SST Facilitator's Guide
An SST Problem-Solving Process

Once the team has established operating procedures and roles, the challenging next step is to utilize a practical and efficient problem-solving process. Problem-solving is the method for defining the presenting problem clearly, generating and selecting high probability interventions, and planning and monitoring implementation.

Welcome and Expectations (1 minute)

The facilitator should welcome staff, thank the requester, and review meeting timelines/agenda.

Share the Referral (2 minutes)

The facilitator should introduce the referral, providing hard copies for each participant. Each participant should then spend time independently reviewing information on the referral.

Student Name:	
Parent Name(s):	Phone #:
Classroom teacher has conferenced with parent(s)?	
Parent(s) has/have been contacted regarding SST referral?	
Classroom Teacher:	Grade:
Birthdate:	Age:	Gender:

Is the student currently identified as, or receiving any of the following *(check all that apply)*
☐ Homeless ☐ Foster Youth ☐ ELD ☐ Counseling ☐ Special Ed

Identify the Primary Concern, Share the Supporting Data (4 minutes)

The teacher/referring party should succinctly state the primary concern.

It is crucial to have an objective description of the academic and/or behavioral problem before the team can begin to assist the teacher. It helps to eliminate negative labels such as "low" or "insubordinate" that defy change, and do not allow for measurement of progress. A concrete definition avoids confusion and ensures that everyone is talking about the same thing.

The concerns need to be articulated in objective and specific terms free of judgments about the nature of the concern. For the teacher who states that the student "is so low" the prompts or questions might be, "Tell me *exactly* what level the student is reading at" or " specifically which math skills are not in place and to what degree?"

Facilitator tip

For the teacher who states that the student is "insubordinate," or "immature," the prompts or questions might be, "Tell me *exactly* what the student does." "What does the student do that makes you think he/she is *insubordinate*?" e.g., he argues with me, he refuses to do as told, she sleeps in class. *Please see Appendix A for SST steps that*

At this time, the requester should also provide/describe specifically targeted data that directly supports the Primary Concern. Other SST members in attendance who also have data that supports the Primary Concern are encouraged to share it at this time. In order to keep the process moving forward, the SST facilitator should continue to emphasize the sharing of data results that contribute directly to the Primary Concern.

Identify the Desired Outcome/Goal (2 minutes)

Once the concern has been pinpointed, it is relatively easy to pair the concern with an alternative, or replacement outcome. The question to ask is "What is the goal?", "What do you want the child to do or achieve? The team should next spend time identifying realistic goal(s) that might be accomplished within 4 to 6 weeks. The goal(s) should be written into the SST Intervention/Action Plan. Data that was used to determine the goal(s) should also be noted on the SST Intervention/Action Plan.

	☐ Initial SST Meeting	☐ Follow up Meeting	Today's Date: _____
Student:		School:	
Teacher:		Grade:	

Targeted Area of Concern: _____

_____

Goal 1:
Current Data to Support this Goal:

Be careful not to admire the problem or focus time and energy in areas that are not within our control.

Brainstorming Possible Interventions (5 minutes)

When the problem has been stated concisely and one or two desired outcomes have been chosen, the team is ready to recommend interventions using a collaborative process.

The individual facilitating the meeting should set up this activity by reviewing the goal or desired behavior(s) and student strengths. This will provide focus and increase the likelihood that ideas generated will be relevant to the problem.

The Requester should briefly introduce the Intervention Checklist section from the Referral Form, noting selected interventions. It will be important to this step in the process for the referring party to focus first on a description of the interventions that have been designed and implemented by the PLC team. The Requester should have data available to share if it is requested by team members.

Intervention Checklist Continued *(please check all interventions that apply to the situation and have been used:*

Instruction	Date Range	Effective?	
		Yes	No
☐ PLC-designed fluid grouping		—	—
☐ Small group instruction		—	—
☐ Break down tasks to smaller steps		—	—
☐ Individualized instruction		—	—
☐ Modify curriculum		—	—
☐ Change grouping		—	—
☐ Modify or shorten assignments		—	—
☐ Simplify directions		—	—
☐ After-school tutoring		—	—
☐ Other _____		—	—

This information will identify interventions that have already been used, for what length of time and to what extent each was effective. After a brief amount of time has been allotted to review this information, the facilitator should select a method for generating other potential interventions. One example of generating ideas is through brainstorming. This process guarantees efficiency and that each person, including the requester, will contribute to the process.

