

# External Factors Framework

Use the tables below to align your TQI priorities and goals with improvement indicators.\*

Begin by reflecting on the questions below. Then use the categories in the tables to identify areas that could have bearing on your TQI. Choose indicators with the greatest potential for positive, feasible impact on your TQ goals. The questions associated with each area can also help shape your future research and data collection efforts.

\* Definition: a measure, often a number, that provides information on the status of a thing or a system. May be a presentation of a trend, tracked over time to measure change and progress. For more information, see Tyler Norris and Associates, *The Community Indicators Handbook* (San Francisco: Redefining Progress [and] Sustainable Seattle, 1997).

**Who:** The TQI team

**Time to complete:** 1.5 hours

**Resources needed:**

- Quiet place to work
- Copies of this tool
- Flipchart and markers
- Data collected to date (surveys, focus groups, other data sources)
- Prioritized TQ goals

## Questions for Reflection

- Which factors have a direct, demonstrated relationship to the TQ priority?
- Which factors are of concern to the community?
- Which factors do the initiative partners have the capacity to change?
- Which factors offer the greatest possibility for successful, sustainable change, given the presumed level of support from decision makers and influencers?
- Which factors offer the most feasible paths toward change, given environmental factors such as state/district fiscal status, political climate, public perception?

With the data you have collected, and the community input you have received, you should have a snapshot of teacher characteristics in your school district and the information you need to conduct a needs assessment of teacher quality. The needs assessment will help you prioritize areas to be targeted for improvement. Setting priorities will guide your future data collection efforts and help you zero in on policy changes or improvement strategies relative to your priorities.

The following tables list a pool of indicators from which you can select those linked to your TQI goals.

EXTERNAL FACTOR	SAMPLE TQ STRUCTURE/PROCESS INDICATORS	QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH
<b>Licensure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State licensure/certification requirements, categories, and procedures</li> <li>■ State relicensure/recertification requirements, and procedures</li> </ul>	<p>What are our state licensing requirements?</p> <p>How do these requirements compare to those of other states?</p>
<b>Teacher preparation program approval</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Criteria/method state uses to approve/renew approval of teacher preparation programs</li> </ul>	<p>What criteria do the state use to approve teacher preparation programs?</p> <p>How do these criteria compare to that of other states?</p>

EXTERNAL FACTOR	SAMPLE TQ STRUCTURE/PROCESS INDICATORS	QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH
<b>School accountability system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Type and use of state/district support services</li> <li>■ Rewards for meeting/exceeding expectations</li> <li>■ Consequences for not meeting expectations</li> </ul>	How does the state/district school accountability system promote practices leading to good teaching?
<b>Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Methods used by the district to recruit new teachers</li> <li>■ Availability of alternative paths to the classroom</li> </ul>	How does our district recruit new teachers?
<b>Hiring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ District hiring standards for teachers</li> <li>■ Percentage of teachers hired who meet those standards</li> <li>■ Percentage of district budget dedicated to recruiting/hiring</li> <li>■ Colleges/universities from which most teachers are hired</li> <li>■ Experience of professional staff involved in recruiting/hiring process</li> <li>■ Hiring process methods: analysis of transcripts, use of structured interviews</li> <li>■ Hiring calendar: dates by which teachers must announce retirement, dates on which applications for teaching positions are due</li> <li>■ “Portability”—ability to transfer benefits, seniority, certification, etc., accumulated during a teacher’s career from one district/state to another</li> </ul>	What hiring standards and practices does our district use?
<b>Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Method by which new teachers are assigned to schools</li> <li>■ Incentives for placement in high-needs schools/subject areas/grade levels</li> <li>■ Procedures by which veteran teachers are assigned schools</li> </ul>	How are teachers assigned to schools?
<b>Induction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage of new teachers participating in a formal induction program</li> <li>■ Length/depth of induction programs: number of hours of pre-service training, of special in-service training for new teachers during first year</li> <li>■ Length/depth of mentoring: number of hours with mentor/support team in first year</li> <li>■ Percentage of new teachers assigned a mentor teacher or support team</li> <li>■ Ratio of mentors to new teachers</li> <li>■ Incentives/training provided to mentors</li> <li>■ Measures of quality of professional development activities</li> </ul>	How are new teachers inducted into the district?
<b>Compensation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Components of district salary schedules</li> <li>■ Starting salary for a new teacher with no experience and a bachelor’s degree</li> <li>■ Incentives, if any, offered to all new hires, or to specific subgroups of new hires</li> <li>■ Incentives based on certain circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance of certain kinds of assignments such as shortage areas</li> <li>• School or student performance</li> <li>• Other evidence of effective teaching</li> <li>• Other criteria</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	What are the components of the teacher compensation system?

