Strategically Using Learning Agenda to Inform Policy and Program Decisions

The Research Agenda

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Mississippi Department of Education

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

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MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

1 All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas

2 Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career

3 Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program

4 Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders

5 Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

6 Every School and District is Rated "C" or Higher

Cursory Thoughts

What is an Agenda?

What is the product supposed to be?

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What is an Agenda

- A document that guides research activities

- Pre-determined questions in line with goals and data availability

- Approved by the organization stakeholders

- The foundation for your work

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Rationale for Why the Agenda is Important

What is done with this agenda?

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Importance to Stakeholders

- Your questions should be of interest to stakeholders

- If you have done your due diligence, the results should be sought after by educational policy makers

- These people should reference the results of these studies with high frequency

Importance to District Personnel

- The results will likely be attractive to other districts

- The results should help teachers in their daily practice

- Provide useful realistic and easily interpretable results

How to Develop the Research Agenda

Preparation

Meetings and other considerations

Goals of the Agenda

- Agency goals

- Department goals

- Stakeholder goals

- Research goals and interests

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Intra-Office

- Examine the goals of colleagues

- What can they contribute?

- Would you consider them stakeholders?

- These people can be a gold mine of expertise

Departments

- These meetings are vital

- Department goals drive most of the agenda

- What do the departments need to know?

- What can be accomplished by the office?

Executive Leadership

- Buy in is critical

- Keep them informed of progress

- Be aware of their goals

Other Stakeholders

- Carefully consider all stakeholders

- If you think they have an interest include them

- The more collaboration, the better the end product will be

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Resource Assessment

What is Available?

Resource Considerations

- Several Resource considerations

- Agency Resources

- Personnel

- Technology Availability

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External Resources

- Who is available to consult

- How often are they available

- What is their area of expertise

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Agency Resources

- Who is aligned with the agency

- What other agencies have a partnership

- What funds can be allocated if necessary

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Agency Resources (Technology)

- Access to research databases

- Access to data analysis software

- Access to project management software

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Stakeholders (as Resources)

- Who are they?

- How often can they meet?

- How often can they provide feedback?

- What are their goals?

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Discussions

- Have a departmental discussion about the goals

- Examine who the stakeholders are

- Ensure their availability throughout the development process.

- You must be able to reach the stakeholders

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Subject Matter Experts

- These people are vital

- They can tell you what the pertinent questions are

- What research needs to be done?

- What research has been done?

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Construction of the Research Questions

What is involved, initial questions, initial drafts

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SMART

- Specific

- Measurable

- Attainable

- Responsive

- Timely

Literature Reviews

- Miniature literature reviews

- Does not have to be extensive

- Need to reaffirm what has already been done

- Where are the gaps?

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Data Availability

- Each question should be crafted with this in mind

- What data do you have

- What data can you get

- Does this information answer your research questions

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Data Availability

- Are you going to have to collect it?

- Are you going to use archival data (e.g., MSIS, Lifetracks)

- What data privacy issues are you going to run into?

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Initial Drafts

- There should be a wide variety of questions

- These can be narrowed down later

A Quality Product

Final Development

Checklist and Considerations

Checklist

- Had the appropriate meetings?

- Understand the goals

- Conducted miniature literature reviews

- Drafted several questions

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Checklist

- Be sure that you asked the right questions initially

- Every stakeholder is happy with the end progress

- Considered your resources

- Considered data availability

- Is the research SMART

How to Make the Agenda Accessible

- Where is the agenda going to placed so its visible

- It should be as widely accessible as possible

- The people who make policy decisions should have easy access to view it

- Your website is a viable choice

Example

The MDE Agenda

Final Product

The Development Process

- The development of this agenda was a significant undertaking

- Trial and error process

- All of the slides presented here were lessons learned

The Development Process

- Interviewed program office staff concerning needs and challenges

- 54 staff members across 23 program offices participated in focus groups

- Thorough literature reviews were done

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The Development Process

- Insights from the program offices guided the development of the Research Framework and preliminary research questions.

- Presented early drafts of the Framework and Agenda with other state education agencies and leading national experts to gain the benefits of their expertise

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The Development Process

- Presented a draft of the Research Framework and Agenda to the executive leadership team to garner feedback

- A final draft was developed

- It is a living document and revised as needed

The Development Process

- Ended with a product with a vibrant appearance

- Content is important but so is the wow factor

- Appearance should be strategically designed

- The web team plays an integral role

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Framework

- Includes Three components

- Dimension

- Indicator

- Change instrument

Question Dimensions

- High Quality Early Learning

- College and Career Readiness

- Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Effectiveness

- Educator (and Administrator) Preparation and Professional Development

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Example

The following is the agenda developed by MDE

Example

- The full agenda can be found on the MDE website

- https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OTSS/MDE-Research-Framework-and-Agenda.pdf

Comments Or Questions?

Thank You

Best of luck!