Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Data or information about school and student performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way. The conference does not provide assistance in helping schools understand what needs to change at the school and classroom levels, based on data.	There is no systematic process for data collection, analysis, and use across the school. Some school, teacher, and student information are collected and used to problem solve and meet accountability expectations.	The school or conference collects all types of data, including demographics, student learning, perception, and school processes. The information is used to drive the strategic quality plan for district and school improvement.	There is systematic and systemic reliance on data (including data for all student groups) as a basis for decision making at the conference, school, and classroom levels. Changes are based on the study of data to meet the educational needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school throughout the school year. The conference engages administrators, teachers, and students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all school, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school and conference quality.
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make school changes. Student dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as attendance, enrollment, student learning results, and drop-out rates for accountability. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling and school operations.	The school or conference collects information on current and former students (e.g., demographics, student learning, and perceptions), analyzes and uses it in conjunction with future trends for planning and supporting the school in doing the same. Identified areas for improvement are tracked over time.	Data, including school processes, are used to provide feedback to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies on all student learning. Schools' historical data are graphed and utilized for diagnosis and leadership purposes by the district. Contributing causes are analyzed.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented across the school. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure and to evaluate all processes and programs. Contributing causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Only anecdotal and hypothetical information are available about student performance, behavior, and perceptions. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the district depending upon individual administrators and their efforts.	Information collected about school needs, effective assessment, and instructional practices are shared with all school and conference staff and used to plan for school improvement. Information helps staff understand pressing issues, analyze information for "contributing causes," and track results for improvement.	A comprehensive information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear in most schools and conference wide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using the data, including the analysis of contributing causes.	Schools are delighted with their instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all schools and students. Schools use data to predict and prevent potential problems. No student falls through the cracks. school-wide, only "effective" programs are in operation.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Instructional and organizational processes critical to student success are not identified. Little distinction of student learning differences is made. Some teachers in some schools believe that not all students can achieve.	Some data are collected on student background and performance trends. Learning gaps are noted to direct improvement of instruction. It is known that student learning standards must be used to guide instruction and learning.	The conference encourages and supports each school in creating a shared vision. Each staff agrees and commits to what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach, how they will assess, and how they and students will treat each other. Student learning standards are analyzed and a continuum of learning is created across the district. Student performance data are collected and compared to the standards in order to analyze how to improve learning for all students.	Formative and summative data on student achievement are used throughout the school to pursue the improvement of student learning. The school ensures that teachers collaborate to implement appropriate instruction and assessment strategies for meeting student learning standards articulated across grade levels. All teachers believe that all students can learn.	The school makes an effort to exceed student achievement expectations. Innovative instructional changes are made to anticipate learning needs and improve student achievement. The school makes sure that teachers are able to predict characteristics impacting student achievement and to know how to perform from a small set of internal quality measures to ensure success.
Implementation	All students are taught the same way. There is no communication between the conference and schools about students' academic needs or learning styles. There are no analyses of how to improve instruction.	Some effort is made to track and analyze student achievement trends on a school-wide basis. The school begins to understand the needs and learning gaps within its system.	Teachers across the school study effective instruction and assessment strategies to implement standards and to increase students' learning. Student feedback, analysis of achievement, and school processes data are used in conjunction with implementation support strategies.	There is a systematic focus on implementing student learning standards and on the improvement of student learning school-wide. Effective instruction and assessment strategies are implemented in each school. The school supports teachers supporting one another with approaches such as peer coaching, lesson study, and/or action research focused on implementing instruction that lead to increased achievement and the attainment of the shared vision.	All teachers correlate critical instructional and assessment strategies with objective indicators of quality student achievement. A comparative analysis of actual individual student performance to student learning standards is utilized to adjust teaching strategies to ensure a progression of learning for all students.
