

Characteristics of Successful Districts



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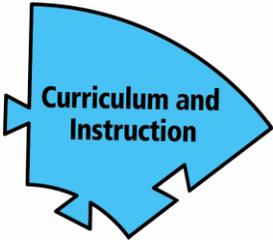
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Foreword

The Department of Public Instruction is committed to ensuring that all Wisconsin students achieve at high levels. We have incredibly talented educators who are committed to creating schools that meet the diverse needs of our students. Many factors affect the success of our classrooms, schools, and districts, and it is important that all practitioners and stakeholders take a step back and critically reflect on current systems and structures that support the mission of our schools and districts to ensure that they are functioning as effectively as possible.



The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* provides districts with a tool to examine their current practices in five key areas. It allows districts to identify and build on their strengths, and address areas that need to be improved. Just as our teachers provide support and guidance to the students in the classroom, districts must offer focused support to each of their schools. These rubrics provide a framework for continuous data gathering and reflection that leads to collaboration and improved strategies to meet the needs of all students. We must continue working to ensure that every child graduates with the knowledge and skills needed for success in the workforce or if they pursue further education.

Acknowledgements

The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* was initially developed after reviewing the available literature on district support for improved school and student performance. In August of 2005, a workgroup of team members from seven Wisconsin school districts developed the indicators for each characteristic. The draft rubric was then used by these districts to conduct a Self-Assessment of efforts to support their low-performing schools. The final version contained in this book is the result of their feedback and the expertise of various stakeholder groups across the state. The workgroup was comprised of the following individuals, who served in the roles listed below at the time that this document was produced.

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List of Characteristics and Standards

CHARACTERISTIC I: VISION, VALUES, AND CULTURE

- Standard 1.1 District Vision and Mission
- Standard 1.2 District Communication with Stakeholders
- Standard 1.3 District Community Partnerships
- Standard 1.4 District Promotion of Positive School Culture
- Standard 1.5 District Support for Safe Learning Environments

CHARACTERISTIC II: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Standard 2.1 District Support for Leadership—District Administrative Leadership Team and Board of Education
- Standard 2.2 District Support for Leadership—Central Office and School Building Administrators
- Standard 2.3 District Support for Teacher Leadership for Student Achievement
- Standard 2.4 District Training for School Improvement Teams and District Monitoring of School Improvement Plans

CHARACTERISTIC III: DECISION MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Standard 3.1 District Development of a Data System for School Improvement
- Standard 3.2 District Use of Data for Resource Allocation to Improve Student Learning
- Standard 3.3 District Use of Fiscal Resources
- Standard 3.4 District Support for School's Data-based Decision Making

CHARACTERISTIC IV: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- Standard 4.1 District Curriculum and Instruction Framework
- Standard 4.2 District Curriculum Alignment
- Standard 4.3 District Support for Research-based Instruction
- Standard 4.4 District Use of Data to Close Achievement Gaps
- Standard 4.5 District Support for Interventions and Extended Learning Opportunities

CHARACTERISTIC V: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER QUALITY

- Standard 5.1 District Support of Initial Educators
- Standard 5.2 District Professional Development Model
- Standard 5.3 District Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers
- Standard 5.4 District Support of Orientation and Mentoring for Principals
- Standard 5.5 District Support for Principals as Instructional Leaders

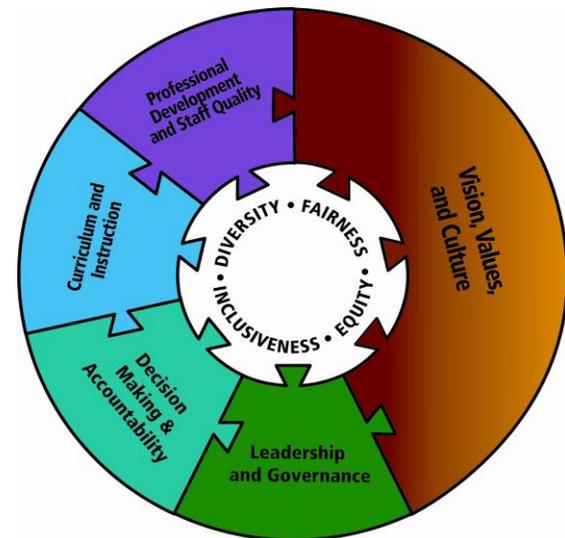
District Support for Continuous Improvement

District-Focused School Improvement

While much research in the past two decades has focused on school improvement, only recently has there been a movement to focus on the district role in school improvement planning. Though many districts and agencies across Wisconsin have school improvement planning policies, resources, and tools, there is often little focus on examining the district's direct role in improving student performance.

The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* is designed to assess effective district support, differentiated for its low-performing schools. Built into these rubrics is the idea that no “one-size-fits-all” policy or program can impact school and student achievement, especially in those schools with the greatest needs.

These research-driven rubrics allow districts to focus not only on school improvement planning, but on other aspects of district practice that influence school and student performance. The application of these Characteristics through a district self-assessment helps districts examine how effectively their district culture, leadership, data systems, professional development models, and support of curriculum and instructional practices impact school achievement. While the Characteristics address these critical areas of district functioning, they also focus on other relevant relationships, programs, and policies that a district designs and implements to effectively support its schools.



