

2012

Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) Guide

Facilitating Districtwide Improvement
in Instructional Practices and Student Performance



Department
of Education

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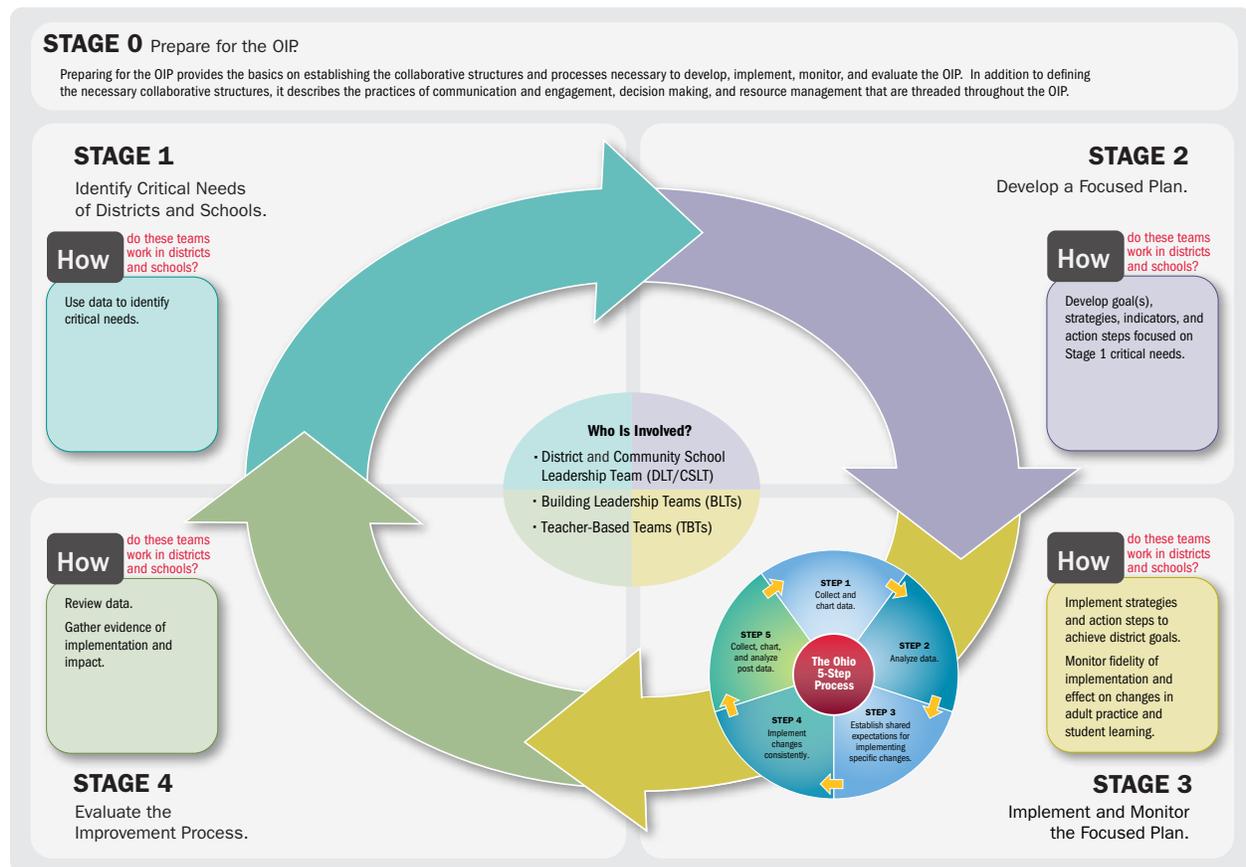
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Abstract

This guide is intended for districts and buildings implementing the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). It is designed to provide the key basics, need-to-know information, tools, and adaptable resources for each stage of the OIP. A large part of the guide is organized by working agendas with relevant talking points and key messages that a District Leadership Team or Community School Leadership Team (DLT/CSLT) and Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) can use to facilitate the process. It contains scant research because this information can be found in the Ohio Leadership Development Framework Modules (www.ohioleadership.org). Further online training on each stage (Stages 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4) can be found at this same website.

The Ohio Improvement Process

To see the full-size visual, [click here](#).



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Overview

During the past 10 years, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has provided guidance to districts or community schools that are involved in the continuous improvement process. This guidance, a linchpin of the Statewide System of Support (SSoS), has benefited schools, districts, and community schools. The department recognizes, however, that it needs to model continuous improvement and that the guidance and support that is provided needs to be constantly improved. The work that has gone into the development of the *OIP Guide* is the culmination of that improvement.

The *OIP Guide* should be considered as a whole. The objective is not to simply comply with state and federal requirements; it is to improve education for every student in every school. A local high-achieving education system (district, community school, buildings, classrooms) using this process will accomplish the following aims:

- Complete a comprehensive, systematic analysis of the critical areas for improving student achievement.
- Focus on a few issues that have the greatest impact on student achievement by determining cause and effect.
- Develop a few SMART goals that respond to the most critical needs.
- Agree on evidence-based or research-based measurable strategies to reach the goals.
- Indicate a small number of actions with purposeful timelines and designate a responsible person(s) and necessary resources to implement them.
- Determine focused, content-specific, high-quality professional development (HQPDP) for all staff.
- Identify specific parent involvement actions to meet the needs of parents and students.
- Create a schedule and explicit steps to monitor strategies, actions, student performance, and adult practices.
- Establish methods and techniques to communicate the plan and plan progress and results.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders throughout the process.

Seven Principles of the OIP

The vision for Ohio is “all students start ready for kindergarten, actively engage in learning, and graduate ready for college and careers,” regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, disability, gift, or talent. Each district or community school and building is working toward that end, as well as toward ensuring equitable access to high-quality instruction for all student groups in keeping with federal and state laws. Continuous improvement planning is the core process for improving instructional practice, leading to higher achievement for all students. The following seven principles summarize the essential characteristics of the OIP.

- 1. Aligns vision, mission, and philosophy.** Every step of the continuous improvement planning process should always be addressed in light of the vision, mission, and philosophy or beliefs of the district and community school. The questions should be “Do the strategies, actions, and resource allocations support our vision, mission, beliefs, and goals?” and “Are our behaviors and decisions congruent with our vision, mission, beliefs, and goals?”
- 2. Is continuous and recursive.** Districts fully committed to high performance do not view continuous improvement as a process that occurs in addition to what they do. Continuous improvement is the core work at every level of the organization and by nature repeats itself.
- 3. Relies on quality data interpretation.** An effective planning process is predicated on the ability of the district or community school, buildings, and classrooms to use (collect, organize, analyze) data to identify critical problems, develop a focused plan, monitor progress, and evaluate plan impact.
- 4. Is collaborative and collegial.** Every plan gets its strength from the people who are committed to it. To make sure the plan will yield positive results, engage the community in understanding the plan, helping to make it stronger, and ultimately, becoming invested in making it work. Include business and community representatives, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and district or community school staff in the planning process, and make the draft plan available for input from the entire community. Make sure the plan reflects the combined thinking and planning of collaborative teams who support plan development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- 5. Ensures communication with those who are affected by the success of the district or community school at each stage.** District or community school priority needs and causes may be related to the issues communities and schools are seeing, and their thoughts may help the planning team(s) better understand the situation. Multiple opportunities for communication and feedback should be included throughout the process.
- 6. Produces one focused, integrated plan that directs all district or community school work and resources.** Heretofore, districts and community schools have had many plans (e.g., technology, professional development, Title 1, Title 2, special education, career and technical education) for many reasons (e.g., basis of funding applications, federal or state requirements). Multiple plans diminish the district’s or community school’s ability to respond to the most critical needs. By developing one integrated, focused plan that responds to the most critical needs, the district or community school will leverage resources to achieve lasting success.
- 7. Establishes the expectation for substantive changes in student performance and adult practices.** The purpose of having a well-conceived planning process is to produce a plan that, if implemented with fidelity, will change student and adult behaviors that lead to improved instructional practice and student performance.

“Everyone leads. It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.”

—Everyone Leads by *Dan Zadra (Compiler), Kobi Yamada, and Steve Potter (Designers)*
(Newtown, PA: *Compendium, 2003*)

Large-Scale Change

The OIP principles and process supports large scale change by

- *Emphasizing the district or community school role* and recognizing that each district and all the schools within that district are part of a system and need to operate as one, requiring a different role and relationship for district-level central office personnel (i.e., moving from program “ownership” to shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability)
- *Redefining leadership* as being about the “improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role” (R. F. Elmore, *School Reform From the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2004]) and recognizing that improvement is everyone’s responsibility—at all levels of the district or community school and in all districts and community schools—thus requiring a common approach and focus across all programs, departments, and offices within the district.
- *Redefining “the system”* to include a focus on aligned and coherent actions at the school, district or community school, region, and state levels that minimizes or eliminates contradictory or conflicting directives.
- *Monitoring the degree of implementation of focused strategies* to determine the effects on changes in adult practice and student achievement is a critical part of the improvement process with an emphasis on monitoring for improvement and learning—not compliance.
- *Establishing internal accountability* where adults hold each other accountable for shared work through leadership structures (DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBTs).
- *Sustaining improvement* through a collective focus on a few targeted strategies and full implementation of these strategies districtwide or community school-wide (every building, every classroom).
- *Setting boundaries for and focusing local conversation and dialogue* to assist adults in collectively and strategically making smarter decisions about which problems to tackle and how to spend time, energy, and resources in addressing those problems (representing a change from solutions regardless of need to identified needs driving the right solutions).

Integrated, Research-Based Approach

The OIP is based on research about what causes districts and community schools to improve. In summary this research states that

- To sustain improvement of teaching and learning on a large scale, the whole district or community school must be involved and include strong lines of communication.
- The role of district or community school and school administrators should be refocused with the highest priority on improving teaching and learning. Data are used as the vehicle for changing conversations in ways that allow the most critical problems the district or community school faces to be identified and addressed.
- It is important to give equal focus to the “how,” as well as the “what,” of improving teaching and learning, continuously using a cycle of monitoring and evaluating progress in order to constantly improve achievement.

