20
Sample Feedback and Guidance Report	22
Sample Readiness Assessment Agenda	23

Introduction

PD Readiness Assessment Tool

- Designed to assist school districts or Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), or networks to begin a PD system redesign effort with the goal of fostering high quality, multi-modal PD interactions.
- Supports the process to identify the current state of each aspect of a PD system's current state and clarify priorities for the ideal future PD state.
- Best leveraged by including multiple stakeholders from across functions in the district or CMO at the onset of redesign, to promote a comprehensive view of the current state of the PD system.
- Enables teams to put forth strong plans for redesigning that system to meet future goals.
- Provides a report to document this cross-team conversation and can serve as a snapshot of the current state of the organization's PD program and key attributes of the ideal design state.
- Most importantly, aligns the team on key ideas and often leads to new areas of focus including changes in the scope and sequence of the PD plan.

PD Readiness Assessment Facilitation Guide

- Best use of the Readiness Assessment tool includes an objective facilitator, who documents and guides the cross-team conversation.
- Successful facilitators have included both internal resources, and external consultants. Key skills include those that understand whole system redesign, ideally with some content knowledge about the functioning of a school district and teacher professional development. Examples include program leaders, PD advisors and others that can ensure that all voices are heard, without a vested interest in the outcome. Also, the facilitator enables all key PD leaders to participate fully in the process.
- Key to the facilitation is also ensuring that key discussion points are documented, that questions about the language in the rubric are resolved, and that a "consensus" score is reached for each question.
- This guide provides the facilitator with support to engage the team and summarize the discussion/conclusions.
- Key guide sections provide background and use case examples for successful outcomes with other districts and CMOs, and to help a facilitator anticipate questions that may arise while working through the assessment questions.
- Some of the questions are intentionally ambiguous so that the cross-team can decide for itself how to define terms and measures of success. The goal is to focus more on the richness of the dialogue and the content being discussed rather than on the score of each question.
- The scores are subjective, but are meant to align the team towards clear PD innovation and implementation.

Readiness Assessment Overview

The following is an overview of the Readiness Assessment tool, intended to give a high-level picture of the objectives, intended outcomes, and history of the development of the tool.

Objective: *what is it and why should you use this tool?*

The PD Readiness Assessment is a tool intended to be used by school districts and CMOs at the beginning a PD system redesign effort. The goal of the readiness assessment is to support the process of identifying the current state of multiple aspects of the PD system and to begin understanding the changes required to achieve a desired future state for PD. The PD Readiness Assessment consists of 28 questions. Best use of the tool includes:

1. Team engagement in a candid, cross-functional discussion about the current state of PD using a common language
2. Development of a shared team view of the current state of the key elements impacting their PD programs as well as a point of view about the elements that should be strengthened or leveraged to support a PD system redesign effort.

Timeline *when you should use this tool within the PD redesign process?*

This tool is best used at the very beginning of the redesign process, during the current state analysis and strategic planning stage:



Audience and Participants

with whom should you use this tool?

- District/CMO core PD redesign leaders representing each of the key aspects of the PD system (including PD program leadership, IT, finance, HR, school administrators and teachers; extended team could include other stakeholder functions such as assessment and curriculum & instruction)
- 1 Facilitator
- 1 Scribe

Note: The composition of this cross team is very important, as inclusion of more functions, and especially teachers, dramatically impacts the discussion and the consensus scores.

Previous Uses

who has used this tool in the past?

This tool was originally developed in July 2013 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As of February 2014, it is in its third iteration (v3.0). It has been facilitated in nearly a dozen school districts and CMOs engaged in the process of redesigning their teacher professional development programs.

Note: The Readiness Assessment Tool is currently being redesigned as a web-based tool rather than an Excel tool. The web-based version is expected in Spring 2014.

Output *what should you get out of this tool?*

- Readiness Assessment Detailed Summary: This report is automatically generated by the Excel tool. It captures high points of the discussion, with consensus scoring
- Readiness Assessment Feedback & Guidance Report: This report is an optional report to be developed by the facilitator. It gives an objective evaluation of the cross-team conversation and identifies key strengths and next steps for the Implementation Planning phase

Readiness Assessment Use Cases

The PD Readiness Assessment Tool is best used at the beginning of a Professional Development (PD) redesign process. Following is a general description of the way it has been used in the past with multiple schools districts and CMOs. Engagement with The Readiness Assessment Tool is not limited to the following use cases, and is designed to best fit the needs of your district/CMO.