Silent generation of ideas in writing.
Begin by asking the team to take a minute to write as many possible interventions as they can. This one-minute think-to-write time results in a broader range of intervention generation. The team should be encouraged to consider all possible solutions from simplest to complex, to more obvious or obscure. They can also be prompted to prioritize their ideas should they have time.

Round robin sharing and recording of ideas.
At the conclusion of the silent generation, the facilitator asks all present, in turn, to share an intervention, continuing to go around to each member until an exhaustive list is obtained. Teams easily generate as many as 8-12 strategies. All comments, judgments or discussion are deferred until the list of ideas is completed. Each idea is listed. A recorder should capture all ideas on a piece of paper, easel or whiteboard to record the ideas for all to see. The silent generation of ideas and round-robin sharing should take no more than 5 minutes.

Evaluate Feasibility of Interventions (5-8 minutes)
Clarification and discussion
The next step is to eliminate any interventions that might conflict with the nature and function of the problem, and to advocate for those perceived as workable and powerful. Preference should always be given to interventions that are instructional, positive and feasible. In addition, some feasibility considerations include: 1) degree of disruption to classroom procedures and teacher routines, 2) possible side effects on the student or peers, 3) amount of support services required, 4) the difficulty of the strategy and prerequisite competencies required to implement, and 5) the power of the intervention and probability of success. Five to eight minutes should be enough time for thorough consideration of intervention possibilities.

Select Interventions (2-3 minutes)

The individual who has the primary responsibility for implementation (the Requester) should, in the end, select the interventions that are most desirable and are measurable. If the teacher is not comfortable with the intervention/s, he or she may not implement it with fidelity. Final selection can be guided by the wisdom of the other team members. More than one intervention may be identified, with some being very easy to implement (e.g., increase rate of positive feedback or change seating) and 1-2 that require more effort. The selected interventions are circled and dated on the brainstorming graphic organizer (paper, easel, picture). This list will then be available at subsequent meetings should further intervention consideration occur, avoiding the need to retrace the team's steps. The intervention/s to be implemented are entered on the Intervention/Action Plan form.

Write Action Plan (2 minutes)

The recorder has been entering information on the form as the meeting has progressed (Goal/s, data that supports the goal/s). Now that intervention/s have been selected, the written plan can be finalized. For each intervention, an actionable goal and monitoring tool are identified and noted on the action plan form. After this notation has been made, the responsible party is identified and noted on the form. Finally, a specific time for a follow-up meeting with the entire team is set. Typically, *four to six weeks* is a reasonable interval for full implementation and a good indication of intervention impact.

Goal 1:		
Current Data to Support this Goal:		
Goal 1 Measurable Intervention/s and actionable goal/s:		
Start Date:	*Monitoring Tool:*	*Responsible Party:*

A Note on Monitoring Implementation

Team participation in implementation and monitoring of outcomes is often overlooked by teams as they put their efforts into problem-solving meetings. The collaborative nature of the team must extend throughout the intervention phase and includes support to the teacher, and data collection.

Ongoing encouragement should be provided during implementation. It might include observing, data collection, and coaching. The greatest success is realized when team members work collaboratively with teachers to achieve positive outcomes.

Appendix A

SST Process and Student Behavior

Problem Identification and Description

(**1**) **Pinpoint the problem.** The concerns must be articulated in objective and specific terms free of judgments about the nature of the behavior. For the teacher who states that the student "*just doesn't care*" the prompts or questions might be, "Tell me *exactly* what the student does that makes you think he/she *does not care*?" (e.g., he ignores directions, does not do his work, and sleeps in class.)

- For the teacher who states that the student is insubordinate," or "immature," the prompts or questions might be, "Tell me *exactly* what the student does." "What does the student do that makes you think he/she is *insubordinate*?" e.g., she argues with me, she refuses to do as told.

(**2**) **Consider Conducting an Observation.** Social behaviors that can be seen or heard provide the needed clarity of the teacher's concern(s). Sometimes the list of problems is lengthy and decisions need to be made regarding where to begin. Usually one or two concerns are all that can be successfully addressed at any given time. It is suggested that the teacher prioritize the problems. The questions to ask might include, "Which problem occurs most frequently?" or "Which one of the student's behaviors do you find most distressing?" In some cases, a behavior, if changed, could have a "domino effect" on other troublesome behaviors.

