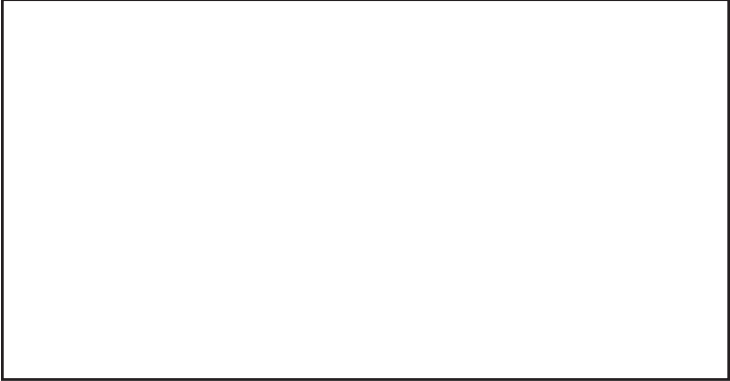


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Thanks are extended to the school-based planning teams who assisted in field-testing this guide.

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- This guide is meant to be used as a workbook. Please write in it (), add to it, or change the wording. Feel free to adapt it in

These guidelines serve two primary purposes. First, the tool (Step 2) is designed to assist schools in determining if they are overreliant on paraprofessionals to educate students with disabilities within general education activities and whether they are utilizing them inappropriately. Secondly, if a school determines that it does have problems with overreliance or inappropriate utilization, these guidelines provide a series of additional steps to assist school-based teams. The remaining steps help schools to support the education of students with disabilities. Options are based on adopting, adapting, or inventing alternatives to paraprofessional supports. Although these guidelines seem to focus on paraprofessional supports, they are actually much less about paraprofessionals and more about school, teacher, and special educator supports. These guidelines rely on paraprofessional supports as an indicator of the overall health of educational supports and as a doorway to examine these other issues and subsequently make improvements.

Pursuing alternatives is one of a trio of interrelated activities schools should consider in providing appropriate educational supports for students with disabilities. Although these guidelines focus on **alternatives**, it is important to be aware of the other two sets of activities, neither of which are addressed in these guidelines, but are elsewhere. First, schools might avoid becoming overreliant on paraprofessionals by engaging in careful **decision-making** about when paraprofessional supports are appropriate. There is not much literature on this topic (Giangreco, Broer & Edelman, 1999; Mueller & Murphy, 2001) and virtually no research . Secondly, schools should attend to the personnel training and supervision requirements for paraprofessionals included in the IDEA and other exemplary practices to provide appropriate **supports** for paraprofessionals who are, or will be, working with students who have disabilities. These supports include categories such as orientation, training, role clarification, acknowledgments/respect, and supervision. A substantial set of literature is available on these and related topics, including some (mostly descriptive) research. For recent summaries of the literature see, Giangreco, Edelman, Broer & Doyle (2001) or Giangreco & Doyle (2002). For continually updated citations and summaries visit the web site:

The process and content embedded in these guidelines are a hybrid drawn from a variety of sources. The specific items in Step 2 and Step 5 are research-based, derived from a series of six interrelated research studies on paraprofessionals in inclusive schools (Giangreco, Broer & Edelman, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Giangreco, Edelman & Broer, in press, 2001; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli & MacFarland, 1997). The overall planning tool is based on aspects of the sources listed below.

- **Team Structure** (e.g., diverse membership, face-to-face interactions, developing a shared framework, pursuing common goals, establishing a process for interactions)
(Friend & Cook, 2002; Idol, Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1993; Lee, 1999; Rainforth & York-Barr, 1997; Thousand & Villa, 2000)
- **Process** (e.g., divergent-convergent process steps, deferring judgment, problem-clarification, fact-finding, use of idea-joggers to generate ideas, incubation times, action-planning)
(Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis & Edelman, 2002; Osborn, 1993; Parnes, 1988, 1992, 1997; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2002)
- **External Input** (e.g., identifying a respected "outsider" to learn about the inside characteristics of the school, ask challenging questions, and offer feedback and ideas throughout the process)
(Jorgensen, 1998; Olson, 1994, 1998)
- **Tools** (e.g., "Chains of Reasoning" used to evaluate the relationship between actions taken by the team and outcomes, ultimately for students)
(McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999; Millar, Simeone & Carnevale, 2001)
- **Team Development** (e.g., team-building activities, team norms, team contracts, team goals, team roles, team structure)
(Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; McGregor & Volgelsberg, 1998; Villa & Thousand, 2000)
- **Team Evaluation** (e.g., team self-evaluation, team reflection, team feedback)
(Giangreco, Edelman, Broer & Doyle, 2001; Giangreco & Doyle, 2002; Jones & Bender, 1993; Pickett, 1999; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997)