Philosophy and Development of the *Characteristics of Successful Districts*

The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* was developed initially as a key component of Wisconsin's Statewide System of Support (SSOS)—as part of the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*. These standards are the basis for a District Self-Assessment process, an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of a district's support to its low-performing schools. These rubrics are grounded in systems and structures at the district level that have been documented to have a positive impact on student achievement.

The driving forces behind the development of these rubrics and the Self-Assessment process include: strengthening existing capacity for school improvement at the building level, examining how districts are allocating their resources, and utilizing a variety of stakeholders to improve and coordinate district support systems. Districts that have used the Self-Assessment process experienced a variety of benefits, including: a more systemic and aligned approach to supporting low-performing schools, an enhanced ability to utilize data, increased stakeholder input, differentiated allocation of resources, and a thorough examination of the impact of services that are currently being delivered.

Building capacity for district and school improvement at the district level is a predominant goal in the development of these rubrics. By facilitating a district-level examination of practices, programs, and policies that focus on enhancing school performance, the *Characteristics of Successful Districts* and its Self-Assessment process can assist a district in identifying specific areas to improve the support a district provides to its low-performing schools.



Small and Large Districts...Make it Work for You!

One of the key strengths of the District Self-Assessment process is the ability of districts to design an experience that works within the size, structure, and local context of their district. Districts, along with the assistance of an experienced facilitator, develop a plan for implementing this reflective process. There is no recipe for how it should be done, because the process is contextual and must be designed to provide the district with the most honest and accurate information, especially as it supports its low-performing schools.

Some standards may be more appropriately applicable to larger districts. If a smaller district can use the intent of the standard and adapt it to practices in its own district, then change the language so that it better fits your district. If the standard is really not applicable to your district, do not spend time on that standard.

Remember, you are engaging in this process to promote dialogue that will give you information to make changes necessary to support your low-performing schools. Make the *Characteristics of Successful Districts* work for you!

Implementing the District Self-Assessment

The District Self-Assessment has been piloted and implemented in many districts, both large and small, around the state of Wisconsin. Feedback from participants has led us to embrace some key practices when implementing successful District Self-Assessments. Below are some of those guidelines from those who have experienced this process.

- Use an external facilitator to coordinate and lead the process.
- Put together a leadership team that works closely with the facilitator to design a Self-Assessment process that best meets your needs.
- Bring key district leaders on board before you begin the process.
- Involve a variety of stakeholders in the process (teachers, administrators, students, parents, community members).
- Design a data collection plan (review current data and determine new sources of data) to ensure that you are gathering data from a variety of sources, from multiple stakeholders.
- Make sure that an action plan results from the District Self-Assessment process. Use this as an opportunity to revisit current plans.
- Build in a variety of ways to communicate the purposes and the findings of the Self-Assessment with key district stakeholders.

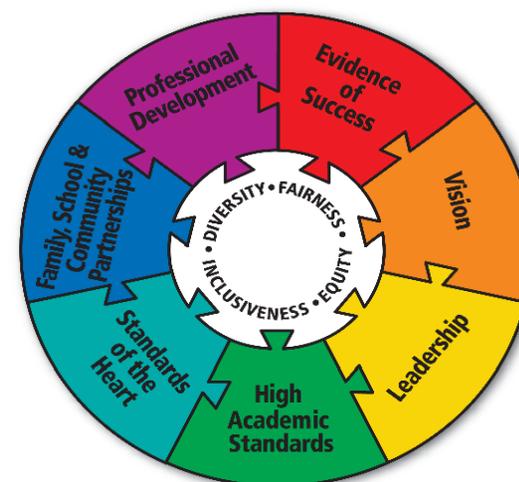
For more information about the District Self-Assessment, including the District Self-Assessment Handbook, go to <http://dpi.wi.gov/ssos/index.html>.

Connecting District and School Improvement Efforts

Characteristics of Successful Schools

In 2000, the Department of Public Instruction released the *Characteristics of Successful Schools* guide. Based on research, this framework was designed to summarize the critical characteristics present in schools that have been successful in closing the achievement gap. The characteristics of successful schools are:

