

Supervising schools in the 21st century: digital tools
and improvement plan

A USER-FRIENDLY TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

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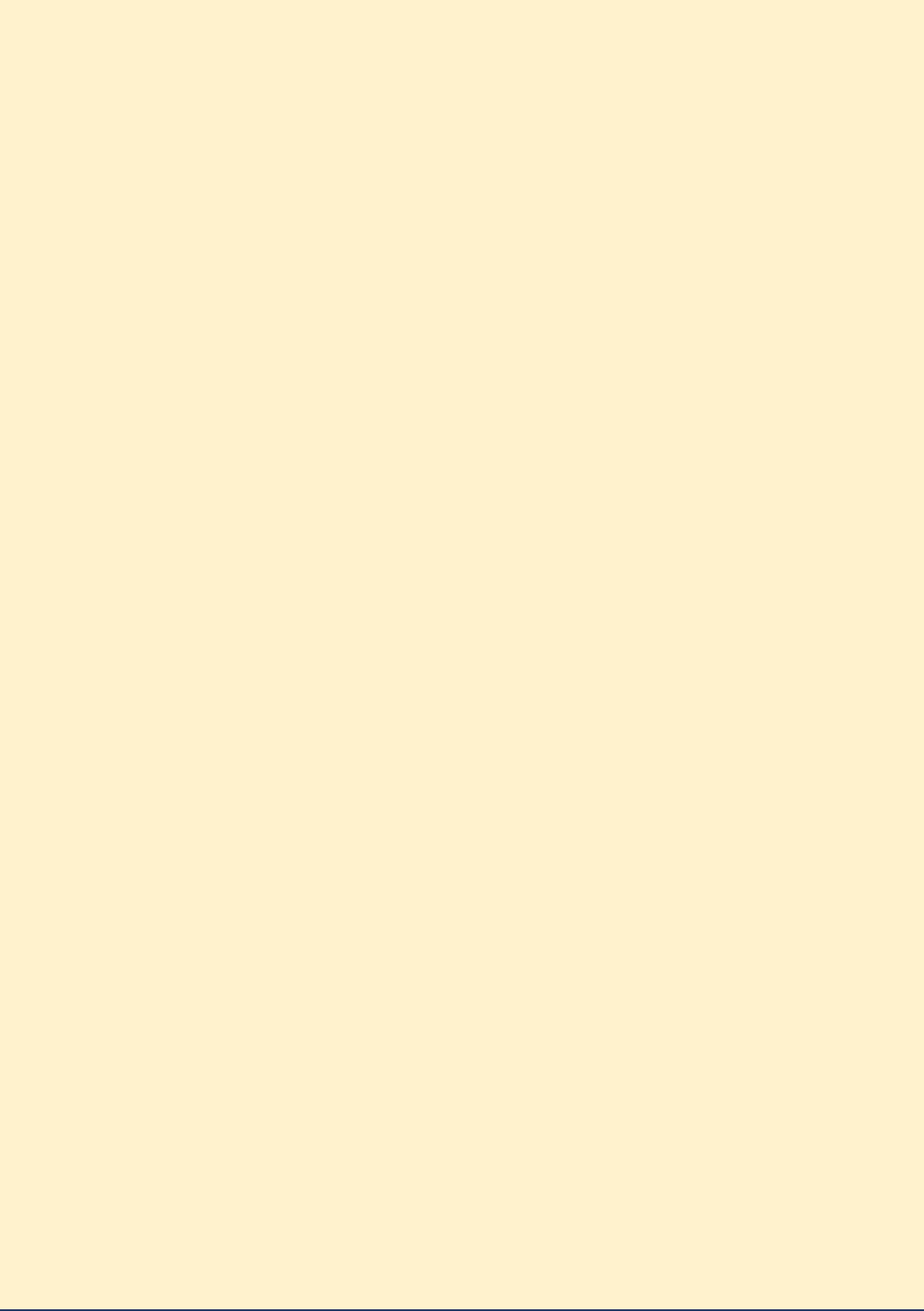
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Section 1: Introduction and Background



1.1 Introduction

This toolkit is an outcome of a project entitled *Supervising Schools in the 21st Century: Digital Tools and Improvement Plans* (SS21DTIP). The purpose of the project was to reinforce the improvement processes taking place within schools with the description of procedures and techniques and the creation of tools that will be aiming to enable schools to engage with educational evidence and find enhanced teaching, learning and managing strategies. This toolkit is based on a systematic literature review and findings derived from a series of Case Studies of schools in four European countries (Spain, Bulgaria, Ireland and Greece). Details can be found on <https://ss21dtip.educarex.es/>. SS21DTIP intended to contribute to a unique and innovative insight into school evaluation by assisting schools with what is at the centre of effective planning activities, data-informed internal evaluation and planning processes.

This toolkit aims to provide those in charge of planning, developing and assessing schools' improvement plans with criteria, strategies and instruments to do it in an effective way. It also aims to promote the European dimensions of School Improvement planning.

The partner organisations from Spain, Ireland, Bulgaria and Greece have joined expertise to carry out SS21DTIP: CEYE-JUNTAEX (*Consejería de Educación y Empleo- Junta de Extremadura*), Dublin City University (DCU), Sofia University (SU) and Regional Directorate of Education (RDE), Stereas Elladas. The inspectorate of Education of CEYE-JUNTAEX has among its functions collaborating in the promotion of continuous evaluation by the educational centres, of their own functioning, of the programs that they develop, of the teaching-learning processes they carry out and the results of their students. DCU hosts the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection (EQI), a multidisciplinary research group examining the impact of evaluation and inspection in education and related fields, and is a designated University Research Centre. Sofia University has brought expertise in the area of school inspection, school improvement and school self- and peer-evaluation and rich experience in case study research. The RDE, Stereas Elladas is a decentralised organisation of the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs in Greece with administrative as well as pedagogic responsibilities, in charge of promoting and monitoring the innovations and reformations of the Ministry of Education within the region of Sterea Ellada.

Committed to transnational usage, the toolkit is available in the four partner languages. The toolkit is also integrated into a MOOC that will be available at <https://ss21dtip.educarex.es/herramienta/>

1.2 Organisation and use of the toolkit

The toolkit is organised into three sections.

Section 1 provides an introduction and background to the project as well as terminology and definitions that are used in the toolkit.

Section 2 includes guidelines for school leaders, teachers and inspectors on data-informed School Self Evaluation and Improvement planning. It is divided into several parts which may be relevant to different stakeholders depending on their organisational context. These include:

- how to create a collaborative school culture for Distributed Leadership in SSE and improvement planning;
- the role of different stakeholders that could be involved in SSE and improvement processes;
- the role of inspectors and how SSE and school inspection can be of benefit to all involved;
- a model of school improvement planning inspired by Ireland's evaluation and improvement planning processes that could be adapted to other educational contexts;
- the guiding principles of/and practical tips for Data-Informed Decision Making;
- the legal and quality framework for SSE in the four partner countries;

Section 3 provides a list of resources for the implementation of School Self Evaluation such as Session plans for consultation processes with different stakeholders and templates for School Evaluation.

1.3 Context

The Project *Supervising schools in the 21st century: Digital tools and improvement plans* (SS21DTIP) identifies the specific priorities of supporting schools to tackle early school leaving and disadvantage and to offer quality education, enabling success for all students. It aims to support schools to improve and to be more aware of the importance of introducing improvement plans based on previous evaluations. This can be achieved not only by providing schools with tools to better accomplish tasks but also by providing those with supervising responsibilities the criteria, strategies and tools to monitor and assess those plans.

SS21DTIP also intended to strengthen the collaboration among external and internal evaluators and improve quality assurance and data-informed planning in schools. Indeed, the 2015 Paper by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture *A whole-school approach to tackle early school leaving* identifies school governance as one of five areas to consider to tackle early school leaving. Among the essential aspects related to school governance, according to the mentioned paper, two are directly addressed by this Project:

1 - Whole-school improvement processes

It is argued that a whole school approach becomes effective when schools identify and address ‘the needs of the school community and engage in continuous, cyclical processes for improvement’. Also, it is stated that ‘schools that actively use school planning and school (self) evaluation will be in a stronger position to eradicate early school leaving’.

2.- External monitoring and assessment (quality-insurance) mechanisms

According to the European Commission Paper, *Comparative study on quality assurances in EU schools education systems* (2015) the practice of external monitoring and assessment can play an advisory and supportive role to schools in implementing their early school leaving strategies. It concludes that the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms depends on both the ‘summative function’, related to control and compliance check and also the ‘formative function’ related to improvement and development. As such, the Project acknowledged that improvement planning processes must be tackled collaboratively to be successful and robust. Indeed, the Hanover Research report *Best practices for school improvement planning* (2014, p. 13) highlights the importance of collaborative culture within schools: ‘Under this system ‘school improvement groups’ collaborate to understand school problems better, assess needs, set priorities for improvement, and select opportunities for making change’.

It is envisaged that the toolkit will not only enhance the quality of education provided in each of the partner countries but also, in schools throughout Europe and elsewhere.

1.4 Terminology and definitions

a. *School Self Evaluation*

School self-evaluation is, by definition, something that schools do to themselves, by themselves and for themselves (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2005). Van Petegem describes self-evaluation as (...) the process, initiated mainly by the school itself, whereby carefully chosen participants describe and evaluate the functioning of the school in a systematic manner to make decisions or undertake initiatives in the context of [aspects of] overall school [policy] development (2005, p. 104). School self-evaluation is done by “persons or groups of persons who are directly involved in the activities of the school (such as the school head or its teaching and administrative staff or pupils) or directly affected by these activities (as in the case of parents and people in the local community). All of them may be grouped under the heading of ‘school community’ (*ibid.*). Internal evaluation can be described as a ‘process of purposive evaluation of school practices which provides insights into the educational experienced of students, as more than those measured by test data’ (Simons, 2013, cited in Nelson, Ehren and Godfrey, 2015).

Self-evaluation is perceived as a process through which an individual teacher, groups of staff, the staff as a whole and senior management:

- ↔ reflect on their current practice;
- ↔ identify and celebrate the strengths of the school;
- ↔ identify and address areas for improvement in their work;
- ↔ engage in personal and shared professional development; and
- ↔ focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching, and the standards of achievement in the school.

The nature of school self-evaluation as a process means that it is not a mere single action but rather a systematic, time-consuming set of activities. To be effective, school self-evaluation should:

- ↔ be ongoing and sharply-focused,
- ↔ involve monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the existing provision and the pupils' achievements;
- ↔ recognise the need for the staff and governors to have a clear and agreed view of the school's current stage of development;
- ↔ help the staff to identify priorities which will have a positive effect on learning and teaching;
- ↔ inform and influence classroom practice and the quality of teaching and learning, as well as promoting school development and improvement; and
- ↔ require the staff to evaluate their work critically, reflect on the extent to which expectations are being realised in the work of the school, and establish a clear vision and future direction for the school. (Education and Training Inspectorate. 2010).

b. School improvement versus accountability

The need for better schools and quality education for all determine a range of approaches toward achieving these goals. Among them, school accountability and school improvement are one of the most discussed and most controversial notions. While decentralisation of educational governance brought the idea of school accountability (Bruns and Filmer, 2011), school improvement has turned the scope of ideas from achieving externally set goals to internally decided needs and measures for future school development. Often, those two concepts collide, especially when presented from different governing bodies or used for various purposes. Still, they can co-exist and supplement each other in the broader perspective of making schools work for the students.

Accountability in education is a broad concept that could be addressed in many ways, such as using political processes to assure democratic accountability, introducing market-based reforms to increase accountability to parents and children, or developing peer-based accountability systems to enhance the professional accountability of teachers (Figlio and Loeb, 2011).

Accountability is described in the *UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/2018* as “a process aimed at helping individual or institutions meet their responsibilities and reach their goals” (UNESCO Global Education Monitoring report 2017/2018). It contains three main elements: 1) clearly defined responsibilities; 2) obligations to provide an account of how responsibilities have been met; 3) the legal, political, social or moral justification for the obligation to account. Although the word “accountability” has been called a cultural expression, with significant dependence of the language and cultural context, it is commonly used in education to describe an expectation and a process of holding schools responsible for the results they achieve, for the way they manage teaching and learning and for the level to which they conform to standards, set from the outside. Structures and bodies have been put in place in almost every country to monitor and ensure schools accountabilities (Ehren, Perryman and Spours, 2014) and schools feel the pressure to achieve external goals and to follow guidelines and requirements set on the national or regional level.

On the other hand, **school improvement** has been seen as a process much more internally generated, performed and monitored. School improvement considers how to bring about change, with several principles underpinning its main philosophy (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005):

- The school should be the focus of educational change strategies;
- The processes of educational change are important;
- Schools should be part of, and own attempts at educational reform;
- Real improvements require strong group dynamics;
- Teacher empowerment and capacity building;
- Bottom-up processes of education planning and curriculum development are most effective.

Considering the above, EFA Report states that one of the perspectives to understand school improvement is as a way of designing and providing conditions that enable teachers, other adults and learners to promote and sustain learning among themselves within schools. Although school improvement may be related to nationally agreed educational standards and goals, its most explicit characteristics is the school ownership of the process itself.

c. Data-informed decision making

The concept of data-informed decision making (DIDM), a term used interchangeably with data-driven decision making (DDDM) and data-based decision making (DBDM) and is relatively new to school systems across Europe (Young, McNamara, Brown & O'Hara, 2018). Still, it is becoming more and more important for schools and school leaders not only to analyse schools and plan improvements but to use various data in the process, especially in the context of external evaluation and accountability and in the case of School Self-evaluation.

Data-informed decision making refers to a practical gathering and use of relevant data and evidence for school operations, performance, and processes when management decisions are made and when school improvements are planned and implemented. Types of data can be different, as well as the objective of their use and the ways data is gathered. Data-informed decision making is also dependent on the existence of information structures within schools and within education systems in different countries. Still, the main data types used by the schools in decision making are (*Ibid*):

- Data arising from assessment: usually school performance compared with the national average for externally devised assessments or other schools. It can also include data for student progress and results in internal assessments.
- Data arising from standardised tests: typical students' performance data in different subjects or subject areas;
- Data arising from attendance: along with performance attendance data is usually perceived as an indicator for education quality;
- Data arising from students profiling: demographic data and data for specific characteristics and needs of students;
- Data arising from student and parental engagement: usually gathered through questionnaires and/or meetings this type of data provides insight about the way school interacts with different stakeholders and how effective parents and students participate and engage in different school activities.
- Data arising from school planning and baseline tracking data.

Data-informed decision making, especially in the context of school self-evaluation and school improvement planning, requires certain skills in data gathering and analysis. The process can be quite time-consuming and usually involves a lot of effort and resources. This leads to situations where school leaders and staff decline or underestimate data-use in school evaluation and school improvement and prefer to rely on their experience and intuition.

Nevertheless, data-informed decision making provides school management and school staff with a proper understanding of the real situation in school and with a realistic picture of areas where improvement is needed and should be considered.

d. Target setting

Implementing school improvement requires setting targets. Usually, this is the start of a school improvement plan and the ultimate “leading star” for all activities in the school improvement process. Target setting relies heavily on the results of School Self-evaluation and data gathered in the process. Still, data availability does not automatically provide for clear and visible targets for school improvement. This is where some of most critical management decisions are made so school improvement can be effectively planned and implemented. *Target setting means deciding which areas of school operation should be improved and what particular results we are looking to achieve in those areas.*

A well-known and useful approach for target setting is developing the so-called SMART targets. *SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely goals.* Target setting is usually done by school management teams, although other relevant stakeholders can be involved in the process, depending on school communication structures and approaches in school improvement. In all cases, target setting should provide the school with a clear objective for future development for a certain period of time and should be in line with school strategic goals and relevant stakeholders’ expectations.

e. School improvement planning

School Self-evaluation should naturally result in a school improvement plan. *School improvement planning is a process of setting targets, and deciding on actions to be taken, along with ways to measure the effects, persons responsible and timeframe for implementation of each action.*

School improvement planning should result in a clear and detailed action framework for the school, understood by all relevant stakeholders. School improvement planning is the follow-up of School Self-evaluation. As such, it can be done by the school management team or with the participation of other stakeholders like teachers, parents, and why not – even students.

f. Stakeholder

School self-evaluation and improvement planning concerns the whole school community. Therefore, different stakeholders should be involved in the process so an overall picture of school quality can be achieved and an attainable improvement plan can be developed and implemented.

Stakeholder usually means anyone who has an influence, interest in the school.

The debate as to what stakeholders to include in the school evaluation process is ongoing (Brown et al., 2019). However, in most countries, stakeholders (with varying degrees of participation) usually include a combination of the school management team, teachers, students, and parents. In addition, various parents’ associations, inspectorate, Departments of education and other educational bodies also have different interests and power to influence school operations and school quality.

Although school self-evaluation and improvement is mainly a responsibility of the school management team, its effective implementation relies heavily on participation of students and parents. If school self-evaluation is to be considered as a whole school improvement approach, then students and parents should be regarded as valuable stakeholders and participants in those processes.

g. Supervision and monitoring

Although inspection and supervision appear to be close in their meaning, the former usually has more normative implications and often brings some consequences for school, while the latter mostly implies observing and/or supporting and directing schools in a certain area or their pursuit of specific goals. **Supervision** can happen at different levels – for example – supervision of teachers or supervision of schools, a specific area (teaching and learning) or a process (school self-evaluation). In any of these situations, supervision requires a certain level of authority, which can come from either knowledge or rank (Rozycki, 2009).