	Dates & Times Scheduled	Date Completed
<p>BEFORE FIRST MEETING:</p> <p>1. Establish a planning team.</p>		
<p>FIRST MEETING (approximately 2 hrs.)</p> <p>2. ... If "..." continue with the next steps.</p> <p>3. Rank the four problem clusters to help establish the school's local focus.</p> <p>4. Become knowledgeable about existing alternatives to current overreliance or inappropriate utilization of paraprofessionals.</p>		
<p>SECOND MEETING (approximately 2 hrs.)</p> <p>5. Engage in self-assessment of the school's current practices.</p>		
<p>THIRD MEETING (approximately 2 hrs.)</p> <p>6. Prioritize the areas of greatest need the team intends to work on first.</p> <p>7. Consider possibilities to adopt, adapt or invent alternatives to address selected priorities.</p>		
<p>FOURTH MEETING (approximately 3 hrs.)</p> <p>8. Develop an Action Plan & Evaluation Plan.</p>		
<p>FIFTH MEETING (approximately 2 hrs.)</p> <p>9. Review data and summarize the plan's impact.</p> <p>10. Communicate activities, progress, and outcomes to the school community.</p>		

Try to ✦ ✦ of approximately 8 people who can represent different groups. Invite people who have a variety of experiences working with various types of students. We suggest balancing the team's

2.



... the numbers of paraprofessionals has increased, in part, because there is a general belief that one of _____ to support

Happens Frequently/ Too Often	Happens Sometimes or for Some	Happens Never or Rarely
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------

... paraprofessionals have more frequent communication and more developed working relationships with the parents of students with disabilities than teachers or special educators.

... the absence of a paraprofessional results in either : (a) a "lost day" at school for a student with a disability because others don't know what to do (e.g., instruction, personal care, behavior support) (b) the child staying home from school, or (c) the parent is asked to be the substitute paraprofessional.

... paraprofessionals operate with virtually unrestricted autonomy (e.g., during a teacher-led lesson a paraprofessional removes a student with a disability or changes the activity).

... students with disabilities spend time with paraprofessionals that typically would be spent with peers (e.g., lunch, playground, free time, hall passing) and/or think of paraprofessionals as their primary "friends" at school.