Outcome	There is wide variation in student attitudes and achievement with undesirable results. There is high dissatisfaction among students with learning. Student background is used as an excuse for low student achievement.	There is some evidence that student achievement trends are available to the school and are being used. There is much effort, but minimal observable results in improving student achievement.	There is an increase in communication among conference, school, students, and teachers regarding student learning. Teachers learn about effective instructional strategies that will implement the shared vision, student learning standards, and how to meet the needs of students. The school made some gains.	Increased student achievement is evident school-wide. The school leadership knows what it takes to support the school in improving student achievement. Student morale, attendance, and behavior are good. Teacher morale and attendance are good. Teachers converse often with each other about preventing student failure. Areas for further attention are clear.	The conference, school, and teachers conduct self-assessments to continuously improve performance. Improvements in student achievement are evident and clearly caused by teachers' and students' understandings of individual student learning standards, linked to appropriate and effective instructional and assessment strategies. A continuum of learning results. No student falls through the cracks.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION

QUALITY PLANNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	No quality plan or process exists. Data are neither used nor considered important in planning.	The school realizes the importance of reviewing data, and having a mission, vision, and one comprehensive plan. However, the conference currently requires the school to focus their plans on solving problems and closing gaps.	A comprehensive plan to achieve the school vision is developed. Plan includes evaluation and continuous improvement.	One focused and integrated school-wide continuous improvement plan for implementing a continuous improvement process is put into action. All school efforts are focused on the implementation of this plan that represents the achievement of the schools vision.	A plan for the continuous improvement of the school with a focus on students, is put into place. There is excellent articulation and integration of all elements in the school due to quality planning. The leadership team ensures all elements are implemented by all appropriate parties.
Implementation	There is no knowledge of or direction for quality planning. Budget is allocated on an as-needed basis. Many plans exist.	School administrators and board begins the continuous improvement planning efforts by reviewing all data, laying out major steps to a shared vision, by identifying values and beliefs, the purpose of the school, and its mission, vision, and student learning standards.	Implementation goals, strategies, actions, responsibilities, due dates, and timelines are spelled out. Support structures for implementing the school-wide plan are set in place.	The continuous improvement plan is implemented through effective procedures in all areas of the school. Everyone commits to implementing the plan aligned to the vision, mission, and values and beliefs. All share responsibility for accomplishing school goals.	School-wide goals, mission, vision, and student learning standards are shared and articulated throughout the conference and with other schools. The attainment of identified student learning standards is linked to planning and implementation of effective instruction that meets students' needs. Leaders at all levels are developing expertise because quality planning is the norm.
Outcome	There is no evidence of comprehensive planning. Staff work is carried out in isolation. A continuum of learning for students is absent.	The school staff understands the benefits of working together to implement a comprehensive continuous improvement plan, they just have not done it yet. Current improvements are neither systematic nor integrated school-wide.	One plan exists. There is evidence that the plan is being *implemented* in some areas of the school. Improvements are neither systematic nor integrated school-wide.	A school-wide continuous improvement plan is known to all. Results from working toward the quality improvement goals are evident throughout the school. Planning is ongoing and inclusive of all stakeholders.	Evidence of effective teaching and learning results in significant improvement of student achievement attributed to quality planning at all levels of the organization. Teachers and administrators understand and share the school's mission and vision. Quality planning is seamless and all the school demonstrate evidence of accountability.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION
LEADERSHIP

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	The School Board is decision maker. Decisions are reactive to NAD, Union, Conference, mandates. There is no knowledge of continuous improvement.	A shared decision-making structure is put into place and discussions begin on how to achieve a school vision. Most decisions are focused on solving problems and are reactive.	The school leadership team is committed to continuous improvement. Leadership seeks inclusion of all school stakeholders and supports collaborative teams by making time provisions for their work.	The school leadership team represents a true shared decision-making structure. All teams understand their roles and carry them out in the implementation of a comprehensive continuous improvement plan.	A strong continuous improvement structure is set into place that allows for input from all stakeholders of the school, and community, ensuring strong communication, flexibility, and refinement of approach and beliefs. The school vision is student focused, based on data and appropriate for conference/school/ community values, and meeting all student needs.
Implementation	The School Board makes all decisions, with little or no input from administrators, teachers, the community, or students. Leadership inspects for mistakes.	The shared decision-making structure is implemented in some places and not others. Structure is mostly used to solve problems or close gaps.	School values and beliefs are identified; the purpose of the school is defined; a school mission and student learning standards are developed with representative input. A structure for studying approaches to achieving student learning standards is established.	Decisions about budget and implementation of the vision are made within teams, by the school board, by the leadership team, by the individual school, and by the full staff, as appropriate. All decisions are communicated to the leadership team and to the full staff.	The vision is implemented and articulated across all grade levels and all school stakeholders. Quality standards are reinforced throughout the school. All members of the school community understand and apply the quality standards. The leadership team has systematic interactions and involvement with conference, administrators, teachers, parents, community, and students about the schools's direction. Necessary resources are available to implement and measure staff learning related to student learning standards.