Stage 0 Preparing for the OIP

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Abstract

“Preparing for the OIP” provides the basics on establishing the collaborative structures and processes necessary to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the OIP. In addition to defining the necessary collaborative structures, it describes the practices of communication and engagement, decision making, and resource management that are threaded throughout the OIP. A working agenda, with relevant talking points, key messages, and resources, is provided to support the facilitation of an OIP orientation meeting for DLT/CSLT and BLTs.

“Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement.”

—Richard Elmore,
Building a New Structure for
School Leadership
(Washington, DC: Albert
Shanker Institute, 2000)

Collaborative Structures

One of the seven principles of the OIP is that it is a collaborative, collegial process. Collaboration does not occur automatically; it runs against norms of isolation and autonomy so pervasive in the field of education. As illustrated in Figure 1, collaboration is the highest level of functioning on a continuum of how information, knowledge, and work operate together in any organization. As an organization moves along the continuum, the tasks and requirements become more complex. The goal is for collaborative teams to operate at a high level of effectiveness, progressing along through the continuum, with the ability to

- Implement procedures for the effective use of data to assess impact on student learning and to make decisions about teaching and learning.
- Work in a culture that supports the effective use of data to improve student performance by organizing and presenting data in ways that identify gaps and trends in student performance and requiring intentional decisions on curriculum and instruction, interventions, and professional learning. Closing achievement gaps requires accelerating the progress of low-performing students and student groups to meet the performance level of regularly developing peers.
- Use building, course, and classroom data to constantly monitor progress in meeting performance targets for the building and each grade level and in planning for the success of all children in order to close achievement gaps.

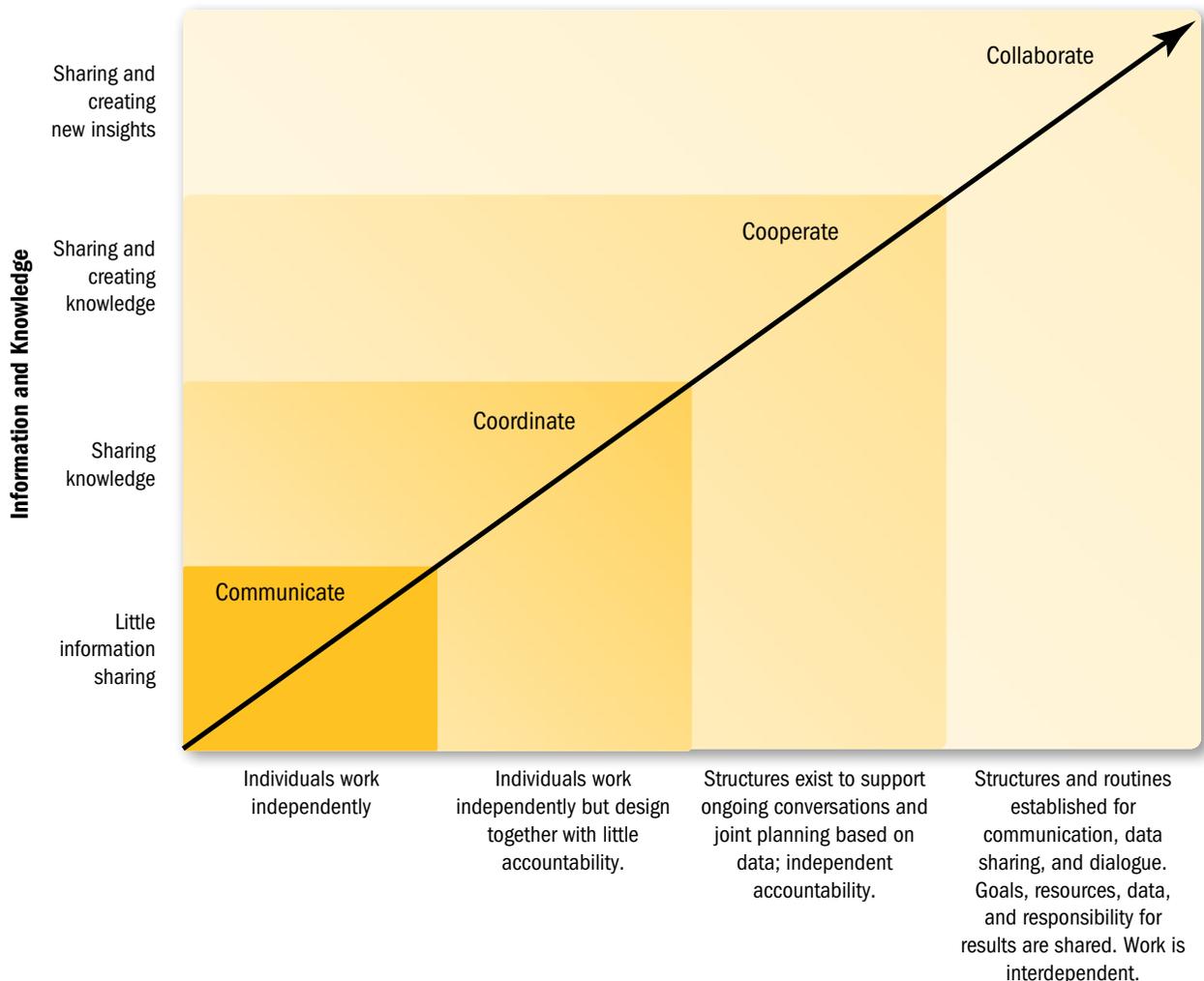
“Collective work in trusting environments provides a basis for inquiry and reflection into teachers’ own practice, allowing teachers to take risks, solve problems and attend to dilemmas in their practice.”

—Professional Learning in the Learning Profession (*School Design Network at Stanford University, 2009*)

Central to the call for reframing leadership is the recognition that district or community school culture must require and support the use of collaborative structures at the district or community school, building, and classroom levels to facilitate communication, build trust and credibility, and stay focused on the collective and shared responsibility for improving student achievement. Improvement of relationships and the development of a collaborative culture become part of a systemwide focus on improvement. Building a culture means creating pervasive norms from the district or community school all the way to the classroom. A collaborative culture

- Empowers people at all levels.
- Respects diverse cultural experience of staff, students, family, and community.
- Attends to the diverse cultural needs of students served.

Figure 1. How Information, Knowledge, and Work Operate in an Organization



By putting structures in place, the district or community school is building its capacity to engage in continuous improvement. It is important for districts or community schools and buildings to

- Define and reassess collaborative team structures (DLT/CSLT, BLTs, TBTs) to do the work of improving student performance and teacher practice.
- Assess the effectiveness of these structures to focus on the work.
- Understand the need for scheduling or “finding time” for collaboration at every level.
- Establish the conditions for effective collaborative teams, that is, norms of practice; guidelines or protocols; training; resources such as time and personnel; communication; and reporting.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teams and individuals to grow, develop, and learn from experiences, and, as a result, become more effective and proficient in the collective work.

DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBT Membership and Roles and Responsibilities

One of the most important decisions the district or community school and building will make in the improvement process is selecting the right people for the work. The following describes the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the individuals and groups needed to effectively implement the OIP. The members are

- Board of education
- Superintendent
- Facilitator
- District Leadership Team/Community School Leadership Team
- Building administrator
- Building Leadership Team
- Teacher-Based Team
- Goal workgroup
- Goal, strategy, or action manager

Board of Education

The specific responsibilities of the board members are these:

- Create and adopt planning policy
- Approve goals prior to full plan development
- Adopt a focused plan and budget
- Monitor plan results (indicators)
- Communicate goals, progress, and expectations to the community

Superintendent

The superintendent, in addition to being on the DLT, has other responsibilities. As a vision and mission keeper, resource allocator, and architect of the plan, the superintendent also must assume the following responsibilities:

- Oversee the OIP and establish additional procedures to implement the process, if needed.
- Select the DLT.
- Set direction and expectations for the DLT.
- Be present and practice shared leadership with the DLT.
- Engage staff and community in the planning process.
- Create collaborative structures for plan development.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement.
- Approve a single, focused, data-driven, and evidence-based or research-based plan.
- Budget the plan.
- Monitor plan development.
- Hold participants accountable for results.
- Communicate plan content, process, and results.

Facilitator

Facilitation of the process cannot be underestimated. The facilitator's role is to help manage the progression of the discussion and process in order to build the capacity of the district or community school and building to fully engage in continuous improvement. The district or community school may choose to use a facilitator external to the district or community school, for example, State Support Team (SST) or Education Service Center (ESC) staff or a trusted employee who will be accepted by everyone as an internal facilitator. Both external and internal OIP facilitators must

- Serve as a critical friend who is a trusted partner, advocate for the success of the work, ask thought-provoking questions, ensure that responses are open and honest, and provide constructive feedback.
- Manage and direct meeting processes using a range of facilitation strategies.
- Understand meetings and make decisions affecting meeting dynamics.
- Keep the group focused on outcomes.

Specific OIP facilitator competencies have been defined in an effort to build consistency in the facilitation of the OIP. The intent of this tool is to assess competency (see **Facilitator Competencies Assessment, Resource 27**) and enhance performance in knowledge, skills, and behavior for external and internal staff employed to facilitate the OIP. This tool is meant primarily to support continuous professional growth of OIP facilitators and is not to be used as a single evaluation instrument.

Throughout this document, these competencies are inherent in the roles and responsibilities described in each stage of the OIP. Effective facilitators are flexible and follow principles, not rules. They improvise. They can direct or request, be firm or soft, serious or light, focus on tasks or on relationships. They have abundant knowledge about processes and groups. They are effortlessly competent with many facilitation moves. They also know they have more to learn and are continuing learners.