Supervision of schools requires both knowledge about schools' work and context and a certain level of authority so direction and support in achieving improvement goals can be provided. While inspection usually implies a level of normative requirements which schools are expected to reach, supervision is about creating a relationship of trust and promoting improvement through observation, sharing experience and joint discussions about ways to improve. Such a relationship implies not imposing sanctions but instead providing feedback as a critical friend and joint planning.

Monitoring is usually described as a system of activities with three critical components: it requires the regular collection of information, it requires an evaluation of that information, and most importantly, it requires that the evaluation results in an institutional action (Kiesler and Sproull, 1982; cited in Richards, 1988). Based on such a definition, monitoring of school can be described as a process of regular collection of information about school's work, results, and state of operations, evaluation of collected information so a proper understanding of school's strengths and areas for improvement can be reached, and providing guidance for future measures at institutional level. This guidance can come in the form of instructions, different types of plans or even directions toward specific actions that school needs to implement. Nonetheless, the whole concept of monitoring is based upon gathering and proper use of information for the benefit of the school itself.

Supervision and monitoring of school self-evaluation and improvement planning should encompass both information gathering and evaluation, and providing support and guidelines for using that information and implementation of school improvement plans. As school improvement is the ultimate aim of both SSE and any form of external monitoring and supervision, the information should provide beneficial insight for schools' status, areas that need improvement and resources needed for that improvement. Unlike inspection where data is used to decide whether the school has reached certain standard or not, school monitoring and supervision is much more oriented toward providing better understanding of school improvement as a process and finding beneficial ways to develop and implement school improvement plans with the help of a critical friend, who has both the knowledge and the authority to provide support and directions.

h. School culture

“Culture” is a difficult term to define because cultural groups are not always internally homogeneous... cultural affiliations intersect, and each individual occupies a unique cultural positioning. People’s cultural affiliations are dynamic and fluid (OECD, 2016, p.7)

The term **school culture** generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the

term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity (The Glossary of Education Reform).

School self-evaluation and improvement can be effectively implemented if collaborative school culture is developed and sustained. Such culture means that trust, support, a shared sense of purpose, good communication, and collegiality exists and create conditions for amicable disagreement in debate and encouragement and affirmation of effort invested in self-evaluation and improvement.

SECTION 2: Guidelines on data-informed school self-evaluation and improvement

2. Distributed/Shared leadership, planning and evaluation in SSE. Collaborative school culture.

For School self-evaluation to be robust and effective demands a whole school approach and collaboration of all stakeholders. The word collaboration here entails working together towards a shared vision to bring about a positive change in school practices. SSE process, it is generally expected, to be driven by the principal and board, however, as Spillane (2006) suggests it is unrealistic to assume that the principal knows everything to lead a complex organisation such as school. The leadership for the learning needs to be extended and shared among those who have the skills and knowledge to complement and support principal. Hence, leadership in schools is not restricted to formal leadership positions it also includes teachers with posts of responsibility and those who have undertaken roles related to the school's priorities (LOAS, 2016). This model refers to the concept of distributed leadership which is neither transactional nor transformational leadership; instead, it possesses some features of both. It is transactional as principals have a manager's role, too and in holding positions of authority and responsibility they have to ensure the routine tasks are done efficiently and effectively by telling their followers what is to be done. While as transformational leaders, they have to enhance the motivation and engagement of those working with them by 'selling ideas' which automatically directs their efforts towards a shared vision.

The concept of distributed leadership in schools as presented by Spillane (2009) and Gronn (2000) has its foundations in distributed cognition and activity theories. According to the distributed cognition theory, thinking and understanding is a process constituted of interactions with other people, tools and routine while activity theory emphasises the understanding the context (situation) in which an action takes place. As such, distributed leadership comprises three variables: interaction, situation and leadership practice and a point to be remembered here is that practice is the product of interaction among leaders, followers and the situation overtime. Hence, leadership in distributive perspective is a situated and social process (Spillane et al., 2004). According to Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is not a direct opposite to top-down, hierarchical leadership. Distributed leadership involves both the vertical and lateral dimensions of leadership practice. DL encompasses both formal and informal forms of leadership practice within its framing, analysis and interpretation. It is primarily concerned with the co-performance of leadership and the reciprocal interdependencies that shape the leadership practice (p.58).

As it is evident in Spillane's definition leadership is not held in one person or in a position only, but is instead distributed among multiple individuals. A body of leadership has multiple individuals who have the tools and skills to contribute to the success of the organisation (Robert, 2019). Based on the skills and competence of the individuals, they are encouraged to take initiatives to lead and work with groups of people. As different individuals take the lead at different times, consequently influence also shifts as different individuals emerge as influential at different times (Harris & Spillane, 2008). It is quite apparent now that distributed leadership has more to do with leadership practice than the leadership position. Harris (2009) clarifies it further and explains that distributed leadership is not merely sharing leadership role but co-performing leadership practice and the interactions that contribute to co-performance leading to decision-making. Distributed leadership is sometimes misconstrued in schools as a delegation of responsibility or tasks to teachers and other staff. However,

Spillane and Harris' definitions clarify this ambiguity by stressing co-performance that leads to collective decision making.

It is, however, the responsibility of the school leaders to develop such a collaborative culture in their schools where teams trust each other and are willing to co-perform regardless of formal position or status for school improvement. In such schools, the emphasis is laid on preparing leaders at every level as a part of a shared process of enhancing individual as well as the collective capacity of teachers as leaders of learning and students as partners in learning to accomplish their own work effectively. SSE process achieves its optimum results when teachers and students have their say in the school improvement process and get regular opportunities to build their capacity through the acknowledgement of their talent and by empowering the taking of responsibility and initiative. Subsequently, creating a self-managing team who engages in collaborative and extended leadership practice that builds the capacity for change and improvement. As Brown (2013) maintains, '... distributed leadership culture in organisations where the distribution of evaluation activities within the school quite naturally forms an integral part of the process ..., consequently, has a greater impact on school improvement' (p. 213). Everyone involved in the process owns it and strives to achieve.

2.1 The role of the School Management Team

The main responsibility of implementing SSE rests with The Management Team and the Teachers' Board of the school. The overall responsibility for organizing, supporting and coordinating the SSE of a school rests with the School principal. The main process is carried out by working groups of members of the Teachers' Board.

The Management Team

- sets the dates for the plenary sessions,
- coordinates the discussion in them,
- participates in each group for the selection of coordinators,
- supports the work of the individual groups,
- provides all the facilities the participants need to develop the process (e.g. access to school records),
- contributes to creating a positive climate and defines a framework that facilitates constructive communication among participants
- collaborate with stakeholders to implement sustainable change and improvement

Since the implementation of SSE is based on the development of effective communication, cooperation and feedback relationships among all stakeholders of the educational community the role of the Management Team is crucial.

Effective communication and collaboration between all stakeholders are essential to creating a human environment, encouraging a more responsive response to school goals and increasing decision-making (Pasiardis, 2004: 90).

The Management Team and especially the School principal must have a clear idea of students' perceptions and expectations about various aspects of school. In addition, the Management Team must know every detail in the school and understand clearly what needs to be done to secure continual improvement. It is also very important, concerning the Teachers' Board to consider ways of managing resistance, to deploy strategies to challenge teachers and hold them to account. Given that many researchers (e.g., Berger, Boles, & Troen, 2005; Ermenc Skubic & Mažgon, 2015; Grimmett, 2007; Moore, 2007; Smith & Sela, 2005; Vogrinc & Valenčič Zuljan, 2009; Wilson, 2000) have established that self-evaluation, is an important factor of their professional development, Management Team has to manage it effectively and challenge teachers. The active involvement of teachers at every stage of planning, collective decision-making and the development of equity and cooperation relationships enhance the acceptance, validity and effectiveness of the process.

Another important factor is the distributing of leadership to members of the Teachers' Board who have expertise in SSE. Distributing of leadership has the potential to transform your school, raise achievement and inspire more effective practice from staff.

Management Teams and Teachers' boards work with the School Counsellor of the school who is responsible for the scientific and pedagogical guidance of teachers. The School Counsellor participates, if requested, in the plenary of the school and gives the instructions necessary for carrying out the SSE.

Moreover, the Management Team and the Teachers' board are working in accordance with the guidelines of the SSE and Improvement Team

The Management Team has a crucial role to play in communicating high expectations, clear criteria for excellence and in holding people accountable for the outcomes of their professional performance.

Management Teams must ensure

- that monitoring and impact evaluation activities are identified at the initial planning stage. School improvement planning is based on the notion of "intelligent accountability" in order to secure continual improvement
- suggestions of actions
- supervising and coordination of SSE processes by Management Team
- selection of the priorities and prioritizing the goals that the school considers realistic and necessary to improve the quality of the educational work.

The selection and formulation of action plans to achieve the objectives selected and to enhance or enhance the quality of specific aspects of school reality.

Engaging of all stakeholders in the school community in identifying key elements of action plans, securing inputs and controlling the parameters that will contribute to their effective implementation (timetables, implementation methodology -implementation strategies, resources and tools, organizational structures), scheduling monitoring and evaluation processes of the action plan(s), success criteria, etc.).

Working groups can significantly facilitate processes and negotiation as well as better study and process of documents by reducing the time of plenary meetings and providing better substantiated arguments in the consultation of the Teachers' Board.

Coordinating the process and involving teachers

The overall responsibility for coordinating the process lies with the principal and those responsible for the action plans. It is not considered effective, nor is it possible for all teachers to be involved in all the details of formulating and implementing action plans. The number of teachers involved in the design and the specific roles they play within the working groups may vary from school to school. Planning is a vibrant and dynamic process that is integrated into the organization and operation of the school.

- Convene the Plenary - Establish working groups.
- Coordinate the participants.
- Facilitate collaboration & communication.

2.2 The role of teachers

For many years, educational research has analysed factors, circumstances and conditions that determine successful learning and many of them have been proved to influence the scope and quality of learners' achievements and success. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching practice has been shown to be essential, if not the most influential factor, in the development of students' learning. Thus, educational policy makers and systems have invested in teacher development and improvement as a way to improve the whole system.

Different approaches to teacher development can be found throughout the history of education, focusing on different aspects, such as skills, knowledge, teaching techniques and so on. A. Hargreaves and M. Fullan (2014) have developed a theoretical framework that understands teaching practice as a social task that requires knowledge, skilful collaborative practice and ability to make decisions, to put it in a nutshell. In their view, when discussing teacher development not only the acquisition of skills and knowledge must be taken into consideration, but also the personal development of teachers and the context in which they work.

Following the approach developed by Hargreaves and Fullan (2014), three different kinds of capital conform the teaching profession: human, social and decisional. **Human capital** refers to the development of necessary skills and knowledge to teach. A teacher must know his/her subject and how to teach it; their pupils and understand the way they learn; understand cultural diversity and family circumstances; know and be able to choose innovative and right activities; and have the emotional skills to empathize with children and adults in and out of the school. **Social capital** refers to how the quality and quantity of social interactions and relationships affect the access to knowledge and information, increasing the knowledge and giving others access to human capital. Leana ([2011], cited in Hargreaves and Fullan [2014]) measured social capital with questions like: To what extent do teachers in this school work in a trusting, collaborative way to focus on learning and the engagement and improvement of student achievement? **Decisional capital** deals with the capacity to make judgements. Teachers with decisional capital show perspective, judgement, inspiration and

improvisational ability while having an exceptional performance. They do it when nobody else is watching and do it with and through their colleagues. They set criteria and make practical decisions with collective responsibility, open to criticism and in a transparent way. They are not afraid of making mistakes as long as they learn from them. Their colleagues and the public respect them because they know what they are doing. They always try to improve with a spirit that fosters major individual and collective contributions.

Assumptions for the teaching profession considered in Hargreaves' and Fullan's approach are worth being reminded:

- Good teaching is technically challenging and complex
- Good teaching requires high-level education and long training period
- Good teaching improves through continuous progress
- Good teaching involves wise criterion, experience and evidence
- Good teaching is a collective achievement and responsibility
- Good teaching maximises, arbitrates and moderates online training.

Twelve guidelines to be followed by teachers are suggested in *What's worth fighting for in your school* (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991)

1. **Locate, listen to and articulate your inner voice.** Teachers must ask and remind themselves what values and goals are the most important, what frustrates them most and what they stand for. This will provide clarity and energy to the process.
 2. **Practice reflection in action, on action and about action.** Deep reflection will lead to new insights and improvement in practices. However, to be effective three conditions are necessary: sufficient data must be used; collaboration -teachers' support groups, professional dialogue, etc.- is a requirement since our own reflection is partial; and last but not least, reflection should focus not only on our own classroom but also on the things that affect directly or indirectly the classroom.
 3. **Develop a risk-taking mentality.** Three general criteria should be born in mind: Be selective (try one or two things), do it on a small scale and take steps towards a positive vision.
 4. **Trust processes as well as people.** Trust in expertise and processes helps organizations develop and solve problems. Examples of processes to be trusted are improved communication, shared decision-making, creation of opportunities for collegial learning, networking with outside environments, experimenting with new ideas and practices and so on.
 5. **Appreciate the total person in working with others,** trying to understand the people with whom we work.
 6. **Commit to working with colleagues.** Some suggested steps are:
 - Plan a unit with a partner
 - Engage in peer observation
 - Work with a colleague on an improvement
 - Form a small study group with a few colleagues
- At a more institutional level:
- Become involved in a collaborative project
 - Become a mentor to beginning teachers
 - Become involved in a peer-coaching project

- Become part of a school improvement team
 - Become part of a group implementing new teaching techniques.
7. **Seek variety and avoid balkanization.** Balkanization creates stereotypes so seek diversity in collegial action; avoid becoming part of an exclusive club; reduce balkanization between elementary and secondary schools, through joint meetings, school visits and so on.
8. **Redefine your role to extend beyond the classroom.** Five different responsibilities to undertake:
- Increase the degree and quality of day-to-day interaction with other teachers.
 - Attempt to improve the culture of the school and the health of the school as an organization.
 - All teachers should have a leadership contribution and take action accordingly.
 - Become knowledgeable about policy and about professional and research issues.
 - Every teacher has a responsibility for helping to shape the quality of the next generations of teachers.
9. **Balance work and life.** Teachers need to be watchful about establishing and maintaining a balance between work and life. Workaholics and careerists do not always make the best teachers. Balancing the work and the life is an important protection against burnout. It also leads to more interesting teachers and more interesting teaching.
10. **Push and support principals and other administrators to develop interactive professionalism.** Teachers should push principals to support collaboration by presenting ideas or otherwise sitting down with administrators to discuss what the school is and should be doing to promote teacher development. They should look for ways to involve the principal in supporting teacher-teacher exchanges.
11. **Commit to continuous improvement and perpetual learning.** A teacher should be a career-long learner, demonstrating openness to learning and contributing to other teachers' learning. Teachers should also demand their schools and districts to provide learning opportunities.
12. **Monitor and strengthen the connection between your development and students' development.** Schools that actively monitor and strengthen the relationship between teacher and student well-being and development will find that both benefit in mutually scaling ways.

The need of reflection about own practice

In 2009 Ministers of Education from the European Union agreed that teachers need to reflect on their learning requirements in the context of their particular school environment (*Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes*, p. 9). Also, two basic requirements are appointed as fundamental in the preparation of quality teachers (p. 15):

- The capacity to systematically assess one's own knowledge base and professional practices, based on a wide range of criteria coming from practice, theory and research;
- and

- Critical and responsive attitudes to innovation and professional improvement (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006).

In Spain, Marchesi and Pérez (2018) have discussed the need of teachers to reflect on their teaching practice as a previous step to external evaluation, justifying it for the following reasons:

- It contributes to the value of their work as teachers.
- It improves the prestige of the teaching profession and teachers' self-esteem.
- It encourages teachers to direct their efforts towards the most relevant skills and tasks.
- It promotes teachers' reflection on their practice and helps them systematise and review their activity.
- It stimulates teamwork and cooperation with other teachers.
- It affects the improvement of the quality of teaching by supporting teachers' commitment and professional growing.
- It presents a model for professional activity and for its training.
- It promotes the organization of access to teaching and marks the path for their professional development.
- It transmits a message to society about the responsibility and professional commitment of teachers.

They have outlined an evaluation model focused on teaching competences. Seven basic skills have been identified as key teaching competences.

1. Promoting all students' learning.
2. Flexible response to diversity.
3. Pedagogical use of ICT in the classroom.
4. Contributing to students' socio-emotional and moral development.
5. Capacity to work as a team with colleagues.
6. Ability to collaborate in school planning and management as well as in daily activities.
7. Collaborating with families.

The following table shows indicators and main sources to be used when evaluating the above-mentioned competences.