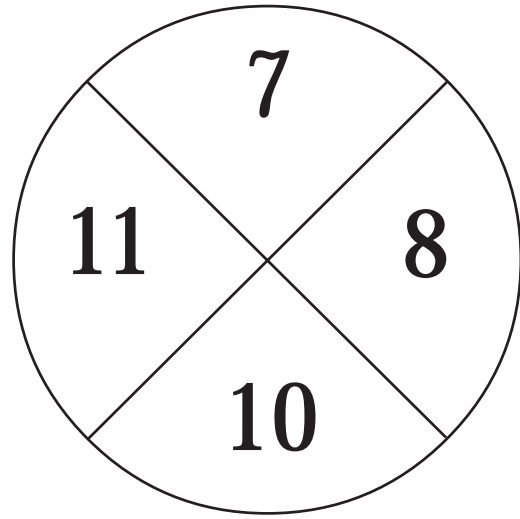
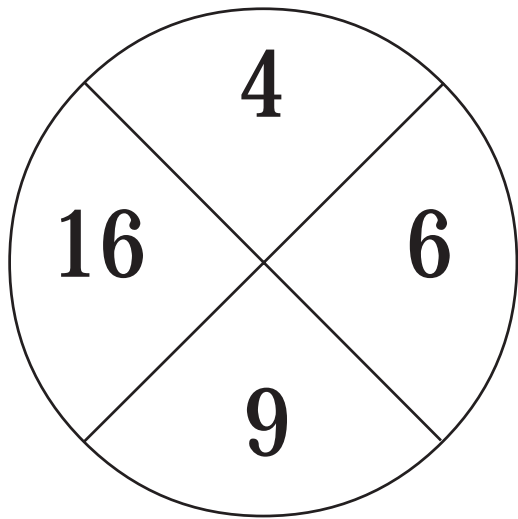
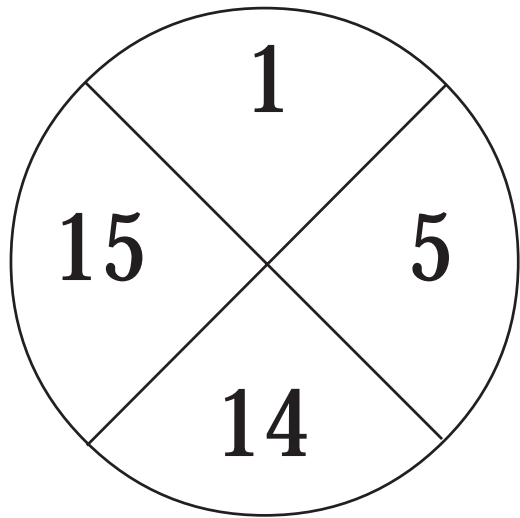
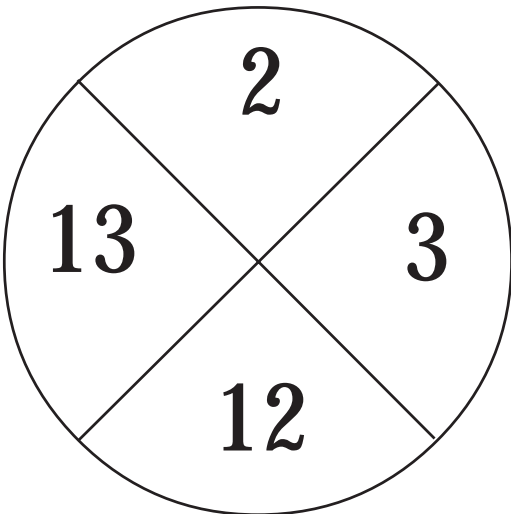
... students with disabilities communicate through their language or behavior that they find the support of a paraprofessional stigmatizing or otherwise unwanted.

... paraprofessionals provide academic support in subjects where they are under- or unskilled.

... teachers or special educators spend time doing clerical tasks while paraprofessionals are teaching lessons to students with disabilities.

... at progress reporting time, teachers or special educators rely on paraprofessionals because they know more about the students.

3.



4. Each team member should become familiar with existing alternatives by reading about them. More detailed information about the options listed below is described in a document available on the internet. This document is internet based so it can be updated as new information becomes available. You can access this document at <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/alternativeinfo.html>

Each team member should become familiar with existing alternatives by reading about them. More detailed information about the options listed below is described in a document available on the internet. This document is internet based so it can be updated as new information becomes available. You can access this document at <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/alternativeinfo.html>

1. Trading Paraprofessionals for Teachers and Special Educators
2. Special Education & General Education Teachers
3. (General & Special Education) is Classroom Teacher & Case Manages Students with Disabilities
4. Increasing Ownership of Teachers and Special Educators to Support Students with Disabilities
5. Increase Professional Educator Time with Students with Disabilities

5.

When considering each of the following 20 statements:
 Ask: "If _____" If "_____" put a check mark in the box that most closely reflects the team's perspective. In the additional space provided, list important facts or perspectives upon which your response is based. If "_____" make a plan to get the necessary information prior to the next meeting.

Check one box for each statement

A.

	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	OK for now	Doing Well
School & Classroom Environment & Practices				
1. Students with disabilities are educated in the school they would attend if they were not disabled.				
2. Students are placed in chronologically-age appropriate general education classes and the number of students with disabilities in those classes is naturally proportional (e.g., no more than 10 to 15% have disabilities).				
3. The school has a well functioning schoolwide support system to provide needed assistance to students with and without disabilities.				
4. Students with disabilities are physically situated within classrooms to facilitate their participation with classmates and instruction by the classroom teacher (e.g., not isolated in the back or side of the room).				