In selecting an OIP facilitator of the process, it is important to select individuals who demonstrate certain behaviors, namely, the following:

- Maintain neutrality.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Be empathetic—show understanding of the parties’ situations, needs, and feelings.
- Listen, paraphrase, clarify, and reflect.
- Intervene appropriately.
- Be authentic without defensiveness or a hidden agenda and explain the reasons for decisions.
- Encourage interaction.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Be an energizer by setting a positive tone.
- Keep the group moving on the problem or discussion.
- Avoid interpersonal confrontation.
- Act as the process guide and do not get involved in the content.

All teams, including the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs, go through stages of team development. Each stage has certain characteristics that influence how the facilitator responds to the group. These stages and the team characteristics are described in Table 1. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to move a team to Stage 4 as quickly as possible. It is likely that even within one meeting, a team may move in and out of several stages. The facilitator needs to adapt to where the team is and use appropriate responses as described in the third column. Facilitation becomes that of a critical friend, shifting the role of the facilitator from passive to actively challenging the DLT/CSLT, BLT, and/or TBT to focus on improving instructional practice and student performance and making data-based choices.

Table 1. The Stages of Team Development and Their Characteristics

Stage of Team Development	Team Characteristics	Facilitator Response
Stage One: Forming	Testing, polite, impersonal, watchful, guarded	Be more directive by clearly articulating the purpose of the meeting/group and discussing ground rules for group functioning.
Stage Two: Storming	Infighting, controlling, conflicts, confronting people, opting out, difficulties, feeling stuck	Help members deal with conflict, clarify differing viewpoints, and make sure hidden agendas or viewpoints are revealed.
Stage Three: Norming	Getting organized, developing skills, establishing procedures, giving feedback, confronting issues	Use problem-solving skills to mediate differing positions, clarify any role ambiguity, and when appropriate, refocus the purpose or rules for group functioning.
Stage Four: Performing	Mature, close, resourceful, flexible, open, effective, supportive	Serve as a collaborator and keep the group moving in a nondirective manner.

Making Connections to Special Areas and Populations. Team conversations on early childhood education, health and wellness, family engagement, and special needs populations should occur during the process. It is not necessary for everyone to be an expert in these areas; rather, it is critical to know what questions to ask to support their connection to OIP. Facilitators can use SST and ESC consultants within each region to inform the OIP. These personnel—for example, SST early childhood consultants—can provide expertise about Ohio’s structure, program policies and requirements, data sources, and evidence-based practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In addition, they can serve as a resource during OIP conversations and assist with district or community school facilitation.

District Leadership Team/ Community School Leadership Team

- Membership of the DLT/CSLT should include individuals with key positions at the various levels of the organization, for example:
 - Superintendent
 - Local school board member
 - Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) administrator, such as treasurer or federal programs director
 - Building-level administrators representative of all grade levels
 - Teacher leaders from various content areas, grade levels, buildings, and specialized instructional areas (e.g., special education, gifted, limited English proficient)
 - Special education, curriculum, and instruction directors or supervisors

- Other program directors or supervisors (e.g., preschool, health and nutrition, safety, family and civic engagement coordinator)
 - The Family and Civic Engagement Team representing parents; local businesses; health and human service and community organizations, such as Head Start director, education manager, or community preschool program director
 - Representatives from groups such as teacher bargaining units
- Those chosen for the team should be able to communicate effectively and influence others.
 - The size and composition of the DLT/CSLT is important for the success of the process. The DLT/CSLT should be small enough to enable efficient communication and coordination but large enough to represent all areas of the district or community school. In a large district, the team may include up to 20 people, whereas in a small district or community school, the team may be 10 people or fewer.
 - It is desirable to have the superintendent serve as an active participant and he or she may be the internal facilitator. The facilitator of the team, if not the superintendent, should be an individual who can represent the team to the superintendent and should be in constant communication with the superintendent. The facilitator must be able to articulate the work of the team, build consensus among team members, and contextualize the process as needed.
 - The superintendent may choose to have a cofacilitator. The benefit to having a cofacilitator is that if one of the two is not available then there is a backup. The downside of having a cofacilitator is the need for constant communication to ensure a consistent message and the need to give the facilitators equal weight in decision making (one cannot overrule the other).
 - A rotation cycle for the DLT/CSLT that allows for a core membership group with others serving a specified term may be necessary. For example, it is unlikely that all building-level administrators or teacher leaders can serve on the DLT/CSLT. These individuals could, however, serve in alternate years to ensure a broader base of representation, as could teacher leaders and external stakeholders. We suggest that individuals be asked to serve staggered terms of at least two years but no more than four years in order to have a balance of new and experienced members. In some cases, a rotation may not be required, particularly in small districts or community schools.
 - The DLT/CSLT needs to understand that the work continues after the plan is developed: The work of continuous improvement is ongoing and involves the DLT/CSLT in all four stages of the OIP.

DLT/CSLT members will need to allow significant time to complete Stage 1 of the OIP, and the facilitator will need additional time to plan and communicate with the superintendent and team members. Consistent attendance is important for continuity. If a member is frequently absent, the superintendent may need to seek a replacement during the data review and planning process. Designees for DLT/CSLT members should be allowed only in rare circumstances.

A summary of the responsibilities of the DLT/CSLT follows, several of which are drawn from the Ohio Leadership Development Framework (http://www.ohioleadership.org/up_doc/70532ODEOLAC.pdf):

- Implement planning policy.
- Promote commitment to continuous improvement.

- Maintain districtwide and community school–wide focus on high achievement for all students, including all subgroups.
- Facilitate the efforts of workgroups.
- Develop a single district or community school improvement plan that focuses on a few district or community school goals for instruction and achievement.
- Convey to schools and the community the district’s or community school’s mission for guiding the development of the focused plan.
- Ensure that schools have focused building plans that are aligned to the district’s or community school’s goals.
- Monitor the progress of the district or community school plan, performance, and indicators and make necessary adjustments that are based on data.
- Communicate to ensure coherence and continuity.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- Make decisions on financial and capital management aligned to district or community school goals and strategies.
- Evaluate the plan and process.

The DLT/CSLT will need to work with building administrators in selecting the people who are best suited for the OIP work. Considerations by the DLT/CSLT in preparing to work with the buildings may include the following:

- Consistency in expectations for all buildings
- Common parameters for and authority of BLTs
- Current patterns for finding time to meet
- Support (financial, material, personnel) for the buildings
- Capacity of DLT to support all buildings

Building Administrator

The building administrator, in addition to being on the BLT, has other responsibilities. As a vision and mission keeper and resource allocator, the building administrator also must assume the following responsibilities:

- Oversee the OIP and establish additional procedures, if needed.
- Select the BLT.
- Set direction and expectations for the BLT.
- Ensure time for BLTs and TBTs to meet.
- Be present and model shared leadership with the BLT.

- Engage staff and the community in the planning process.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement.
- Approve a single, focused, data-driven, and evidence-based or research-based school plan.
- Budget the school plan.
- Monitor plan action development.
- Hold participants accountable for results.
- Communicate plan content, process, and results.
- Prepare TBTs on their roles and responsibilities.
- Model the use and application of data to inform instructional effectiveness.
- Ensure access to valid, reliable, and useful data.
- Ensure data is shared across levels, DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs.
- Serve on an “equal footing or partnership” with all members of the BLT.
- Adjust the workday to accomplish the work of instructional leader.

The principal or building administrator also will need to identify a structure for how individuals and groups will work together, including determining who has decision-making authority, how communication should flow, and how relationships are structured.

Building Leadership Team

The BLT shifts the focus from an individual to a team that can function as a purposeful community. The BLT needs to understand that this work continues after the plan is developed and that the work of continuous improvement is ongoing and involves the BLT in all stages of the OIP.

- Membership of the BLT should include individuals with key positions at the various levels of the organization who may be representative of the following:
 - Principal or building-level administrators
 - Teachers who represent all grade levels or grade spans, early childhood, general education, special education and English language learners (ELL), including all subgroups
 - Nonadministrative staff who serve in a leadership position, for example, literacy coach, mathematics coach, afterschool coordinator, parent liaison
 - Noncertified staff, such as secretaries, custodial and maintenance staff, food services staff
 - Stakeholders representing parents, local businesses, or community organizations, such as a program that serves children and families who will transition into the elementary building
 - Teachers union representation
 - Central office—DLT/CSLT liaison or ad hoc members

- Those chosen for the team should be able to communicate effectively and influence others.
- The size and composition of the BLT is important for the success of the process. The BLT should be small enough to enable efficient communication and coordination but large enough to represent all aspects of the building.
- The facilitator of the team, if not the principal, should be an individual who can represent the team to the principal and should be in constant communication with the principal. The facilitator must be able to articulate the work of the team, build consensus among team members, and serve as the primary liaison with the DLT/CSLT. Anyone can be the facilitator of the BLT (for example, a teacher). This does not negate the pivotal role that the principal plays on the BLT.
- The BLT may choose to have a cofacilitator. The benefit to having a cofacilitator is that if one of the two facilitators is not available, there is a backup. The downside of having cofacilitators is the need for constant communication to ensure a consistent message and the need to give both facilitators equal weight in decision making (one cannot overrule the other).
- A rotation cycle for the BLT that allows for a core membership group with others serving a specified term may be necessary. For example, not all teachers can serve on the BLT at one time. Teachers could, however, serve in alternate years to be inclusive and balance the work. We suggest individuals be asked to serve staggered terms of at least two years but no more than four years in order to have a balance of new and experienced members. In some cases, a rotation may not be required, particularly in small districts or community schools.

A summary of the responsibilities of the BLT follows, several of which are drawn from the Ohio Leadership Development Framework.

