



Indistar[®]

Getting Better Together[®]



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Improvement

Results for students don't improve unless adult performance improves. In order for performance to improve, people must know what good performance looks like and have a clear path for achieving it. Indistar provides the "what" but leaves the "how" to those that know their students best.

What is Indistar®?

Efforts to work hard and do the right thing can sometimes get messy. Too much effort, not too little, is often to blame—the result of well-intentioned people, absent common focus, shared vision, and clear understanding of their role.

But, if that effort could be streamlined and channeled in the same direction, couldn't schools really get somewhere? We think so.

Indistar is premised on the firm belief that district and school improvement is best accomplished when directed by the people closest to the students. Each district or school Leadership Team applies its own ingenuity to achieve the results it desires for its students—students it knows and cares about.

Providing a district or school Leadership Team with a process that encourages local ingenuity and responsibility changes the dynamic within a school and between the schools and its district. The Indistar process requires a “culture of candor” in which district and school personnel talk openly and honestly about their professional practices that contribute to student learning.

Placing this high level of confidence in the ability of district and school personnel to chart their own course also requires that the district or school team is given convenient access to tools, resources, and effective practice to get the job done.

Change is made and sustained through focus, sequence, and shared accountability. Indistar provides the focus and sequence while accommodating flexibility in approach. In other words, Indistar provides the “what” but leaves the “how” to those who know their students best.

Indistar is a web-based platform that harnesses local ingenuity and guides a district or school Leadership Team in charting and managing its improvement. The platform is tailored for the purposes of each district and its schools.

Indistar includes Wise Ways® research and practice briefs to support its indicators of effective practice. Indistar also provides Indicators in Action™ video modules with real teachers and principals in real schools and classrooms demonstrating the practices. Indistar also enables coaches to assist a Team with coaching comments and reviews about the Team's ongoing work.

The bottom line is that Indistar guides Leadership Teams through a cycle of assessing, planning, implementing, and progress tracking. Focus is clear, responsibilities are assigned, efforts synchronized.

- ★ **Innovation.** Indistar guides work by school Leadership Teams with built-in flexibility to encourage local innovation.
- ★ **Research Alignment.** Indistar's Wise Ways® links each indicator to a succinct synthesis of the related research, examples, and resources.
- ★ **Capacity.** Indistar builds the district's capacity to support the improvement of its schools.
- ★ **Documentation.** Indistar provides practical documentation such as agendas, minutes, responsibilities, timelines, coaching, and degree of implementation.
- ★ **Operational Data.** Indistar delivers the “other side of the data equation,” the district, school, and classroom practices that contribute to student learning. Practice must improve in order for results to improve.
- ★ **Unique to District.** Indistar becomes the district's unique system, accessible through its own website, and aligned with existing initiatives.
- ★ **Electronic Reporting.** Indistar includes an administrative page that allows for convenient monitoring of each school's progress and access to electronically submitted reports.
- ★ **Progress Tracking.** Indistar provides charts that track and display progress.

What challenges does Indistar® address?

1. **Practices aligned with research.** ADI researched and identified the behaviors and practices that result in improved teaching and learning so that the district and school can spend its time implementing them.
2. **Provide assistance to multiple schools in need of improvement with limited staff and resources.** Indistar's web-based technology allowing coaching, monitoring, and reporting virtually.
3. **Clarify the roles of personnel involved in improvement.** Indistar prompts users



to assign responsibility to individuals for implementing and monitoring tasks so that roles and expectations are clear for everyone.

- 4. Maintain an intense instructional focus to impact student learning.** Indistar focuses on building and sustaining a strong instructional core, with an emphasis on aligned and differentiated instruction.

Who uses Indistar®?

Districts may purchase Indistar for use with some of its schools or all of its schools. Indistar may be accessed through the district's website and reflects the initiatives of the district. The district may establish its own Leadership Team and work through the district indicators to improve its own professional practices to better support its schools.

Each school creates a Leadership Team to work through the school level indicators of effective practice. One person from each Leadership Team (district or school) is designated to serve as Process Manager. The Process Manager interfaces with the system to prepare team meeting agendas, worksheets, and Wise Ways®. The Process Manager also enters the team's minutes and work plans into Indistar. Coaches (engaged by the school or provided by the district, or charter organization) are given access to the system so that they can follow the progress of the Team's work and provide coaching comments for the Team. Superintendents and principals are given full access to the system. The Leadership Team is given its own unique login so that it may review reports of the work in progress, view minutes and agendas of the Leadership Team meetings, and review comments made by a coach or district liaison. The district, or school may also issue "guest" logins to groups—teachers, parents, school board members, for example—who can then view progress charts and reports without editing data.

