



Introduction	
<i>Overview</i>	<p>This tool provides a list of capacity indicators necessary to execute and sustain the Smarter School Spending process. There are specific capacities in each section of the process that are necessary to effectively complete the process. Use this tool to identify what capacities you have and will need to complete Smarter School Spending.</p> <p>Most districts will not have all of the capacities at the start of the process, but rather, will use the experience as a way to build capacity to sustain the work going forward. You may use the worksheet on page 2 to track your self-assessment.</p> <p>After completing this tool, districts should be ready to begin the Smarter School Process, armed with a complete understanding of their district's strengths and weaknesses with respect to capacities and readiness. Additionally, districts should have a plan for addressing any weak capacities and/or readiness criteria. The Introductory District Diagnostic Resources document has more detailed information on ways to acquire the necessary capacity.</p>
<i>What is the challenge you are trying to solve?</i>	Ensure that you have the necessary people, time and resources to support the Smarter School Spending process.
<i>What will you get out of this activity?</i>	<p>This capacity assessment will help you determine what additional support you will need to complete Smarter School Spending. After assessing your district's capacity you should think about whether you need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire additional staff to support the implementation of Smarter School Spending • Build internal capacity using the tools and resources provides on this website • Partner with an external provider for support
<i>When should we do this activity?</i>	The Introductory District Diagnostic should be completed at the beginning of the process during Step 1: Plan and Prepare . It can also be reviewed at the end of the process in Step 11: Continuous Improvement to ensure that you have developed the capacities to continue to support the work going forward.
<i>How long will it take to complete?</i>	Assessing your district's capacity should take no longer than 30 minutes . If you choose to hire or identify a partner to support Smarter School Spending then you should allow sufficient time to complete the hiring or procurement processes (e.g. 6 weeks-6 months.)
<i>Who should be involved?</i>	District leadership as well as the Working Group should be involved in identifying the additional resources that may be needed to support the process.
<i>Is technical assistance support necessary?</i>	No
<i>Tips & Tricks</i>	The resources and examples listed at end of each indicator table are examples of the types of tools or processes that you will need to complete in Smarter School Spending. They should be used to give you a sense of the amount of time, skills and information you will need to achieve these capacities.



CAPACITY

Use the following table to track your capacity in each indicator

Step	Capacity	Self-Assessment (1= No Capacity, 4 = Full Capacity)	How will you acquire necessary capacity?
1. Plan and Prepare	A. Sufficient and experienced staff to manage a complex strategic planning process that involves setting instructional priorities, identifying cost savings options, engaging stakeholders and communicating strategically		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	B. The necessary information and knowledgeable staff to project with reasonable accuracy expenditures and revenues for the next 3-5 years to determine how much cost savings are needed to fund instructional priorities		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	C. Dedicated staff, tools and processes in place to determine stakeholder support at key stages of the strategic and financial planning process and make adjustments to the process based on stakeholder feedback		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
2. Set Instructional Priorities	A. Dedicated time to identify the critical elements of each of its instructional priorities and the information and staff with capacity to estimate with reasonable accuracy the additional 3-5 year costs needed for effective implementation of these priorities		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
3. Pay for Priorities	A. Understand the cost savings options successfully used by other districts and the necessary data and staff to identify an initial list of potential cost savings options that merits further consideration for your district		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary



	B. The ability to collect information and execute analysis to determine the potential savings, impact on students, ease of implementation and collect stakeholder feedback for the prioritized cost saving options		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	C. Communication tools and processes that can proactively and regularly engage the board and key stakeholders to generate support and mitigate opposition to the district's instructional priorities and cost savings options		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	D. Staff dedicated to engagement around issues related to instructional priorities and cost savings		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
4. Implement Plan	A. Leaders that can collaborate to make tough budget tradeoff decisions		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	B. To produce a budget document that clearly shows resources devoted to instructional priorities and resources shifted for priorities based on considerations of cost effectiveness		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
	C. To produce a strategic finance plan that includes effective implementation of instructional priorities, identification of resources needed and cost savings options for the next 3-5 years		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary
5. Ensure Sustainability	<p>A. Staff and systems that can support effective implementation of instructional priorities and cost savings options and gather data on implementation quality that enables timely adjustments.</p> <p>Established systems or processes to assess existing and future program effectiveness based on specific outcomes.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Hire <input type="checkbox"/> Build <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> None necessary



1. Plan and Prepare

There are a set of activities your district should do to prepare for Smarter School Spending. The following indicators will help you understand the necessary capacities your district should have to adequately plan and prepare for a successful process


CAPACITY 1A

<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your District will need...</i>	Sufficient and experienced staff to manage a complex strategic planning process that involves setting instructional priorities, identifying cost savings options, engaging stakeholders and communicating strategically.	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have staff that it can dedicate to a complex strategic planning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has staff that it can dedicate to a complex strategic planning process but the staff lacks sufficient experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district is in the process of training staff to manage effectively a complex strategic planning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has sufficient and experienced staff to manage a complex strategic planning process that involves setting instructional priorities, identifying cost savings options, engaging stakeholders and communicating strategically.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources:</i>	Process Organization & Work Planning Guide – The guide provides an overview of how to structure the Smarter School Spending Process	

