Instructions for Using the
District Team Self-Assessment Tool

The goal of this self-assessment is to help district leaders identify strengths and opportunities to develop a systemic approach to reducing chronic absence.*

The tool is built around six key ingredients: **capacity building, actionable data, positive engagement, strategic partnerships, adequate resources,** and **shared responsibility.**

While assessing your district across all six ingredients, think about the actions your district takes on its own, as well as the role of community partners.

A cross-departmental district team should undertake the following steps at least annually:

1) **Complete the assessment:** Each person should complete the assessment separately to reflect on strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consider adding district leaders from departments not represented on the team such as curriculum and instruction, special education, and operations who can offer valuable perspectives and suggestions.

    a. **If you are meeting in person**, give each participant a copy of the self-assessment to complete on their own.
    b. **If you are meeting virtually,** create an online version of the self-assessment using applications like Google Forms or Survey Monkey.

2) **Tabulate the results** and share with the team so they can see how everyone responded to each question.

    a. **If you used a paper-and-pencil version**, collect/summarize the results using a clean copy of the tool or have participants transfer their responses to a wall chart.

    Example: Print out the "Large Chart" version of the self-assessment, which has one question per page, and post them around the meeting room. Using dot stickers or some other type of marker, ask everyone to record their answers on large chart paper so that the group can see how everyone responded to each question. This approach allows everyone to see the collective responses without the need for additional copies.

    b. **If you used the online version**, download/print out the summary reports.

3) **Discuss:** Convene the group to review what the combined data reveal about strengths, gaps, and differences of opinion. Use the results to identify practices that should be continued and to flag potential areas for improvement.

4) **Set goals:** Once team members have agreed on initial priorities, get feedback from key stakeholders, then finalize your goals.

5) **Make a plan:** Assign responsibilities and establish timelines for completion.

6) **Communicate the results**: The team should communicate the results of the assessment with district staff and – if possible and appropriate – schools and community partners, and engage them in executing the improvement plan.

Throughout this document, we refer to the importance of ensuring resources and strategies address the needs of specific student populations and their families. These are groups of students which national and state data show are more likely to be chronically absent such as students with disabilities, living in poverty, from communities of color, facing high mobility or homelessness, or involved in foster care or juvenile justice.

Chronic absence is missing 10% or more of school for any reason – including excused and unexcused absences as well as suspensions. It is different from truancy (unexcused absences) or average daily attendance (how many students typically show up each day) both of which can mask high levels of chronic absence.