Important Related Facts or Perspectives

Needs

Check one box for each statement

Special Educator Practices

- 9. Special education teachers have working conditions (e.g., manageable caseload size, caseload composition, materials, manageable number of paraprofessionals to supervise) that facilitate individualized special education for students on their caseload.

- 10. Special educators have the knowledge of the general education curriculum and standards and the skills to successfully individualize curriculum for students with disabilities.

11.1

Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	OK for now	Doing Well

Check one box for each statement

Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	OK for now	Doing Well

**Teacher & Special Educator
Collaboration**

- 12. Teachers and special educators schedule time to work with students who have disabilities and collaborate with each other by assigning paraprofessionals to noninstructional support tasks (e.g., clerical, attendance, lunch, playground supervision) and professionally planned and supported instruction (e.g., practice sessions).

- 13. Teachers and special educators are familiar enough with all the students in the classroom, the curriculum, and instructional approaches, that the temporary exchange of primary roles can occur without major disruption to students with or without disabilities.

- 14. Teachers and special educators are familiar enough with the various educational and support needs of the students with disabilities in the classroom that the temporary absence of a paraprofessional can occur without major disruption to students with or without disabilities.

Important Related Facts or Perspectives

E.	Check one box for each statement			
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	OK for now	Doing Well
Family Information and Participation				
15. Families are well informed about how the school defines appropriate and potentially inappropriate roles of paraprofessionals.				
16. Families are well informed about the potential benefits and drawbacks of providing paraprofessional supports.				
17. Families are well informed about information the school considers to determine whether paraprofessional supports should be included in their child's IEP.				
18. Parents and students with disabilities (when appropriate) participate as team members in developing and implementing the IEP.				
Important Related Facts or Perspectives				

- Base priority selections on your team's self-assessment ratings from Step 5, other

7.

Now your team is ready to consider possibilities using the *Problem Solving* tool. Don't be too quick to come to a decision. Part of effective problem-solving is deferring judgment, generating quantity of ideas, and being open to new possibilities. Then, once you have considered many possibilities, it will be time to evaluate your ideas and converge on what actions you will take.

Given the range and complexity of priorities your team has identified, it is quite likely that no single alternative will be sufficient to address the needs. Therefore, be thinking about a *range of alternatives* you can pursue. The number of alternatives and their size is up to your school to decide.

As you start to consider which alternatives to put in your school's package, be thinking about *existing alternatives* while you work on developing *new alternatives* to put in place. To assist your team, we suggest you begin by considering whether any existing alternatives make sense in your situation, then moving on to considering adaptations of existing alternatives. Finally, if *existing alternatives* or *adaptations* doesn't meet the need, it's time for your team to get very creative and consider *something that works in your school*.

For each ranked priority that your team circled in Step 6 (p. 18) use a *Problem Solving* tool (see pp. 23-25) to consider possibilities and evaluate them.

I stands for " *I* *I* " Problem-solving research suggests that idea-generation is facilitated when problems are restated in the affirmative and put into a question format. For example, rather than " *I* " we could say, " *I* "

Each of the 20 items included in the *Problem Solving* lists (Step 5) is stated in the affirmative. They represent the other side of the coin when compared to the problem statements in the *Problem Solving* tool (Step 2). Step 7 starts by taking each of the priorities you selected in Step 6 and putting them in a question format starting with *I*. Sometimes the original wording will fit just right; at other times you will want to modify the language of the item to better focus on your vision for your school.

In other words, try to avoid reinventing the wheel. Use the information you read about in Step 4. Also, refer to the "Match Matrix" on page 22; it cross-references each of the 20 self-assessment items with two of the most obvious existing alternatives that can be considered to address the need. Although other boxes in the matrix could reasonably be marked, we offer a couple to getting the ball rolling. Your team may find that unmarked alternatives are appropriate.