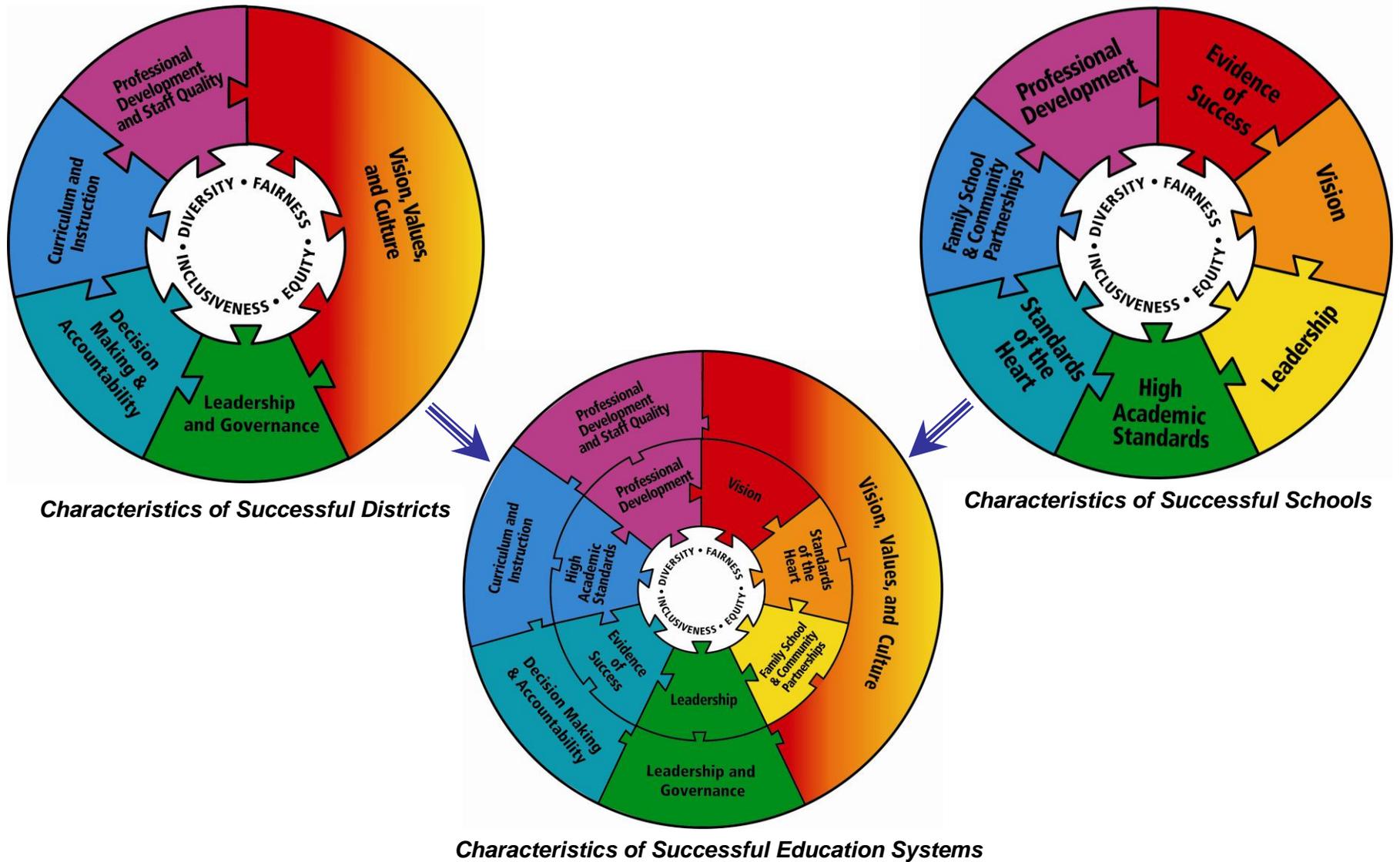
- **Vision:** Having a common understanding of goals, principles, and expectations for everyone in the learning community
- **Leadership:** Having a group of individuals dedicated to helping the learning community reach its vision
- **High Academic Standards:** Describing what students need to know and be able to do
- **Standards of the Heart:** Helping all within the learning community become caring, contributing, productive, and responsible citizens
- **Family, School, and Community Partnerships:** “Making room at the table” for a child’s first and most influential teachers
- **Professional Development:** Providing consistent, meaningful opportunities for adults in the school setting to engage in continuous learning
- **Evidence of Success:** Collecting and analyzing data about students, programs, and staff



Central to the implementation of these characteristics is equity, diversity, fairness, and inclusiveness. Each characteristic listed above must include and attend to these important principles, commitments, and the corresponding responsive practices.

The Characteristics formed the basis for school improvement needs assessments surveys and tools available on the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website www.dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html. These tools have been used by many Wisconsin schools. The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* is the logical next step. This framework provides district-level staff the opportunity to examine the impact that district decisions and support are having on student success in low-performing schools. Successful schools are supported by efficient, responsive district systems and structures. The *Characteristics of Successful Districts* delineates the support and guidance that such districts provide.

Improvement efforts, whether initiated at the school or district level, must promote research-based strategies. The accompanying graphic shows the connection between the *Characteristics of Successful Schools* and the *Characteristics of Successful Districts*. These combined characteristics create the basis for improvement efforts in any educational system.



Characteristic I: Vision, Values, and Culture



The district's focus on vision and mission, communication with stakeholders, partnerships with community agencies/ organizations, and promotion of positive school culture, results in learning environments that are focused on student learning and success in low-performing schools.