- Promote commitment to continuous improvement.
- Maintain schoolwide focus on high achievement for all students.
- Facilitate the establishment and ongoing efforts of collaborative team structures that use data to inform and improve instructional practice.
- Develop a single SIP that focuses on a small number of actions aligned to the district's or community school's goals and strategies.
- Monitor the progress of the SIP, specifically adult implementation and student performance indicators and actions, and make necessary adjustments that are based on data.
- Communicate to ensure coherence and continuity.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- Make decisions on financial and capital management aligned to district or community school goals and strategies.
- Evaluate the SIP for impact and process.

Teacher-Based Team

The TBT shifts the focus from an individual teacher to a team of teachers who can function as a purposeful community. TBTs provide structured time for teachers to come together and review and revise the impact of teaching practice and student learning. They are forums for job-embedded professional learning. Well implemented, they enable teachers to draw from the professional knowledge that exists in their own school and among colleagues, which is informed by other professional development opportunities that help them learn research- or evidence-based practices.

- Membership of TBTs should include teachers who may be representative of the following:
 - Teachers in the same grade or same content area (TBTs may center on specific content areas within existing department structures.)
 - Intervention specialists supporting the needs of students with disabilities
 - District-supported early childhood classrooms within the elementary building

“In recent years, teachers have...emphasized the value of collaboration with their colleagues to improve student achievement.”

—MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Teachers, Parents, and the Economy
(March 2012)

- Community preschool programs that serve children who directly feed into the elementary building, such as Head Start teachers, childcare providers, and family home providers
- TBTs may also be arranged vertically across grade levels or disciplines to provide continuity of focus in instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- The facilitator of the team should be an individual who can represent the team to the BLT and should be in constant communication with the principal. The facilitator must be able to articulate the work of the team and build consensus among team members.
- The TBT may choose to rotate roles, including that of facilitator, among members. In this way, all members assume the role of facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, and so on, as determined by the team.

A summary of the responsibilities of the TBT follows.

- Generate standards-based common formative assessments by selecting the specific priority standards and grade-level indicators that students must master.
- Create a preassessment to be given prior to the unit of study (also used as the postassessment to be administered at the end of the unit of instruction).
- Collect and chart data in relation to student learning indicators and student performance data in relation to plan indicators (step 1 of Ohio’s 5-Step TBT Process).
- Analyze their students’ results, concentrating on specific students who are proficient, approaching proficiency, and falling far below proficiency on the identified standards-based concepts and skills (step 2 of Ohio’s 5-Step TBT Process).
- Determine and implement effective differentiated and engaging research-based instructional strategies that are based on students’ learning needs in their classrooms while continually assessing progress, both formally and informally, to monitor and adjust their selected strategies on the basis of their analysis of student learning results (steps 3 and 4 of Ohio’s 5-Step TBT Process).

- Postassess their students to determine mastery of the identified skills and concepts. If students have not reached mastery, interventions are implemented to ensure student success (step 5 of Ohio's 5-Step TBT Process).
- Discuss successes and challenges, learning from colleagues about how to implement classroom changes (step 3 of Ohio's 5-Step TBT Process).
- Report results to the BLT.
- Share work and celebrate successes.

Goal Workgroup

Membership of the workgroup will vary greatly by district or community school. Groups may be used to collect, organize, and summarize data during Stage 1. The goals will determine group membership during Stage 2. These groups may include content (e.g., literacy or mathematics) or program specialists with interdisciplinary perspectives and skills, teacher leaders from multiple levels, classified staff, parent and family representatives, public and private early learning representatives, student support services administrators, building-level administrators from multiple levels, special education designees, English language acquisition designees, assessment administrators, pupil personnel services administrators, and building and grounds administrators. Individuals who will be affected by the plan should participate. Goal workgroups have two primary functions:

- Review district or community school goals and the data upon which the goals were developed.
- Develop the strategies, indicators, and actions for the goals.

Goal workgroups also may become responsible for implementation and monitoring during Stage 3.

Sizes of workgroups will depend on the goals identified by the DLT/CSLT. Some individuals may need to participate in multiple goal workgroups. For example, if the district or community school has three goals and each includes professional development, it may be necessary to have the district's or community school's professional development specialist(s) participate in each group. In addition, the workgroups may need to call in others, as appropriate, to assist with working on a particular strategy or set of actions.

Goal, Strategy, or Action Managers

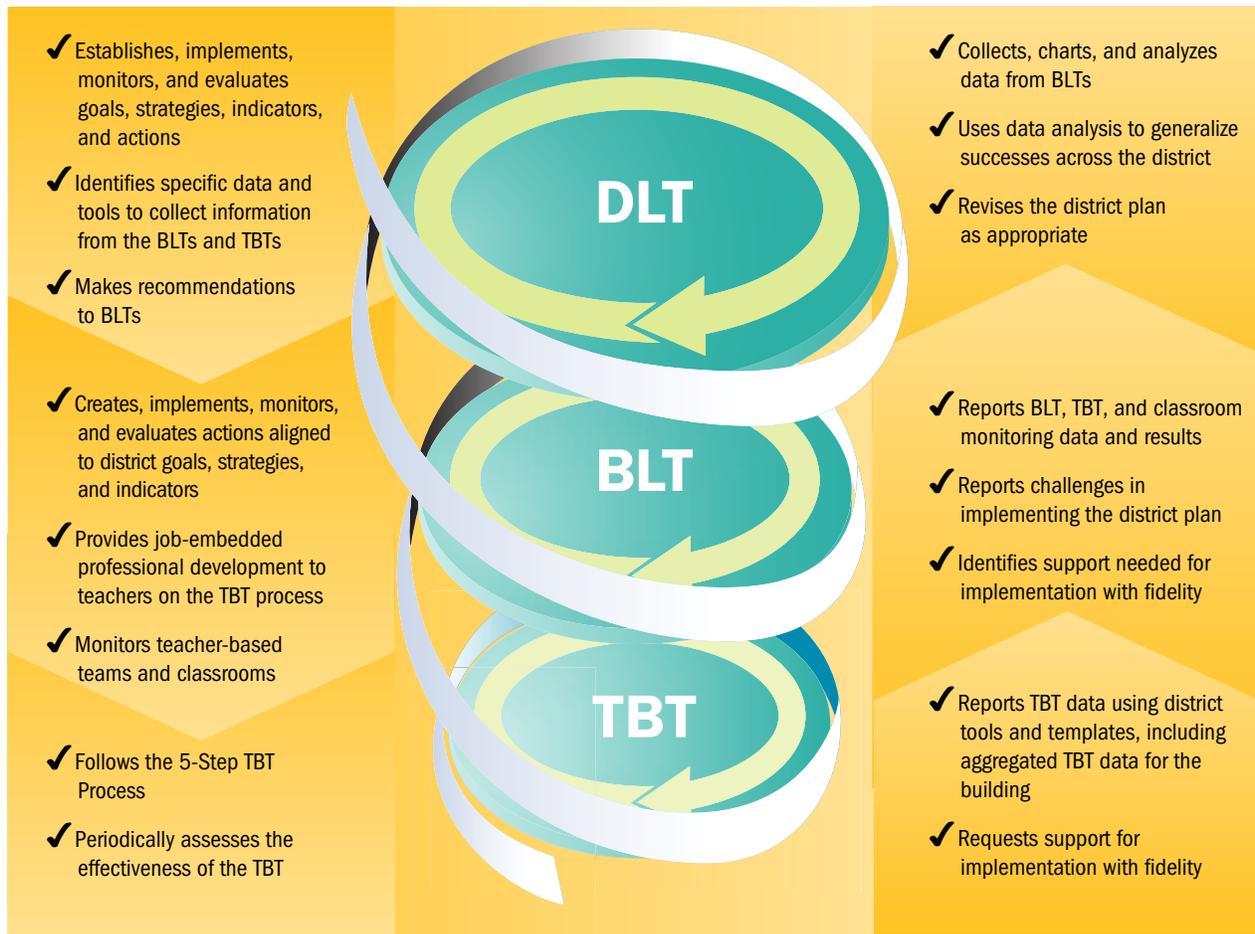
One option for the DLT/CSLT to consider when it reaches Stage 3 is to identify an individual who serves as a goal, strategy, or action manager. This person may or may not be a member of the DLT/CSLT or BLT. Responsibilities of the goal, strategy, or action manager may include

- Championing his or her assigned goal, strategy, or action
- Leading development of actions, tasks, or both
- Identifying and overseeing use of resources (timelines, persons responsible, budget)
- Reporting progress
- Communicating results to various stakeholders

Relationship of DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBT

Figure 2 illustrates the interrelationships of the DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBTs. The chart shows the ongoing, two-way communication and flow of information that occurs from the DLT to the BLT to the TBTs (checklist on the left) and the flow from the TBTs to the BLTs to the DLT (checklist on the right). TBTs serve as the foundation of the process because the entire focus of buildings and the district or community school should be on student learning and the support of teachers in the teaching and learning process.

Figure 2. Interrelationships of DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBTs



OIP Orientation for DLT/CSLT or BLTs—Working Agenda

A. Introductions and Purpose

The orientation should begin with participants introducing themselves (if not everyone is acquainted with each other), perhaps having individuals do the following:

- Give his or her name and current affiliation
- Complete the following phrases:
 - My experience with continuous improvement is....
 - I think the greatest challenge this group will face is....
 - I believe this group has a wonderful opportunity to....

This should be followed by a review of the participant agenda and an explanation of the purpose:

The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize the team with the OIP and their roles and responsibilities in developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the process and impact.

TIP:

Bring BLTs together for group conversation of the OIP overview and message from superintendent.

B. District Message: Vision or Mission and Expectations

The superintendent should provide the charge to the DLT/CSLT and BLT. If the superintendent is not present at the BLT orientation, the message may be provided in the form of a taped or live video or written correspondence. The charge should identify the following:

- District vision or mission, commitment, and purpose (e.g., develop a data-driven and evidence-based or research-based focused plan)
- Desired result (e.g., improvement in student achievement, accelerated student achievement for underperforming groups, and changes in educator practices)
- Level of authority in relation to decision making and one focused action plan aligned to district or community school goals and strategies
- Communication and monitoring linkages and relation between DLT/CSLT and BLT
- General timeline for plan development, implementation, and monitoring
- Resources available from the district or community school
- Expectations for DLT/CSLT and BLT membership including any nonnegotiables
- Importance of getting the needs assessments right—they affect the quality of plans

Once the superintendent's message has been provided, the district or community school planning policy should be explained.