Sometimes existing alternatives do not fit a school's need in their known forms -- that's when it is time to consider *adapting* existing alternatives, this means making adjustments so that it fits in your school. *Idea-joggers*, from creative problem-solving, can be used to play with ideas to adapt them, Idea-joggers prompt us to think about known facts and ideas in new ways. So take existing alternatives or related facts that you think hold promise and ask questions such as:

What new variation might we generate if we took the original idea and...

- made it bigger?*
- made it smaller?*
- rearranged it?*
- stretched it?*
- reversed it?*
- eliminated it?*
- twisted it?*
- looked at it from the inside out?*
- turned it upside down?*

I

When adopting or adapting existing alternatives doesn't meet your school's need, it is time to consider inventing something new. At its heart, generating new ideas is about discovering new relationships between known facts. So refer to the relevant facts you collected during the *Self-Assessment* step of this process. Use the *Idea-Joggers* listed above along with the following strategies:

- Emphasize the generation of a quantity of ideas (to help get past the obvious)
- Defer judgment (don't judge ideas prematurely)
- Be open to seemingly wild or unconventional ideas
- Encourage hitchhiking on ideas
- Rely on relevant facts to help spur ideas
- Use metaphors and analogies to generate ideas
- Use *idea-joggers* (looking for connections, similarities, associations, between seemingly unrelated objects or ideas)

Determine a set of criteria to help your team decide which of the brainstormed possibilities are most suitable for your situation.

- matches highly focus need area identified in Step 3
- doable
- cost
- time to enact
- number of faculty and staff affected
- number of students affected
- proposed impact on student learning
- consistency with the IDEA
- other criteria your team determines

Evaluate a subset of your team's most promising ideas based on the criteria you choose (see grid on Brainstorming Worksheet). You can use whatever scoring scheme makes sense to you (e.g., check marks; plus/minus; rating scale). If you want to you can weight certain criteria if you think they are more important than others. You need not evaluate every idea, just the most promising ones.

Use your evaluation of the ideas to help you **select the ideas you will pursue**. Do not use the criteria as a "formula" to make the decision for you, but as a way to guide your evaluation and discussion about what you want to do. **Circle the most promising set of ideas.**



	(from Step 5)																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. <i>[Faint text]</i>									•			•								
2. <i>[Faint text]</i>					•	•	•					•	•							
3. <i>[Faint text]</i>						•				•	•									
4. <i>[Faint text]</i>			•		•		•			•	•	•	•							
5. <i>[Faint text]</i>												•								
6. <i>[Faint text]</i>								•												
7. <i>[Faint text]</i>									•											
8. <i>[Faint text]</i>			•		•			•												
9. <i>[Faint text]</i>																		•	•	
10. <i>[Faint text]</i>															•	•	•	•	•	•
11. <i>[Faint text]</i>	•	•		•										•	•	•	•	•		
12. <i>[Faint text]</i>	•	•		•																

• = two of the most obvious connections between self-assessment priorities and existing alternatives

A. _____

Brainstorming Worksheet

B. Brainstormed Possibilities

C. Determine Criteria

D. Evaluate Ideas Using Criteria

E. Select the Ideas to Pursue
(indicate by circling)

A. _____

Brainstorming Worksheet

B. Brainstormed Possibilities

C. Determine Criteria

D. Evaluate Ideas Using Criteria

E. Select the Ideas to Pursue
(indicate by circling)

A.

Brainstorming Worksheet

B. Brainstormed Possibilities

C. Determine Criteria

D. Evaluate Ideas Using Criteria

E. Select the Ideas to Pursue
(indicate by circling)

8.

For each identified priority and corresponding brainstorming worksheet, complete one Action Plan & Evaluation Plan form. These forms may not provide sufficient room to record all the details you would like, so keep additional records. These forms are designed to present a summary of key points and clearly communicate your team's plan. This starts with your selected actions, leads to proposed outputs of those actions, and ultimately to student outcomes. Here are suggested steps for completing the form:

- List your team's idea(s) and plan in a way that makes sense to your team.
- Describe the logistics (e.g., What will be done, by whom, when?).
- Identify resources needed to implement your plan.