DEFINITION	INDICATORS OF DISTRICT SUPPORT			
	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>1.1 DISTRICT VISION AND MISSION:</p> <p>The district's <i>vision</i> provides a collaboratively developed descriptive picture of a district's preferred future. The district's <i>mission</i> is a collaboratively developed description of how the district will achieve its vision. Together the vision and mission guide district and school practices, policies, and goal development, resulting in increased student achievement.</p>	<p>The district's low-performing schools have the capacity to lead school improvement using the district's vision and mission. There is an ongoing process to support the link between the district's vision and mission and school improvement efforts.</p>	<p>The alignment of the district's vision and mission with district and school practices and policies results in increased student achievement in the district's low-performing schools. Stakeholders are knowledgeable and supportive of the district's vision and mission.</p>	<p>There is evidence that some alignment exists between district and school practices and policies, and the vision and mission in the district's low-performing schools, but it is inconsistent. There is some evidence of collaboration and communication with stakeholders in building the vision, but it is not systematic.</p>	<p>There is little or no connection between the district's vision and mission and district practices, policies, and goals. Few stakeholders are aware of the district's vision and mission.</p>
<p>1.2 DISTRICT COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS:</p> <p><i>District Communication with Stakeholders</i> is a key strategy to foster two-way communication between stakeholders and the district, by systematically sharing information and working collaboratively to achieve the district vision and mission. Stakeholders include students, parents, community members, university partners, staff, the Board of Education, and others. Parents/families are considered to be full partners in their child's education.</p>	<p>The district supports ongoing, systemic, formal two-way structures for communicating and collaborating with key stakeholders in its low-performing schools. These structures are assessed for their effectiveness, and continuous improvements are made. Parents are actively involved and knowledgeable about district/school practices that support the needs of all students.</p>	<p>The district has formal, two-way structures for listening and communicating with stakeholders in its low-performing schools that result in meaningful feedback and building positive relationships. Parents/families may be involved in some school practices, but their involvement may be inconsistent or not tied to strategies that will have an impact on student learning in low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has an initial plan or informal structures in place to address communication with stakeholders about its low-performing schools, but these structures provide few ongoing opportunities to gather feedback, input, or updates from stakeholders.</p> <p>Involvement of parents/families is sporadic or not tied to student learning and achievement.</p>	<p>The district has no formal structures for listening to and communicating with stakeholders about its low-performing schools. There are few opportunities to involve parents/families in meaningful ways to support student learning and achievement.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>1.3 DISTRICT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:</p> <p><i>District Community Partnerships</i> enhance the achievement of students by providing external resources that benefit the district and its low-performing schools.</p>	Partnerships between district and community agencies/ organizations are structured, self-sustaining, and continuously developing with a focus on increasing student performance in the district's low-performing schools. Partnerships are assessed for their impact on student/school success and are responsive to changing needs.	Partnerships between district and outside community agencies/organizations assist with aspects of student learning and success, resulting in increased student performance in the district's low-performing schools.	The district has fragmented or informal partnerships with outside resources and community agencies/ organizations with little focus on addressing needs of the low-performing students and schools.	The district has limited or nonexistent partnerships with outside resources and community agencies/ organizations to better meet the needs of the low-performing schools.
<p>1.4 DISTRICT PROMOTION OF POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE:</p> <p><i>District Promotion of Positive School Culture</i> reflects the norms, behaviors, and practices of a district that ensure staff, students, and parents/families are connected and valued.</p>	The district's processes to promote positive school culture result in clear, operational procedures that are integrated into daily practice in its low-performing schools. The values that support the learning and success of students are evident throughout the school.	The district has processes that effectively promote positive school cultures in its low-performing schools through communication, interaction, respect, and high-quality learning environments. School norms, behaviors, and practices result in improved relationships that benefit students in its low-performing schools.	The district has an inconsistent or unevenly applied process to effectively promote positive school cultures in its low-performing schools.	The district has limited or nonexistent processes to effectively promote positive school cultures in its low-performing schools.
<p>1.5 DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:</p> <p><i>District Support for Safe Learning Environments</i> are the district's plans, programs, and strategies that include behavioral expectations and consequences for actions, as well as knowledge and skills needed by students and staff to promote safe physical, emotional, and social environments.</p>	The district's procedures that ensure safe and orderly environments are embedded within daily practices at the district's low-performing schools. Data analysis and ongoing assessment are used to continuously improve safe learning environments.	The district's processes for ensuring safe and orderly environments in its low-performing schools lead to maximized student learning and staff effectiveness.	The district's implementation of procedures to ensure safe and orderly environments in its low-performing schools is inconsistent, incomplete, or ineffective.	The district lacks procedures to prevent violence, foster a drug-free environment, and/or create a safe learning environment in its low-performing schools.

Characteristic II: Leadership and Governance



The district's leadership and governance practices result in effective district administrative leadership teams and school board policies, a collaborative central office staff, effective building administrators, and targeted training and monitoring to support school improvement in the low-performing schools.