Most districts or community schools have a vision or mission and often principles or ideas that articulate their perspective on education in their community. Sometimes they are voiced in a motto or statement that communicates what the district or community school considers to be its purpose.

“Convey to all schools the district’s vision and mission for guiding the collaborative development of district goals, and communicate performance targets to all buildings.”

—*Ohio Leadership Development Framework Module, Development of a Focused Plan*

The important part of having a mission is not the statement itself so much as it is the collective understanding of how the statement encourages specific behaviors and attitudes. A shared mission is achieved by learning and identifying the reason that a district or community school exists (mission). The role of data in shaping the future and identifying mission (e.g., improvement in student achievement) cannot be overestimated because it will ensure that the district’s or community school’s most crucial needs guide the work of district or community school employees.

If the DLT/CSLT feels it is necessary to revisit the district or community school mission, revisiting should occur before Stage 1 so the identification of critical needs is not delayed. Answers to the following questions may help the DLT/CSLT choose to revisit the district or community school mission:

- Is there an educational, legislative, or political benefit to revising the mission? Is the mission still timely?
- Have changes in data resulted in new understandings about students, educators, or community?
- Have community demographics shifted since the mission was last reviewed?
- Does the district or community school want to engage the community at this time?
- Who was involved in developing the current mission? Are they still the primary stakeholders?

C. Ground Rules and Assignments

A vital first step is the development of guidelines for participation, often referred to as ground rules, to provide a frame to ensure open, respectful dialogue and maximum participation. Most educators have participated in developing or using ground rules, so it is easier to list those rules commonly used and then ask for additional ground rules from the participants. When somebody proposes a ground rule, other participants should be asked whether they agree to it. If most do, it should be added to the list. When listing ground rules, explain the intent behind each of them. For example:

- Listen actively—that is, respect others when they are talking by paying attention and keeping an open mind. The goal is not to agree; it is about hearing and exploring divergent perspectives.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (say *I* instead of *they*, *we*, or *you*).
- Practice timely attendance—everyone should be present when the meeting starts, not leave the room except when absolutely necessary, and stay until the end of the meeting.
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks.

- Participate to the fullest of your ability because growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses because they can be as disrespectful as words. (Give examples.)
- Focus on ideas, not people.

It also is important to set a ground rule for how participation will be managed. For example, should participants raise their hands to be called on, or should people speak freely? Some people—especially those who tend to be introverted—need more time to process thoughts before speaking, so the latter option may exclude them from the discussion. Still, the formal process of raising hands to be recognized may detract from the collective atmosphere needed to discuss multicultural issues.

Once everyone agrees to the ground rules, they should be posted and visible during each meeting. They then can serve as a reference when there is a sense that participants are failing to sufficiently follow one or more of the items. It is everyone’s responsibility to challenge participants on the ground rules early and often. If the ground rules are not adhered to early in the process, it may become impossible to enforce them later. If a particular ground rule is routinely broken, it should be renegotiated by the participants.

Group ground rules and assignments form the basic structure of the group. A group assignment is a pattern of behavior expected of a group member. Each member of the group should assume a job, although assignments can be changed or rotated from meeting to meeting. The following list of common assignments can serve as a starting point. Roles appropriate to the meeting should be selected.

- *Recorder or reporter.* Serves as the group’s memory by taking minutes of the meetings and keeping the group’s records and history.
- *Timekeeper.* Monitors the use of time as allocated in the agenda and reminds the group when time exceeds the allocated time.

D. Overview of the OIP Stages

The basic **OIP Orientation Slide Presentation, Resource 1**, may be augmented as needed. Some key concepts to highlight during the presentation are

- The process will use a combination of state and local data to identify the most critical needs.
- The process highlights the importance of the DLT/CSLT–BLT–TBT and the role the DLT/CSLT plays in developing a coherent district or community school plan that rolls down to all buildings in the district or community school.
- The process will result in one focused plan, eliminating the need for multiple plans (technology, professional development, Title I and so on).
- The process is collaborative, not developed by one or a few people, and engages internal and external stakeholders.

The **OIP Visual and Summary of Stages, Resource 2**, and **DF/BDF Flowchart and DF/BDF Tabs, Resource 3**, are useful materials to distribute during this overview.

TIP:

Some groups will include individuals who inhibit group progress, for example, power seekers, time dominators, clowns, and recognition seekers. As a preemptive strike, these types of behaviors may need to be discussed as ground rules are established.

E. Repurposing Collaborative Structures to Support Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Because collaboration is key to successful OIP implementation, a good starting point is a discussion about what collaboration is and what it is not. The discussion may include general requirements for keeping teams on track:

- Allow sufficient time to meet
- Train members in the collaborative team process
- Use protocols to guide discussion
- Have a skilled facilitator to keep the agenda focused

Teacher's professional commitment and collegial learning account for 23 percent of the variation in school effectiveness and student outcomes on the state achievement test.

—*S. M. Hord & W. A. Sommers, Leading Professional Learning Communities: Voices From Research and Practice (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008).*

It also may be appropriate to provide the research base that shows the benefits of collaboration in support of improvement in student achievement. Three suppositions supported by research that bring home the urgency of using teams to improve instruction and student learning are important to include:

- Teachers working together rather than in isolation improve classroom instruction.
- Using data across the system results in improvements in student learning.
- Doing a few things well and deeply (focused) across the system results in sustainable improvement.

The DLT/CSLT will need at some point to identify the existing collaborative structures by building configuration. For example, elementary buildings may choose to define themselves by grade level or by grade spans (K–2, 3–5). Middle-level buildings may organize by content area or by core teams (if they are a middle school rather than a junior high school). High schools may organize by department, grade level, course, or some other defined group of students, for example, advanced placement. After summarizing the current collaborative structures operating in the district or community school and buildings, they should compare this review to the collaborative structures needed to support plan implementation and monitoring and make adjustments as needed.

F. Roles and Responsibilities

The DLT/CSLT and BLT need to understand their role and the time commitment they are making to the OIP and beyond the OIP. An understanding of the importance of TBTs in the process also should be emphasized.

One of the first steps is to introduce the Ohio Leadership Development Framework, including the research base and the online self-assessment resource. If time and technology allow during the session, each participant should complete the leadership practices self-assessment online. If not, a time for completing the online performance assessment should be scheduled. The self-assessment results will provide baseline leadership information and data that can be used in answering the **DF/BDF** questions.

One option for the DLT/CSLT and BLT to become familiar with the Ohio Leadership Development Framework is to form six pairs or triads (the choice depends on the size of the group) with one of the framework areas assigned to each pair or triad. If possible, each pair or triad should include a novice and a seasoned staff member. Each pair or triad should meet before the next BLT meeting and consider the responsibilities of the DLT/CSLT and BLT in relation to the area assigned. One person from each framework area team will need to be prepared to report out at the next meeting on these questions:

- What are we doing now?
- How did it come to be this way?
- What are we going to do to ensure we can meet these responsibilities?

Groups may then report to the whole group after recording responses to the last question. Groups may wish to revisit these questions, as appropriate, at future DLT/CSLT meetings.

More details about the various roles and responsibilities are provided earlier in this section of the Guide.

G. OIP Implementation Criteria and Rubric

Introduce the **OIP Implementation Criteria and Rubric, Resource 5**, as a tool that can be used to measure progress. By providing **Resource 5** during orientation, teams will be made aware of what high-quality implementation and alignment looks like. It also gives a clear understanding of expectations and will assist in understanding strengths and opportunities for improvement as a DLT/CSLT or BLT moves through the process.

H. Schedule to Complete the Initial OIP

The schedule for completing the process initially will be developed during the first DLT/CSLT–BLT session and will be updated and checked throughout the OIP.

There is no standard timeframe when certain tasks should occur at the building level except when the building develops its actions. Building actions cannot be developed until the DLT has created and approved its goals, strategies, and indicators.

As the DLT/CSLT or BLT considers the frequency and length of its leadership team meetings, it will need to identify items that have to be addressed. There is no particular sequence to these discussions, although it is obvious that some will need to occur at specific points in the process. The team also may want to determine whether the topic can be dealt with through a sole-purpose meeting or whether more than one meeting will be needed and, if so, how many topics each meeting should cover. It is possible that some items may be standing agenda items for each meeting, for example, reviewing ground rules. The following list is offered to assist the team in thinking about topics for meeting agendas.

- Establishing or reviewing ground rules
- Understanding the district or community school **DF/BDF** data and results

- Understanding the district or community school goals, strategies, and indicators
- Reviewing leadership self-assessment results
- Understanding the district or community school and building monitoring process
- Completing the **DF/BDF**
- Developing protocols for collaborative teams
- Drafting building actions and applying district or community school indicators to the building, including building actions that address student subgroup performance
- Cross-walking district or community school actions and draft building actions such as timeline sequence and congruence of professional development
- Finalizing building actions and indicators
- Presenting building actions to all staff
- Soliciting input from all staff into **CCIP** and SIP
- Allocating resources to strategies and actions
- Obtaining approval from the board of education for **CCIP** or DLT/CSLT for SIP
- Reviewing formative assessment data
- Reviewing classroom observation data
- Developing monitoring protocols
- Evaluating meeting effectiveness
- Developing or reviewing the communication approach (actions for ensuring all staff are informed and engaged and ensuring effectiveness of internal and external communication)

I. Documenting the Process

After each stage, the district or community school will want to document the process. To whom this responsibility falls depends upon the size and organization of the district or community school. The documentation may be divided into three sections: methodology, summary and considerations, and final products. Table 2 provides guidance about what to document at each stage. The information should be maintained by a designated person, for example, support staff, so that it is complete and accessible to anyone who needs the information. In addition, the district or community school should maintain a copy of the current mission, planning policy and procedures, DLT/CSLT membership, and meeting agendas and minutes. The amount of documentation should be detailed enough so that someone external to the district or community school can understand the process.