Outcome	Although the decision-making process is clearly known, decisions are reactive and lack focus and consistency. There is no evidence of staff commitment to a shared vision. Students and parents do not feel they are being heard.	Quality leadership techniques are used sporadically. Critical areas for improvement are identified.	The mission provides a focus for all school stakeholders and school improvement guides the action to the vision. The school is committed to continuous improvement. Faculty feel included in shared decision making.	There is evidence that the school leadership team listens to all levels of the organization. Implementation of the continuous improvement plan is linked to student learning standards and the guiding principles of the school. Leadership capacity for implementing the vision throughout the school is evident.	Site-based management and shared decision making truly exists. Teachers understand and display an intimate knowledge of how the school operates. School support and communicate with each other in the implementation of quality strategies. Teachers implement the vision in their classrooms and can determine how their new approaches meet student needs and lead to the attainment of student learning standards. Leaders are standards-driven at all levels. Instructional coherence results.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no professional learning. Teachers, principals, and school staff are seen as interchangeable parts that can be replaced. Professional learning is external and usually equated to attending a conference alone. Hierarchy determines "haves" and "have-nots."	The "cafeteria" approach to professional learning is used, whereby individual teachers and administrators choose what they want to take, without regard to an overall school or conference plan.	The shared vision, school continuous improvement plan and student needs are used to target focused professional learning for all employees. Staff is in-serviced on relevant instructional and leadership strategies.	Professional learning, data-gathering methods and collaboration are used by all teachers and administrators, and are directed toward the goals of the shared vision and the continuous improvement of the school. Teachers have ongoing conversations about student achievement data. All staff members receive training in their content areas. Systems thinking is considered in all decisions.	Leadership and staff continuously improve all aspects of the learning organization through an innovative, data-informed, and comprehensive continuous improvement process that prevents student failures. Effective job-embedded professional learning is ongoing for implementing the vision for student success. Traditional teacher evaluations are replaced by collegial coaching and action research focused on student learning standards. Policies set professional learning as a priority budget line-item. Professional learning is planned, aligned, and leads to the achievement of student learning standards, and the shared vision.
Implementation	Principals, teachers, and school staff performance is controlled and inspected. Performance evaluations are used to detect mistakes.	Teacher professional learning is sporadic and unfocused, lacking an approach for implementing new procedures and processes. Some leadership training begins to take place.	The school ensures that teachers are involved in year-round quality professional learning. The school staff are trained in shared decision making, team building concepts, effective communication, collaboration strategies, and data analysis.	Teachers, in teams, continuously set and implement student achievement goals. Leadership considers these goals and provides necessary support structures for collaboration. Teachers utilize effective support approaches as they implement new instruction and assessment strategies. Coaching and feedback structures are in place. Use of new knowledge and skills is evident.	Teams passionately support each other in the pursuit of quality improvement at all levels. Teachers make bold changes in instruction and assessment strategies focused on student learning standards and student learning styles. A teacher as action researcher model is implemented. Staffwide conversations focus on systemic reflection and improvement. Administrators and teachers are strong leaders.
Outcome	There is no professional growth and no staff or student performance improvement. There exists a high turnover rate of employees, especially administrators. Attitudes and approaches filter down to teachers and students.	The effectiveness of professional learning is not known or analyzed. Teachers feel helpless and unsupported in making schoolwide changes.	Teachers, working in teams, feel supported by the district and begin to feel they can make changes. Evidence shows that shared decision making works.	A collegial school system is evident. Effective classroom strategies are practiced and articulated school-wide. These strategies, focused on student learning standards, are reflective of professional learning aimed at ensuring student learning and the implementation of the shared vision.	True systemic change and improved student achievement result because teachers are knowledgeable of and implement effective, differentiated teaching strategies and formative assessments for individual student learning gains. Teachers' repertoire of skills is enhanced and students are achieving. Professional learning is driving learning at all levels. A continuum of learning exists in each school.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no system for input from parents, business, or community. Status quo is desired for managing the school.	Partnerships are sought, but mostly for money and things.	The school has knowledge of why partnerships are important and seeks to include businesses and parents in a strategic fashion related to student learning standards for increased student learning.	The school seeks effective win-win business and community partnerships and parent involvement to implement the vision. Desired outcomes are clearly identified. A solid plan for partnership development exists.	Community, parent, and business partnerships become integrated across all student groupings. The benefits of outside involvement are known by all. Parent and business involvement in student learning is refined. Student learning regularly takes place beyond the school walls.
