CRISS® for Administrators

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Introduction

Administrators know how leadership sets the standard for the school. Leadership is critical to developing a school community where adults and students care about one another, root for one another, and work together for the good of the whole in times of need and in times of celebration. Leaders strive to establish a climate that engages students intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Leaders want a place where students and educators can become and remain active, voracious, independent learners. No small task!

Project CRISS can help with these visions. It can become an avenue for creating a collaborative community of administrator, teacher, and student learners. With successful implementation, Project CRISS can become a tool for instilling deep and lasting changes in a school by creating a culture where students and educators will indeed become and remain life-long learners. Yet, as with other initiatives dealing with effective schools, the success of the project depends upon school leadership and teacher expertise.

The relationship between teacher expertise and student achievement is undeniable. While curriculum, class size, district funding, community, and family involvement all contribute to student achievement, none is as important as the teacher. Across multiple studies measuring student achievement, the teacher remains the key ingredient. Teacher expertise relates directly to student performance. (Strong & Hindman, 2003).

As educational leaders, we want schools filled with great teachers. Expert teachers have an energetic vitality, a deep commitment to teaching, and a burning desire to do their job even better. They are ravenous learners as they engage themselves and their students in a continual process of inquiry. This professional attitude must become the life breath of schools if we want them to be successful.

Schools must be places that promote teacher learning across all experience and ability levels. We want strong teachers to become even stronger and teachers new to the field to have every opportunity to become great teachers. Project CRISS aims to strengthen the expertise of everyone.

With careful planning and attention to on-going project implementation, Project CRISS can become a catalyst for creating a dynamic, learning culture. This manual is designed to help administrators make this cultural goal a reality.

To help school leaders reach these lofty goals, this manual is designed to be practical. It represents a compilation of good ideas gathered over the years from administrators who have facilitated the successful implementation of Project CRISS in their schools. Our hope is to provide on-going support as you and your colleagues progress through the various stages of implementation.

The ideas in this manual rest on the assumption that you already have some background knowledge about Project CRISS. Ideally, you have attended or have plans to attend a two- or three-day Level I CRISS Workshop. We also assume that you have access to the CRISS training manual which accompanies the Level I workshop.

This administrators' guide is used in conjunction with the CRISS manual and a CD-ROM and DVD from the video production, *Reading in the Content Areas with Research-Based CRISS Strategies* published by the Video Journal of Education. The CD-ROM and DVD are inserted on the inside of the back cover.

If you have the elementary edition of this guide, the CD-ROM contains parts 1 and 2 of the elementary version of the video *Reading in the Content Areas with Research-Based CRISS Strategies*; and, if you have the secondary edition of this guide, the CD-ROM contains parts 1 and 2 of the secondary program. The CD-ROM reviews the Level I training and shows classroom applications. The DVD contains part 3 of the video series which reviews the leadership program. It is the same for elementary and secondary.

If you haven't attended a CRISS workshop, we recommend you watch the first two parts of the video which provide an overview of the CRISS Principles and Philosophy and an introduction to many CRISS strategies. These CD-ROM presentations of teachers implementing Project CRISS in their classrooms provide background knowledge about the project.

Getting Started: Organizing a Planning Team

Use this guide with a planning team of administrators and teachers responsible for overseeing project implementation and follow-through within a school or district. Include on the team, key administrators, teacher leaders from different content and/or grade levels, and your on-site CRISS trainer or facilitator.

Keep the team relatively small. Set up a schedule to meet and develop a system of reporting back to the rest of the staff. Provide each member with a copy of these materials.

Embedded in this manual is a combination of questions and activities for individual and group involvement. Included are places for written responses; pages 37 through 41 provide space for additional reflections and comments. Use this manual as a tool to inspire active engagement and conversations among members of the team. Keep the CD-ROM, the DVD, and the CRISS manual handy so you can easily move from one to the other.

**PLANNING
TEAM
Task 1**

Identify Goals.

Before reading any further, begin your team discussion with a "Think-Pair-Share" (page 56 in CRISS manual).

"Think"\ about your goals for Project CRISS in your school or district. Brainstorm your own ideas here. Then "Pair"\ with a partner, revise and/or add to your ideas.

"Share"\ with the whole group. Record ideas so all can see using chart paper or a computer with a projection screen.

In your group discussion also talk about how you might meet these goals. What steps might you take? Record ideas on your chart.

PLANNING TEAM Task 2

Read Chapter 10.

Now that you have had an opportunity for discussion, think further about long-term goals by reading or rereading Chapter 10, Assessment, in the CRISS manual. Pay particular attention to the section describing the CRISS Five Star School which delineates the features for examining the depth of implementation within a school. The gold standard *for CRISS implementation is the Five Star School. Appendix A, page 43, describes the features of a Five Star School and provides space where schools can assess the level of implementation and plan for future growth. Schools reaching this standard have used the project for several years and have progressively embedded the program by using success in one year to drive deeper implementation in the next.*

NOTE: This document can be helpful to districts in developing long-term goals. The Five Star School criteria also provide a general overview of the ideas presented in this administrator's manual.

With your team, fill out the second column—"Where are you now?" of this blackline (Appendix A, page 43).

PLANNING TEAM Task 3

View First Half of Leadership Video.