Primary Use Case: Organizing step in creating a shared understanding of the current PD challenges and innovation objectives

Background: A district or CMO has established a core PD cross-functional team to serve as the redesign leadership, and has committed to innovating the PD program. Key elements of the PD innovation have been defined, but specific team activities and implementation steps have not been fully determined.

1. Each team member independently reviews and answers each of the 28 questions based on their experience and understanding within the district or CMO.
2. All participants meet to discuss their perspectives. Moving through each question, the responses are discussed and differing perspectives are shared. With that, the group reevaluates the responses to align on a consensus a score for each question. These outcomes are captured in the tool for reference.
3. After generating the consensus scores and leveraging the scoring rubric, create the summary report to highlight key strengths and gaps observed. The report table of the Excel tool allows the team to “click” a button in order to finalize results. This button generates a printable version of the assessment report.
4. From the summary report of strengths and gaps, members of the core PD team determine how to incorporate the learnings into actionable next steps for the PD program redesign and prioritize areas of focus. Refer to the Next Steps Guide at the end of this document for further suggestions.

Potential variations to the above use case:

- For districts that are distributed in terms of program design, or trying to get a clear perspective of individual stakeholder groups, this tool can be used to understand such perspectives for purposes of defining the PD innovation plans.

In this use case, the readiness assessment can be used to survey the specific stakeholder group(s). For example, a group of teachers could answer the questions as well as a group of home/central office personnel. Note that this is not a substitute for teacher-centered engagement and design, but instead a method to increase the inputs/data about the current state for those involved in the cross-team conversation. This can then be leveraged as input to the cross team engagement, or as an alignment process within the various stakeholder groups. Key to making this approach successful is ensuring that appropriate resources and time to effectively drive this process.

- Instead of using the tool at the beginning of the redesign process, a school district or CMO could choose to use the assessment periodically throughout a PD redesign implementation phase. This method will allow for clear understanding of the progress being made along the way. One consideration to be managed with this potential usage method is that it requires continued engagement across all key stakeholders and tight focus on the key issues that enable the PD program transformation. These interim check-ins could identify new issues and the group will need to determine whether the new issues are core or incidental to the PD effort overall.

PD Readiness Assessment Rubric/Guide

The System Map (pictured below) is a visual representation of a hypothesis about the factors and processes needed to support PD redesign. This model was developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Innovative Professional Development team, based on research and experience in working with districts and CMOs across the country engaged in professional development program transformations.

In an ideal state, at the core of a professional development program are empowered, effective teachers. To create empowered teachers, leaders must:

- identify their individual needs,
- personalize a PD plan,
- access multiple PD models, and
- use continuous feedback for continual refresh of offerings based on performance.

The building blocks and enabling conditions illustrated below are addressed as part of the readiness assessment, as key program elements to be addressed in designing or innovating professional development programs. For each building block and enabling condition, several key questions are posed to get a sense of the current level of capability maturity. There are four capability levels described for each question:

- **Non-existent** – fairly low level of capability maturity, in that limited capabilities exist or those that are present do not exist in any pervasive, repeatable manner.
- **Initial** – increased level of capability over “non-existent”, generally characterized by inconsistent execution and limited repeatable processes.
- **Defined and Managed** – moderately high level of capability maturity, with consistent execution and repeatable processes
- **Optimizing** – highest level of process maturity, characterized by high level of execution, process standardization, and continuous monitoring and feedback to achieve the desired results, that are formalized and part of the way the district “does business” on a consistent basis – ingrained in their policies and practices, and continue even through leadership changes.

In total, there are 28 questions and for each, suggested considerations and guiding questions have been provided to focus the discussion topics and ensure the capability assessment can be achieved. Some of the questions are intentionally ambiguous to allow the team to align on their own internal definitions and working norms.

Some general considerations for completing the assessment include:

- It is important to drive for clarity by determining at a consensus score for each of the 28 questions.
- Each consensus score should be one of the capability levels identified – mid-point scores should not be used.
- To achieve the consensus, focus the team on the content of each of the capability levels – in light of the PD program objectives. It is more important to focus on the outcomes in place (or desired), than the “score.”

Note: The questions and rubric use of the word “district” includes CMOs. CMO personnel engaging with this tool should read “district” as “CMO/Central office”.

PD System Map