Implementation	Barriers are erected to close out involvement of outsiders. Outsiders are managed for least impact on status quo.	A team is assigned to get partners and to receive input from parents, the community, and business in the school.	Involvement of business, community, and parents begins to take place in school and after school hours related to the vision. Partners begin to realize how they can support each other in achieving school goals. School staff understand what partners need from the partnership.	There is systematic utilization of parents, community, and businesses school-wide. Areas in which the active use of these partnerships benefit student learning are clear.	Partnership development is articulated across all school groupings. Parents, community, business, and educators work together in an innovative fashion to increase student learning and to prepare students for college and careers in the Twenty-First Century. Partnerships are evaluated for continuous improvement.
Outcome	There is little or no involvement of parents, business, or community at-large. The school is a closed, isolated system.	Much effort is given to establishing partnerships. Some spotty trends emerge, such as receiving donated equipment.	Some substantial gains are achieved in implementing partnerships. Some student achievement increases can be attributed to this involvement.	Gains in student satisfaction with learning and school are clearly related to partnerships. All partners benefit.	Previously non-achieving students enjoy learning with excellent achievement. Community, business, and home become common places for student learning, while school becomes a place where parents come for further education. Partnerships enhance what the school does for students.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for SOUTHWESTERN UNION

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Neither goals nor strategies exist for the evaluation and continuous improvement of the school organization or for elements of the organization.	The approach to continuous improvement and evaluation is problem-solving. If there are no problems, or if solutions can be made quickly, there is no need for improvement or analyses. Changes in parts of the system are not coordinated with all other parts.	Some elements of the school organization are evaluated for effectiveness. Some elements are improved on the basis of the evaluation findings.	All elements of the school's operations are evaluated for improvement. Efforts are consistently made to ensure congruence of the elements with respect to the continuum of learning within and across the conference.	All aspects of the schools organization are rigorously evaluated and improved on a continuous basis. Students, and the maintenance of a continuum of learning for students, become the focus of all aspects of the school improvement process.
Implementation	With no overall plan for evaluation and continuous improvement, strategies are changed by individual schools, teachers, and/or administrators only when something sparks the need to improve. Reactive decisions and activities are a daily mode of operation.	Isolated changes are made in some areas of the school organization in response to problem incidents. Changes are not preceded by comprehensive analyses, such as an understanding of the contributing causes of undesirable results. The effectiveness of the elements of the school organization is not known.	Elements of the school organization are improved on the basis of comprehensive data analyses, analyses of contributing causes of undesirable results, and the analysis of process effectiveness.	Continuous improvement analyses of student achievement and instructional strategies are rigorously reinforced within each classroom and across learning levels to develop a continuum of learning for students and to prevent student failure.	Comprehensive continuous improvement becomes the way of doing business throughout the school. Teachers continuously improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of instructional strategies based on student feedback and performance. All aspects of the school organization are improved to support teachers' efforts.
Outcome	Individuals struggle with system failure. Finger pointing and blaming others for failure occur. The effectiveness of strategies is not known. Mistakes are repeated.	Problems are solved only temporarily and few positive changes result. Additionally, unintended and undesirable consequences often appear in other parts of the system. Many aspects of the school are incongruent, keeping the school from reaching its vision.	Evidence of effective improvement strategies is observable. Positive changes are made and maintained due to comprehensive data and process analyses and evaluation.	Teachers become astute at assessing and in predicting the impact of their instructional strategies on individual student achievement. Sustainable improvements in student achievement are evident at all grade levels due to continuous improvement supported by the school.	The school becomes a congruent and effective learning organization. Only instruction and assessment strategies that produce quality student achievement are used. A true continuum of learning is in place for all students and staff. The impact of improvements is measured.