Table 2. Information to Document, by Stage

	Methodology	Summary and Considerations	Final Product
Stage 1	<p>What data (including source) were collected to respond to each question</p> <p>Who, including members of the DLT/CSLT (names, positions, roles), collected, organized, and analyzed the data</p>	<p>Completed DF</p> <p>Summary of data to support DF results</p> <p>List of data that need to be collected in the future</p>	<p>Prioritized needs</p> <p>Quotes and comments, if desired</p>
Stage 2	<p>How and when stakeholder forums were conducted</p> <p>Who participates (names, positions, roles) and how they were prepared to do their work</p> <p>How and when communication occurred</p>	<p>Summary of decisions</p> <p>Focused plan (CCIP)</p> <p>Analysis of prompts or questions used to solicit stakeholder input</p> <p>Summary of communication activities</p>	<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Responses and reactions to communication activities</p> <p>Quotes and comments, if desired</p>
Stage 3	<p>What evidence was collected to demonstrate implementation of the goals, strategies, and actions</p> <p>Budget reports to demonstrate funds were used in support of the plan</p> <p>Data collected to measure indicators</p> <p>Data used for monitoring results</p> <p>How and when monitoring took place to review student performance and adult practices</p> <p>How periodic corrections were made and what they were</p>	<p>Progress reports about the degree to which the plan was implemented (see IMM)</p> <p>Analysis of budget expenditures</p> <p>Formative data about the degree to which indicators were met</p> <p>Summary of monitoring results including data analysis and interpretation</p>	<p>Progress reports</p> <p>Interpretation of budget expenditures in relation to plan accomplishment</p> <p>Report about the degree to which indicators were met</p> <p>Quotes and comments, if desired</p>
Stage 4	<p>Which data were used for evaluating results</p> <p>How and when evaluation took place</p> <p>How corrections were made and what they were</p>	<p>Comparison of planned results with achievements (see Question 6, Evaluation Narrative IMM)</p> <p>Summary of plan changes</p>	<p>Evaluation report</p> <p>Conclusion statements</p> <p>Recommendations for changes to next year's plan</p> <p>Quotes and comments</p>

J. Commitments and Next Steps, Questions, and Answers

The facilitator or cofacilitators will need to review any decisions made at the meeting, such as when the leadership online performance assessment will be completed. These should be recorded and posted.

In order to maximize and effectively use time, the DLT/CSLT and BLT should evaluate each meeting. This can be done quickly and need not take much time on the agenda. Three options for evaluating meetings are as follows:

- **Plus/delta**—Members identify what worked well (Plus) and what could be improved (Delta) by posting self-adhesive notes—one idea per note—on labeled newsprint as they leave the room or by offering ideas in the whole group that are written on newsprint.
- **Stop/start/continue**—Members write about items that should be stopped (i.e., discontinue in the meeting), ones that should be started (i.e., something to improve the meeting), and ones that should be continued (i.e., is working well). They are instructed to write one item or idea per self-adhesive note and post each on the appropriately labeled newsprint sheet (Stop, Start, or Continue) as they leave.
- **Meeting Effectiveness Checklist, Resource 4**—Members individually complete the checklist and aggregate the results.

K. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The summary of the discussion and decisions should be finalized and sent to the DLT/CSLT and BLT as a record of the meeting and a prompt to follow up on the agreements.

Shared Leadership: Supporting Ongoing Two-Way Communication and Engagement

There can never be enough communication. The superintendent will need to consider what and how to communicate about the OIP, as well as who should receive the information. As a part of the standard DLT/CSLT agenda, a communication log should be developed (as in Figure 3). The log will assist in determining who (audience) needs to know what (content or objective), when (date), and how (format). It also will serve as a record of what has occurred (results and feedback). Communication needs to be transparent, and every layer of the system needs to be involved.

Figure 3. Sample Communication Log

COMMUNICATION LOG					
Date	Audience	Content/ Objective	Format	Results	Feedback

Greater communication is the most frequently identified need in any system. Above all else, the DLT/CSLT and BLT must communicate the process and plan clearly and regularly to employees. When the DLT/CSLT and BLT demonstrate the link between process, plan, and specific decisions, staff is encouraged to think strategically.

Change is like an iceberg. Everyone focuses on the content of the change, which is the 10 percent of the iceberg above water. The problem is not just identifying what needs to be done differently; it is about what happens to support it. While concentration is on the content of the plan (above the water), there is something else going on called the process of change (the 90 percent of the iceberg below the surface). If the leadership team is not able to get people to buy into the process of how the change is managed, it will fail. The DLT/CSLT and BLT must determine how to make the process work for them. That requires ongoing, two-way communication and engagement. Table 3 provides an overview of the key communication messages and feedback necessary for each stage of the process, considering the diversity of the community.

TIP:

The IMM provides a page to create a cyclical communication approach that includes the who, what, when, to whom, and how of communication. It also produces a report by district or community school or building that can be used to monitor communication efforts.

Table 3. Key Communication Messages, by Stage

Messages and Feedback	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Rationale and research to support continuous improvement	●	●	●	●	●
Roles and responsibilities for plan development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	●	●	●	●	●
Plan needs, goals, targets, strategies, indicators, and actions		●	●	●	●
Feedback on progress in improving student performance and classroom practices				●	●
Feedback on progress in implementing and adaptations to plan				●	●
Schedules, for example, plan development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, professional development, collaborative structures	●	●	●	●	●
Methods to support student learning at home, in school, and in the community		●	●	●	●
Results from the annual and summative evaluations					●

These key messages should be provided to all stakeholders, although the means and extent of information will vary. Throughout the process, the DLT/CSLT and BLTs will create an approach to communication that describes the following:

- **What Will Be Communicated:** Describe the content of the communication, for example, completed district or community school plan or **CCIP**, plan progress, changes or expectations for plan implementation and process, evaluation results.
- **To Whom and in What Languages It Will Be Communicated:** Specify the internal and external audiences, for example, BLTs, DLT/CSLT, community members, organizations and partners, district or community school or school employees, families, students, board of education. Communication should be in the primary language(s) of the audience, for example, family home language.
- **When It Will Be Communicated:** Specify a date or frequency (for example, monthly, quarterly) with which the communication will occur.
- **Who Will Be Responsible for Ensuring Communication:** Identify the position of the person who will be held accountable for the communication.
- **How It Will Be Communicated:** Consider the needs of the district or community school populations and specify the means of communication, for example, print media, Internet or intranet, television and radio, reports, presentations, meetings, CD/DVD, webinar, fireside chats, town meetings, simulcasts.

As the DLT/CSLT and BLT advance through the process, it is highly likely that the district or community school and buildings will have more that needs to be communicated (see Table 3). The DLT/CSLT and BLTs may need to revisit and reinforce their communication approach recorded in the **IMM**. One way to accomplish this is to use the following process and questions.

Process for Revisiting and Strengthening the District or Community and Building Communication Approach

1. Map the current internal and external communication structures for the work of the district or community school and buildings as outlined in the plan, indicating both one-way and two-way communication. Identify the processes you already have that can be used to communicate, for example, principal administrative meetings.
2. Check the map against the questions in Figure 4, identifying current gaps, and address ways of modifying. Ideas are identified in the right column to stimulate thinking.
3. Develop or revise current communication approach. (See **IMM** Communication Approach.)
4. After development or revision, summary questions may be asked, for example, How will you know if communication is effective? What is the evidence or measures for determining if two-way communication is really occurring?

TIP:

Check the district's or community school's communication approach to ensure completeness and consistency.

Does the internal communication approach include

- All levels of the organization?
- Two-way communication, that is, feedback loops?
- A focus on
 - Adult implementation and student performance?
 - Execution and progress of the plan as written?
- Identification of the who, what, when, and how of the communication?
- Periodic review points to ensure implementation and adequacy of the communication plan?

Figure 4. Questions and Ideas to Guide the DLT/CSLT and BLTs Communication Approach

- How is the DLT/CSLT communicating the **CCIP** to the board of education and administrators and central office departments/BLTs/community?
- Has the DLT/CSLT determined decision parameters for internal and external communication about the plan?
- How is the DLT/CSLT communicating expectations for monitoring the implementation and student performance indicators from the plan to the BLTs?
 - Specific indicators
 - Measures to be used
 - Timelines
 - Format and method for reporting
- How is the BLT communicating the above, including the SIP, to collaborative groups, teachers, students, and the school community?
- How does the DLT/CSLT communicate expectations and parameters for collaborative teams to district staff and buildings?
- How and when do TBTs report or present data to the BLT?
- What is the specific data/progress that needs to be communicated from BLT to DLT/CSLT, from TBTs to BLT and/or DLT/CSLT, and from teachers to students?
- How is a summary of collected data fed back to the BLT from the DLT/CSLT? Teachers from the BLT? Students from teachers? Board of education from the DLT/CSLT?
- How is implications and analysis of the data communicated through all levels of the system?
 - TBTs to BLT
 - BLT to DLT/CSLT
 - Departments to BLT and DLT/CSLT
 - DLT/CSLT to board of education
- How do you know whether communication is effective? What are the measures for determining when communication is really occurring?
- Who needs to hear what about the district plan or about the building plan?
- What communication protocols will be used for buildings not represented on the DLT/CSLT or grade-level or subject-area teachers not represented on the BLT?
- How will you sustain hope that implementation will result in positive change?