EXTERNAL FACTOR	SAMPLE TQ STRUCTURE/PROCESS INDICATORS	QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH
<b>Ongoing professional development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Type of professional development available</li> <li>■ Percentage of school/district budget devoted to professional development</li> <li>■ Average percentage of teacher time devoted to professional development</li> <li>■ School/teacher choices regarding professional development</li> <li>■ Cooperative relationships between district and other providers of professional development programs</li> <li>■ Time available for planning, professional development, and collaboration with other teachers</li> <li>■ Results of evaluations of district professional development programs</li> <li>■ Measures of quality of professional development programs</li> </ul>	<p>What is the structure of and funding for professional development programs provided or facilitated by school/district?</p>
<b>Work environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage of total budget devoted to classroom teaching</li> <li>■ Level of control teachers have over use of resources, professional development programs, and other professional needs</li> <li>■ Facilities use/maintenance</li> <li>■ Percentage of time spent on instruction</li> <li>■ Percentage of time dedicated to individual and collaborative planning</li> <li>■ Opportunities for leadership by teachers</li> <li>■ Effectiveness of principal's leadership</li> <li>■ Student load of each teacher</li> </ul>	<p>What are the characteristics of teachers' work environments?</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establishment of clear goals/expectations for teachers</li> <li>■ Measurement/monitoring of teaching success and improvement</li> <li>■ Use of evaluation data to promote improvement and reward good teaching</li> <li>■ Use of evaluation data to terminate poor teachers</li> </ul>	<p>How are teachers evaluated, and what happens as a result of the evaluation?</p>
<b>Resource deployment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage of employees involved in instruction vs. administration</li> <li>■ Organizational structure of central office: program-based vs. school-based structures</li> <li>■ Alignment between budget and district objectives</li> <li>■ Staff/services devoted to district objectives</li> </ul>	<p>Are resources—staff, money, technical assistance—deployed in accordance with district objectives?</p>
<b>Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accessibility of teacher characteristics data disaggregated by school/classroom</li> <li>■ Regularly maintained systems for collecting and warehousing data</li> </ul>	<p>How does our district share teacher information with parents and the public?</p> <p>Where is data available? How does our district compare to state/national norms on these issues?</p>

EXTERNAL FACTOR	SAMPLE COMMUNITY SUPPORT/EXPECTATION INDICATORS	QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH
<b>School board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public support/advocacy of school system by board</li> <li>■ Degree of input by school employees to board deliberations</li> </ul>	What is the relationship between the school board and the school system?
<b>Teachers unions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Terms of state/district agreements with teachers unions</li> <li>■ Level of respect/trust between school system and teachers unions</li> </ul>	What is the relationship between the teachers union and the school system?
<b>College and university programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Annual number of graduates of area preparation programs</li> <li>■ Annual number of graduates of area preparation programs accepting jobs in the district</li> <li>■ Accreditation status of the teacher preparation programs from which most area teachers graduate*</li> <li>■ Graduation requirements/standards of the teacher preparation programs from which most area teachers graduate</li> <li>■ Annual number of graduates of area preparation programs with characteristics deemed high priority by the district: specialists in shortage content areas, minority candidates</li> <li>■ Annual number of such graduates accepting jobs in the district</li> <li>■ Annual number of student teachers provided by area programs</li> <li>■ Annual number of district teachers enrolled in area college and university programs, either degree programs or professional development programs</li> <li>■ Number and quality of college/university programs that place faculty in K–12 schools as consultants and/or other positions that strengthen ties between university research and in-service teacher practices</li> <li>■ Number and quality of college/university programs that use in-service teachers to help design and teach courses for pre-service teachers</li> <li>■ Evidence of other ways colleges/universities are contributing to teacher quality</li> </ul>	How responsive are local college/university-based teacher preparation programs to the hiring needs of the district?
<b>Parent involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher satisfaction with parent involvement/support as expressed in surveys, focus groups</li> <li>■ Forms—such as parent report cards—that allow teachers to alert and/or assess the degree of parental involvement/support in children’s education</li> </ul>	How well do parents support the work of teachers, such as making sure children do homework, attending parent/teacher conferences?
<b>Business involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Annual number of teachers/administrators participating in business-offered training/internship experiences</li> <li>■ Business sponsored programs in which mid-career and retiring professionals enter the teaching profession</li> <li>■ Business funding that supports teacher quality such as professional development</li> </ul>	What has the business community done to support teacher quality?
<b>Media coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of stories on teacher quality issues</li> <li>■ Quality—accuracy, bias, clarity, depth—of teaching-related coverage</li> </ul>	How has the local media covered issues of teacher quality?

\* See, for example, the [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education](#) (NCATE) Standards.

EXTERNAL FACTOR	SAMPLE COMMUNITY SUPPORT/EXPECTATION INDICATORS	QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH
<b>Public awareness, involvement, action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage demonstrating awareness of teacher quality issues</li> <li>■ Percentage rating TQ improvement as a high community priority</li> <li>■ Percentage who say they volunteer in schools</li> <li>■ Percentage who say they serve in a leadership position in a school or community-related organization or initiative</li> <li>■ Number and diversity of residents participating in focus groups, town meetings, and other forums on teaching issues</li> <li>■ Percentage of registered voters who voted in school board elections and for school bond referenda</li> </ul>	<p>To what extent do local residents participate in public activities to improve teacher quality?</p>
<b>Community organization involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number and diversity of community organizations adopting teacher quality as part of their organizational agendas</li> <li>■ Grants to teachers for special projects</li> <li>■ Type/scope of professional development provided by community organizations</li> </ul>	<p>What have community organizations done to support teacher quality by including teacher quality in their agendas, providing grants to teachers for special projects, or augmenting district professional development offerings?</p>