CAPACITY 1B

<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your District will need...</i>	The necessary information and knowledgeable staff to project with reasonable accuracy expenditures and revenues for the next 3-5 years to determine how much cost savings are needed to fund instructional priorities	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have the necessary data or knowledgeable staff to project its revenue and expenditures for the next 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/>



	years with sufficient accuracy.	
2	The district is developing the capacity to project its revenue and expenditures with sufficient accuracy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has the necessary data to project its revenue and expenditures but does not have staff with the ability to translate that information into an analysis of how much cost savings are needed to fund instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has knowledgeable staff and necessary data to project with reasonable accuracy expenditures and revenues for the next 3-5 years to determine how much cost savings are needed to fund instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	 Budget Projection Tool – Districts can input basic financial information to generate projected finances for the next 5 years	



CAPACITY 1C		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your District will need...</i>	Dedicated staff, tools and processes in place to determine stakeholder support at key stages of the strategic and financial planning process and make adjustments to the process based on stakeholder feedback	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	This district does not have the necessary staff, tools or processes to determine stakeholder support for its instructional priorities and cost savings options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has identified key stakeholders but does not have dedicated staff or processes to determine their support for its instructional priorities and cost savings options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has the ability to develop a communication plan and has dedicated staff but has not developed processes to determine stakeholder support at key stages of the strategic and financial planning process and make adjustments to the process based on stakeholder feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has dedicated staff and has the tools and processes to determine stakeholder support at key stages of the strategic and financial planning process and make adjustments to the process based on stakeholder feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	<u>Communications & Engagement Planning Workbook</u> — Districts may use planning templates within this downloadable workbook to address the five key planning steps: Segment, Strategize, Simplify, Sequence, and Success Metrics	



**2. Set Instructional
Priorities**



Having a set of instructional priorities are essential for the success of Smarter School Spending. The following indicators will help you identify the capacities you need to ensure you can develop appropriate instructional priorities, develop implementation plans and build support for those priorities

CAPACITY 2A		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i>	Dedicated time to identify the critical elements of each of its instructional priorities and the information and staff with capacity to estimate with reasonable accuracy the additional 3-5 year costs needed for effective implementation of these priorities	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district has dedicated time to identify its critical reforms but has not identified the critical elements or determined their costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has dedicated time to identify the key elements of its most critical reforms but does not have the information to determine their costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has identified the key elements of its most critical reforms and but does not have the staff with capacity to determine their costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has identified the key elements of its most critical reforms and can estimate with reasonable accuracy the additional 3-5 year costs needed for effective implementation of its priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <p>Instructional Priorities Planner – Districts can use this guide to identify the key components of their instructional priorities that will require additional investment</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <p>Cost Projection Tools – Districts can either input cost information into the provided blank template or personalize the pre-populated priority-specific templates to predict incremental investment in instructional priorities</p> </div> </div>	



3. Pay for Priorities

At this step the district will need to identify areas of cost savings to pay for their instructional priorities. There are a set of capacities necessary to execute analysis on potential cost savings and build support for change.




CAPACITY 3A		
<p><i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i></p> <p>To understand the cost savings options successfully used by other districts and necessary data and staff to identify an initial list of potential cost savings options that merits further consideration for your district</p>		
<p>Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i></p>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not yet understand the cost savings options successfully used by other districts and does not have the necessary data or team to conduct light touch analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district is developing the ability to determine which cost savings options successfully used by other districts merit further exploration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district clearly understands cost savings options successfully used by other districts and has collected the necessary data but has not dedicated a team or staff to complete light touch analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has the necessary data and staff time dedicated to conduct analysis to identify which cost savings options merit further exploration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i></p>	<p> Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets – Districts can leverage the findings within the issue briefs to explore and implement valuable methods of resource reallocation</p> <p> Cost Savings Options: Screening and Sizing Tool– Districts can identify a set of cost savings opportunities</p>	




CAPACITY 3B		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i>	The ability to collect information and execute analysis to determine the potential savings, impact on students, ease of implementation and collect stakeholder feedback for the prioritized cost saving options	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have the ability to fully explore its potential cost savings options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has the staff and but does not have the analytical bandwidth to identify the next steps needed to fully explore each of its highest potential cost savings options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has the staff and analytical bandwidth to explore some cost savings options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has the staff and analytical bandwidth to explore all of the potential cost savings options independently or with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	Identify Top Savings Options Guide – Districts can review and understand the process to quantify the savings from the screening and sizing tools Analyze Top Savings Options Guide – Districts can translate the savings tactics of their highest potential savings opportunities into analysis & findings	

CAPACITY 3C		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i>	Communication tools and processes that can proactively and regularly engage the board and key stakeholders to generate support and mitigate opposition to the district's instructional priorities and cost savings options	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have the communication tools and processes in place to link cost savings options to effective implementation of the district's instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has communication tools and processes to make the case for a specific cost saving option but cannot explain why it is needed for effective implementation of the district's instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>