Table 1: Teaching competences, indicators and information sources in teachers' practice evaluation

Competence	Indicators	Information sources
1. Promote all students' learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes the contents of the subject taught in a coherent and integrated way. • Uses different methodologies to favour interest, student participation and student cooperation. • Contributes to connect learning experiences in and out of the classroom. • Pays attention to the development of the reading competence of their students. • Designs continuous assessment and training strategies. 	Teaching portfolio. Self-evaluation sheets Classroom observation Students' feedback

2. Respond flexibly to students' diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs learning situations adapted to students. • Cooperates with other professional to offer a better educational response to students with learning difficulties. • When planning and performing teaching, takes into account students' cultural diversity. • Offers appropriate educational response to students with delayed learning. • Adapts assessment procedures and tools to students with learning difficulties 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self-evaluation sheets Classroom observation Students' feedback</p>
3. Pedagogical use of ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates ICT in the teaching and learning process. • Uses information and resources from outside the school. • Promotes individual and personal learning 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self-evaluation sheets Classroom observation Students' feedback</p>
4. Work as a team with colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with other teachers in planning the teaching activities. • Participates in innovation programs to improve teaching. • Participates in projects or research practice groups. Participates in team training programs. 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self-evaluation sheets management team, head of department or educational coordinator' s feedback</p>
5. Contribution to the socio-emotional and moral development of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make proposals to favor students' wellbeing. • Carries out orientation and mentoring activities to facilitate the social and emotional development of students. • Launches initiatives to promote social inclusion of students with difficulties. • Promotes solidarity activities for students as peer-tutoring • Collaborates in service-learning programs. 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self evaluation sheets Management team's feedback</p>
6. Collaboration in the school planning and management as well as in daily activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates actively in the Teachers' Boards' meetings . • Collaborates in school activities such as, drama, music, sport, communication. • Participates in activities that reinforce the school identity and the collaborative culture: awards, graduation, informal meetings, competitions. • Collaborates in socioeducational programs. 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self evaluation sheets Management team's feedback</p>
7. Collaboration with families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps families informed • Holds regular meetings with families. • Establishes individual relationship with families, especially with those of students with difficulties. 	<p>Teaching portfolio. Self-evaluation Management team's feedback (optional: Family feedback)</p>

Deriving from the general competences and teaching activities, teachers are expected to develop specific tasks which are required when a school carries out self-evaluation processes and improvement plans. Obviously, they will depend on the position and level of responsibility of a teacher

in the school. Thus, principals' role will be different to that of heads of department/cycle, guidance teachers or group teachers. Nonetheless, all teachers in a school will have to develop the following tasks:

- All teachers should be part of the planning process, participating actively in the design of the plan (focus, objectives, implementation measures)
- Implementing the plan
- Make sure that teaching strategies are adequate to learners' needs.
- Collaborate with school bodies and other stakeholders when evaluating the plan, by providing feedback on students' achievement, parents' opinions, etc.
- Teachers should help other stakeholders understand and interpret data.

2.3 The role of parents

2.3.1. Introduction

In the literature related to SSE and school improvement in the recent years the roles of stakeholders, particularly parents, are strongly emphasised. As evident in regulation documents in lots of countries, the parents not only have a right to be consulted about many aspects of school decision making, but also they are central to both the evaluation of the performance of the school and one of the *key actors in planning* its future direction (Brown et al., 2019)

Parents are considered as one of the primary stakeholders in education and have been constructed as customers through the advancement of school autonomy and the decentralisation of decision-making to schools in many parts of the world. In fact, *stakeholder voice has become an integral aspect of school improvement* (Brown et al., 2018)

In 21st century parent role in education is “no longer regard as simply including parents in fund-raising or attending an occasional student play, music performance, or sports event. Parent involvement includes the concept of a meaningful partnership consisting of regular communication and parent participation in the development and implementation of a *plan for school improvement*” (Cowan, 2003 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 59)

Epstein (1986) noted that there are two main theories of school and family relations. One perspective emphasizes the “incompatibility, competition, and conflict between families and schools and supports the separation of the two institutions” (p. 277). The second theory emphasizes the “coordination, cooperation, and complementarity of schools and families and encourages communication and collaboration between the two institutions” (p. 277). Schools must seek and find methods to increase the participation of parents in their children’s education. There are those who would argue that schools will be successful only to the degree that they are successful in involving parents (Cotton & Mann, 1994 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 59)

A good example for the important role of parents in school improvement process would be the following thought of Epstein & Salinas (2004):

What is the difference between a professional learning community and a school learning community? A professional learning community emphasizes the teamwork of principals, teachers, and staff to identify school goals, improve curriculum and instruction, reduce teachers' isolation, assess student progress, and increase the effectiveness of school programs. Professional teamwork is important and

can greatly improve teaching, instruction, and professional relationships in a school, but it falls short of producing a true community of learners. In contrast, a **school learning community** includes educators, students, **parents**, and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities. One component of a school learning community is an organized program of school, family, and community partnerships with activities linked to school goals. Research and fieldwork show that such programs improve schools, strengthen families, invigorate community support, and increase student achievement and success.

2.3.2. Definitions

Parent: "Any family member, including a blended or extended family member (Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997), or other adult (e.g., grandparent, step parent, or someone standing in loco parentis) who plays an important role in the child's life (National PTA, 2000) or contributes to the learning of the child and his or her improvement in school" (Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 58).

Parent/parental involvement: "The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school related activities including ensuring—that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and that other activities are carried out" (Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 58).

2.3.3. Benefits and positive effects of parental involvement

Key stakeholders such as [...] parents know the local context better than those in central government. They can, therefore, provide detailed knowledge, valuable insights and constructive feedback on how to improve schools. Thus, calls for greater participation in decision-making have often been championed in the literature as a progressive way of making schools more democratic and more efficient (Mokoena, 2011 in Brown et al., 2019)

The effects of parent involvement on making schools better and improving student achievement has been recognized for decades. A review of the research on parent involvement reveals that parent involvement positively affects students' achievement, attendance, self-esteem, behavior, graduation, emotional well-being, and life goals. Not only has a compelling connection been found between student achievement and parent involvement, but it is also interesting to note that these benefits cross lines of family income and parent education level (Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 60).

Moreover, these studies attest to the benefits of successful parent involvement, including:

1. higher achievement
2. improved school attendance
3. improved student sense of well-being
4. improved student behavior
5. better parent and student perceptions of classroom and school climate
6. better readiness to complete homework

7. higher educational aspirations among students and parents
8. better student grades
9. increased educational productivity of the time that parents and students spend together
10. greater parent satisfaction with teachers (Myers & Monson, 1992, p. 14 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 60).

2.3.4. Factors Influencing parental involvement

Literature review on the role of the parents in education outlines many factors influencing the engagement of parents and their effective involvement in school. These are important to be considered by management teams while planning parent involvement in SSE and school improvement activities. Among these the following (Anfara & Mertens, 2008; Brown et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2019):

- age of the children - parental involvement decreases while increase of children age in school
- cultural factors – some cultures have more positive attitudes towards education and its importance for children's future and thus are more willing to involve in their children education
- socioeconomic status of parents and level of education of parents
- lack of parent education and parenting skills
- language barriers, parent illiteracy
- time and job pressures
- living conditions of the family - health, family problems, living arrangements, lack of resources needed for participation
- parents could be constrained by work commitments and childcare difficulties
- parents may be discouraged due to perceptions that their children may be put into a vulnerable position if they take a critical stance on school policies
- past experiences of parents and teachers with schools and schooling
- teacher characteristics, such as level of education and sense of efficacy – higher levels of education have been associated with more positive attitudes toward parent involvement, but also with fewer parent contacts and more disputes
- parents and educators different perceptions/conflicting views of the roles of the parents in schools, and the meanings and functions of parent involvement.
- teachers may hesitate to involve parents because of the time investment required, the absence of external rewards for efforts to involve parents, lack of practical support, problems with low commitment or skills of parents,

- teachers may fear parents questioning their professional competence/fear of criticism, fears over potential decreases in the professional status and general wellbeing of teachers
- less than welcoming atmosphere toward parents in schools and classrooms; minimal opportunities for involvement; poor communication from schools.
- grade level – lower grade levels have been associated with teachers' use of more parent involvement strategies
- class size - large class size has been associated with more teacher efforts to involve parents
- school formalization (i.e., rules and controls) and centralization (i.e., hierarchical structuring of the organization) - teachers in more formalized and centralized schools exercise less parent involvement.

For successful parent-school relationships, the principal is the key individual (Rapp and Duncan, 2012 in Brown et al., 2018). Barr and Saltmarsh (2014 in Brown et al., 2018), argue that whether parents feel welcome or unwelcome in the school community is significantly shaped by the ways **inclusive leadership** is exercised by the principal with and on behalf of parents. A **school culture of trust** is also significant for fostering collaboration among school staff and with the greater community as teachers working in a supportive environment will be more likely to provide parents with information (Gordon and Seashore Louis 2009 in Brown et al., 2018).

2.3.5. Types/models of parental involvement

Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University and associates have developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework assists educators in developing school and family partnership programs. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement includes (Epstein et al., 2002):

- *Parenting*. Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.
- *Communicating*. Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.
- *Volunteering*. Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.
- *Learning at Home*. Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.
- *Decision Making*. Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.

- *Collaborating with the Community.* Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community.

Chrispeels (1991 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008) presents a framework for describing how the school, home, and community should work together. This model suggests that parent involvement has a hierarchical structure with co-communication being the basis for other types of involvement. Hence, more fundamental types of parent involvement occur that require less skill than more complex types. Her model includes the following components:

- involving parents as partners in school governance, including shared decision making and advisory functions
- establishing effective two-way communication with all parents
- respecting the diversity and differing needs of families
- establishing strategies and programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate
- providing support and coordination for staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from kindergarten through high school
- using schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

Davies' (1985, 1987 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008) model has four categories of parent involvement. These include: co-production or partnerships, decision making, citizen advocacy, and parent choice. While the first three elements in the model are similar to what Epstein and associates (2002) described, the fourth component, "parent choice," deals with issues related to tuition tax credits, open enrollment plans, alternative public schools, and the like.

Other models have been developed by Berger (1991), Gordon (1979), Rutherford (1993), and Berla, Henderson, and Kerewsky (1989) (in Anfara & Mertens, 2008).

Brown et al. (2019) point out that there are varying **degrees of participation of parents in decision making in schools** – and used for the purposes of SSE and school improvement – that can range from tokenism in the form of engaging parents with negligible decisions to that of a genuinely reciprocal process of shared decision making as described in Harts (1992) ladder of participation.

Degrees of participation

1. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults
2. Child-initiated and directed
3. Adult-initiated shared decisions with children
4. Consulted and informed
5. Assigned but informed

Degrees of non-participation

1. 3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
3. Manipulation

2.3.6. Tips for effective parental involvement for school improvement

Myers and Monson (1992 in Anfara & Mertens, 2008) offered a number of recommendations aimed at encouraging and nurturing parent involvement in schools. Their recommendations include:

- building a strong parent-school organization
- implementing an “open door” policy for parents
- involving parents in the orientation programs as students transition to middle school
- encouraging teachers to write personal notes to parents about students’ accomplishments
- conducting special events during the school year that are geared toward parent participation, and
- conducting surveys to affirm the importance of parents’ opinions.

LaRocque et al. (2011 in Brown et al., 2018) suggest a variety of ways in which schools can address barriers to school involvement and participation:

- Addressing emotional barriers: In addition to the teacher sharing expectations of the students and their families, teachers could also encourage parents to share their expectations of the teacher. With regular interactions and the teacher’s encouragement, parents can begin to feel more comfortable and confident in the school setting.
- Addressing cultural differences: Having some understanding of families’ visible and invisible cultural nuances can go a long way in helping schools find something of value in families. Visible cultural nuances include facets such as language or clothing; invisible culture includes facets such as communication style, status, or imbedded values.
- Addressing physical barriers: schools can facilitate parents being able to physically attend school activities. It may be as simple as scheduling parent– teacher conferences to accommodate the schedules of the family. If teachers provide a variety of meeting times, there is a greater likelihood that parents will find a time that suits their schedules or if schools provide childcare or suggest alternate locations for meetings, those parents for whom these types of issues constitute barriers will be better positioned to being able to physically attend and meet with teachers. For school-based activities, school buses could also be used to pick up parents before meetings and return them to bus stops near their homes afterwards.
- Addressing language barriers: teachers should be conscious of the language they use so it is not too academic, scientific, or abstract. Teachers could use a variety of means of communication when communicating with parents, such as translating newsletters. In addition, oral communication (in person or by phone) may be preferred to written

communication as it allows for immediate clarification in case of misunderstanding. Translators could also be used when necessary.

As McKenna and Millen (2013 in Brown et al., 2018) contend, parent engagement must develop over time and not through quick-fix, one-shot seminars or workshops, and must be cultivated and sustained via students, parent and educator interactions and the environment.

What might be particularly useful for facilitating Ravn's (1998 in Brown et al., 2018) model of 'Joint Acting', a process of enabling all education stakeholders to share ideas in an environment of mutual respect, that ensures a logical, reasoned communication process. According to Ravn, 'Joint Acting ensures that no single party continuously determines the ideas that form the basis of discussions or actions in education'. It recognises four fundamental functions, each of which can best be explained by questions related to patterns of interaction:

- The expressive function: what opportunities exist for the people involved to express themselves? Is there time for everyone's ideas to emerge?
- The social function: what opportunities exist for enjoying a common experience? For people getting to know each other? To take planned action? To feel a sense of belonging?
- The informative function: what opportunities do people have to exchange sufficient and high-quality information on equally valued terms? To generate common and complementary knowledge? To share useful information with other educators and parents?
- The controlling function: what are the opportunities for the people involved to equally influence the proposed plans? (Ravn 1998, 377 in Brown et al., 2018).

Joint Acting requires various ways of meeting and making decisions about education, and requires that everyone understand and agree upon four key areas (Ravn 1998, 377 in Brown et al., 2018): content (the focus of parent-teacher discussions, which must be significant to the participants i.e. children's learning), structure and organisation (the ways that meetings and consultations are conducted, to ensure dialogue and mutual assistance), intentions and possibilities (why particular topics are discussed, decisions are made and actions are taken), and benefits (who gains from the interactions and partnership activities).

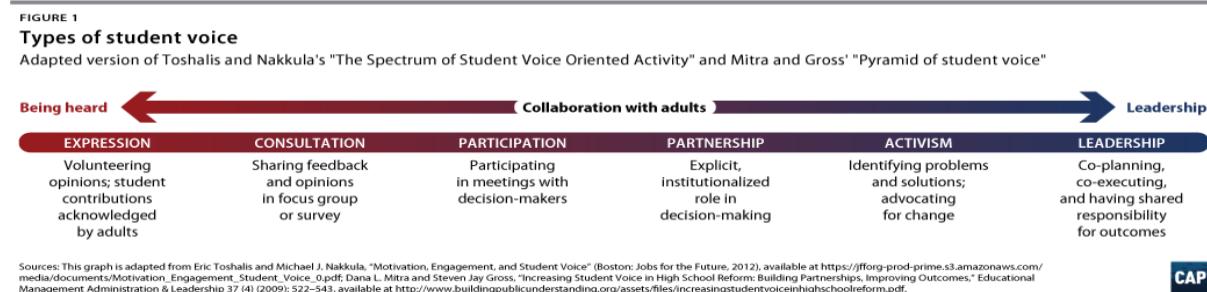
As Epstein & Salinas (2004) suggest ,a well-organized **partnership program** starts with an Action Team for Partnerships. Made up of teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners, the Action Team is linked to the school council or school improvement team. With a clear focus on promoting student success, the team writes **annual plans for family and community involvement**, implements and evaluates activities, and integrates the activities conducted by other groups and individual teachers into a comprehensive partnership program for the school.

Annual action plans could use a research-based framework of six types of involvement—parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community—to focus partnerships on *school improvement goals* (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). By implementing activities for all six types of involvement, schools can help parents become involved at school and at home in various ways that meet student needs and family schedules. Input from participants helps schools address challenges and improve plans, activities, and outreach so that all families can be productive partners in their children's school success (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

2.4 The role of the students. Student voice

School self-evaluation in itself is a mean to promote distributed leadership in schools. Teachers, students and parents' involvement in reviewing the school practices, coming up with suggestions to sustain what is good and improve what needs improvement and participation in decision-making processes contributes to strong collegial relationships. As already discussed, collegial interactions lay the groundwork for developing shared ideas and generate forms of leadership that promotes improvement (Harris, 2008). Students who have the most significant stake in education must have a democratic voice in the educational process. It is a part of the responsibility of school leadership to provide such fora to students where they can openly discuss and share their ideas and actively participate in the educational improvement process. Fletcher (2015) defines student voice as 'any expression of any learner anywhere, anytime focused on learning, schools or education... Student voice is the individual and collective perspective and actions of young people within the context of learning and education. Student voice means student input in their education ranging from the instructional topics, their learning style, the way curriculum is designed, school building and infrastructure, school policies and any area that concerns them directly or indirectly.

Benner et al. (2019) have come up with a comprehensive model of Student Voice by combining features of Toshalis and Nakkula's (2012) 'The Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity' and Mitra and Goss's (2009) 'Pyramid of student voice'.



The continuum clearly shows movement from being heard to actual leadership along with the related activities. Interestingly, survey questionnaire though being the most commonly used method of collecting student's voice is quite low on this continuum. Merely holding a meeting with student representatives to obtain their opinions is not enough if evaluation is to be genuinely distributed. If students are to have a genuine role in school evaluation, they must have a role in identifying the areas to be improved, deciding what needs to be done and ultimately co-performing the tasks for improvement through interdependence and by sharing the responsibility for the outcomes.