DEFINITION	INDICATORS OF DISTRICT SUPPORT			
	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>2.1: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP— DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM AND BOARD OF EDUCATION: <i>District Support for Leadership—District Administrative Leadership Team and Board of Education</i> refers to the district administration and the Board's critical role in aligning policies, resources, and funding to the district's goals and priorities, and overseeing the impact of those funds.</p>	<p>The district administrative leadership team, in collaboration with the Board of Education, monitors how the district's low-performing schools effectively utilize and coordinate targeted funding, resources, and policies, resulting in increased student achievement.</p>	<p>The district administrative leadership team, in collaboration with the Board of Education, provides additional, targeted district funding and resources to address the district's goals and priorities in its low-performing schools, ensure alignment of policies and funding, and monitor the impact of the use of the funding.</p>	<p>The district administrative leadership team, in collaboration with the Board of Education, targets the effective use of Title I money and resources for the designated low-performing schools, but does not ensure alignment between these funds and local funding resources.</p>	<p>The district administrative leadership team, in collaboration with the Board of Education, accepts the report for the use of funds at the low-performing schools, without examining if these funds are targeted to the greatest need, only meeting minimal compliance with Title I requirements.</p>
<p>2.2: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP - CENTRAL OFFICE AND SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS: <i>District Support for Leadership - Central Office and School Building Administrators</i> refers to the critical relationship between central office staff and school building administrators in planning, monitoring, and decision making regarding district programs and the use of resources that address improved student achievement. In smaller districts, this might involve key individuals who make decisions about programs and resources.</p>	<p>The district's planning, monitoring, and decision making processes include an ongoing review of how effectively central office staff and school building administrators collaborate, assess district programs, use resources, and how these practices impact student achievement in the district's low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district provides structured, regular opportunities for central office staff and school administrators to plan and monitor collaboratively, and make decisions about district programs and use of resources addressing student achievement in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district provides some opportunities for central office staff and school administrators from its low-performing schools to jointly plan and make decisions about district programs and use of resources addressing student achievement, but collaboration among these groups is infrequent and inconsistent.</p>	<p>The district's central office staff/departments operate independently with few opportunities for collaboration between school building administrators and other district central office staff to support the district's low-performing schools.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>2.3: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:</p> <p><i>District Support for Teacher Leadership for Student Achievement</i> recognizes the critical role that districts play in building teacher ownership of student achievement by providing opportunities for teachers to collaboratively plan and work together on school improvement and professional development.</p>	<p>The district has defined various roles for teacher leaders including collaboration opportunities and school improvement and professional development planning. The district can describe the impact of their leadership on student learning and achievement.</p>	<p>The district partners with schools in promoting student achievement by deliberately building teacher leadership in its low-performing schools through support of teacher opportunities for collaborative planning, school improvement planning, and professional development planning opportunities.</p>	<p>The district has begun acknowledging the role that teacher leadership plays in increasing student achievement, but efforts to support and build teacher leadership are inconsistent in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has little or no evidence of building teacher leadership in its low-performing schools. School staff lacks ownership of the learning process of students.</p>
<p>2.4: DISTRICT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS AND DISTRICT MONITORING OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS:</p> <p><i>District Training for School Improvement Teams and District Monitoring of School Improvement Plans</i> are critical strategies that districts use to build the skills of school staff to collect and analyze data, make recommendations for actions, and monitor the effectiveness of school improvement plans in addressing the needs of students and staff.</p>	<p>School improvement teams collect and analyze data, monitor the effectiveness of school improvement plans, and make necessary changes to the plans to continuously increase student achievement. The district monitors results and provides additional support and resources in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district provides targeted support for training of school improvement teams, collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources, and monitoring the effectiveness of school improvement plans, resulting in increased student achievement in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district plan for training and monitoring school improvement processes is not implemented systematically and does not provide targeted support to the district's low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district provides little or no training for and monitoring of school improvement processes for the low-performing schools.</p>

Characteristic III: Decision Making and Accountability

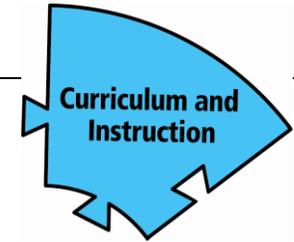


The district supports the school’s collection and analysis of different sources of disaggregated student data. These efforts result in effective decisions regarding the allocation of resources and school improvement initiatives based on student performance in its low-performing schools.

