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Description automatically generated with medium confidence**Conducting a Program Needs Assessment**

**Tip Sheet**

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**What to do:** Every year — and before planning and designing any new initiative — work with your team to conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify student needs and interests and to set priorities. Collect three types of data: school-level data, student-level data, and student voice data. Family/community data may also be important. Use guiding questions like the examples shown here to help you analyze data, begin discussions with your team, and set priorities. You can replace the examples with your own information.

**Why it matters:** A needs assessment helps you understand students’ academic needs and to incorporate those needs and student voice into activity design.

# School-Level Data

School-level data provide the big picture of student performance and give you a starting point from which to work. These data may come from campus or school improvement plans; State, district, or school goals that your program can help to address; State assessment results for the school(s) you serve; district benchmark tests; attendance and behavior reports;and other sources.

| **Guiding Questions for School-Level Needs** | **Needs Statements** | **Information Source** | **Priority**  **(High, Med, Low)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| When looking at school-level data, what are the overall trends? What’s needed for improvement? | Only 60 percent of third-grade students are meeting standards on the math State assessment. | State assessment results | High |
| In State assessment scores, in which subject areas do students show deficits? Capture specific data for each grade level you’ll serve in your program. | Only 70 percent of third-grade students met standards on the last English language arts State assessment. | State assessment results | High |
| In attendance reports, what trends do you see that need to be addressed? | Nearly 15 percent of third-grade students have been absent 10 or more days this year. | Attendance reports | High |
| When looking at behavior reports, what trends do you see that need to be addressed? | About 10 percent of our third-grade students averaged three or more discipline referrals this year. | Behavior reports | Medium |

# Student-Level Data

These data provide details about areas where students are struggling — the specific skills and content knowledge they need to master. Identify the top three to five student-level learning gaps and use guiding questions to begin discussions with your team.

| **Guiding Questions for Student-Level Needs** | **Needs Statements** | **Information Source** | **Priority**  **(High, Med, Low)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| When considering data shared by school-day teachers, what specific skills do students need to master to meet standards on the State assessment, to improve report card grades, and to ensure promotion or graduation?  *List needs by grade level and subject-specific skills.* | Teachers indicate that students who failed to meet math standards most often failed to master the use of fractions and measurement. | Discussion with third-grade math teachers and district benchmark scores | High |
| With respect to attendance issues, what do counselors, parents, and teachers say are the most common reasons for absences? | About 60 percent of reported absences occur in the winter and early spring. The school nurse reports high rates of respiratory viruses during those months. | School nurse | Low |
| With respect to discipline referrals, what specific behaviors occur most often? | About 5 percent of discipline referrals are coded as fighting.  Another 5 percent of discipline referrals are coded as disrespecting the teacher. | School administration | Medium |

# Student Voice Data

These data provide information about the kinds of activities students want. Record their top three to five ideas interest areas.

| **Guiding Questions for Student Voice** | **Needs Statements** | **Information Source** | **Priority**  **(High, Med, Low)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What activities do students want, and which ones can we accommodate? | Third-grade students want to engage in art, cooking, gardening, and soccer. | Student interest survey | High |
| Which recent activities have been most popular with students? | Last year students really liked nature walks, ultimate frisbee, and our citizen science activity. | Attendance and activity observation notes | Medium |
| What do parents say students might want or need? | Students need to get more exercise and they need help with math. | Parent survey | High |

# Family/Community Data

These data can help you provide support to students and their families, while also improving family engagement in education. Issues families face may include transportation, childcare, limited time, social and emotional needs, and access to food and medical care.

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| **Guiding Questions for Family/Community** | **Family/Community Needs** | **Information Source** | **Priority**  **(High, Med, Low)** |
| What do family work schedules look like? How many children are there who may need a safe space after school hours? | Most adult family members (90 percent) work at least one full-time job; some have part-time jobs in addition.  Many families (80 percent) have two or more school-age children | Family survey | High |
| What other needs do families and students have that our program can help to address? | About 85 percent of students may not have regular access to healthy meals at home. | School meal program data | High |
| Half our students don’t have access to safe spaces where they can be active at home. | Family survey | High |

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