- If one intervenes with a child who is ignoring directions, not attempting work and sleeping in class, by addressing "not attempting work" the other behaviors will likely improve as well.
- If one intervenes with a child who is out of his seat, roaming the room, seldom completing work, and disrupting other students, by addressing "staying in his seat," the other behaviors will likely improve as well.

Sometimes the intervention team will want to choose a problem that can be quickly or easily changed in order to gain momentum. To fully understand the behavior we must look at *antecedents*; when or under what conditions the behavior occurs. We are looking for setting variables, activities, or interactions with others that lead to the behavior of concern.

- Identify what happens immediately before the sleeping behavior occurs, e.g., teacher is beginning instruction and student puts head down on desk and goes to sleep. Also, look for a pattern of the behavior, e.g., sleeps during reading, writing and math, but does not sleep during music, P.E., art or computer lab.

- Identify when the student argues with the teacher, e.g., when corrected, when requests are denied, etc.

It is also necessary to discover what *consequences* are currently at play; that is, what happens when the student behaves appropriately and what happens when the student misbehaves.

Question such as the following will help to identify the consequences:
- "What does the teacher do when the student behaves appropriately?" The teacher expects the student to cooperate and therefore does not comment on appropriate behavior.
- "What does the teacher do when the student sleeps?" The teacher warns the student then ignores the behavior and lets the student sleep.
- "What happens immediately after the student argues with the teacher?" The teacher sends the student to the office.

(3) Consider function of behavior. Awareness of consequences leads to functional thinking that establishes the purpose the behavior serves. In its simplest form, the function is determined by asking the questions "Why is he doing this?" or "What is the payoff for sleeping, or arguing?" All behavior has a function driving it. Students behave either to *avoid* or *escape* something; feelings of inadequacy, anxiety or discomfort or to *gain* or *obtain* something; attention, power, or revenge. **Considering the function of the behavior also helps to clarify whether the student cannot do the work or will not do the work.** Clearly interpreting the function will guide the selection of useful interventions. For example, a student throwing tantrums each time she is told to join her reading group is being sent to time out; once in time out she quiets down quickly. When questioned about the function of the behavior, the teacher can now see that the student is escaping reading instruction, which is difficult for the student. Continued use of the exclusionary interventions (such as timeout) is not appropriate.

(4) Establish replacement behavior/desired outcomes. Once behaviors of concern have been pinpointed and antecedents identified, it is relatively easy to pair the behavior with the opposite, alternative, or replacement behavior. For the child that is out of his seat, the desired behavior is to remain in his seat or ask permission before leaving. For the child who argues with the teacher when corrected, the replacement behavior is accepting correction calmly. The question to ask is "What is the goal?", "What do you want the child to do or achieve?", or "What is the preferred behavior?" Alternative or replacement behaviors are always stated as the presence of the preferred or desirable behavior, not the absence of the problem behavior e.g., "accepting correction calmly" instead of "not arguing".

(5) Identify student strengths and interests. Knowing what the student likes and what s/he does well is essential to seeking solutions that build on assets. A student that is passive and not involved in academic learning may have talents in other areas and that potential can be used and channeled to engage the student in positive behaviors. Interests can also be used to develop reinforcing activities. Questions to ask might include "What does this student do well?" or "What does he choose to do when s/he has free time?" Defining the problem succinctly in this way requires some skill and initially some time. It is therefore recommended that the case liaison and the teacher do this prior to the team meeting. This provides a non-threatening private setting for the teacher to respond to questions and uncovers the need for

observation.

A student that is bossy with others may have leadership potential that can be used and channeled to engage the student in positive behaviors. Interests can also be used to develop reinforcing activities. Questions to ask might include "What does this student do well?" or "What does he choose to do when s/he has free time?" Defining the problem succinctly in this way requires some skill and initially some time. It is therefore recommended that the case liaison and the teacher do this prior to the team meeting. This provides a non-threatening private setting for the teacher to respond to questions, uncovers the need for observation, and allows the case liaison to determine if Ancillary Team members will be needed. It also ensures efficient use of the team meeting time. At the team meeting, the case liaison can provide a succinct description, including all of the above variables, within 2-3 minutes. The team can then spend the majority of their time on solutions and planning for intervention.