



District
Management
Group

MANAGER'S TOOLKIT

Are There Opportunities to Raise Productivity?

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Ask yourself the following questions to assess whether some of these targeted opportunities to raise productivity hold promise in your district.

Are There Opportunities to Raise Productivity

Take this quick test to find out

Staffing models tend to evolve in response to an immediate need rather than a systemic review: a new mandate demands compliance and a position is added; an employee unexpectedly resigns and the same position is filled in a like manner, etc. Maximizing productivity will not be a one-time event, but a consideration that should inform all the day-to-day decisions that must be made. It is a mindset of continuous improvement. Productivity-enhancing moves can target any given area and come in any number of forms.

Through our extensive benchmarking of district practice, DMC has identified some of the most common areas of opportunity to increase productivity. Ask yourself the following questions to assess whether some of these targeted opportunities hold promise in your district.

Do you know the fully loaded cost of each of your programs (e.g., outlays on materials, salaries, benefits, and overtime, offset by any revenue or grants brought in by the program)?

Have you broken up any positions into separate higher- and lower-skilled components or shifted responsibilities to lower-skilled, lower-paid staff (e.g., having an aide do lunch duty instead of the assistant principal, replacing an RN with an LPN)?

Do you outsource any district services (e.g., contracting for food service, custodians, or paraprofessionals)?

Do you survey administrators and/or parents to determine what programs are viewed as most important (e.g., giving parents detailed budget information and tasking them to come up with ways to cut a set amount)?

Do you have class-size targets that differ depending on the type of class (e.g., core vs. noncore, K-3 vs. 4-12)?

Do you set target caseloads for physical, speech & language, and occupational therapists (e.g., setting 75% as the amount of therapists' time that should be spent with students)?

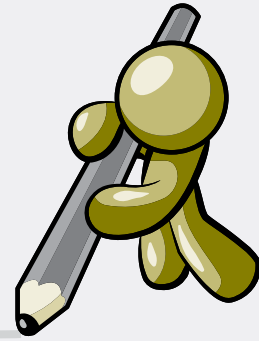
Do you redeploy staff members among schools each year based on enrollment changes (e.g., moving a teacher from a school where class sizes are below target to one where they are above target)?

Do you have classes at the secondary level that are much smaller than class-size targets (e.g., having the same art class taught in five different periods, each with under 20 students)?

Have you developed programs to recognize your staff's achievements (e.g., allowing teachers to stay in the classroom but take on new responsibilities such as lead teaching)?

Do you have a set of comparable districts against which you benchmark (e.g., comparing achievement and staffing levels to districts of similar size and demographics)?

in Your District?



Score Your Results

Are there opportunities to get more for less from your staff?

Give yourself **1 POINT** for every time you answered **YES** _____

Give yourself **5 POINTS** for every time you answered **SORT OF** _____

Give yourself **10 POINTS** for every time you answered **NO** _____

Give yourself **15 POINTS** for every time you answered **DON'T KNOW** _____

TOTAL SCORE _____

[illegible]

Your Score	Your Opportunity to Reduce Costs
0 - 25	You are well-positioned to respond to the unprecedented challenges of a new fiscal reality.
26 - 50	You're in a good place, but productivity is not optimized. There are more opportunities as staff turns over and new methods and technologies become available.
51 - 75	This is the time to think in terms of both student achievement and dollars spent, not just one of the two dimensions.
75 plus	Many options are available for crafting a strategic response to the "new normal."

We count the “don’t know” answers so heavily because we want to underscore that much of the data for answering these questions and calculating productivity is already available; it just isn’t analyzed in the relevant ways. This is especially true regarding the number and fully loaded cost of your staff and the number of students they serve. Data on student achievement and growth—the other necessary variable for calculating productivity—may be less abundant now, but should soon be more readily available due to the introduction of new teacher and principal evaluation systems.