Benner et al. (2019) explain eight approaches that teachers and school leaders can use to incorporate student voice in school self-evaluation and school improvement initiatives: student surveys; student perspectives on governing bodies such as school boards, local, state decision-makers; student council; student journalism; student-led conferences; democratic classroom practices; personalised learning; and youth participatory action research.

Student surveys are used to collect the perspective of a large number of students on strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement in their school. Whereas, School boards can partner with students to have their perspective in developing culturally sustaining educational practices and select

curricula and instructional materials that are most relevant and engaging to diverse groups of students. This gives real power to a student on a school board.

Student councils, on the other hand, are comprised of student representatives who highlight issues that are important to students and school culture and make decisions. The number of students on a student council depends on the number of students in a school. Student councils typically have a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary, among others. In most schools, student representatives run campaigns and are elected by their peers. To ensure that student council represents the entire student body, schools need to encourage diverse candidates to stand in the council election. A diverse student representation brings to table different viewpoints and a range of student interests. Another strategy is Youth participatory action research (YPAR) that enables schools and teachers to co-perform action research with students. Such a research approach provides students with an opportunity to develop skills needed to conduct systematic research, analyse pertinent issues in their schools or communities, and explore solutions to address them.

The strategies described so far are focused on a broader perspective of the school while the ones discussed in this paragraph are mainly focused on individual students or small groups of students. For instance, Parent Teacher Associations are generally organised twice during a school year where parents and teachers meet to discuss student's progress and behavioural issues, if any. Alternatively, if students are invited to lead this conference this will allow them to describe their academic achievement and collaborate with teachers and parents to address academic, behavioural, or social challenges. Students will understand better the progress they are making and the areas where they need to improve. Similarly, personalised instruction is another strategy to give students a voice in what and how they learn. Through personalised learning at least some of the learning experience can be based on students' individual needs, skills, and interests. This allows students to explore topics that interest them, which can increase the relevance and engagement of instruction. Lastly, democratic classroom practices allow students to weigh in on the structure and climate of their learning environment. By facilitating students' group discussions teachers jointly set class expectations, make classroom rules, solve problems and make decisions including co-creation of curriculum and design and assessment measures.

3. The role of inspectors

In most of Europe, an important instrument of educational evaluation and accountability is school inspection. Inspectorates assess the quality of education and hold schools accountable for a broad range of goals related to student achievement, teaching, organization and leadership (Gustafsson et al., 2015).

Moreover, school inspections are expected to respond to social and economic changes, transforming inspections to different extents. Nonetheless, two major approaches can be identified. On the one hand, is a high stake sanction-oriented inspection, driven by reliance on hard data, concerned primarily with monitoring and accountability, while on the other is the low stakes advisory inspection, more focused on a variety of data sources, interested in self-evaluation and more concerned with collaborative improvement (Brown et al, 2018). These two conceptions of school inspection explain the differences in the factors that determine the way inspections respond to demands, such as governance arrangements, statutory powers of the inspectorate, roles and responsibilities of school inspectors, the forms and frequency of inspection visits, level of emphasis on school self-evaluation and action planning for improvement and availability of support services for school (NIAR, 2013)

In this context, school self-evaluation and inspection activities are increasingly viewed as essential requirements for large-scale education reform and improved educational outcomes (*Synergies for Better Learning. An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessments. OECD*).

Although, different approaches towards the integration of SSE and external evaluation have been identified by Alvik (1996) -Parallel, sequential and cooperative- (quoted by Swaffield and MacBeath, 2005, p. 240) , showing the different stages and ways of participation that can be found when analysing the relationship among schools and external agents, according to Swaffield and MacBeath ‘few administrations have resolved the relationship between what the schools should do autonomously and what support or intervention should come from without’ (2005, p. 240).

In many countries, such as Spain and Ireland, inspectorates share the responsibility for ensuring self-evaluation and improvement processes. However, the role of the inspectors in these processes is not always clear and procedures may not have been established. In Spain, Estefanía argues that the inspector shall act in the schools, supporting while controlling and supervising the results (2014, p. 10).

This toolkit’s approach views the role of inspectors as that of ‘a critical friend’, facilitating SSE and improvement processes.

3.1. Coexistence of SSE and school inspection

In many countries the existence of school inspection has proved its efficacy for school accountability and external monitoring. At the same time, school self-evaluation undoubtedly contributes to a better understanding of school and has been found useful towards the involvement of teachers in improvement processes.

It can be affirmed that the relationship between external and internal evaluation is central to stimulating improvement. Inspectorates are increasingly emphasising the importance of effective self-evaluation as a driver of improvement (Donaldson, 2013, p. 7).

The mere coexistence of both systems has made some think that both are necessary and ‘they might even benefit from each other’ (Nevo, 2001). He thinks that the benefits of internal evaluation for schools are numerous, from the acquisition of skills and knowledge to the involvement of teachers in decision-making. However, the lack of credibility of internal evaluation without external is also considered. But, according to Nevo (2001), there are three main ways in which internal evaluation benefits from external evaluation. First of all, internal evaluation needs external stimulation since schools tend to reject evaluation. Also, external evaluation helps expand the perspective of internal evaluation by providing data, resources and so on. And last but not least, external evaluation legitimizes internal evaluation and makes it credible for the public.

Others think the coexistence should lead to a relationship between internal self-evaluation and external inspection, considering them as complementary; inspectors may contribute to “broadening and deepening a school’s self-knowledge” (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2005, p. 239). However, inspectors need to be aware of some counterparts:

- “External inspection and honest disclosure by schools are unlikely bedfellows. Thus, an inspector may have to convince that there is no hidden political agenda” (*Ibid.*, p. 242-245)
- Self-evaluation can become self-delusion (or worse) and must operate within a framework of accountability with/which both encourages its rigour and validates its authenticity (Donaldson 2013, p.7).

3.2. Benefits of SSE for inspection:

Despite the counterparts mentioned above, there are many **benefits for inspection** if schools go through self-evaluation and improvement processes. SSE contributes to:

- Expanding the scope of SSE: In conjunction with SSE and the use of additional local data, inspection can broaden its scope and address local issues that are deemed necessary by schools.
- Improving the interpretation of findings: When it is used with SSE, the local perspective can be added to augment the overall quality of the evaluation.
- Increasing evaluation utilization: A major issue of SSE is that schools either oppose or accept the results and make very little use of the findings. However, schools that have a well-developed system of SSE actually welcome an external perspective for a variety of reasons ‘perhaps they wish to celebrate their efforts, perhaps for affirmation that they have got it right, perhaps because they welcome a further critical eye.
- Results and findings can be transferred to different situations and contexts

Recommendations for inspectors to support improvement:

- Mandate and encourage SSE, stimulating school and system improvement. To a greater or lesser extent encourage schools to engage in SSE to complement external inspection and in a very limited number of cases replace it.
- Provide schools with guidelines and tools to be used in their internal evaluation and improvement processes.
- Focus on evidence and evaluative functions, less on administrative compliance. Inspectors collect evidence during inspection visits and use evidence generated by a range of evaluation instruments to judge quality and hold schools accountable.
- Development of standards, criteria, indicators. Inspectorates set expectations by virtue of their education standards and procedures. Inspectors should make sure that schools know the standards, criteria and indicators to be used in external evaluation processes.
- Development of the capacity of school leaders and teachers to develop and collect data, emphasizing ‘the important role of systematic data collection as a basis for reflection’ (Nevo, 2001, p. 96)
- Move from cyclical to data-informed risk-based evaluation. In many education systems schools go through external inspection every x number of years. Nonetheless, in many others this has started to change and schools are inspected depending on risk analysis.
- Prioritise school improvement over school accountability. In this sense, the traditional controlling and supervising functions of inspectors should focus on prevention rather than correction.
- Look at schools as organizations, respecting the decisions they make.
- Involve stakeholders at all levels

3.3. A proposed framework for external evaluation of school self-evaluation and improvement processes

Being aware of the different approaches, traditions and educational contexts inspectorates develop their tasks, this toolkit offers a framework for inspectors to promote, monitor and evaluate SSE and improvement processes at schools.

Taking into account that in many education systems the framework for school self-evaluation establishes the requirement to develop an improvement plan on a three or four-year basis, external monitoring should be adapted to this time schedule. Thus, the proposed framework has been designed to be developed at the same pace as the school plans, implements and evaluates its plan. In this way, a four-phase framework is proposed:

SUPPORT THE SSE AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES

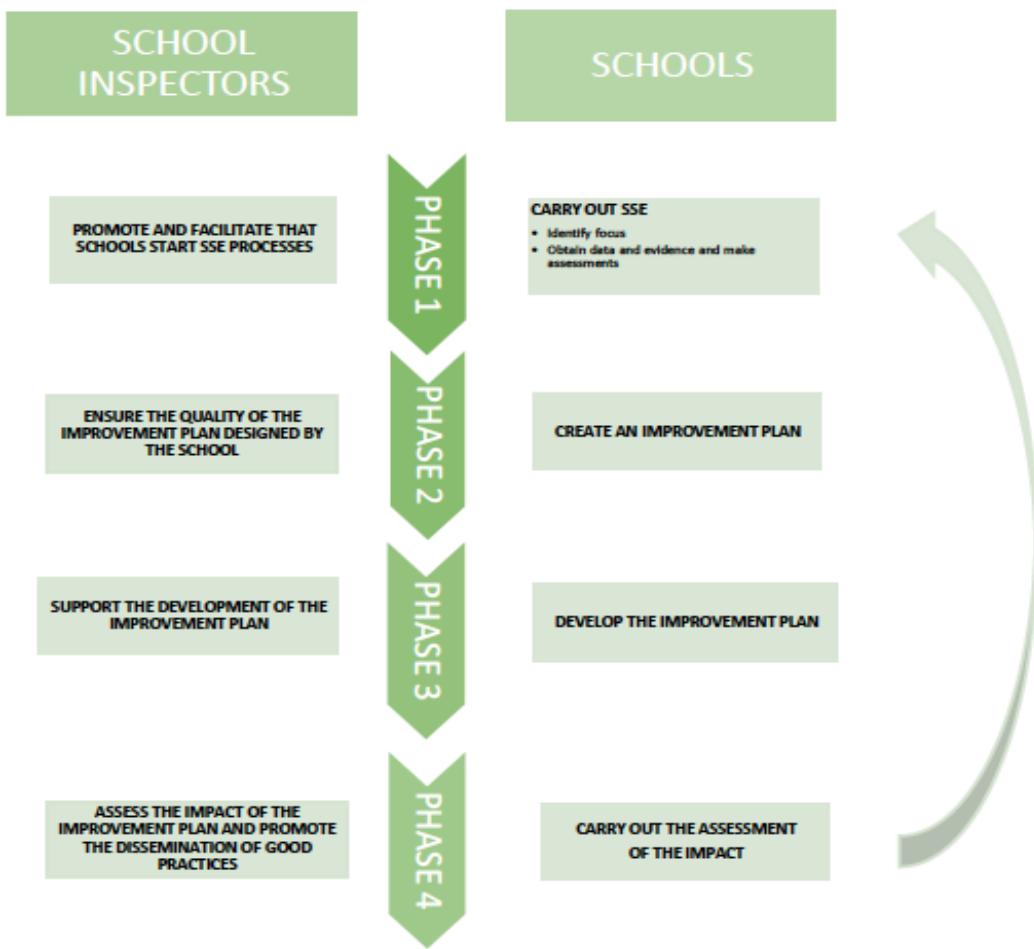


Fig. 1 Four phase inspection process

PHASE 1: Promoting and facilitating SSE processes at schools

As stated before, schools rarely commit to self-assessment processes voluntarily; as a consequence, external support is required to encourage schools to embark on the SSE process and to develop improvement plans. In this regard, inspectorates should include, among their tasks, activities to help schools become familiar with SSE and the development of improvement plans.

In the first phase, unless otherwise dictated through legislation it is intended that schools decide to carry out the process starting with SSE and continuing with an improvement plan. To do this, inspectors must spend some time listening to stakeholders and observing school activities and tasks

to get to know the school, avoiding precipitous assessments and judgments. In addition, a favourable climate for SSE needs to be facilitated, helping school leaders understand the reasons why such a process should be undertaken. The identified areas for improvement should be set out and, finally, the role of the inspector should be established throughout the process.

Once the school decides to start the process, tools and guidance should be provided by the inspectors to facilitate SSE. Specifically, the experience and knowledge accumulated in other schools is a valuable resource that can serve as a reference.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the roles and limits of the parties involved in SSE have been defined.

In this context, the school will carry out SSE processes, which will primarily be achieved through the following three steps:

1. Deciding which specific area the school intends to self-assess, i.e. choosing the focus for SSE
2. Gather all available evidence related to the selected focus, bearing in mind that there should be varied sources and data types.
3. Carry out the analysis and assessment of the evidence collected, to map the strengths and areas that can be improved in relation to the focus.

Considerations for inspectors:

- Taking time to get to know the school, postponing judgement and listening.
- Facilitating the climate for self-evaluation by helping school leaders understand the reasons to become involved, by ensuring that the purposes are explicit and that the role of the inspector in the process is understood.
- The inspector may run sessions and devise procedures that ensure finding compelling evidence
- Provide resources, readings that stimulate and facilitate SSE
- Share knowledge and experience of other schools'
- Ensure that roles and boundaries are clear and agreed

PHASE 2: Ensuring the quality of the improvement plans designed at the schools.

At this stage, each school develops the improvement plan as a coherent response to the SSE carried out in the previous phase. To this end, inspectors will provide samples and templates that will facilitate the development of the improvement plan. An improvement plan consists, first of all, of setting the aims intended to be achieved. For each of the aims, actions to be performed shall be determined. After that, time, responsibilities, achievement criteria and revision measures need to be specified for each activity.

Therefore, inspectors should agree on the quality standards to be used to evaluate improvement plans, which eventually should be shared with school leaders, as that will most likely help them understand what is expected of improvement plans.

The following table contains a set of standards, which are divided into indicators, that allow assessing the quality of the improvement project that a plan develops.

QUALITY STANDARDS	INDICATORS
RELEVANCE OF CHOSEN FOCUS	Significant to school Addresses students' needs Inclusive
QUALITY OF OBJECTIVES	Specific: Measurable: Attainable: Relevant: Timely:
INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL BODIES	Distributed Responsibilities Assignment of responsibilities stated
INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS	The role of stakeholders is described and borders delimited Participation is scheduled
DATA ANALISED	Variety of data Variety of sources Relevant data for focus
MEASURES (CURRICULAR AND OTHERS)	Realistic Complying with legislation Coherent with focus and objectives Address high number of students Inclusive Time schedule is realistic and feasible
EVALUATION MEASURES	Validity Able to prove improvement Include year achievement indicators The evaluation design allows use of feedback

PHASE 3: Supporting the development of the improvement plan.

Most probably problems or difficulties will arise during the implementation of the improvement plan in each school, which may be attributed to deficiencies in the design of the plan or to other causes not planned.

At this stage, inspectors should address the following two aspects:

1. They should follow up on the plan; that is, they should verify that the plan is carried out and developed according to the design.
2. On the other hand, they should provide the occasional support requested to support the centre when relevant difficulties arise during the development of the plan that exceed the capacity of the school.

PHASE 4: Value the impact of SSE and improvement plans at schools and disseminate good practices.

The design of the improvement plan sets out the elements that should be used to assess the impact of the plan. Therefore, in each plant, the following process must be followed:

1. Assess what has been performed in each action included in the plan by checking the criteria of achievement established in the design of the improvement plan. If something has not been achieved, it is essential to detect the causes.
2. Going from the particular to the general, the school must assess whether the aims of the plan have been reached.
3. Draw conclusions on the process followed.

Inspectors shall monitor the following aspects relating to the impact of the evaluation carried out in schools and which will be previously known by the school leaders:

1. Check that the impact is assessed according to what was designed in the improvement plan.
2. Know the assessment that has been agreed at each school about what has been achieved in relation to the objectives of the plan and the conclusions.
3. Disseminate experiences and improvement plans that can be considered as good practices.

4. Planning improvement



Figure 1: Six Step Process

School self-evaluation and improvement planning process is cyclical as presented in Figure 1. However, unlike a routine cycle that repeats itself, it is an open spiral and every time it reaches the first step of identifying a focus it is pitched at a higher level. For example, if in Year 1 a school identifies 20% of pupils of level 3 at Grade D in literacy, in Year 2 it must be less than 20% otherwise it means that this process has not been planned, implemented and monitored effectively.

Step 1: Identify Focus

In this step, schools should identify the focus for the inquiry. Schools by making use of the quality framework for SSE and the guidelines provided by their respective school inspectorates or Ministry of Education need to identify the areas (Domains) that they need to improve and the areas where they are performing well in order to sustain them.

Step 2: Gather Evidence

Depending upon the foci of inquiry (areas for improvement) identified, schools will decide the evaluation approaches, methods and sources that they intend to employ. In order to gather robust evidence, it is suggested to collect relevant information from a variety of sources, including teachers, learners, parents and school management.