DEFINITION	INDICATORS OF DISTRICT SUPPORT			
	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>3.1: DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT OF A DATA SYSTEM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p><i>District Development of a Data System for School Improvement</i> is a comprehensive and systematic process developed by the district for collecting and using a variety of data that can be disaggregated by student subgroups. The data system is accessible to school staff and includes strategies for stakeholders to continuously provide feedback.</p>	<p>The district has a plan and system in place to add building-based qualitative and quantitative disaggregated student data that provides for continuous improvement in data collection and use in the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has a comprehensive system of targeted data that can be disaggregated by student subgroups, is enhanced and improved continuously, and includes strategies for stakeholders to provide feedback. The system is user-friendly, accessible to all staff, and available from a variety of locations.</p>	<p>The district has a data system beyond WINSS that is accessible to staff. However, data is not always current or immediately available to the district’s low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district does not have a comprehensive system beyond WINSS for gathering and reporting disaggregated achievement, perception, and program data about its low-performing schools.</p>
<p>3.2: DISTRICT USE OF DATA FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING:</p> <p><i>District Use of Data for Resource Allocation to Improve Student Learning</i> refers to a district system for targeting resources, including, money, staff, professional development, materials, and additional support to schools based on the analysis of a variety of data that is disaggregated by student subgroups to determine district and school needs. In smaller districts, decisions might be made to target specific groups or individuals who need extra support.</p>	<p>The district has an objective system involving multiple stakeholders who use a variety of data that is disaggregated by student subgroups to allocate resources that sustains district operations and meets critical learning needs of students of the low-performing schools. The system is continuously evaluated and refined to improve resource allocation that meets the needs of the schools and the district.</p>	<p>The district uses a variety of data that is disaggregated by student subgroups to make decisions concerning resource allocation and improved support to the district’s low-performing schools. Use of resources is continually evaluated by the district for its impact. Input from school staff, parents, students, and the community is periodically gathered to make changes to balance allocation needs.</p>	<p>The district uses data that is disaggregated by student subgroups to make some adjustments based on performance and operational needs; however, only a small portion of the resources is allocated based on targeting resources to the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district does not use data that is disaggregated by student subgroups for resource allocation purposes in its low-performing schools.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>3.3: DISTRICT USE OF FISCAL RESOURCES:</p> <p><i>District Use of Fiscal Resources</i> refers to how districts use fiscal resources from local, state, and federal programs to achieve their goals and priorities, and how those resources are coordinated in the district.</p>	<p>The district has an ongoing process to evaluate and improve the use of fiscal resources and collaboration among programs and departments that are responsible for various funding sources. This evaluation and collaboration allows the district to more effectively achieve its goals and priorities in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The use of all district school improvement funds from Title I, II, III, V, or other programs are coordinated among key stakeholders and targeted toward reaching goals in the low-performing schools. Carryover of school improvement funds only occurs when funds are allocated for future support of specific school improvement activities.</p>	<p>The district has attempted to create a centralized plan for coordinating school improvement funding, but there are gaps in coordination and targeting of funding to the low-performing schools. School improvement funds that are returned or carried over are generally ten percent or less of the original allocation.</p>	<p>The district has no centralized plan for allocating and coordinating school improvement resources to its low-performing schools. The district frequently turns back funds available for school improvement from Title I, II, III, V, or other programs.</p>
<p>3.4: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL'S DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING:</p> <p><i>District Support for School's Data-based Decision Making</i> refers to the practices and systems that the district has implemented to develop a school's capacity to use a variety of data that can be disaggregated by student subgroups to make effective decisions that benefit students.</p>	<p>School staff in the district's low-performing schools use a variety of disaggregated student data to make decisions as an operational norm of the culture. Schools become more self-sufficient in their capacity to make data-based decisions. The district supports the schools' use of data through a continuous feedback loop.</p>	<p>The district has a formal plan to build capacity for school-based, data-driven decision making in its low-performing schools. The district is extensively involved in helping its low-performing schools use a variety of disaggregated student data, resulting in improved student achievement.</p>	<p>The district has a process that supports the use of disaggregated student data for school-level decision making, but the process is applied infrequently or inconsistently at the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district does not have a formal process that supports the use of disaggregated student data for school-level decision making in its low-performing schools.</p>

Characteristic IV: Curriculum and Instruction



The district ensures that curriculum, assessment, instructional practices, and programs lead to equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for all students in its low-performing schools.