How is Indistar® customized for each district?

The system is entered via login and password through the district's website and displays the district's name. The district may choose indicators from an ADI curated list of indicators. The district may specify a subset of indicators as "key indicators" to be given special emphasis or create specific filters or crosswalks to help guide schools in the work. The district may determine consulting roles to be utilized in the system; for example coaches for school Leadership Teams and district liaisons to school Leadership Teams.

How was Indistar® created?

Indistar was created by ADI, working directly with several state education agencies and revising the system as the states engaged their districts and schools with the process. ADI continues to constantly upgrade the system in response to clients' needs and suggestions. ADI tailors the system to specific district's needs as much as possible.

How is Indistar® organized? What is its structure?

Indistar is built around the core functions performed by each level of the education system, effective practices at each level, and indicators of effective practice. A core function is a central, operational purpose of a district, or school. An effective practice is a way of operating (related to a core function) that is shown by both research and evidence in real-world application to contribute to student learning. An indicator is an observable expression of a practice, something concrete that indicates that an effective practice is in place.

How will Indistar® help advance a district's or school's goals?

Goals are typically constructed around a district's or school's core functions, such as Leadership, Curriculum, Professional Development, or Instruction. They are often broad statements that advance a mission. Specific,

detailed actions are then necessary to attain a goal. Indistar drives the specific, detailed actions. Indistar's indicators of effective practices are research-based ways of doing things that add meaning to global goals. The indicators of effective practice are specific, plain language guideposts, aligned with research. In fact, the indicators are so specific that they can be easily assessed, clearly aligned with people responsible, set to timelines, coached, and tracked for high-quality implementation. Specificity matters.

How are the indicators aligned with research?

For each indicator, a Wise Ways® link is included in the system as well as on the Leadership Team page and Guest page for convenient access by the Leadership Team, faculty, and others. The indicators provided by Indistar are drawn from research syntheses.

What are the logical steps in the cyclical improvement process?

Assess indicators. The Leadership Team selects an effective practice. The team then considers an individual indicator related to that practice, discusses it, and comes to a decision about the level to which this indicator is currently being met. A Priority/Opportunity Index is recorded for the indicator, enabling the team to gain quick wins.

Plan for full implementation of indicators. Once an indicator has been assessed, the team describes how it will look when the objective is fully met and constructs a plan to achieve it. The plan includes a list of actions leading to achievement of the objective, along with persons responsible and target dates.

Implement and monitor progress. As each task in the plan is completed, a completion date and comments are recorded. When all the actions for an objective are completed, the Leadership Team decides if the objective has been met and provides evidence.

What reports can be generated?

Indistar provides standard reports that can be generated at any time, printed, or saved. Reports include such things as: agendas, minutes, lists of

indicators assessed (with ratings and evidence), lists of actions (by person responsible, by date range, etc.), and comprehensive reports that include everything.

How does the coaching feature work?

An external coach is provided access to offer feedback to the Leadership Team's work. The coach reviews the ongoing work of the team and offers comments. The Principal is alerted by email that a comment has been entered by a coach, and the team can then reply. The system maintains a thread of the dialogue between the coach and the team, and the comments can be saved or printed as a report.

What does Indistar® provide for professional development on the indicators of effective practice?

Indistar® provides a growing library of web-based, professional development modules (Indicators in Action™) for teachers and school leaders. The modules include video demonstrations of many of the indicators, arranged in topics such as: Instructional Planning, Professional Development, Instructional Alignment, Differentiated Instruction, Classroom Management, and Teacher-Directed Instruction, Leadership, and School Community.

How does Indistar® provide the state with convenient tracking of district and school progress?

The administrative web page displays a summary of the schools that have submitted reports, with access to each school's dashboard. The administrative page also includes a variety of reports to gauge progress and aggregate data.

The bottom line is this, when the adults in the building focus their attention on the details that matter—professional practices—all working together for the betterment of their students, improvement happens. Indistar is a way to help.

Get Started!

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