The possible sources of evaluation approaches and methods

Individual and collective professional review of teaching and learning

- Teacher discussion and reflection
- Teacher self-evaluation of teaching and learning
- Team teaching and review
- Review of monthly progress reports
- Professional collaborative review of teaching and learning
- Individual and collective review of pupils' work

School community perspectives on teaching and learning

- Pupils' views
- Teachers' views
- Parents' views

Data review of pupil outcomes arising from teaching and learning

- Analysis of teacher designed tasks and test results where appropriate
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative information and data on the different areas of curriculum regarding achievement and progress of the pupils (including standardised test results)
- Analysis of trends (achievement data) overtime
- Comparison of the outcomes of standardised tests with national norms (when available)
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on pupils' dispositions towards teaching and learning
- Review of current assessment records
- Review of pupil progress records

School environment and policy review for teaching and learning

- Audit of school's code of behaviour with reference to the Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education
- Analysis of attendance (and drop outs) rates
- Analysis of suspension and detention rates
- Audit of the school assessment policy
- Audit of school safety statement
- Health and safety audit
- Health and safety inspection of classrooms and other learning settings
- Consultation with the board and teachers regarding Child Protection needs
- Review of use of ICT

- Review of written plans

Table 1¹

Step 3: Analyse and Make Judgements

The evidence collected in step 2 should be analysed and the emerging trends are to be measured against the standards described in the quality framework. This comparison will enable the schools to arrive at the quality judgements on the aspects of provision that are already effective and identify those areas that need to be improved.

Step 4: Write and Share Report and Improvement Plan

On the basis of quality judgements, the school should prepare a short SSE Report and Improvement Plan. The improvement plan should include SMART targets grounded in school data analysis and the actions that will help the school to bring about the improvements. A summary report and plan is to be shared with the school community.

Step 5: Put Improvement Plan into Action

This is the most crucial part of the six-step process. This is where, individual teachers, subject departments and school leaders implement the agreed actions to bring about the desired improvement. This step will be different in every school and for evaluation as it largely depends upon the context of the school.

Step 6: Monitor Actions and Evaluate Impact

The final step is closely linked to step 5. As the improvement plan is being put into action, the school monitors the actions as they are rolled out. It is important to consider the experiences of teachers and learners as well as the impact of the changes on learning.

Sometimes, during the implementation of improvement plan some evidence may suggest that the targets and actions need to be adjusted, reframed or amended. The adjustments or modifications can be made anytime as this is all part of the improvement process.

Setting smart targets

A target is a statement of the change in the level of performance that a school wants to achieve within a 12-month period (Brito, 2009). Targets are focused on continuous improvement in standards of achievement by pupils, and state the desired outcomes by taking into account their national and local priorities. Targets need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). It is mandatory that the targets are evidence-based and schools are expected to gather evidence by reviewing a wide variety of data before setting targets, for example data on past performance, trends over time, achievement of specific student populations, student characteristics, and resource allocation (human and financial) (Campbell and Levin, 2009). The review of data helps the schools to

¹ The Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2016). School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 -2020

decide their baseline and set ambitious yet realistic and achievable targets. Without baseline and benchmark schools cannot measure their progress or improvement.

The easy formula for remembering how to write SMART targets is:

Verb / Thing affected / From (Baseline) / To (Level Intended) / By (Date).

To (action word) + (Key result) + How often + By date

For example:

- To reduce the percentage/number of Year 3 students in the minimum standard band on Leaving Cert from (11%) in 2019 to (9%) in 2020.
- To increase parent rating of school communication on the School Satisfaction survey from 60% (satisfactory) to 80% (satisfactory) by Dec 2020.
- To reduce the number of discipline infractions from (2019 figure) to (target figure) by 2020.

The following verbs are useful when writing SMART targets.

Increase, Raise, Decrease, Reduce, Expand, Underpin, Cut, Identify, Discover, Ascertain, Compare, Apply, Meet, Involve, Implement, Reinforce.

While setting targets avoid using ambiguous words such as:

More, Improve, Successfully, Efficiently, Regularly, Aim to, Appropriate, 100% (unrealistic and hence unachievable), Effectively, Timely (Brito, 2009).

An example of an unmeasurable target

- EAL students will perform better than their non-EAL counterparts on the Junior Cycle in literacy and numeracy in 2020.

Checklist for setting targets

- The target focuses the school on improvement;
- The target is the final indicator of success for the intended outcome;
- The target is a numerical measure;
- The target can be numbers of students, proportion of students, or groups reaching a specified standard;
- Data is available as evidence of the improvement; and
- The target is clear and precise. (Brito, 2009)

It is should be noted that here we are referring to the whole school targets and plans. The school improvement action planning process begins by setting targets or goals for pupils' achievement and then develops appropriate learning and teaching strategies to reach these goals. An effective leadership and management framework must then be provided to support this process of change (Davies and Ellison, 2003).

5. Data-informed SSE: Collecting data and Interpretation of data

There is a large body of evidence regarding effective approaches on data-informed SSE. School systems today have access to more data than ever before but most teachers and school leaders lack the skills to use the data for student and school improvement.

Data-informed decision making based on the systematic use of educational data by schools, leaders and educators is considered necessary for school improvement. Data teams consist of teachers and school leaders, who collaboratively analyse data to solve educational problems at their school.

Linking Data with Action ensures that data support the recommendations generated from the research and that they are disseminated to the appropriate decision-makers.

Starting with some definition concerning terms, like Data and especially Educational Data. Data are information that we gather and analyse to inform our decision making. Data take many forms, including words, numbers, sounds, and images.

In the school context, educational data often include:

- contextual/student characteristic data: such as information collected from enrolment records, student profiles, or attendance rolls
- perception data: such as those resulting from surveys and interviews with students, parents and teachers
- student achievement data: various kinds of assessment data including student work samples, rubrics, scores or observation notes
- student wellbeing data: such as those that capture students' social and emotional development, or school culture.

For data (qualitative and quantitative data) to be useful they should be collected and collated systematically and for an identified purpose. Two crucial requirements about data are data literacy and statistical literacy. Data literacy is the ability to understand, interpret and evaluate data accurately.

Each type of data can provide insights into factors that impact a variety of student academic and wellbeing outcomes.

Some characteristics of high-quality data to underpin educational decision making and practice are:

- **complete**: all the data needed are available
- **accurate**: the data correctly describe what you intend to measure
- **relevant**: the data are relevant to the purpose for which they will be used
- **accessible**: the data are easy to access
- **timely**: the data are available for the intended use within a reasonable time period once collected

- **interpretable:** can be understood. For large datasets, additional information to provide insight into the data is required, such as how the data are organised and classified
- **secure:** data are protected and access is limited to relevant people.

Another important factor is the value of using multiple sources of data.

According to Murray (2014) the use of student achievement data should not be the only decision-making factors, and should be used in association with other school data that can help in learning the important lessons that eventually influence the school culture, classroom instruction, student learning, and mentoring and professional development.

Studies show that the role of school leaders is crucial and can enable hinder data use. These studies are indicating what types of leadership behaviours are applied to support data use in data teams.

Headmasters in their school have to establish a vision in combination with goals with teachers and provide individualised support including emotional support. The creation of a culture focused on commitment to follow the process, trust and security within the group, is required for an honest debate. Furthermore, engaging in data discussions with teachers and sometimes with stakeholders towards improvement rather than accountability as well the creation of a net which connect different parts of the school organisation is also very important.

International studies show that many teachers do not feel adequately equipped or confident in using and analysing assessment data. Teachers require access to tools, skills and professional learning to support themselves in the useful interpretation and use of data. Of course, data use is influenced by system, organisation and team/individual level factors.

The value comes from being able to interpret what the data means

Goal setting. Collecting data. Interpretation action and evaluation

The problem of incorrect data and incorrect interpretations

A crucial issue when a school is trying to make data-informed decisions is that the data are not correct, accurate or trusted. As a result, decision-makers within an organisation do not even have access to the right data needed to make appropriate decisions. There is no standardised data definitions or standardised calculation. This leads to incorrect interpretations based on incorrectly built analytics.

Data alone is not the solution for the best decisions. Even if an organisation has useful data, decisions are typically made with assumptions. Correct interpretations are the key to impactful data informed practice.

Strategies

First of all, we have to identify the context of the subject we want to investigate, formulate the right questions with clarity and then collect relevant and appropriate data. It follows the analysis and interpretation of data. Then we formulate the results of data analysis. In the end, we develop appropriate action plans and make data-informed decisions, after taking account implications, and take action based on these.

The SSE Toolkit has to be designed for the use of teachers, headmasters, inspectors and other stakeholders/facilitators working within primary and secondary school environments

As it mentioned before this, ensures that the recommendations generated from the research are supported by data and that they are disseminated to the appropriate decision-makers.

The goal of monitoring and evaluation is to produce data that are used to document progress towards goals and objectives and to improve School. However, the data produced by these systems is often incomplete, inaccurate, and tardy, due to insufficient capacity in the system, or inadequate system design.

That data must be of high quality if they are to be relied upon for making good decisions on School improvement.

It requires the selection and utilization of appropriate research methods and tools

- Data recording
- questionnaire
- observation
- interview

Procedure

The Teachers' board raises the research questions, sets the quality criteria of the index, selects the sources to extract the information, defines techniques for collecting information, utilizes information already available at school, distributes activities to groups and members and sets the timing of the index investigation.

The whole process is conducted periodically by decision of the Teachers' Association on selected quality indicators by a group of teachers depending on the size and potential of the school. It concerns a more in-depth and in-depth investigation of indicators selected in the General Assessment or arising from regional / national priorities.

Introduces 'action research' to school

Parents, students and local community (municipality) can participate in parts of the toolkit according to the decision of the Teachers' Board

It enhances teachers' knowledge and experience

Encourages / promotes the development of partnerships in the school community

The results are approved by the Teachers' board

All these are used for the selection of Action Plans.

Our proposal is based on a wide range of indicators and is based on the plan of the Greek SSE.

6. Guidelines on how to develop a Survey

A Survey is the most efficient way of collecting data as in a short time; one can reach out to a large sample with minimum cost. They are the most commonly used self-evaluation tool and can be easily employed to collect information from a range of school stakeholders: pupils, parents, teachers and the board of management in a non-intimidating environment. The data gathered through a questionnaire survey can be analysed statistically, and emerging findings can thus be used to make informed decisions for school improvement. Questionnaire surveys can serve various purposes:

- Factual Information (frequency of ICT based lessons, frequency and type of leadership opportunities for staff/students).
- Information on stakeholders' perceptions and experiences concerning the work of the school
- Information regarding stakeholders' level satisfaction with the education provision²

By conducting questionnaire surveys, schools can develop and meet significant objectives needed for their particular schools. Schools may use parent, faculty, and student surveys to identify strengths and weaknesses that they might not otherwise see within the school. This data allows them to zero in on the problems and plan accordingly by implementing programmes to affect positive changes in the school. They can then continue conducting student, parent, and faculty surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes implemented for school improvement. Through a questionnaire, survey schools can ask questions about a wide range of topics related to schools such as school safety, bullying, student-teacher relationships, student engagement, teacher support, instructional leadership, and many other vital issues.

While designing a questionnaire, specific points should be taken care of. The first and foremost thing is to decide the primary objective of the survey, and as the second step identify and list subsidiary topics related to the main objective. In the third step, carefully review all the subsidiary topics and decide the specific aspects of the sub-topics about which information is to be elicited from the questionnaire respondents and finally, carefully frame the questions to get the relevant answers.

1. Think about the answers you are seeking from your survey and then think of the questions that could yield those answers.
 - a. For example, how many computers do you have in school? (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).
 - b. What does this mean: present but broken; out of school to be repaired; the property of the school or teachers' and students' computers?
2. Except for a few items that request background or demographic information, direct the items to the research problem.
3. When requiring quantitative information, ask for a specific number instead of an average.
 - a. For example, how often during the past academic term did you observe a teacher? Instead of, 'On the average, how many times do you observe a teacher?'

² School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 -2020

4. All items should fit the informational background of the respondents.
5. As far as possible, use 'soft' words rather than 'hard' words.
6. For example, when surveying teachers use the 'corrective action' instead of 'punishment' (Wiersma, 2000).
7. Make the questions as simple as possible. Questions that include multiple ideas or two questions in one, will confuse people.
 - a. For example, do you enjoy sports and drama classes?
 - b. Would the answer 'Yes' mean that the respondent enjoys both, or one? If it is important to know about both classes, then two questions are to be formed:
 - c. Do you enjoy sports?
 - d. Do you enjoy drama classes?
8. Make sure that the questions are without bias. Don't lead the respondent into an answer.
 - a. For example, do you not agree that high school students should have the right to express their views in tutorials?
 - b. It might be difficult for students to answer 'No' in response to such a question.
9. Consider the sequencing of the questions bearing in mind it is always best to begin with those that are easy and to place more difficult or sensitive questions later in the questionnaire. Keep questions of a certain theme together in the questionnaire (Bell, 2014).
10. Steer clear of sophisticated or uncommon words. Avoid jargon, acronyms or anything that is not in everyday speech. Make the reading level of the items appropriate for the respondents.
11. All questions should be omnicompetent (capable of coping with all possible responses) (Stone, 1993).
 - a. For example, does your teacher support you to achieve your academic goals?
 - b. Tick the most appropriate answer (Always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)
12. It is always a good idea to pilot a questionnaire before use with a small group of the sample. This will help to iron out any design faults which might have been overlooked.

7. Guidelines on how to conduct interviews

The interview is another method of collecting information, for self-evaluation, about the working of a school and quality of teaching and learning from the members of the school community.³ It can be conducted after survey questionnaire to get in-depth information around the areas identified for further exploration after the analysis of questionnaire response or independently to get information at personal and face to face level (Macbeath, 2000).

A significant advantage of interviews, as perceived by Bell (2014), is its adaptability. ‘A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings which the questionnaire can never. The way in which responses are made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc.) can provide information that a written response would conceal. Questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, but a response in an interview can be developed and clarified (p.91)’. Despite all these advantages, interviews have the main drawback of being time-consuming. It is important to plan and conduct interviews systematically without a significant drain on time. The following points are to be considered when planning and conducting an interview.

1. Discuss the protocol of interview with the interviewee. Explain the purpose and duration of the interview. Ask for permission to record the interview or bring along someone to take notes, if you intend to record the interview or take notes. If you want them to ask questions, specify if they're to do so as they have them or wait until the end of the interview. Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).
2. Sequence the questions carefully. Move from simple factual questions to make the interviewee feel at ease and then gradually move to why or more contentious questions.
3. Wording of the questions should be neutral. Avoid evocative and judgmental wording that are likely to influence answers.
4. Try to ask more of open-ended questions so that the interviewee has more scope to choose her/his own terms when answering questions.
5. Avoid long and wordy questions where interviewee loses the track of what is actually being asked.
6. Encourage responses with occasional verbal or non-verbal cues such as nods of the head, ‘uh huh, hmm’ to keep the flow and structure of the conversation.
7. Attempt to remain as neutral as possible. Be careful not to react when listening to responses or note taking. That is, if you jump to take a note, it may appear as if you are surprised or very pleased about an answer, which may influence answers to future questions.

³ School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 -2020

8. Write down any observations made during the interview. For example, where did the interview occur and when, was the respondent particularly nervous at any time? Were there any surprises during the interview? Did the tape recorder break?
9. Don't lose control of the interview. This can occur when respondents stray to another topic, take so long to answer a question that times begins to run out, or even begin asking questions to the interviewer.

8. Guidelines on how to conduct a focus group

Focus group is another method for gathering information for school self-evaluation purposes. Quite like interview, it can be conducted independently or after a questionnaire survey or individual interview to discuss in-depth the issue faced by the school or the ones that emerge through other data collection methods. It is a form of group interview though the pattern of conversation is not backwards and forwards between interviewer and the group; instead, the reliance is mainly on interaction within the group on the predetermined topics (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). For instance, a group of teachers may gather to explore several in-depth issues related to the use of ICT in numeracy lessons in the school emerging from a review of lessons and questionnaires administered to students.⁴

The interviewer, in a focus group, has the role of a group moderator who steers the conversation using questions occasionally as a feeler to keep the conversation going. The questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members rather than with the moderator, such that the views of the participants can emerge. It is from the interaction of the group that the information transpires. During this process, the moderator either takes notes or records the vital points she or he gets from the group. An important point to be noted is that, most of the information yielded in a focus group discussion is qualitative.⁵

Group discussion produces data and insights that would be less accessible without interaction found in a group setting—listening to others' experiences stimulates the participants in making explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons (Punch 1999, p.171). This is also known as the group effect where members of a group engage in a kind of 'chaining' or 'cascading' effect; talk links to, or tumbles out of, the topics and expressions preceding it (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 182). In addition to this, the focus group is less time consuming and cost-effective as compared to individual interviews and survey questionnaires (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

However, great care needs to be taken when selecting a moderator and using the recording instrument because both can be obtrusive. In such a case, participants are likely either to hold back on their responses and/or try to answer the moderator's questions with answers they feel that the moderator wants to hear. Another major concern in the focus group setting is the lack of anonymity. With all of the other participants, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

⁴ School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 -2020

⁵ Ibid.

