

STANDARD 6

STAKEHOLDERS
COMMUNICATIONS
& RELATIONSHIPS



The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

STANDARD 6: STAKEHOLDERS COMMUNICATIONS & RELATIONSHIPS

Anderson School District One

STANDARD: The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes, calendar of parent meetings
- Calendar of events that promote stakeholder involvement
- District staff affirm that stakeholders are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions
- Internship/partnership agreements with community-based business and agencies
- Parents and community members regularly volunteer time in district
- Policies regarding credit for service learning
- Policies regarding suggestions, grievances
- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm that they are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Calendars, agendas, minutes of parent meetings
- District Improvement Committee: agendas, minutes, membership
- Emails, phone answering system
- Newsletters, brochures, letters, memos
- Parent - Teacher conferences schedule
- Policies regarding formal inclusion of stakeholder involvement
- Stakeholders affirm they have variety of opportunities to be formally involved in life of district
- Steering Committee meetings: agendas, minutes, membership
- Web page dedicated to parents/community members
- Wide variety of stakeholder communication documents/avenues

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Advisory Committees
- Calendar, agendas, minutes, committee membership



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- District staff affirm that they regularly include community in preparing instructional delivery activities
- Policies regarding volunteer involvement
- Schedule of volunteer activities
- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm that their suggestions and recommendations are acted upon
- Stakeholders affirm that they are actively involved in providing expertise

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Brochures, pamphlets
- Newsletters about student performance
- Online calendar, schedule, and news/updates
- Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data
- Parent Handbook
- Parents and students are informed and involved in developing individualized learning plans for students
- Parents and students are informed and involved in making course selections
- Regularly published newsletters to community
- Stakeholders affirm that they are knowledgeable about student learning
- Student Handbook

6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Parent - teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data
- Policies regarding reporting schedule
- Report cards

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Focus Questions:

1. How does the school system's leadership ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

Beginning with the election of a seven member Board of Trustees, Anderson School District One assures responsiveness to community expectations and concerns. The leadership and unity of this board reflects the communities (electorate of each trustee) that make up this district and ensures district responsiveness. In turn, the district leadership ensures the responsiveness of its schools to their community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction. All the areas of Anderson One have the same expectation of quality education and continuous improvement of student achievement.

The district strategic plan is developed collaboratively by professional educators and representatives of the community. Parents, religious, business and industrial, and civic leaders join with the leadership of the Board of Trustees and the district office staff to discuss and formulate through an envisioning process to develop the core strategic plan for the direction of Anderson One. Annual reassessment of this plan as well as a reassessment of needs is conducted collaboratively.

Opportunities for community/stakeholder input exist with each board meeting. However, the culture of Anderson One is such that stakeholders have access to district leadership on a daily basis. Seldom are appointments necessary for stakeholders to meet with district or school leaders on any topic. The superintendent sets the example of an open door policy that is readily followed by all staff in positions of district and/or school leadership.

The district's most important stakeholder group, our students, has the continuous support and attention of our administration, faculties, and staffs. Student forums, student government, student participation on committees, advisor/advisee, CAPs process, surveys, and numerous opportunities for student participation in community or civic activities ensure district responsiveness to their needs and promote student satisfaction.

Parents and other caring adults actively address issues with the district and schools through personal meetings and phone calls, surveys, online interaction, membership and participation in PTA's, booster clubs, and School Improvement Councils. Additionally, at the secondary level, all parents are invited to share in their student's educational planning with input on courses, direction for preparation for career planning and future education. This opportunity, known as the CAPs process (Career Awareness Planning), brings about great stakeholder satisfaction.

Teacher/administrator forums, faculty meetings, surveys, and the open door policy throughout the district provide opportunities for faculty and staff input on all issues affecting these stakeholder groups and ensure responsiveness.

Numerous community collaborative efforts ensure Anderson One's responsiveness to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction by open dialogue and feedback. Some examples would be membership and participation in civic clubs, partnerships with businesses, colleges, churches, and local government. Job shadowing and apprenticeships, Special Olympics, career days at schools, Good News clubs, Relay for Life, college nights, and collaboration on grant initiatives are only a few of the opportunities for district/stakeholder interaction.

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Anderson One and all of its schools have formal websites that provide communication to the community and stakeholders as well as provide a means of feedback. Individual organizations, as well as teachers, also have websites to provide communication and receipt of stakeholder feedback. School, group, and teacher newsletters add to the level of communication and help to provide systemic and individual responsiveness thereby increasing stakeholder satisfaction.

2. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school system and its schools, including the sharing of student performance results?

Anderson One is proud of the outstanding level of student achievement brought about by the educational effectiveness of our system. Numerous outlets are used to communicate with stakeholders about this effectiveness including the sharing of student performance results. From the Board of Trustees throughout the entire system of district employees, all are proud to communicate about the district.

All local media outlets are contacted by the public information officer with any information pertaining to student achievement results, programs used to produce these results, and measures taken to provide continuous improvement in all aspects of the system. Further, results of surveys, South Carolina school and district report cards, and an annual Report to the People provide information about the effectiveness of the district. Additionally, key communicators (parents) at each school provide newsworthy quotes and/or comments for the media, as necessary.

District, school, teacher, and special group websites are in operation for the express purpose of information sharing on district activities and results. The Parent Portal aspect of PowerSchool, the digital student management system used by the district, allows the communication of information to parents about their student's courses, grades, and assignments. Teachers also communicate with parents through the use of emails sharing information about student performance and ideas for continuous improvement. Efforts are made, whenever possible, to share information in English as well as in Spanish in order to better serve this rapidly growing population in Anderson One.

All schools hold open houses, orientations, community presentations, and offer school newsletters for the edification of stakeholders on school activities and effectiveness. Each school sponsors a PTA, booster clubs, and a School Improvement Council which receives detailed information about the school and the district. Flags, banners, bulletin boards, and other signs are used in all schools communicating student academic, artistic, character, and athletic achievement. Administrators and school staff are all available to share information with stakeholders. Anderson One is a "transparent" district desiring to communicate the efforts of our employees and the successes of our students.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation.



COMMITMENT TO
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

STANDARD 7

The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.



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7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results):

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools
- District staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement
- District staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees
- Graduation and retention rates
- Information/Data system
- Postsecondary engagement: employment, college
- Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics
- Record of student performance improvement efforts
- Specific program initiatives to support continuous improvement
- Stakeholder survey (satisfaction) data
- State/Federal Accountability Plan

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement
- District and School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees
- Policies, procedures for district and school improvement committee work
- Stakeholder survey data demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process

7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning:

Highly Functional



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Evidence Provided:

- Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings
- Data: student performance, stakeholder opinion are used in development of school improvement plan
- District staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning
- District staff demonstrate capacity for providing methodologies to increase student performance
- Evaluation data demonstrating impact of plan and actions taken to remediate
- School improvement plans demonstrate alignment with district vision, purpose
- Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets
- Student performance targets are communicated to all stakeholders
- Vision, purpose posted in district-wide facilities

7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- District guidelines and professional learning provide strategies for effective instruction for closing achievement gaps
- District staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices
- District staff affirm their involvement in evaluating the impact of instruction on student growth
- District staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions
- School improvement plans demonstrate evaluation of goals, objectives, and strategies impact on student growth

7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools
- District staff affirm their involvement in professional learning
- Personnel Policies that outline staff evaluation process
- Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

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7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Annual Report
- District staff and stakeholders affirm the use of performance data during Parent-Teacher conferences
- Information/Data system
- Newsletters, brochures
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts
- Stakeholders affirm receipt of district communication regarding improvement efforts

7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- Evaluation of effectiveness of continuous improvement plan and process
- Stakeholders affirm knowledge of an evaluation of the district's improvement efforts

7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- District staff affirm that time is allocated for improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring
- Policies and procedures for engaging in district-wide and individual school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts:

Highly Functional



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Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- District expectations and guidelines for all schools and departments to engage in a continuous improvement process
- District staff affirm their knowledge of the district's expectations and guidelines for supporting student performance

Focus Questions:

1. ***Describe the process for continuous improvement used by the school system and its schools and the impact of this process on student learning and system effectiveness.***

Anderson School District One sets student achievement as its highest priority at every level. District administrators consistently and effectively collaborate with school leaders in all possible aspects to improve student learning. Data is gathered at both district and school levels. District and school leaders meet to analyze data in order to develop plans for continuous student improvement. Data includes test results, demographics, community concerns, facilities updates, and strategic and long-term projections. Often, district and school leadership develop plans for improvement that are district wide (i.e., HSAP programs, EOC strategies, PASS improvement) as well as school specific (i.e., tutoring, RTI, case management). Principals and other school leaders often implement these plans at the school level through staff development and department meetings; however, schools are rarely left to accomplish these tasks alone. District leadership often supports school staff development through workshops, speakers, teacher focus groups, curriculum writing, and grant writing. The amount of systems support from both district and school leadership, enables Anderson School District One to rank high among South Carolina districts in its continuous attempt to improve student learning. Schools routinely request and receive staff development for teachers, materials, technology, and scheduling and class flexibility through district leadership.