-

Example 1:

Let's imagine that in the **Actions/Ideas column** your team listed "Reallocate funds currently designated for four paraprofessional positions to hire one special educator. A second action in the same column was to pursue "Establish a Paperwork Paraprofessional role designed to free up potential time for teachers and special educators. In the **Proposed Outputs column** your team might check the box, "Increase instructional time for students" as a logical link in the chain of reasoning. In the space for data, the team might write, "Increase in instructional time for students." In the **Student Outcomes column** your team might check the box, "Increase in student achievement" and in the space for data might write, "Increase in student achievement." This extends the chain of reasoning because the team hopes that the increase in instructional time leads to student achievement.

Example 2:

Let's imagine that in the **Actions/Ideas column** your team listed "Increase peer involvement for students with disabilities" as one of its ideas and specified its components. This was selected because the team recognized that too many students with disabilities were receiving supports that could be provided more naturally by peers. In the **Proposed Outputs column** your team might check the box, "Increase peer involvement for students with disabilities" as a logical link in the chain of reasoning. In the space for data, the team might write, "Increase in peer involvement for students with disabilities." In the **Student Outcomes column** your team might check the box, "Increase in student achievement" and in the space for data might write, "Increase in student achievement." This extends the chain of reasoning because the team hopes that the increase in peer involvement leads to more time with peers and the development of positive relationships.

Action Plan & Evaluation Plan

Selected ideas corresponding to priority # ____ (from Step 6):
IWWMW:

Actions/Ideas	Proposed Outputs	Student Outcomes
<p>What? When? Who? Resources needed?</p>	<p>What will the actions do to improve education for students with disabilities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased access to regular class placements, curriculum or activities Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased collaboration between regular and special education Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased teacher and special educator instructional contact time with students Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased ownership and capacity of teachers and special educators Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More informed families and/or greater participation in educational decisions Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More effective use of professional, paraprofessional, and natural supports Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:</p>	<p>How will students with disabilities be positively affected by the proposed outputs?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased belonging, inclusion, and opportunities Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Academic achievement (e.g., general education curriculum, IEP goals) Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improved social skills or behavior Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased frequency and quality of peer interactions Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increased self-determination: Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:</p>

** Use this form to summarize your plan and chain of reasoning. Attach additional detailed information as needed.

Action Plan & Evaluation Plan

Selected ideas corresponding to priority # ___ (from Step 6):
IWW/MW:

^ ! , s ! !		
Actions / Ideas What? When? Who? Resources needed?	Proposed Outputs What will the actions do to improve education for students with disabilities?	Student Outcomes How will students with disabilities be positively affected by the proposed outputs?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased access to regular class placements, curriculum or activities Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased belonging, inclusion, and opportunities Data:
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased collaboration between regular and special education Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic achievement (e.g., general education curriculum, IEP goals) Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Improved social skills or behavior Data:
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased teacher and special educator instructional contact time with students Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased frequency and quality of peer interactions Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased self-determination: Data:
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased ownership and capacity of teachers and special educators Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:
<input type="checkbox"/> More informed families and/or greater participation in educational decisions Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:
<input type="checkbox"/> More effective use of professional, paraprofessional, and natural supports Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Data:

** Use this form to summarize your plan and chain of reasoning. Attach additional detailed information as needed.

1
(activities, adjustments, progress, etc.)

Dates	Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
(activities, adjustments, progress, etc.)

Dates	Notes

P
S
(activities, adjustments, progress, etc.)

Dates	Notes

✦ *I* ✦ Analyze and discuss the implications of the data your school has collected. Prepare notes for a summary report. Consider using the following headings to guide the development of your discussion and report. You are encouraged to prepare this report in a manner that is suitable for practical uses in your organization (e.g., to submit to the Superintendent or School Board). Throughout your reporting try to maintain a focus on two overarching questions:

✦ How do we know what we know?
✦ How do we know what we know?

10.

Suggested "To Do's"

1. Once you have completed your report (Step 9), decide if its contents need to be put into different formats for different audiences (e.g., a slide show for a board presentation, a one-page highlights summary).
2. Share the findings with your local school community and other appropriate groups. As a planning team, decide what audiences the information will be disseminated to, the corresponding format, and timelines.
3. Cycle through the planning process to continue ongoing school improvement. Review team membership and make needed changes. Return to your team's previously identified priorities and self-assessment to begin the process of selecting new challenges to pursue.

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