9. Legal and quality framework for SSE

9.1. Legal and quality framework for SSE in Spain (Extremadura)

This section outlines the general framework for School Self-Evaluation and Improvement in the Spanish education system and, specifically in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura. Also, the involvement of the Inspectorate of education is described. On the one hand at national level, the State Education Authority (*Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional*) which is the competent authority as regards the general organisation of the education system, establishes the minimum requirements for schools, regulates educational qualifications, international relations and cooperation, promotes research, state inspections and statistics on education, among others. The **2/2006 Organic Law of Education** in its article 145.2 states: "The educational administrations shall support and facilitate school self-evaluation". In addition, their Title VII establishes that the Inspectorate of education is entrusted with supporting the development of teaching practice and management and with supervising school operation and programmes, regarding it as a key player in improving the education system, and the teaching quality and equity.

On the other hand, The Autonomous Education Authority is the competent authority in terms of establishing and approving schools, management of personnel, educational programmes, student services, financial management, support and funding. It is also empowered to develop the specific regulations required to implement state legislation and any other relevant matters for its territory. The Department of Education and Employment (*Consejería de Educación y Empleo*), as part of the regional government of Extremadura, is responsible for regulating and implementing education and training in the region, where compulsory education lasts ten years, between the ages of 6 to 16 years.

The regional Law of Education (*Ley 4/2011, de 7 de marzo, de Educación de Extremadura*) regulates, among other things, how to attain equality in the access of students to the education system, and assumes the school success and the achievement of the highest educational quality as major challenges for the system. In this regard, a range of measures of educational performance are included, together with measures where improvement and self-evaluation are the key contents:

- Art.13: **Plan for the improvement of educational success.** "1. schools will design a Plan for the improvement, integrated in the School Educational project. It shall be multiannual and, in its design and evaluation, the socio-economic and cultural context of the Centre shall be considered."
- Art. 141.4: The School Educational Project shall include, among others, the following aspects: the principles of inclusive education, the general lines of pedagogical action, curricular projects, measures of guidance and attention to diversity, the Plan for the improvement of educational success, procedures for the School Self-Evaluation, the School Coexistence Plan and the Tutorial Action Plan."
- Art. 141.8: The **School Annual Report** will analyze the degree of fulfilment of the general school programme and set improvement proposals. In addition, it will include the **conclusions of the self-evaluation processes** relating to the operation of the Centre, the teaching and learning processes and outcomes of students."

Also, the Decree of Attention to Diversity (228/2014) in its article 4 refers to the **Plan for the improvement of educational success**, regulating that:

- The socio-economic and cultural context shall be considered for its design and evaluation.

- Programmes, measures and actions contained in the Plan will aim that all and every one of the students, according to their personal potential, needs, motivations and interests, achieve key competences, reach the objectives settled for different stages, and remain in the Education System.
- Schools, based on its pedagogical and organizational autonomy, will design and implement the measures and activities that allow them to respond to the characteristics and educational needs of the students enrolling, taking into account, in addition, the results of individualized assessments carried out by schools in accordance with what the educational administration establishes, with the ultimate aim of establishing reinforcement mechanisms to achieve success for all.
- The School Commission of Pedagogical Coordination, or body that replaces it, will establish the guidelines for the organization of the Plan, will ensure its development at the school and will coordinate its monitoring and evaluation, taking advice and support from school guidance teachers.

In Extremadura, the **Inspectorate of Education**'s functions, responsibilities and main organizational procedures are detailed in the Extremadura Education Act and the Decree 34/2019, that regulates the Inspection of Education in Extremadura, by establishing that the Inspection shall contribute to education quality and equity improvement and regulates the following functions for inspectors by supervising and controlling the educational system, advising the educational communities of schools, promoting educational experimentation, innovation and research, participating in the evaluation of the education system, ensuring compliance with the standing provisions and the principles and values of the education system, as well as promoting effective equality between women and men.

To perform these functions inspectors are allowed, by means of interviews, visits and observation, to obtain first-hand knowledge of all activities carried out in schools, to examine and check the academic, pedagogical and administrative documentation of schools and to receive from other public employees and those responsible for public and private schools and education services, the collaboration necessary for the development of their activities in which inspectors will be considered as public authority.

All those actions are described in two documents: the Master Action Plan for the Education Inspectorate in Extremadura 2017-2020, a three-year plan that includes "supervising, controlling, evaluating and counselling the organisation and operation of schools", as one of eleven regular actions, which shall focus, among others, on the development of plans that contribute to school success; and the Master Action Plan which is annually developed in a general action plan, which specifies actions to be carried out by inspectors. Thus, during the first and second terms all district inspectors must check whether the Plan for Improvement is included in the School Educational Plan. Also, inspectors need to check whether measures derived from the analysis of previous year final evaluations results, are specified in the School Annual Report, have been included in the School General Annual Plan.

As neither the regional education authorities nor the Education Inspectorate in Extremadura has designed its own guidelines or indicators for SSE and school improvement, for training and guidance given by inspectors, indicators and guidelines designed for other programmes are normally used. Schools, mainly those developing quality assurance programmes, such as *Centros que aprenden enseñando* and *CPDEX* -training programmes aimed to improve school performance by analysing teaching competences- or *CALIDEX* – a quality assurance programme for vocational training schools-,

may obtain guidance and feedback from inspectors, which can be delivered in a dynamic way, either in a school visit or even at the request of the school itself.

In addition, every year during the third term, inspectors participate in the final evaluation of primary and secondary students as external evaluators. Inspectors supervise the implementation of the tests at some specific schools, selected by the educational authority. This action carried out by all district inspectors give the Inspectorate the opportunity to control the implementation of these external tests and check the actual level of students' achievements.

Finally, at the end of the school year, all inspectors write a report, based on their own supervision on the school final report, and for every school that implements a programme for education success.

9.2. Legal and quality framework for SSE in Bulgaria

At national level, school improvement process is not clearly defined in relevant legislation. It is implicitly incorporated within the quality management process described in *Chapter 15 of Preschool and School Education Act*, along with the requirement that each school should implement its own strategy for development with an action plan (art. 263). There are no law prescriptions about what such strategy should describe or any explicit mentions of "school improvement" in its content or aims.

Quality management and school improvement has been set in *Regulation No 16/8.12.2016* but after quite a resistance from the system it was suspended a year later and is now under deliberation for changes and future implementation.

When it comes to the inspection role regarding school improvement, the establishment of **National Inspectorate of Education** changed the landscape of inspection-school relationships quite a bit. Inspection process is clearly described in *Regulation No 15/8.12.2016*. The National Inspectorate developed, tested and published on its site Inspection framework with inspection criteria. In the Preschool and School Education Act, inspection is defined as a '*process of developing a total, independent expert evaluation of the quality of education a kindergarten or a school provides at a certain time of its activity and defining guidelines for improvement*'. It is expected that National Inspectorate will provide clear guidelines for school improvement and the **Regional departments of education** will support schools in their implementation in practice.

In the relevant legislation quality management is set as an *ongoing process of organizational development, based upon analysis, planning, activity implementation, evaluation and improvement of schools' and kindergartens work*. The suspended Quality management regulations explicitly stated that school improvement should be based upon school development strategy and the action plan for its implementation. *The strategy should be developed for 4 years period with a 2-year action plan and it should incorporate the results and guidelines provided after school self-evaluation*. School self-evaluation was supposed to take into account opinions of parents, students, teachers, management staff and other educational staff and was expected to provide information about school quality in two main fields – school management and instructional process. Self-evaluation results were expected to provide insight for planning measures for school improvements and school development in every 2 years. School development strategy and the 2-year action plan were supposed to be accepted by school's educational council and approved by school Community Council (parental body for civic control and supervision of school management). School improvement measures are also related to the guidelines provided by National Inspectorate after the inspection, made once every 5 years.

As for now, as Quality management regulation has been suspended, schools develop their strategies in a more “formal” way, not considering the need for aiming at school improvement. Parents and students rarely participate actively in strategy development process.

Although the suspended Regulation on quality management described in details the participants and the process of school self-evaluation, it didn't set clear indices and criteria for quality evaluation and school self-evaluation, and expected schools to developed ones of their own, which created quite a pressure within the system. No formal support services for schools has been developed to help them cope with the new requirements. School principals had to form a school team for self-evaluation and to provide proper training for them, but such training was offered by various private training companies with no formal common syllabus or law-set requirements. This situation led to quite a resistance among teachers and school staff regarding self-evaluation and, naturally, against quality management and school improvement aims incorporated in it. This led to the suspension of the regulation and to the present debates about how it should be changed and implemented in practice.

In addition, neither Preschool and school education act, nor quality management regulations define a mechanism for follow-up and supervision of school improvements implementation after a period of time or any specific processes and measures for supporting schools in developing their action plans and plans for improvements.

9.3. Legal and quality framework for SSE in Greece

Historical Evolution of SSE in Greece

To control the educational process from 1830 to 1982, the institution of the Inspector was established. The inspector was the administrative and supervisory supervisor of teachers with all powers concentrated on his face (Panagopoulos, 2012). Then from 1982 until today we have the status of *School Counsellor*. By law 1304/1982, the institution of the Inspector is abolished and the institution of the *School Counsellor* is established by June 2018. The supervisory role of the *School Counsellor* is to provide scientific and pedagogical guidance (Article 1, par.1). His duties include teacher training, evaluation and SSE.

Law 3848/2010 is another attempt by the Greek Ministry of Education to implement a system of evaluation of educational work and to harmonize with European trends in accountability, quality and effectiveness in education.

Evaluation will initially be linked to the face of the school counsellor, since in accordance with the institutional framework, in addition to his / her scientific, pedagogical guidance and training of teachers, he / she is also involved in the evaluation of teachers' work (Andreou & Papakonstantinou, 1990).

Law 3848/2010 provides for the planning and evaluation of school unit action (par. 1). At the beginning of each school year, an action plan is drawn up that is evaluated at the end of the year with a report outlining the successes, weaknesses and problems encountered. Improvement proposals are also made (Article 32 (2)).

The action plan and evaluation report, which are produced under the responsibility of the head of the school unit in collaboration with the teachers' board and the school counsellor, are communicated to the pupils and the parents' board, are published online, on the school's website and the relevant

education directorate and are submitted to the Educational Research Centre (paragraph. 3). Concerning teacher evaluation, Law 2986/02 refers.

Ministerial Decision 15/03/2013: "Evaluation of the Educational Unit of the School Unit SSE". The Ministerial Decision sets out the purpose, scope, framework and procedures for the evaluation of the educational project (SNE) in the school unit. The support structure of the SNE Observatory, as well as the supervisory and evaluation bodies at regional and central level, are also identified.

The SSE was attempted in 2013-14 (Ministerial Decision/10-12-2013) and School teacher board at their meetings, where many objections and fears were heard, made a 'General Assessment of the School Image', selected and developed action plans that would be implemented by the school year 2014-2015. The 2015 government change stopped the whole process until today.

Ministerial Decision: 30972 / 15-3-2013), adds that the evaluation of the school unit's educational work is a process of mobilizing all stakeholders in the educational community to develop actions which aim to:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning,
- balanced and comprehensive development of students,
- enhancing equality and alleviating social inequalities;
- fight discrimination and exclusion and open the school to society

The Ministry of Education and Science then proceeded to issue No. 30972 / Γ1 / 15-03-2013 (Government Gazette 614 / tb) Decision on the "Evaluation of the School Unit Educational Project with the Self-Evaluation Process", which describes in detail:

Article 1: Purpose of the evaluation

Article 2: Implementation

Article 3: The SSE Framework

Article 4: Evaluation Method / Procedure

Article 5: SSE training material

Article 6: The SSE Observatory

Article 7: The SSE Information Network

Article 8: Supervision and evaluation of SSE.

The implementation for the 2013-14 school year included the following:

1. A general assessment of the school's image.
2. Selection and development of an Action Plan to improve the educational project, which will be implemented in the school year 2014-15.
3. Annual evaluation report of the school

The SSE thematic framework consists of three main interpretative categories: data, processes and results, which are distinguished in areas, indicators and criteria.

The principal responsibility for the implementation of the SSE lies with the principal and the association of teachers of the 'school units' who will voluntarily participate in the self-assessment program. Implementation of the program is foreseen by working groups, consisting of members of the lecturers' association, who will be responsible for reporting on a quarterly basis. These reports will reflect all the actions of the school, based on the self-evaluation program.

Quantitative data that are readily available at school and recorded in imprint forms or even in electronic databases (e.g. number of classrooms, class area per student, can be used to assess school reality for individual quality criteria, students per PC). In addition to quantitative data, qualitative and quantitative data can also be used which, in order to collect, require the use of other research methods and information extraction tools (e.g. questionnaires and interviews).

The new government is elaborating a new framework for SSE that is expected to be announced shortly.

9.4. Legal and quality framework for SSE in Ireland

This section outlines the general framework for School Self-Evaluation and Improvement in Ireland and the involvement of the Inspectorate of education is shaping the process is described.

Since 2010 Ireland has experienced a profound restructuring of its school inspection and School Self Evaluation process, including significant changes to its schedule for inspections and the mandated requirements for schools to carry out their own evaluations.

As previously stated, until this point school inspections had typically used four evaluation types, and for the most part, internal planning activities had primarily consisted of developing school policies and plans. Moreover, there was little evidence to suggest that schools were collecting and analysing the data necessary to develop and implement actions plans for improvement (See: McNamara and O'Hara, 2008, 2006, 2005). In fact, akin to other European countries, school self-evaluations were rarely mentioned, if at all, in the majority of school inspection reports.

However, during the 2009/2010 academic year the inspectorate began to experiment with new modes of inspection, including the introduction of a codicil version of WSE referred to as WSE-MLL (Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning). Significant changes compared to the WSE model are evident and primarily relate to:

- (1) a greater emphasis being placed on internal evaluation where the 'onus is placed on schools to engage in the self-evaluation process' (Egan, 2010, 53)
- (2) the structure and composition of the final WSE report, and
- (3) the inclusion of parent/student opinions in the form of questionnaires.

According to the Chief Inspector WSE-MLL 'will provide a shorter and more focused report on the school... with less time on school planning and even more time in classrooms' (Hislop, 2010, 20). The most notable change in this new model of the WSE was the introduction of confidential, anonymous questionnaires that are given to parents and students prior to the external evaluation. The purpose of

this initiative is to acknowledge that ‘schools exist to serve the learner and so one of the more important changes that we are making in this new model is to give voice to both students and their parents’ (*ibid*).

A significant emphasis was also placed on ensuring that schools become proactive in carrying out their own internal evaluations. As stated by the Chief Inspector ‘at the beginning of the inspection we are asking boards of management for their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school so that we get some sense of the capability of the school to conduct self-evaluation’ (*ibid*). However, this new focus highlighted another issue, namely the alignment of the school inspections with school self-evaluation activities.

Prior to 2010 there was no statutory requirement for schools to conduct self-evaluations, although it was assumed that self-evaluations were an intrinsic part of a school’s development planning (which was and is a legislative requirement of all schools in Ireland). However, to ensure that *all* schools would engage in the self-evaluation process and subsequent action planning for school improvement, Circular Nos. 0040/2012 (DES, 2012a) and 0039/2012 (DES, 2012b) of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) required all schools to conduct self-evaluations during the 2012/2013 academic year. These self-evaluation activities have to be performed in accordance with the inspectorate-devised school self-evaluation guidelines (DES:2012a;2012b) that were published in November 2012. According to the then Minister for Education ‘the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines will support schools to evaluate their own work and to set targets to improve teaching and learning. This will help to achieve the targets set out in the Programme for Government and in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, launched by the Minister last year’ (Quinn, 2012).

Section 3: Resources

A. SESSION PLANS FOR ORGANISING CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Generally speaking, meetings are a great tool to reflect and learn how to continuously improve. However, many teachers find meetings unproductive and view them as a waste of time. To avoid these drawbacks, school meetings should be well prepared and those in charge of running them get trained.

A.1. Session plan for students' representatives

Student participation in SSE or review meetings where decisions are made views students as collaborators with adults and is a step towards acknowledging student leadership. A wide range of areas including student achievement standards, classroom lessons, curriculum design, teaching, interrelationship among students, class and teachers, teacher training, student government/council, school policies, previous SSE report and school improvement plan can be reviewed during these meetings. Depending upon the agenda the group composition may vary and can be organised at a class level or whole school level. For the purpose of this toolkit, we will focus on a meeting with students' representatives at whole school level.

SSE meeting with students' representatives can be called after administering questionnaire and collating the responses of student survey so that the school leaders have a clear idea of students' perceptions and expectations about various aspects of school or can be conducted directly on the previous year's SSE report and annual plans for school improvement. The moderator of the meeting needs to be selected with utmost care and can be the president of student council, student counsellor or a member of school leadership team who is familiar with students or anyone (from school staff) who students feel comfortable with to share their ideas and opinions.

Venue and time - All participating students must be informed well in time about the schedule of the meeting and the moderator should ensure that they know where and when the meeting is to take place and how long will it take.

Agenda – All participants are to be informed of the purpose of the meeting. The agenda and any other pertinent information should also be distributed prior to the meeting so that the students can review it and be prepared to discuss the items. The information package may include SSE report and annual improvement plan of the previous year, analysis of student achievement data, extra-curricular activities' reports, teachers' professional development activities/programmes reports, analysis of students' attendance, analysis of high school drop outs, analysis of discipline infractions or any other reports or analyses relevant to school priorities.