 *Hold fireside chats or town meetings.*

 *Decision parameters might include what action to take for every level of the system and circumstance.*

 *Develop an executive summary of the CCIP and SIPs that can be used in multiple situations.*

 *Allow students to be in charge of their own data and conduct student-led parent conferences on the data.*

 *Set up a feedback mechanism—suggestion box, one-on-one meeting, monthly updates—so staff has an opportunity to respond.*

 *Strategically locate posters or charts displayed throughout the district or building about the plan focus and plan progress.*

Intentional Data Decision Making and Resource Management

The data and information needed in any part of the process will vary but in general fall into four types: (1) achievement or student performance, (2) perception, (3) program, and (4) demographic. These data are gathered through four methods: (1) surveys, (2) interviews, (3) observations, and (4) documents and records. Table 4 provides an overview of the key data requirements for each stage in the process.

Table 4. Key Data Requirements

Data Requirements	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Learn about the district or community school and buildings (as context for the work)	●	●	●	●	●
Communicate plan development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation		●	●	●	●
Inquire into student, classroom, building, and district or community school needs		●		●	●
Target goal and strategy focus		●	●	●	●
Determine degree of plan implementation				●	●
Determine effectiveness of process in all stages and levels (LEA, building, classroom)				●	●
Measure changes in student performance and adult implementation				●	●
Identify ways to improve the system by generalizing successes				●	●

One of the responsibilities of the DLT/CSLT is to create and maintain a student information system that is accurate, accessible, and timely. The data management system needs to contain student-specific, detailed results from statewide, districtwide or community school-wide, buildingwide, and classroom assessments. Often the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs find it valuable to examine not only students’ total scores but also skill-specific subscores and responses to individual items. Whatever assessment data is included should be mutually complementary in providing data that aligns to the state standards and district or community school curriculum. In addition, student nonacademic data should be included, for example, behavior or discipline data and attendance. It also is highly desirable to include teacher data, for example, attendance and instruction. As a DLT/CSLT considers how to manage its data, it should ask the following questions:

- What demographic information needs to be included so data can be compared, triangulated, and disaggregated? Examples to include would be gender, race, ethnicity, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, language-minority status, special education status.
- What other program data needs to be included, for example, afterschool programs, tutoring, summer school?

- How will students and teachers be tracked over time, as they move within the system, complete additional assessments, and participate in additional programs?
- Will students and teachers be assigned personal identification numbers for the purpose of making and publishing data comparisons?
- How will information be kept up to date?
- How will information be accessed by individual teachers, building, and district or community school staff?
- Do all teachers and staff have access to the necessary technology, that is, computers, Internet, software?

Any management of data requires the use of technology, which may be as simple as spreadsheet or database software, a more sophisticated locally developed software application, or a purchased data warehouse. In determining which technology to use, the DLT/CSLT should consider

- The type and amount of technical support available: that is, personnel to support updates and upgrades and to support staff when technical problems arise
- The development timeline: that is, ready availability or timeliness of available data
- The level of ownership in the results: that is, who should be involved in the design and implementation
- The type and sophistication of the reports needed: that is, basic reports, multiple queries
- The training and professional development needed initially and as needed: that is, technology use and assessment literacy (the ability to understand, interpret, and use data correctly)
- The return on investment: that is, initial and long-term costs versus information use
- Access to the information: that is, confidentiality, privacy rights—Is it accessible for all or only some?
- The serious, long-term commitment to using data: that is, modeling the use of data at the district or community school level, holding everyone accountable for results

One of the essential leadership practices described in the Ohio Leadership Development Framework is resource management. The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) broadened the definition of resource management to include the management of time, money, staff, and programmatic resources and called for maintaining shared central office and school authority over major resource decisions. Throughout the stages of the OIP, the DLT/CSLT is expected to make “proactive, highly intentional decisions” about the equitable (as compared to equal) allocation of resources to achieve the district’s or community school’s goals.

Resource management is the efficient and effective deployment of a district’s or community school’s and building’s resources when they are needed. As districts, community schools, or buildings move through the stages of continuous improvement, they will need to manage resources at each of the stages. The resources needed in any stage of the process will vary but in general fall into five areas: (1) financial resources, (2) human knowledge and skills, (3) materials, (4) time, and (5) information technology. Table 5 provides an overview of the key resource requirements for each stage in the process.

Table 5. Key Resource Requirements

Resource Requirements	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Structures and schedules that support a culture of inquiry	●	●	●	●	●
Time for plan development, collaboration, professional development, and monitoring	●	●	●	●	
Tools, templates, protocols, and processes to support plan development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation		●	●	●	●
Identification of additional funding aligned with meeting district or community school goals			●		
Information management procedures and infrastructure		●	●	●	●
Allocation of time, money, personnel, and materials to accomplish the goals			●		
Reduction or elimination of initiatives that are not aligned with district or community school goals for achievement and instruction			●		
Equitable allocation of resources to principals and schools to meet the CCIP and SIP			●	●	●
Developing many staff as leaders and facilitators	●	●	●	●	●

STAGE 1

Identifying Critical Needs

Understanding the Structure and Requirements of the DF/BDF— Working Agenda	28
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Abstract

This section describes how to use the DF/BDF including collecting, completing, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data to respond to essential questions. Two working agendas, with relevant talking points, key messages, and resources, are provided to support the facilitation of meetings that focus on key activities for the DLT/CSLT and BLTs to identify and affirm critical needs and focus areas.

Understanding the Structure and Requirements of the DF/BDF— Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review the meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter).

The purpose of this session is to know how the **DF/BDF** works, understand the data needed to respond to the **DF/BDF**, and identify existing and needed data for the district, community school, or building to complete the **DF/BDF**.

B. Overview of DF/BDF Structure and Questions

Review the levels and categories with all participants. Briefly show how the **DF/BDF** works by projecting the appropriate sections of the *DF User Manual*. Note: It will be important for someone in the district or community school or building to have participated in prior training on how to use the **DF/BDF**. This on-line training can be accessed through the ODE website.

C. Explanation of Types and Methods of Data

Describe the four types of data that can be collected to respond to each **DF/BDF** question: (1) achievement or student performance, (2) perception, (3) program, and (4) demographic.

Most data are collected using one of four methods: (1) surveys—which may be collected from all respondents (for example, all teachers) or through sampling (for example, a designated number of teachers from each grade level or school); (2) interviews or focus groups—usually a sample of potential respondents who are representative of the district or community school demographics (for example, parents representing grade levels, culture, ethnicity); (3) observations—classroom, programmatic (for example, afterschool programs); and (4) documents and records (for example, assessment results, demographics, policies, lesson plans, meeting minutes).

D. Identifying Data to Complete the DF/BDF

Data Source Identification, Resource 6, provides lists of data that may be needed for informed, data-based decisions required by each level and area of the **DF/BDF**. The lists include ideas of where a district or community school may find state and local data. Although not all-inclusive, the lists serve to stimulate ideas for data sources. Bolded sources in **Resource 6** are prepopulated by the ODE. **Resource 7** provides a Microsoft Word version of the **DF Essential and Expanded Questions** for ease in viewing the entire **DF/BDF**.

Resource 6 has two uses: (1) to guide the discussion to determine what data the district or community school has **readily** available that can answer the questions in the **DF/BDF** and (2) to provide an organizer for summarizing data to support **DF/BDF** ratings and judgments. Few sites will have data to answer every question in the **DF/BDF**. If there are no data, the district or community school or building makes a choice to either (1) identify data that need to be collected for future decisions, (2) collect data in the near future to respond to questions in the **DF/BDF**, (3) include data collection as an action in the plan, or (4) choose to disregard the question at this time. Make note of the district or community school choice.

If the leadership team has 10 members or fewer, the data identification activity can be done in the whole group. If the team is larger than 10, then the DLT/CSLT or BLT can be divided in half, with each group taking responsibility for different DF levels or different content areas. If the latter is the case, have the DLT/CSLT and BLT members self-select which group to be in but ensure the number of members is fairly balanced in size. Each group will need a facilitator, timekeeper, and recorder. The overriding question is

What data and information do we have to help us answer this question?

Have the group look at the questions for each level or area, taking one area at a time. Ask the group to scan the questions within each area for two to three minutes and make individual notes of any data the district, community school, or building currently has to respond to the item.

- Using an LCD projector, project **Resource 6**. Record the name of the district or community school document that provides information to respond to each item. Only list a data source once even though it may respond to several items.
- Once all existing data have been identified, ask whether the group believes any additional data need to be collected. Make a list of these data. Explain that this may be data collected for this plan or may be collected for next year's plan. To be realistic in identifying any new data that need to be collected, the whole group will need to look at data needed for all levels before a decision can be made about what to collect.

- After completing each level and area, reach consensus on the data that will be collected for this plan and data that will be collected in the future (possible action in the completed plan). If considerable data are still needed, use the following questions to determine what is critical:
 - Will the data be the only source of data for this area or will it supplement other existing data?
 - Can the data be collected efficiently and in time to complete the **DF/BDF**?
 - What resources (people, technology, etc.) would be needed to collect the data?
 - If we do not have these data, will we be able to make an informed determination or rating?

In thinking about what data need to be collected, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to differentiate meaningful data from irrelevant information.

E. Agreement on Data to Be Collected

Once the list of existing and needed data has been identified, ask the group to scan the list to ensure it is relevant and doable for the district or community school at this time.

Identify who will be responsible for either gathering existing data or for determining how the data will be collected and by when. This should be written next to each of the data items so there is a visible record of assignments.

It is possible that the people who know about the data, who have the data, or who can collect the data are not on the DLT/CSLT or BLT. It will be important for team members to identify these individuals and seek their cooperation in this task.

F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Poll members to ensure they understand their assignments. Another option is to have each DLT/CSLT and BLT member summarize what he or she has agreed to do. This is important because it compels individuals to acknowledge their commitments publicly. Summarize the next steps to include: date of next meeting, initial agenda for next meeting, and how to get assistance with assignments, if needed. The summary of the discussion and decisions should be finalized and sent as a record of the meeting and a prompt to follow up on the agreements. Follow-up can occur through written reminders (e-mails, memos) or personal contact. Periodically complete the **Meeting Effectiveness Checklist, Resource 4**, to gauge efficacy of meetings over time.