DEFINITION	INDICATORS OF DISTRICT SUPPORT			
	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>4.1: DISTRICT CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK:</p> <p>The <i>District Curriculum and Instruction Framework</i> provides a district-wide picture with levels of specificity to what is taught in all grades and in all subject areas, including the core content, grade level benchmarks, instructional strategies, and assessments. The framework provides curricular and instructional transitions between grades and disciplines within and among district schools.</p>	<p>The district's low-performing schools monitor, evaluate, and improve implementation of the curriculum and instruction framework to maintain the integrity of the core content, grade level benchmarks, instructional strategies, and assessments for growth of student achievement. With the help of school staff and administrators, the district provides additional support to teachers and principals to implement the framework, and provides additional support for curricular and instructional transitions between grades and disciplines within and among district schools, when necessary.</p>	<p>The district process for supporting teachers and principals in the implementation of the curriculum and instruction framework results in rigorous and relevant curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district's low-performing schools. The framework provides for curricular and instructional transitions between grades and disciplines within and among district schools.</p>	<p>The district has developed a curriculum and instruction framework including the core content, grade level benchmarks, instructional strategies, and assessments, but provides inconsistent or infrequent support to teachers and principals for implementing the framework in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district does not have a curriculum and instruction framework with levels of specificity to what is taught in all grades and in all subject areas, including the core content, grade level benchmarks, instructional strategies, and assessments.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>4.2: DISTRICT CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT:</p> <p><i>District Curriculum Alignment</i> describes the systematic and systemic processes, support, and training for the use of curriculum aligned with state and district standards, resulting in common, high expectations and a shared vocabulary for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district's low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district's low-performing schools ensure the use of aligned curriculum in their classrooms and utilize the district's established expectations and vocabulary for curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote the school's planning and implementation of improved instructional and assessment practices. The district monitors the successful application of aligned curriculum, classroom instruction, and assessment, and provides additional support when necessary.</p>	<p>The district's processes, support, and training for the use of curriculum aligned to both the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (WMAS) and the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) assessment frameworks lead to common expectations and vocabulary for instruction, curriculum, and assessment that foster improvement of instructional and assessment practices in the low-performing schools. The district provides targeted staff development and follow-up support for schools to ensure classroom instruction aligns with the curriculum.</p>	<p>The district supports processes that result in curriculum aligned to both the WMAS and the WKCE assessment frameworks, but provides little additional support or training in the low-performing schools to ensure that common expectations and vocabulary for classroom instruction, curriculum, and assessment assist with the school's improvement of instructional and assessment practices.</p>	<p>The district has provided few or no resources and/or processes to assist schools with curriculum alignment, resulting in no common vocabulary for classroom instruction, curriculum, and assessment.</p>
<p>4.3: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTION:</p> <p><i>District Support for Research-based Instruction</i> refers to the effective support that the district provides to teachers and schools regarding the use of research-based instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to effectively meet the needs of a wide range of student learners – including English Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities, gifted, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged – in their classrooms.</p>	<p>The district requires, finances, supports, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of its low-performing schools' implementation of research-based instructional strategies and assessments, resulting in multiple opportunities at the classroom level for all students to meet state standards. The district provides additional targeted resources and training to support research-based instruction in its low-performing schools. Referrals to Title I and Special Education have decreased.</p>	<p>The district requires, finances, and supports research-based instructional strategies, materials, and assessments in its low-performing schools, resulting in multiple, effective opportunities at the classroom level for all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, gifted, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged to meet state standards. All classroom teachers in the low-performing schools are providing effective differentiated instructional strategies.</p>	<p>The district requires that research-based instructional strategies, materials, and assessments be applied at the classroom level, but provides little additional, targeted support to reinforce the use of research-based instruction, materials, and assessments in its low-performing schools. Professional development is provided to classroom teachers to build their skills at providing differentiated instruction, but application of these strategies varies from teacher to teacher.</p>	<p>The district does not require, finance, or support the use of research-based instructional strategies, materials, or assessments. Teachers in the low-performing schools rely primarily on Title I or Special Education services to meet the wide range of learning needs of the low-performing students.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>4.4: DISTRICT USE OF DATA TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: <i>District Use of Data to Close Achievement Gaps</i> refers to how the district uses student, program, and school data to identify targeted areas for curriculum, instruction, and other program improvements to support the academic achievement and social and emotional well-being for all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged.</p>	<p>The district monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its low-performing schools' use of assessment and other data to identify achievement gaps, to improve curriculum, instruction, and other programs, and to appropriately support all students. The district provides additional resources to support the schools' efforts to increase the achievement of all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged.</p>	<p>The district uses assessment and other data to identify achievement gaps, provides meaningful feedback and support for implementing curriculum, instruction, and other program improvement to support all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged.</p>	<p>The district uses assessment and other data to identify achievement gaps, but is infrequent and/or inconsistent with its support to its low-performing schools in identifying targeted areas for curriculum, instruction, and other program improvements to support all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged.</p>	<p>The district uses minimal or no assessment and/or other data to identify achievement gaps, provide meaningful feedback for curriculum and instruction improvement, and appropriately provide other program improvements to support all students, including ELL, students with disabilities, ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged.</p>
<p>4.5: DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR INTERVENTIONS AND EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: <i>District Support for Interventions and Extended Learning Opportunities</i> refers to the system of support that schools use to ensure that students performing below grade level have access to interventions and extended learning opportunities that ensure struggling students in the low-performing schools are making progress. These strategies can include: tutoring, summer school, intercession courses, after-school programs, and extended learning opportunities within the school day.</p>	<p>The district's low-performing schools implement a systematic approach to using interventions and extended learning opportunities to meet the needs of struggling students in the low-performing schools. The district monitors these interventions and extended learning opportunities for their impact and to ensure that struggling students are not being eliminated from higher level learning opportunities. Interventions and extended learning opportunities are modified to more effectively meet the learning needs of students.</p>	<p>The district has a systematic approach to assess the different learning needs of its struggling students and to target interventions and extended learning opportunities to the needs of individual students in the low-performing schools. The impact on student achievement is generally positive.</p>	<p>There are limited or inconsistent interventions and extended learning opportunities available to students performing below grade level, and participation in these opportunities is inadequate to address the learning needs of struggling students in the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has no formal structure to ensure that students performing below grade level have access to individualized interventions and/or extended instructional time outside scheduled core classes in its low-performing schools. Academic support is limited to Title I or Special Education services.</p>

Characteristic V: Professional Development and Staff Quality



Comprehensive district-wide professional development and recruitment strategies exist to ensure that high quality teachers are serving students in the low-performing schools.