3	The district can generally link cost savings options to the district's instructional priorities but cannot yet make a persuasive case that the cost savings options are needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district leadership has communication tools and processes that can persuasively make the case to the board and key stakeholders for cost savings options needed to implement the district's instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	 Strategic Finance Plan Template – District leaders can use this template to effectively communicate their 3-5 year strategic finance plan to the board  Introduction to Smarter School Spending — Districts may use this annotated PowerPoint to show how to connect the dots among the district's vision, goals, instructional priorities, potential cost savings, multiyear finance plan, and annual budget  Communications & Engagement Workbook — Districts may use planning templates within this downloadable workbook to address the five key planning steps: Segment, Strategize, Simplify, Sequence, and Success Metrics	

CAPACITY 3D		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i>	Staff dedicated to engagement around issues related to instructional priorities and cost savings	
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have any staff dedicated to communication and engagement issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has staff dedicated to engagement issues but they do not have the skills necessary to communicate around instructional priorities or cost savings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has some staff they can dedicate to communication and engagement issues with some skills necessary to communicate around instructional priorities or cost savings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district already has staff dedicated to engagement and communication around instructional priorities and cost savings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	 Communications & Engagement Planning Workbook — Districts may use planning templates within this downloadable workbook to address the five key planning steps: Segment, Strategize, Simplify, Sequence, and Success Metrics	



4. Implement Plan

To implement instructional priorities and cost savings options there are a set of capacities related to making trade off decisions, implementing the budget and developing a strategic finance plan.

CAPACITY 4A		
<i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i>		
Leaders that can collaborate to make tough budget tradeoff decisions		
Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district's academic and finance leader generally do not collaboratively make resource decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district's academic and finance leaders talk periodically about programmatic and resource priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district's academic and finance leaders are generally together in the room when resource decisions are made.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district's academic and finance leaders collaboratively make resource decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	 Balance Budget Tradeoffs – District leaders can use this tool to assist in finalizing key budget tradeoff decisions	




CAPACITY 4B

*To carry out
Smarter School
Spending Your
district will need...*

To produce a budget document that clearly shows resources devoted to instructional priorities and resources shifted for priorities based on considerations of cost effectiveness

Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner?
Check the box that most describes your district

1 (No Capacity)	The district has the necessary data to determine total spending on its instructional priorities or determine their cost effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district can determine total spending on its instructional priorities but cannot yet conduct analysis to determine their cost effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has the ability to determine the cost effectiveness of its instructional priorities but does not have the ability to develop a new process or format for budget development.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district can produce a budget document that shows total resources devoted to instructional priorities and clearly reflects shifts in funding based on consideration of cost effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i>	 Strategic Budget Guide –Districts can employ the template to transparently communicate the use of district resources	

CAPACITY 4C


*To carry out
Smarter School
Spending Your
district will need...*

To produce a strategic finance plan that includes effective implementation of instructional priorities, identification of resources needed and cost savings options for the next 3-5 years

Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner?
Check the box that most describes your district

1 (No Capacity)	The district does not yet have a process to develop and adopt a 3-5 year strategic finance plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has a process to identify the resources needed to implement its instructional priorities over the next 3-5 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district can identify the resources needed to implement its instructional priorities over the next 3-5 years but has not yet adopted them as a strategic finance plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>






<p>4 (Full Capacity)</p>	<p>The district can produce a strategic finance plan that includes effective implementation of instructional priorities, identifies resources needed and includes cost savings options for the next 3-5 years.</p>	<p>□</p>
<p><i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resources</i></p>	<p> Strategic Finance Plan Template – leaders can use this template to effectively communicate their 3-5 year strategic finance plan to the board</p>	



5. Ensure Sustainability

To ensure that the district can continue to implement the priorities and cost saving options, the district must monitor the effectiveness of the program and implement systems to ensure continuous improvement

CAPACITY 5A		
<p><i>To carry out Smarter School Spending Your district will need...</i></p>	<p>Staff and systems that can support effective implementation of instructional priorities and cost savings options and gather data on implementation quality that enables timely adjustments</p> <p>Established systems or processes to assess existing and future program effectiveness based on specific outcomes</p>	
<p>Does your district have the capacity already or does it need to hire, build, or partner? <i>Check the box that most describes your district</i></p>		
1 (No Capacity)	The district does not have systems in place to measure the effective implementation of its instructional priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The district has identified a methodology to measure implementation of its instructional priorities but does not have the staff with capacity to use that methodology.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The district has begun to measure implementation of its instructional priorities but does not yet have data to enable timely adjustments and budget changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 (Full Capacity)	The district has dedicated staff and is able to gather data on effective implementation of its instructional priorities to make adjustments and budget changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><i>At full capacity, your district should be able to use the following resource</i></p>	<p> Measuring Impact Guide – An overview on how to ensure that student outcome measures are integrated into the resource allocation process</p> <p> Program Evaluation Survey – Districts can adapt this survey to assess the implementation and impact of various programs</p> <p> Program Success Tracker- Districts can use this tool to track the effectiveness of programs going forward</p>	