Format – It is entirely at the moderator's discretion how she wants to conduct the session. It can be as one large group working on all agenda points together or small groups working concomitantly on one or two points. It is suggested that the key information to be presented as PowerPoint on one machine in case of a large group while for multiple groups the relevant information is to be presented on one machine per group to keep the discussion focused.

Refreshments – Some light refreshments should be arranged.

During the meeting - the moderator should

- Greet students and make them feel welcome.
- Start on time and end on time.
- Review the agenda, and then stick to it.
- Appoint someone to keep minutes of the meeting for future reference.
- By showing enthusiasm ensure that students realise the significance of the meeting.
- Be a role model. Listen actively and show interest, appreciation and confidence in the participants. Respect students' feelings and acknowledge constructive contributions. Head off private conversations that are irrelevant to the topic at hand.
- Be professional and courteous. Allow everyone the chance to contribute.
- Recognize all who have comments or questions.
- Clarify questions. Restate them so that everyone understands. Do not make long
 - speeches.
- Encourage group discussion and feedback on all discussion topics.
- Keep conversations focused. As gently and tactfully as possible, end discussions when they are unproductive or becoming detrimental.
- Work for consensus.
- Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a positive note by asking students to express things they thought were good or successful.
- Close the meeting with a strong positive statement. Thank the group and acknowledge their efforts.
- Write up and distribute minutes within the next few days.

A.2. Session plan for parents' representatives

Areas for the session

Parents can be a valuable source of information and ideas throughout SSE and school improvement planning process. Including parents in consultations provide schools with a key point of view about the way parents perceive what the current state of school operation is and what parents believe should be improved. Being both part of school community and still somewhat distanced from everyday school operations, parents see school mostly as a mean for their children education and socialization. Anyway, parents have a lot to say about environment, teachers' work, students' achievements, etc. Main areas for sessions with parents could include different aspects of students' academic achievements, students' safety, school climate, extracurricular activities, school-parents communication and feedback and other topics, all relevant in one way or another to SSE and school improvement. In addition, topics that could be discussed during session can include means and opportunities for parents to engage more meaningfully with school life, to support teachers and school staff in implementation of different school policies or school improvement plans, as well providing suggestions on how school environment could become more open to parents so they feel more welcomed and included.

Group composition

Consultation process can include representatives of parent-teachers boards, representatives of parents from different classes or parents' bodies in school, depending on the school structure and traditions of parental involvement. When it comes to number of participants, it is not functional to include a huge number of parents, as it is much more difficult to moderate and properly lead the consultation process to an effective result. Having a lot of participants in a session creates a risk of "drifting away" from the main topic of the discussion to different areas or specific aspects that parents have interest in. However, it is important to ensure that all parents, willing to participate, or having opinion on SSE and school improvement, have the opportunity to express their ideas and offer help or to be acquainted with school self-evaluation and improvement initiatives. This could be done in different ways through questionnaires, focus groups, parents' meetings, etc.

Previous requirements to the session

Session with parents could be held after collecting parents' suggestions and expectations about SSE and school improvement. It is not obligatory but will surely help the discussion and will provide a good starting point for reaching an effective agreement about future common activities. Even if no actions and communication with parents have been taken, consultation could still be organized in a beneficial way by preparing proper, simple and understandable information for participants about the aims of the meeting, SSE and improvement plans, different initiatives already taken in the field and possible ways parents could join and support the process. This will allow for a better focus of the discussion and will benefit both school and parents' representatives throughout the meeting.

Moderator profile

Moderator of the session should be chosen very carefully as parents and school staff sometimes tend to "stand on different sides of the fence" when it comes to school quality, school accountability and school improvement. That's why moderator should be perceived as fair and impartial, with enough

knowledge of the topics to be discussed, and with solid understanding of both school staff and parents' concerns. This could be either a representative of the school management team, school staff, a school counsellor or a parent. Anyway, the moderator should be trusted by parents so they can express freely their ideas and concerns and still be seen as impartial if issues of contradictions arises during the meeting.

Venue and time

When consultation with parents is organized it is important to set a venue and time suitable for them. This usually means considering the typical working hours and deciding on date and time which will allow for most parents' representatives to participate. The moderator should inform the participants on beforehand about the venue, the starting hour, and the timeframe of the session.

Agenda

Information about the aims of the meeting and the topics to be discussed should be provided on beforehand so parents could prepare and contribute in the most meaningful way. Such information may include data about SSE, SSE report, possible measures for school improvement, and specific data about students' achievements or other aspects which the school considers should be available to parents so an effective discussion could take place. According to the aims of the meeting, different questions can also be included in the agenda to guide parents throughout the consultation process.

Format

There are no strictly recommended formats about sessions for consultation with parents. It depends on the number of participants, the aims, and even the routine ways and traditions in school-parents communication paths so far. Still, a format in which all participants feel welcomed to express their ideas is advisable and it is up to moderator's discretion what will work best at any specific group or situation. If any information should be presented to the group it should be done in such a way, so all the participants can see/hear it and understand it properly – either through PowerPoint presentation or through written individual flyers. The consultation can be organized through questions and answers, brainstorming or discussions in small groups – whatever serves best for the school and parents. A clear closure of the meeting is needed with focused joint decisions and/or future actions to be taken in the field of SSE and school improvement, especially when it comes to parents' participation and contribution and school's responsibilities.

Settings

The settings of the sessions with parents could be a room, bigger auditorium in the school or other suitable for the purposes of the meeting space, usually within the school territory. It is possible the meeting to be held in another building such as community center, etc. if it is preferable for the parents. The place should be comfortable and welcoming and arranged in a way which contributes to positive atmosphere and free sharing of opinions and suggestions. Projector and other technical devices should be provided if needed.

Tips and recommendations for the meeting

In addition to the tips and recommendations mentioned in A.1 and A.2, for parents' sessions the following could be considered:

- Stress the important role of parents for school improvement and the need for mutually beneficial cooperation in students' interest.
- Be aware of the fact that parents are adults with quite sufficient life experience and although there are not professionals in education they can provide valuable information about students' needs, school strengths and weaknesses and possible measures for school improvement from a perspective closer to community perceptions and ideas.
- Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting by providing positive reinforcement and showing appreciation of parents' contribution.

A.3. Session plan for teachers

It is agreed that teachers have the main responsibility in teaching and learning procedures and outcomes, so they should get involved in improvement processes to a greater extent. Although not all teachers in a school need to get involved in SSE and improvement procedures, all must be aware of what is to be done and, specifically, some teachers should participate actively in researching and developing the plan. This will require periodical teachers' meetings, where teachers participate in different ways and with different responsibilities and degrees of commitment.

Areas for the sessions and group composition

Teachers' participation in SSE and improvement processes should not be limited to consultation processes, but extended to planification and development of reports and plans. In this sense, teachers are expected to participate with different degrees of involvement. In fact, a SSE and Improvement Team should be formed at the beginning of the process. This leading group could be integrated by a number between 4 and 6 teachers with different profiles and responsibilities within the school. At least one of them should be a member of the School Management Team, another teacher should have Counselling responsibilities and the rest ought to represent either teachers from the same departments or class levels. Also, their attitudes, experience and commitment towards evaluation and improvement could be considered. It is important to bear in mind that this team will have to lead other teachers into the improvement Project.

Also, meetings with all teachers in the school will be necessary to carry out the planning and development of SSE and improvement. Therefore, the tasks/topics for the meetings will vary depending of the teachers' group composition and the stage of the process:

School SSE and Improvement Team (SIT)

- Raising awareness about SSE and improvement among other teachers and stakeholders
- Identify focus of improvement
- Analyse and make judgements
- Setting SMART targets
- Writing a draft SSE report and improvement plan
- Monitor actions and evaluate impact

All teachers' meetings:

- Gather evidence
- Provide feedback on students' learning and also on the draft SSE report and improvement plan
- Put improvement plan into action
- Setting professional development goals
- Contribute to the SSE and improvement plan evaluation

Previous requirements to the sessions

Meetings with teachers will require careful preparation. Documents for debate need to be prepared and a methodology approach designed, particularly when feedback from teachers has to be collected

during the session. Also, teachers might need to provide information and data before the meeting; in that case, templates, control sheets or other observation tools will be asked to be brought or distributed prior to the meeting. If necessary, teachers responsible for leading or developing different tasks should be reminded prior to the meeting of their expected role at the session.

Moderator profile

The moderator profile may vary depending on the nature of sessions. Tasks to be developed may require different moderator profiles. Thus, the principal should be the person in charge of leading and moderating sessions with all teachers. However, working sessions of SIT could be led either by the principal, another member of the SMT or even by a teacher with major responsibilities in developing and implementing the plan.

Venue and time

Sessions should be held at the school or at other place like the Teacher Training Centre; in an environment that facilitates communication and where all feel comfortable and can speak freely. The meeting should be held in the afternoon after school lessons and all members should know in advance when and where it will take place and its expected duration.

Agenda

The agenda and the documents to be discussed or analysed must be handed in to all teachers attending the meeting at least three days in advance so that they are informed and prepared for the meeting. Topics and tasks to be developed during the working sessions and meetings should be specified and a timeframe for each should also be included. If some teachers are responsible for leading or developing different tasks, this circumstance may also be included in the agenda.

Format

The format of the sessions with teachers will vary depending on the aims and tasks of the meetings. Obviously, the format selected must pursue effectiveness, but also, the well-being of participants. If, for instance, teachers are expected to listen to somebody providing information, documents and/or a power presentation is advisable, as those means of communication will facilitate concentration. However, if teachers are expected to make decisions, design or develop any activities, teachers could be organised in small groups. For those sessions different group techniques could be adopted, such as brainstorming, snowball technique, role-playing, etc. Group dynamics and techniques normally facilitate assertive, deep and free communication.

Tips and recommendations for the meeting

In addition to the tips and recommendations mentioned in A.1 and A.2, for the teachers' sessions the following could be considered:

- Explain the importance of the teachers in developing SSE and the IP in detail
- Make sure teachers understand the responsibility of all the staff in building trust and giving support to other stakeholders

- If teachers are expected to work in groups, explain how the groups are going to be conformed and organised, giving details about the criteria to be used and the role of each member in the group.

A.3. Session plan for school boards

The major advantage of self-evaluation, is that the school is responsible for raising and maintaining its own quality independently, exploiting its own strengths and resources.

A key feature of the self-assessment processes at school is consultation – productive discussion, which is based on the organized discussion of school community members about the educational work provided. Members of the school community - in groups or in plenary - meet in sessions, submit their opinions, and record their assessments of the status and functioning of the school in each of the areas of educational work based on data readily available to the school unit (from its archive, from statistics, etc.). Conclusions are drawn, the agreements reached by the school community members are recorded (e.g. for the school's overall picture evaluation report) and the school's strengths and weaknesses are highlighted. The value of the process lies in the quality of the dialogue, the presentation and utilization of the evidence available and the use of substantiated arguments during the consultation of the School Boards.

The role of working groups

School boards are formed by different stakeholders, depending on each jurisdiction's legal framework. School management boards', teachers' and parents' representatives are normally members of these bodies, but in some countries even students and local authorities are also represented.

As professionals, teachers cannot be mere implementers of decisions; they should participate actively in the formulation and adoption of decisions, and in the evaluation of their implementation (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006).

The School Board decides to set up working groups. In some cases, the work of participants at the plenary level may be decided, especially in small-scale School Boards, but, in most cases, it is advisable to set up working groups to save time and better results, especially in crowded boards. The working groups undertake the implementation of actions approved by the School Board, inform as expected the plenary of the School Board about the progress of the work, cooperate with educational bodies and with the stakeholders, depending on the needs of the action plan, present the results. of the action and propose measures to improve the educational work in the field in which they worked.

Working groups can greatly facilitate processes and negotiation, as well as better study and process of documents, questionnaire analysis and results, by reducing the time of plenary meetings and providing better substantiated arguments in the consultation of the of School Boards.

The meeting

Depending upon the agenda the group composition may vary and can be organised at a group level or whole board level. For the purpose of this toolkit, we will focus on a meeting at whole board level. (Therefore, the tasks for the meetings may vary depending of the group composition and the stage of the process).

The meeting of the members of School Board has to be very well organised. The moderator has to take into account:

- A. A careful preparation – provision of detailed information

- B. An environment that facilitates communication
- C. Some light refreshments.

Information about the aims of the meeting and the topics to be discussed should be provided on beforehand so teachers could prepare and contribute with ideas in the most meaningful way. Such information may include data about SSE, the SSE report, possible measures for school improvement, and specific data about students' achievements or other aspects which the school considers should be available to parents so an effective discussion could take place. According to the aims of the meeting, different questions can also be included in the agenda to guide throughout the consultation process.

Venue and time

The moderator, a member of the School Management Team, should inform the participants on beforehand about the venue, the starting hour, and the timeframe of the session. Also, the Board has to be informed well, about the place, the schedule and the duration of the meeting.

Agenda

The agenda of the meeting should be carefully specified by the moderator and should be distributed prior to the meeting, several days in advance.

All participants are to be informed of the purpose of the meeting. The agenda and any other pertinent information should also be distributed prior to the meeting so that everyone can review it and be prepared to discuss the items. The information package may include the SSE report and annual improvement plan of the previous year, analysis of students' achievement data, co-curricular activities' reports, analysis of students' attendance, analysis of high school drop outs, analysis of discipline infractions or any other reports or analyses relevant to school priorities.

Format

It is entirely at the moderator's discretion how she wants to conduct the session. It can be as one large group working on all agenda points together or small groups working concomitantly on one or two points. It is suggested that the key information to be presented as PowerPoint on one machine in case of a large group while for multiple groups the relevant information is to be presented on one machine per group to keep the discussion focused. In addition, an agreement about future common activities is necessary.

During the meeting

In addition to the tips and recommendations mentioned in A.1 and A.2, for the School Boards' sessions the following could be considered:

- Embrace change which is focused on improving
- Ensure that monitoring and impact evaluation activities are identified at the initial planning stage.
- Hold teachers to account and challenge them to improve their performance

- Manage resistance and hold them to account.
- Recognize the need for board evaluation

B. TEMPLATES

B.1. School self-evaluation report

1. INTRODUCTION

This document records the focus and the findings of our school self-evaluation process, with specific information about the sources and outcomes. At the end, a proposal of aims for improvement is provided. The targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets will be specified in our School Improvement Plan.

The focus of this evaluation

We undertook the school self-evaluation during the period *(month/year)* to *(month/year)*. We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning and/or leading and management:

- Teaching and learning:
 - a)
 - b)
- Leading and management:
 - a)
 - b)

2. FINDINGS

2.1 After carrying out a SWOT analysis, related to the above mentioned focus, we found out the following

- Strengths:
- Weaknesses:
- Opportunities:
- Threatens:

2.2 Sources of Evidence

Refer to school/department reports, parents'/students'/teachers' interviews, school meetings' minutes, pupils' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills, etc.

3. AREAS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT. We have agreed that we need to improve the following practice in our school

Specify the aspects of teaching and learning and leading and management the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

B.2. School improvement planning chart

OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

AIM 1: _____

INDICATOR(S) OF SUCCESS: _____

TIMELINE: _____

ACTIONS	STRATEGIES FOR EACH ACTION	PERSONS / GROUPS RESPONSIBLE	INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT	TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIES	REVISION TIME	RESPONSIBLE
1.-						
2.-						
3.-						

B.3. Student Survey Questionnaire

School Name: _____

Class: _____

Gender: Male Female

How often do the following statements stand true?

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	I enjoy being at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.	I try to give my best during lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3.	I know where I am in my learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4.	I know how can I improve my academic performance in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5.	I am supported by my teachers to achieve my academic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6.	I can make connections between the learning (topics taught) in different subjects/areas of curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7.	I know my actions may have consequences so I behave responsibly.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8.	I appreciate being a member of the group I am learning with.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9.	I understand the purpose of learning activities organised by my teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10.	My classroom environment is based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11.	I am involved in learning experiences that are both challenging and supportive.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12.	I contribute my opinions and experiences to class discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13.	My teachers notice when I am good at something.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14.	I ask questions whenever I feel the need.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

15.	I am not afraid of risking an incorrect response.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16.	I talk to my teachers if I have a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17.	I can clearly see progression in my teachers' lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18.	Teachers' feedback helps me to overcome my mistakes and achieve better.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19.	Teachers have the requisite subject knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20.	Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to keep us all engaged.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21.	Teachers use a range of questions to keep us fully involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22.	Teachers take time to assist individual students who need help.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23.	Teachers use variety of learning resources to enhance our learning experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24.	Teachers plan a range of assessment tasks and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25.	For every task planned, teachers share/develop success criteria with us.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26.	Teachers help each other and work together.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
27.	The school encourages students to respect people from other backgrounds and treat everyone equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
28.	I feel like I am a part of the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29.	School leaders promote a culture of learning in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30.	For better teaching teacher training sessions are organised in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
31.	School sets high expectations of learning for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

32.	School sets high expectations of behaviour for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
33.	School leaders promote innovation and creativity.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
34.	School leaders celebrate individual achievements.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
35.	School leaders celebrate collective achievements.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
36.	We get a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
37.	School leaders ensure allocation of appropriate time for each subject on the school timetable.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
38.	School environment is safe for both students and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
39.	School leaders encourage respectful interactions at all levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
40.	School leaders communicate with parents to support students' learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
41.	School leaders communicate with parents to support students' well-being.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
42.	School leaders maintain mutually beneficial relationship with other schools and the wider community.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
43.	School leaders empower teachers to take on leadership roles to lead learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
44.	School leaders encourage teamwork in all aspects of school life.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
45.	School leaders value our views.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
46.	School leaders ensure that the student council is democratically elected.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
47.	School leaders ensure that student council is representative of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

48.	Student council has an active role in decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
49.	Student council has some role in policy development in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
50.	School leaders support students in taking leadership roles by providing opportunities to lead school initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Any other comment or suggestion?

