HOW TO WRITE A BAD ACTION PLAN

Or,
Instead of Doing This, Do That
1. Work by yourself

INSTEAD

• An action plan must grow out of a study that includes all stakeholders
• Must be part of a school-wide assessment of the current program or profile
2. Don’t clutter your life with notes, minutes, rough drafts

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• Keep all notes.
• Take minutes at planning sessions.
• Keep all drafts until the process is complete.
3. Base it on jobs that need to be done or are already scheduled

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• It must not be a list of “Must-do” items.
• It is not to be a list of capital or maintenance items to be completed.
For example, “Paint the Administration Building” is not an action plan.
• You are looking for broader areas that need improvement and will improve student learning.
• They are to be in responses to areas needing growth revealed in your self-study
4. Start writing. The important thing is to produce a good looking document

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- Know what you want to accomplish
- Ask “What problem are we wanting to solve?”
5. Do Not address student learning

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- The action plan must address the issue of student learning.
- It needs to address the ESLRs or SLOs.
- It probably does not address them all. That is okay.
- A visiting team should be able to see a parallel finding in the self-study that corresponds to the plan.
6. Have lots of them.

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- Make sure each action plan is worthy of the school’s focus and that it is achievable.
- The idea is to go towards one overarching Action Plan with various aspects.
7. Be vague and general

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• Be specific
• Think through the steps necessary to accomplish the growth goal
• Break the plan down into manageable and obtainable steps
• Be measurable, coherent, concrete, and comprehensible to teachers and administrators
• Follow a format similar to the following table:
The Heading

Action Plan: To bring together the long-range plans of various parts of the school’s program, a schoolwide master plan needs to be developed.

Rationale: An overarching master plan would have a positive impact on student learning by making more explicit the connections between the various aspects of the school’s program and its ESLRs.

Growth Target: The implementation of a five-year schoolwide master plan

ESLRs Addressed: Spiritual, Academic, Physical, and Social
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Person responsible</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
<th>Reporting process</th>
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8. Keep them secret

INSTEAD

• Be sure your visiting team doesn’t have the pleasure of introducing your faculty, staff, board, or any stakeholders to the Action Plans in your document.
9. Ignore strong portions of your program.

INSTEAD

• It is okay to include things you are doing well and want to make sure they stay strong.
• You do not want strong areas to become future areas of growth due to lack of attention.
10. Keep the time line short – one year maximum

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• These should be plans that will be deep and significant enough to provide focus for several years.
• Think Ongoing School Improvement
11. Be optimistic and idealistic

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- Set measurable goals
- Be realistic about timelines
12. “Pour them in concrete”

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• Constantly reevaluate them. If circumstances change, modify them and document.
13. Whatever you do, forget it!

INSTEAD

• The biggest mistake is that you never follow up on the action plan.
• Have a plan to review it on a regular basis.
• Even if you succeed in writing a bad one, if it has steps, do them!
• Better yet, WRITE A NEW ONE!