DEFINITION	INDICATORS OF DISTRICT SUPPORT			
	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>5.1: DISTRICT SUPPORT OF INITIAL EDUCATORS:</p> <p><i>District Support of Initial Educators</i> is the systematic process that the district has implemented to support the orientation and mentoring needs of initial educators according to the state law (PI-34).</p>	<p>The district provides intensive and targeted support of initial educators through orientation, coaching, and mentoring programs. The district monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its low-performing schools' efforts to improve orientation, coaching, and mentoring programs to address the changing needs of initial educators and provides for continuous improvement of district services to schools.</p>	<p>The district provides intensive and targeted support of initial educators through orientation, coaching, and mentoring programs. The district monitors the effectiveness of its system in its low-performing schools to improve the program and address the changing needs of schools.</p>	<p>The district has a system for identifying the needs of initial educators in its low-performing schools; and provides orientation, coaching, and mentoring programs, but it is not aligned with the identified goals of the district, and little monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of the system occurs.</p>	<p>The district has little or no evidence of an organized system for the orientation and mentoring of initial educators of its low-performing schools.</p>
<p>5.2: DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL:</p> <p><i>District Professional Development Model</i>, organized around district goals and program priorities, is a systematic, comprehensive, standards-driven approach and structure for providing high quality learning opportunities to district staff that focus on improving student learning and achievement.</p>	<p>The district has adopted a standards-based professional development model organized around a comprehensive set of program priorities. The model has been successfully implemented and is sustained and changed in order to meet the needs and goals of all students and staff, especially in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has adopted a professional development, standards-based model organized around a comprehensive set of district goals and program priorities that is focused on improving student learning and achievement in its low-performing schools, and is designed to meet the needs of a variety of staff members.</p>	<p>The district offers a variety of professional development activities for its low-performing schools, but it is not a standards-based, comprehensive model reflective of district and program priorities that is focused on improving student learning and achievement.</p>	<p>The district has little or no evidence of a comprehensive, professional development model for its low-performing schools based on professional development standards and district goals and program priorities that focuses on improving student learning and achievement.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>5.3: DISTRICT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED, EXPERIENCED TEACHERS:</p> <p><i>District Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified, Experienced Teachers</i> is the systematic process that the district has implemented to ensure that all teachers in the low-performing schools are licensed and effective.</p>	<p>The district monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its efforts to recruit, place, and retain highly qualified, effective, and experienced teachers in its low-performing schools. The school climate/culture is supportive of continuous professional development, professional learning communities, and improved student learning. Retention rates for highly qualified, effective, and experienced teachers are similar to the district's schools with high levels of student learning.</p>	<p>The district can document that it consistently recruits and places highly qualified, effective, and experienced teachers in the low-performing schools. Strategies to improve school climate/culture and foster a professional learning community are in place in the school. Retention rates for highly qualified, effective, and experienced teachers are improving.</p>	<p>The district attempts to recruit and place highly qualified, effective, and experienced teachers in its low-performing schools and identifies strategies to improve school climate/culture and the retention of those teachers.</p>	<p>The district has little or no evidence that it prioritizes recruitment and placement of its most effective teachers in its low-performing schools.</p>
<p>5.4: DISTRICT SUPPORT OF ORIENTATION AND MENTORING FOR PRINCIPALS:</p> <p><i>District Support of Orientation and Mentoring for Principals</i> is the systematic process that the district has implemented to support the orientation and mentoring needs of new principals and the on-going learning of all principals in its low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its efforts to improve orientation and mentoring programs to address the changing needs of new principals that results in continuous improvement of district services to administrators. The district continually designs and evaluates the impact of professional development programs and strategies for principals in the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district monitors the effectiveness of its system for the orientation and mentoring of principals in its low-performing schools to improve the program and address the changing needs of schools. The district provides ongoing learning opportunities for principals in the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has a system for the orientation and mentoring of new principals in its low-performing schools, but it is not aligned with the identified goals of the district and little monitoring and improvement of the system occurs. There are few and inconsistent learning opportunities for principals in the low-performing schools.</p>	<p>The district has little or no evidence of an organized system for the orientation and mentoring of principals, and/or systematic ongoing learning opportunities for all principals in its low-performing schools.</p>

	Leads to Continuous Improvement and Institutionalization	Leads to Effective Implementation	Raises Awareness	Minimal, Absent, or Ineffective
<p>5.5: DISTRICT SUPPORT OF PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS:</p> <p><i>District Support of Principals as Instructional Leaders</i> refers to how the district ensures that school building administrators monitor, supervise, and support instruction as their top priority; and ensures that district leaders implement a system of interventions that addresses the needs of students performing below grade level.</p>	<p>The district has a systemic and systematic structure that monitors and supports building administrators and other leaders in its low-performing schools. These systems allow for analyzing student data to improve instruction, curriculum, assessment, professional development, and determination of appropriate interventions for students performing below grade level.</p>	<p>The district uses the results of principal evaluations and school monitoring to support building administrators and other leaders in its low-performing schools in improving student learning by using effective implementation of instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional development. The district provides resources to principals in low-performing schools to implement a system of interventions for students below grade level.</p>	<p>The district articulates the link between instructional leadership, staff effectiveness, and student achievement to building administrators in its low-performing schools, but provides little/no differentiated support for improving student learning and planning interventions for low-performing students.</p>	<p>The district provides little/no support to administrators and other leaders of its low-performing schools for instructional leadership and implementation of a system of interventions for students performing below grade level.</p>

Supporting Research

	Applies to Characteristics...				
	I	II	III	IV	V
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Baldrige National Quality Program. (2004). <i>Education criteria for performance excellence</i> . Gaithersburg, MD: Author. Retrieved August 9, 2006, from http://www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/2004_Education_Criteria.pdf	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Dailey, D., Fleischman, S., Gil, L., Holtzman, D., O'Day, J., & Vosmer, C. (2005). <i>Toward more effective school districts: A review of the knowledge base</i> . Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved August 9, 2006, from http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/psb/dl10/AIR%20Toward%20more%20effective%20school%20districts.pdf	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Datnow, A., & Stringfield, S. (2000). Working together for reliable school reform. <i>Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk</i> , 5(1&2). http://www3.ksde.org/sfp/csr/csr_cd/6_Working_Together_for_Reliable_School%20Reform.pdf		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Elmore, R. F. (2004). <i>Knowing the right thing to do: School improvement and performance based accountability</i> . Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, Center for Best Practices.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	Applies to Characteristics...				
	I	II	III	IV	V
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New American Schools. (2003). <i>Framework for high-performing school districts</i> . Unpublished manuscript. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
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Wagner, T. (2000). <i>How schools change: Lessons from three communities revisited</i> . Boston: Beacon Press.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
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