B.4. Parent Survey Questionnaire

Dear parents and guardians,

We are undertaking a self-evaluation in our school. The views of parents are very important to us and can really help us. By giving us your views and opinions, we can continue to improve the quality of education and learning of pupils in our school.

The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. We would be very grateful if you complete it and return it to the school before (insert date).

Please note that you may complete the questionnaire anonymously and that all individual responses will be treated confidentially.

Thank you very much!

(Insert Principal's Name)

(Insert date)

No of children in school: _____

Children's Class: _____

Your gender: Male Female

	School-Parents interaction	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	The school applies various forms of communication with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.	School-parents communication is based on mutual trust, respect, and acceptance.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3.	The school implements timely and adequate measures when parents seek support for solving a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4.	I have opportunities to give suggestions for different school initiatives and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5.	The school ensures optimal conditions for effective interaction with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6.	I have opportunities to participate in decision-making regarding school improvement and development.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7.	I have opportunities to participate in different school activities and initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	Support of students' development and progress	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
8.	School environment is favorable and stimulates the development of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9.	Teachers motivate my child to achieve his/hers best.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10.	Teachers provide additional support to my child, if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11.	The school provides various activities which satisfy my child needs and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12.	The school provides different services which are useful for my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13.	The school teaches my child to be independent and confident in his/hers own abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14.	The school provides regular information for the progress of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15.	The school provides education that supports further education and professional realisation of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16.	The school provides timely support to parents if needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17.	My child improves his/hers academic achievements.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18.	The school assists and supports parents in case referral to other institutions is needed regarding my child's personal and educational development.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19.	The school supports and stimulates the development of my child's learning skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	Educational environment	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
20.	My child feels safe and secure at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

21.	My child is not being bullied or harassed at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22.	The school applies adequate measures in cases of aggression and bulling at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23.	The school provided optimal conditions for effective instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24.	The school provides useful educational materials and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25.	The school provides optimal and modern educational technologies for the instruction process.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Any other comments or suggestions?

C. AREAS AND INDICATORS FOR SELF-EVALUATION⁶

School space, logistics and financial resources

- Existing spaces are sufficient for the implementation of the school curriculum.
- The existing school premises are suitable for teaching and school life.
- Classrooms cover the needs of students in the class / classroom.
- The special classrooms and areas of the school (e.g. physics-chemistry labs, computer labs, art classrooms, music classrooms, library-reading rooms, etc.) are sufficient for the development of the Curriculum.
- Activity and event rooms (e.g. theater, multipurpose, amphitheater) meet the needs of school life.
- School administration areas (Director offices, Vice Principal, teacher offices) cover the work needs of teachers.
- Collateral areas (canteen, concierge, warehouse, medical office, toilets) cover the needs of students and teachers.
- Outdoors (courtyards, stadiums) are sufficient for the number of pupils / three.
- School premises are functional (appropriate temperature and lighting, no disturbing noise, shaded courtyard, seating, etc.).
- Classrooms are suitable for teaching the various courses.
- The building facilities are safe for pupils and teachers of the school including infrastructure for people with mobility problems (elevators, special ramps, etc.).
- (School equipment and resources are sufficient for the implementation of the school curriculum.
- School equipment and facilities respond to modern teaching needs and learning processes.
- The school has the necessary laboratory equipment (instruments and materials of physics-chemistry laboratories, music instruments, painting materials, computers, etc.) to teach the various courses.
- The school's infrastructure for audiovisual teaching means meets the needs of the Curriculum.
- Activity and event rooms (e.g. theater, multipurpose, amphitheater) have the equipment they need to operate.
- The special rooms and areas of the school (e.g. physics-chemistry labs, computer labs, art galleries, music rooms, library-reading rooms, etc.) have the equipment they need to operate.

⁶ These areas and indicators are taken from Greek policy guidelines for SSE and improvement.

- The equipment of the school administration areas (Director offices, Vice Principals, teacher offices) responds to the working needs of teachers.
- The school has the necessary equipment (appropriate IT infrastructure and communication networks) to integrate ICT in the daily educational process.
- The computers available are state-of-the-art.
- The financial resources available are sufficient to support educational work at school (development of educational activities, supportive and other interventions, as well as local / national / international level programs).
- The municipality, the Parents Association or the local community financially supports the school.

School data

- The school has the teachers required per specialty to teach the individual subjects.
- Teacher scientific and pedagogical training meets the requirements of the Curriculum.
- The teachers' experience is sufficient for the implementation of the Curriculum and the development of activities inside and outside the school.
- Students' needs for special or additional teaching (reinforcement teaching, Reception Class, Integration Department) are adequately covered by the teaching staff.
- The needs of the school for dedicated scientific staff (for guidance, counseling and student support) are sufficiently covered by the school's cooperation with specialized centers and services of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- The administrative staff is sufficient to support the teaching and administrative work of the school.
- Assistant staff with responsibilities related to school cleaning, maintenance and care cover the needs of the school unit.

School procedures

- The Directorate, in collaboration with members of the school community, has formulated the school's core goals of what it must achieve in the coming years (vision, values and goals of the school).
- Teachers have agreed on a general set of principles and apply the school's rules of procedure to deal with the various problems.
- The Department supports a collaborative work framework for all school unit stakeholders.
- The decisions that regulate school life are the result of collective and democratic processes.

- Teachers are equally involved in making decisions about the operation of the school.
- The Management ensures that the decisions of the Teachers' Association are complied with.
- Pupils' participation in school decisions, where appropriate, is encouraged.
- Students 'and parents' views and requests are taken into account in planning and dealing with problems.
- The right conditions are in place for the effective communication of school members with each other and with the outside environment.
- The Department ensures a positive climate and supports the operation of the school as a place for learning and providing equal educational opportunities for all students.
- The Department supports and coordinates the good and good development of the school curriculum.
- Since the beginning of the school year, the Teachers' Association has set specific goals and priorities and plans actions for their implementation.
- The planned activities of the school are carried out satisfactorily.
- The curriculum design is governed by pedagogical - teaching principles and takes into account the particular needs of students and teachers.
- Necessary initiatives and actions are taken to maintain the timetable (eg due to the absence of teachers).
- The Teachers' Association works with students to improve the implementation of the school curriculum.
- The Teachers Association works with the Parents / Guardians Association to design and implement the school curriculum effectively.
- Management ensures timely and reliable information to staff on matters relating to it.
- The administrative / extracurricular activities are effectively organized according to the priorities of the school unit.
- Management effectively manages potential disputes / disagreements between members of the school community.

School leadership, management and organization

- Financial resources are managed in a rational way.
- The Teachers' Board is involved in the management of school resources.
- The School Management works effectively with the School Committee on resource allocation and management.
- The school management takes care of the maintenance of the building.

- The school management takes care of the cleanliness of the building in collaboration with teachers and students.
- The school takes the necessary measures for the safety and protection of students in all areas.
- Teachers and students have easy access to the facilities available (various facilities and equipment).
- The school management encourages the use of school infrastructure and equipment by teachers and students.
- Parents and local community stakeholders are given the opportunity to utilize school infrastructure and resources to develop extracurricular activities.
- The school is developing initiatives to find additional resources and resources to make school curricula more effective (e.g. using pupils at the City Hall).
- The school implements an integrated policy for the integration of ICT into school functioning (teaching and learning support, in-school and out-of-school communication, network development).
- The teaching staff of the school is utilized according to the skills and experiences of each member for the needs of the school.
- The distribution of responsibilities to the teachers of the school is fair.
- The Division supports the collaboration of teachers by specialty and / or class but also by specialty and class.
- Procedures are being developed to support teachers in their particular scientific and pedagogical needs.
- In-school training is provided for the needs of teachers.
- In-school training is provided by specialist scientists at the initiative of the Directorate and the Teachers' Association.
- School teachers are interested in participating in training programs, educational research programs and / or scientific conferences.
- The school creates conditions for the success of teachers' initiatives for their professional development (e.g., support for the ability to co-design teaching, etc.).
- Teachers regularly collaborate with each other on various pedagogical / teaching topics (ways of evaluating students, cross-curricular approach of a teaching unit, etc.).
- The school supports the smooth adaptation and integration of new members of the teaching staff.

Teaching and learning part I

- The teacher plans teaching both on an annual basis and on a unit level. It provides a comprehensive overview of the subject and plans the teaching of the individual modules in relation to the objectives of the lesson, the time frame and the specific learning potential of its class.
- The teacher systematically prepares his teaching at the level of teaching time, setting clear teaching / learning goals and ways of achieving them (eg teaching and organizing classroom strategies, teaching resources, teaching time, student assessment methods).
- The teacher organizes the total teaching time (on an annual basis) and makes effective use of the teaching time to implement the goals and content of the Curriculum according to the needs of the students.
- A variety of teaching methods are used depending on the subject being taught, knowledge, level of understanding and students' learning needs.
- A variety of organizational formulas are applied in the classroom (classroom teaching as a group, individualized teaching, teaching with workgroups) depending on the objectives of the lesson and the needs of each student.
- Assessment, presentation and discussion of tasks are systematically used to provide feedback on the educational process and to evaluate student performance.
- The teacher searches for, organizes and uses the appropriate teaching resources according to the curriculum requirements and the needs of the students.
- Students make creative use of the equipment and resources available during the lesson.
- The work assigned to students supports and extends the goals and content of instruction and is of a similar degree of difficulty to the students' abilities.
- Students engage in collaborative work and work effectively in groups of different composition and size.
- The teacher encourages the students' active involvement in the learning process.
- Students participate in the lesson, formulate reflections, and support their personal views.

Teaching and learning. Part II

- Development and implementation of pedagogical practices and student assessment practices.
- The teacher and the students formulate the context and rules of operation of the classroom.
- The teacher takes care of the organization of pedagogical communication. It creates a climate of mutual understanding in the classroom, shows respect for the personality of the student, treats discipline issues that may arise, and conflicts with rational arguments.

- In the classroom, a climate of participation, cooperation and collegiality is cultivated. The role that the teacher takes in teaching (e.g., the role of coordinator) helps in this direction.
- The teacher immediately encourages and rewards each student's contribution to the learning process in combination with his or her past performance.
- The teacher uses a variety or combination of assessment methods / techniques depending on the objectives and content of the lesson.
- There are ways of systematically recording students' evaluation results in order to use them more effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes.
- Records are kept of data on the quality of work, progress, achievements or problems in student performance (not only numerical but also descriptive).
- Students are regularly informed about the quality of their work, their performance and their progress.
- Students discuss with teachers their progress and their views are taken into account.
- The information derived from the mid-term evaluations is used to provide feedback and improve students.
- It monitors the student's individual progress (or student groups) and develops personalized or differentiated support actions for students.

Culture and relationships at school - relationships between teachers and students and among the students

- Teachers look for opportunities and develop initiatives for creative collaboration with students.
- The relationships between teachers and students are governed by the principles of justice, meritocracy and trust.
- Teachers create the conditions for students to participate in activities that foster collaboration and mutual help.
- Teachers manage students' behavioural problems at school with sensitivity, discretion, and the required consistency, with a view to the smooth functioning of the school.
- Teachers work with students to organize events and other activities.
- Teachers work with students to solve problems in the learning community.
- The relationships and partnerships between teachers and students help open the school to society.
- Students behave according to the principles and rules that are shaped in the school environment.

- Students collaborate creatively with each other on all aspects of school life.
- The rules governing school life are the result of the consent of all participants in the educational process.

School culture and relationships - school relations with parents and partnerships with educational - social institutions

- The school organizes and implements procedures that facilitate systematic communication with all students' parents.
- The school develops mechanisms to investigate the views and positions of all parents.
- Opportunities are provided for active involvement of parents in activities and initiatives undertaken by the school.
- The school informs and engages the Parents' Association in its annual activity planning and implementation strategies.
- The school ensures a climate of cooperation, mutual appreciation and understanding with parents.
- The school systematically and responsibly informs all parents about the performance and progress of their children.
- The school works with parents to address student behaviour problems.
- The school often and effectively collaborates with School Counsellors and other service providers to implement its educational work.
- The school leverages existing educational support agencies (Environmental Education Officers, Health Education, KEDDY, etc.).
- The school's cooperation with the municipality and the school committee is constructive.
- The school works with the schools of origin and reception of its students to facilitate the adaptation of students and to facilitate the work of teaching and learning.
- The school collaborates with other schools or educational institutions (Universities, etc.) to develop common activities and programs.
- The school actively participates in community life and takes initiatives for joint actions with local community stakeholders.

Programs, interventions and improvement actions: Training programs and innovations, supportive and compensatory interventions

- Initiatives are offered at the school to participate in voluntary educational programs at national or international level.
- Students' initiatives and activities are supported and supported at the school.

- Initiatives for student participation in cultural and sporting events are undertaken at the school.
- Initiatives are given at the school for lectures on topics of special interest to students.
- Pupils visit sites of scientific or cultural interest.
- Initiatives are being developed for student participation in student competitions.
- The school supports and strengthens the operation of Student Clubs.
- Volunteer activity of students and teachers is encouraged (school gardening, environmental actions).
- The school encourages the development of values, attitudes and skills so that students can participate as responsible and active citizens in a democratic society.
- The school enhances the sense of security and confidence of students and parents in the educational work provided.
- Teachers support the innovative changes introduced into the school unit and facilitate their implementation.
- Teachers try and experiment with innovative actions and initiatives at school.
- The school runs programs and develops supportive, supportive and compensatory actions.
- The school has special programs for special classes of students (reinforcement teaching, tutoring, reception class, integration department).
- The school takes initiatives and actions aimed at combating segregation and exclusion and fostering solidarity and cooperation between students.
- The school ensures equal learning opportunities for all students.
- Procedures are in place for schools to monitor student attendance.
- The school is taking measures to support students who are absent from school for a long time.

Programs, interventions and improvement actions: Development and implementation of action plans to improve the educational project

- The process of educational planning - the formulation, implementation and evaluation of action plans is a continuous and consistent activity for the school, integrated into its daily operation.
- The action plans that are formulated are based on the analysis of school reality by utilizing the self-assessment data of the educational project.
- The action plans that are formulated set feasible but ambitious goals and clearly identify all the parameters for the implementation of each action (objectives, success criteria,

implementation method, timetable, resources and tools, monitoring and evaluation processes).

- The implementation of the individual procedures is supported by a strong sense of commitment of the school teachers.
- The school encourages increased involvement of school community members in all stages of educational planning.
- The school emphasizes its joint engagement with other schools, educational and social bodies in the context of educational planning.
- School community members have a clear picture of the action plans the school is going to implement, the processes associated with them and the role they play.
- The school develops systematic procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of its action plans.
- The school takes particular care to ensure the continuity and sustainability of improvement actions.
- The school takes particular care to exploit the results of action plans and disseminate good practice.
- Improvement actions have a direct and long-term positive impact on the overall functioning and achievements of the school.

Educational outcomes: student attendance and student dropout

- The procedures foreseen and operating at school to monitor student attendance are effective.
- The school knows which pupils have been absent for a long time (eg more than a week), as well as the reasons for their absence.
- Students attend classes in a timely manner.
- Students attend all the lessons of the daily program.
- The school has been successfully dealing with cases of students who have been absent from school for a long time.
- School-specific programs for certain categories of students (reinforcement teaching, tutoring, reception classes, integration) help to effectively reduce absences and dropouts.
- There are limited cases of students leaving school.

Educational outcomes: students' achievements and progress

- The educational achievements of the students correspond to the aims and contents of the Curriculum.

- All students - low, average, high performance - are making progress on their previous achievements.
- The difference between low and high performance of students decreases during the year.
- Educational Outcomes Individual and social development of students
- The personal, social and political development of students is a key issue for discussion and debate among school teachers.
- All students are accepted by their peers, regardless of their ethnic background, color, or learning difficulties.
- The school's efforts to provide all students with equal learning opportunities are effective.
- Students are sensitive to community problems.
- Students make decisions and implement them responsibly.
- Students take responsibility for their school responsibilities and show interest in learning.
- Students participate collectively and responsibly in managing school life problems.
- The students are solidarity and do not split into opposing 'groups'.
- There are no particular conflicts between students at the school.
- Students peacefully resolve differences that arise in their relationships.

School outcomes: achieving school goals

- The school fulfilled the institutionally foreseen objectives of the curriculum and curriculum to a satisfactory extent.
- The school successfully implemented the educational goals set at the beginning of the school year.
- The school fully met teachers' and parents' expectations of students' progress in their lessons and social development.
- Teachers are optimistic about further improving their school work in the coming school year.
- Students are satisfied with their individual progress and involvement in school life.
- Parents are satisfied with the general function and educational achievements of the school.
- New technologies in the organization, administration, promotion and publicity of the school have been used effectively.

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