2. ***What process is used to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school system and its schools?***

District Leaders working in conjunction with community members, school level professionals, and state and county representatives develop a vision and strategic plan with the purpose of continuously improving student learning. Schools develop individual vision statements that reflect that of the district. Data is used in both cases not only to find areas of success, but also to identify areas for improvement. With an understanding of what areas need improvement, goals are set by either groups or individual leaders of schools. Communication is a key component that allows district and school leadership to combine their efforts. Because communication from school to district is the norm, materials and support are made available and improvement goals can begin with little delay. Rarely do district leaders mandate change. Rather, change initiatives (for the sake of improvement) are collaborative and often develop from the school level with the district providing valuable support to the change initia-



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tive efforts. Although data is used to identify problems, solutions are often generated through discussions with teachers, students, parents, and principals. This involvement helps to ensure that solutions to identified problems are more likely to succeed. An annual district needs assessment is generated through contact with school representatives at all levels and in all disciplines.

3. What process is used to ensure that system and school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

Staff development is truly an exceptional aspect of the Anderson School District One plan for continuous improvement. There are several reasons for the emphasis on staff development to improve student learning. First, there is a culture from the district office to school leadership to teachers that emphasizes the importance of seeking out and implementing best practices regardless of subject or grade level. Second, district leadership is committed to helping teachers develop best practices through staff development, either outside or from within the district. Finally, district and school leadership have a clear understanding that staff development can take many different forms with equal effectiveness. Perhaps the most common and useful staff development is teacher cohorts where teachers within a school or from different schools meet to develop curriculum and discuss teaching strategies. This practice happens from K-12 and is an important resource for the district to tap from within talent and ideas to improve student learning. Additionally, the district aggressively seeks funding (through grants and budgeting) to allow teachers and administrators to travel and attend staff development and conferences. In many instances, speakers are brought into the district in order to reach a larger audience of Anderson School District One personnel. Finally, district leadership supports a Summer Academy of staff development for teachers with a tremendous variety of topics and speakers. Teachers, following conferencing with their principals, are expected and encouraged to seek out areas in which they feel they need improvement.

Perhaps the most important aspect of successful staff development in Anderson School District One is the process through which needs are identified. There is a very successful line of communication from the classroom to the board room that allows personnel at ANY level to identify and suggest staff development. Teachers are as likely to find information on their own as for it to be sent by principals or superintendents. Finding excellent staff development opportunities is a shared responsibility within the district and is one of the most important parts of our continuing improvement of student learning.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

Communication and collaboration are the cornerstones of the effort toward continuous improvement in Anderson School District One. On a continuing basis, district leadership gathers and evaluates data with school leaders to identify deficiencies in student learning. Data is not limited to numbers, and often includes ethnographic information collected directly from stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents. Together, district and school leaders debate, discuss, and decide the best ways to make improvements. This process involves allocation of resources (talent, funding, technology, and support). Typically, district and school leaders decide not only on a course of action, but also a standard of measurement to evaluate progress. School leaders then include stakeholders within their schools and communities to begin the process of improving. Monitoring of the plan by district leadership varies from formal reports and continued data gathering to informal and frequent conversations with school leaders and stakeholders. During the process of implementation, review and adjustment are overseen by district and school leadership and emphasis is placed on efficient and effective use of resources. A firm trust is placed on school leaders and teachers to make suggestions and changes. District leadership demonstrates the understanding that stakeholders (teachers, students, and community members) are the key to successful improvement. Success is shared through multiple avenues (media, internet, email, district gatherings). However, there is a common practice of personal conversations with stakeholders to share success and

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express appreciation. Clearly, everyone is involved in continually making Anderson School District One a better place for students to achieve.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system fully implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns all functions of the system and its schools with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are systemic, sustained, and fully embedded, and the system demonstrates significant progress in improving student performance, system and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are clearly informed by the documented results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of a highly sustained, continuous process of improvement.