Next watch the first half of Part 3, the Leadership video, on the DVD (gold and red segments, about 14 minutes in length). It provides a succinct overview of the resources needed to help your staff become more proficient with Project CRISS. It also introduces the Implementation Map (Appendix B, insert) which is a useful management tool for long-term planning.

With this additional information, return to the summary of your previous discussion. Continue to talk about goals and ways to meet these goals. Add additional comments to the chart paper. Consider the following questions:

• What will implementation of Project CRISS look like in one year, in two years, in three years from now?

• What will Project CRISS look like for the teachers? For students? For administrators?

• How will administrators support teachers?

PLANNING TEAM Task 4

Develop the Implementation Map.

As you read through this guide, document plans for implementation on the Implementation Map, Appendix B (insert). As shown on the video, you may place planning sticky notes directly on this map (we suggest you laminate it first). Read through the following guidelines for each column. (NOTE: If this map does not meet the needs of your school or district, feel free to create your own Implementation Map on a large sheet of chart paper. When creating your own map, make sure 3" x 3" sticky notes can fit within each column.)

1. Project CRISS Goals
   • Record the goals you and your team developed as part of Planning Team Task 1.
   • Identify which goals you can accomplish in Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3. You may want to record each year on a different color of sticky note*. (*We suggest using sticky notes so plans can be revised as your school or district progresses through the first three years of CRISS implementation.)

2. Plans for Successfully Launching Project CRISS
    • Read through Chapter 1 of this guide and determine when you can carryout Whole Staff
      Discussions 1 and 2. (See page 7.) Record on a Year 1 sticky note.
    • Record the information from these discussions in the appropriate columns of your Map.
    • Read through the section of the CRISS Web site entitled "Guidelines for an Effective CRISS
      Implementation," (www.projectcriss.com "Training" section). We suggest printing this section
      for all team members. Also, read "Planning for a Successful Initial Implementation" on
      page 8 of this guide. Using this information for guidance, record your planning steps on the
      Implementation Map.

3. Staff Training
    • Determine when teachers, administrators, support personnel, and substitute teachers will be
      trained and which staff will be trained in years 1, 2, and 3.
    • Plan for developing a school or district corps of certified CRISS Trainers.

4. Administrator Training and Walk-throughs
    • Develop a schedule for the planning team to meet and read the *CRISS for Administrators*
      materials. Chapter 5 in this guide provides specific information on the administrative walk-
      through process.
    • Plan for an administrators' workshop detailing the walk-through process for CRISS. Contact the
      CRISS office for details, 1-877-502-7477.

5. Sustaining Project CRISS Implementation
    • Read through Chapter 3 of this guide and review the "Guidelines" document from the CRISS
      Web site. With your team decide what elements of follow-up your school will implement to
      support Project CRISS. Record on sticky notes and add to your Implementation Map.
    • Integrate *CRISS Cornerstones* into your plan. (See page 20.) We recommend using it during
      years two and/or three to maintain implementation.

6. Enlisting the Support of Parents and the Community
    • Read through Chapter 4 of this guide. With your team determine when you will implement the
      parent workshop and the other ideas listed. Record on sticky notes and place on the
      Implementation Map.

7. Teacher Implementation Data Collection
    • Review Chapter 5 of this guide on the walk-through process and determine where it fits in this
      data collection process.
    • Read pages 224-229 in Chapter 10 of the CRISS manual. Can you use the Teacher Pre/Post
      Survey (Appendix E, page 52 in this guide) and the Level of Use Matrix (Appendix C,
      page 48)? Where do the CRISS Strategic Learning Plan and teacher journals and portfolios fit
      into your plan?
    • Determine where the various tools provided in this quide (See the appendices starting on
      page 42) fit into your three-year plan for data collection.

8. Student Implementation Data Collection
    • Review pages 229-231 in Chapter 10 of the CRISS manual.
    • Determine where the Student Pre/Post CRISS Survey might fit into your plan (See Appendix F,
      page 54 in this guide.)
    • Plan when and how administrative walk-throughs can be used to evaluate student
      implementation.

9. Student Achievement Data Collection
   • Determine what tools you can use and when students can be assessed. Add this information to your Implementation Map.

The suggestions presented in this manual will help with developing a Implementation Map that fits within your own school culture. After reading each section of this manual, take a moment to discuss with your planning team whether or not some of the ideas could be included within your school's implementation plan.

Display the planning map in a high traffic area such as the staff break room or conference room. The map will show staff the considerable planning that has gone into the Project CRISS initiative as a multi-year school-wide goal. Revisions will remind staff that the map is a fluid document; it's always a work in progress. Principals may want to keep a duplicate copy of the map, or a software version, in their offices for easy reference.

The Organization of CRISS for Administrators

With this background preparation, let's move into the content of this guide. Keep both the criteria for the Five Star School and the Implementation Map handy.

This manual is structured around several key components or questions which frequently arise about successful project implementation. They are as follows:

• How do schools or districts launch Project CRISS effectively?

• What are the keys to successful implementation?

• How do schools or districts sustain Project CRISS implementation?

• How can schools or districts enlist the support of parents and the community?

• How can Administrative Walk-throughs support and guide Project CRISS implementation?