Collecting, Organizing, and Summarizing Data

Completing the **Data Source Identification, Resource 6**, should help the district or community school and building identify gaps in data and determine the most relevant information that needs to be collected. It will be the responsibility of the person(s) assigned to the data to organize and summarize the data for the leadership team(s) to analyze it efficiently. There is a variety of ways to organize and summarize data. Tables, charts, graphs, and written narratives are the most common. When using tables, graphs, or charts, the source and timeframe of the data should be given. If at all possible, multiple years of data should be provided. In order to determine trends, at least three years of data is needed. To make comparisons, at least two years of data is needed.

Data summaries are primarily looking for trends and patterns that provide a focus for district or community school goals and strategies. The DLT/CSLT and BLT also should have on hand the following references, which are available on the ODE website.

- Ohio Professional Development Standards
- State Academic Content Standards (Revised Academic Content Standards and Common Core Standards in English/Language Arts [ELA] and Mathematics)

Although it is impossible to prepare for all the ways in which data can be organized and summarized, the following are common and simple examples of how it can occur.

Level 1: Achievement and Growth

Level 1 calls on teams to review student achievement and progress data to identify content areas of greatest concern. The additional levels of the **DF/BDF** provide essential questions to help districts or community school and schools conduct analysis of the root causes of factors that contribute to the current situation. The **DF** uses the Matrix of Achievement and Progress (MAAP) and SAS[®] EVAAS value-added reports to uncover patterns of progress and achievement within and across schools, grades, and subjects.

District assessment results should be discussed at this time. Reports such as objectives, performance reports, subtest reports, skills reports, content cluster reports, and mastery objective reports will need to be considered in addition to those provided by the ODE. Often district or community school assessment data are provided in summary or aggregate formats. If, however, the district, community school, or building also wants to look at local data such as writing rubric results, the team can summarize the data by charting the percentage of students who performed at the desired level or above. Once all the achievement graphs and charts are ready, the DLT/CSLT and BLT can use highlighters to emphasize the numbers in the charts using the stoplight method indicated by the colors in Figure 5.

Achievement + Progress = A More Complete Picture of Student Learning

Battelle for Kids provides guides for using progress and achievement data to establish improvement priorities for DLT/CSLTs, BLTs, and TBTs. Visit www.BattelleforKids.org for details.

Figure 5. Organizing Data by Stoplight Method

Highlight Color	Meaning	% of students (Suggested Cutoffs)	% of students (Our Cutoff Levels)
Blue	WOW! Beyond Expectations	100%	
Green	GOOD! Meets Expectations	80–99%	
Yellow	CAUTION! Below Expectations	70–79%	
Pink	URGENT! In Need of Immediate Improvement	0–69%	

*Taken from *Data Retreat Facilitator’s Guide*, North Central Regional Education Laboratory, 2001.

The samples in Figure 6 show two data charts prepopulated in the **DF/BDF** with numbers highlighted using the stoplight method described earlier in this discussion.

Figure 6. DF/BDF Prepopulated by Stoplight Method

Grade Level	Metrics	SY	SY	SY
Grade 3	Students tested	163	140	180
	Not proficient	33	33	42
	Students proficient	130	107	138
	Proficient percentage	79.8%	76.4%	76.7%

Reading	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
Subscale	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	
Vocabulary	89.9%	79.4%	85.2%	86.3%	89.5%	89.0%	82.4%
Reading process	81.6%	83.1%	84.6%	82.0%	86.5%	87.2%	79.0%
Informational text	91.8%	86.0%	88.3%	82.6%	85.4%	86.0%	80.1%
Literary text	87.3%	77.9%	87.7%	90.7%	86.0%	87.8%	78.4%

Three ways of analyzing achievement data to show comparisons are (1) yearly cohort group comparisons, (2) yearly grade-level comparisons, and (3) within-year progress data. Figure 7 shows how they can be represented graphically. State-level data can be applied to 1 and 2 in Figure 7. If the district, community school, or building wishes to do 3, it must rely on district-, community school-, or school-level data.

Figure 7. Showing Patterns in Achievement Data

1. Yearly Cohort Group Comparisons				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Grade 3	Student Group A			
Grade 4		Student Group A		
Grade 5			Student Group A	
Grade 6				Student Group A

2. Yearly Grade-Level Comparisons				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Grade 3				
Grade 4	Student Group A	Student Group B	Student Group C	Student Group D
Grade 5				
Grade 6				

3. Within-Year Comparisons				
	Year 1			
	Fall	Winter	Spring	
Grade 4	Student Group A	Student Group A	Student Group A	

As a reminder, Level 1 data will result in the identification of one or two priority content areas, which will become the student performance goals for the district or community school and buildings.

Level 2: Instructional Management

The questions in Level 2 are related to curriculum, assessment, instruction, and educator effectiveness in a specific content area.

Level 2A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

Effective in 2014–15, all Ohio districts and community schools will be required to implement the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the revisions to Ohio’s academic content standards in science and social studies, and the aligned assessments, all of which were adopted in June 2010. ODE also has prepared a model curriculum as a Web-based tool for educators that identifies instructional strategies and resources that align with the revised standards.

As districts and community schools respond to questions in Level 2A, they should use the standards and model curriculum as a benchmark. Although ODE cannot endorse or recommend specific textbooks or resources, the Center for Curriculum and Assessment has many materials on the ODE website under Model Curricula that are designed to help school districts, community schools, schools, and teachers review and choose high-quality instructional materials and strategies for their students.

Level 2B: Educator Effectiveness

Ohio has adopted a human capital management system designed to maximize educator effectiveness and ensure that every student has access to highly effective, well-supported teachers and leaders who stay in the system. There are eight components to the system: preparation, recruitment and equitable distribution, hiring, induction, professional development and learning, performance management, compensation and incentives, and working conditions. Two resources for responding to questions in Level 2 as they relate to the eight components are the Gap Analysis and Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey (see the ODE website). The latter provides data on factors that affect teacher hiring, retention, and mobility. The Teaching and Learning Conditions online survey has fewer than 40 questions and can be completed in 30 minutes or less. If the district or community school has at least 40 percent participation, districts and community schools can receive school and district or community school summaries.

The district and community schools also may choose to summarize data gleaned from the Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP). Results from the IPDP aggregated rubric, available on the ODE website, may serve as a valuable source of data for the district or community school. The System to Achieve Results for Students (STARS) provides dates and participant information about professional development training. Districts also may have electronic professional development charting systems for their staff that tracks individual teacher professional goals, individual professional development plans, professional development contact hours, and so on, that could be used for data analysis. The data may be compared with observation and achievement data at the classroom or building level to determine whether professional development time and resources are being directed to the areas of priority need and to determine whether there is an impact on student achievement as a result of participation in professional development.

Figure 8. Ohio’s Integrated 21st Century Education System



Level 3: Expectations and Conditions

Level 2 focused on a particular content area; Level 3, in contrast, has an overall general or global effect on student academic performance across all content areas and is viewed once. At Level 3, district or community school personnel also may identify a specific issue that is unique to their district or community that needs attention to promote, facilitate, or improve student performance. Primary data sources in Level 3 are (1) perception data; (2) demographic data, such as mobility, attendance, and discipline; (3) program data; and (4) processes and procedures data. Following are ideas for organizing and summarizing these data.

(1) Perception Data

Perception data will take unique formats that depend on the nature of the data. Persons assigned to summarize perception data will need to determine guidelines or cutoff levels for survey data. Before looking at the data, the DLT/CSLT and BLT members assigned to these data should answer the question *What would positive results look like?* For example, if a survey was ranked on a five-point Likert scale, positive results might be the percentage of rankings of three or higher. The ranking percentage could be defined as the cutoff level.

Table 6. Schema for Organizing Perception Data

Highlight Color	Meaning	Survey Results (% of Rankings of 3 or Higher on a 5-Point Scale)	Our Criteria
Blue	WOW! Beyond Expectations	100%	
Green	GOOD! Meets Expectations	75–99%	
Yellow	CAUTION! Below Expectations	55–74%	
Pink	URGENT! In Need of Improvement	0–54%	

For other results, it may be useful to use a similar color-coding process as just described. Because the perception items in the **DF/BDF** are similar across students, families, and staff, the results from the questions asked may be shown as in Table 7. It should be noted that there may be many questions for which the degree of implementation results from the considered judgment of the DLT/CSLT and BLT and is not based upon a survey or other instrument.

Table 7. Displaying Results From Perception Surveys

% of Rankings of 3 or Higher on a 5-Point Satisfaction Scale	Parent Survey			Student Survey			Teacher Survey		
	EL	M	HS	EL	M	HS	EL	M	HS
Focus on positive student outcomes in (content area)	80%	65%	40%	85%	75%	60%	95%	90%	85%
Safe environment for learning									
Partners in educational process									
Sensitivity to students' needs when they experience academic or behavioral needs									
Challenging (content areas) curriculum									

The *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory*, developed by the National School Climate Center and available on their website (<http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php>), provides data on the quality and character of school life. Student data can be disaggregated by grade level and subgroup and can be administered online and in a print version. These data are organized and summarized to show rating patterns for each group for each dimension surveyed. Charts are organized in two ways to make it easier to make different kinds of comparisons:

- By climate dimension, which shows the rating patterns for physical safety, social-emotional safety, and so on, for students versus school personnel versus parents.
- By population group, which shows the rating patterns for students, then school personnel, then parents for each dimension.

Profile charts of median ratings for different student subgroups, school personnel, and families show perceptions of school climate dimensions in consistently different ways and demonstrate which dimensions might be most sensitive to different ratings for subgroups. Subgroups are the following:

1. Students by grade, gender, race, and ethnicity
2. School personnel by grade and experience
3. Families and parents by child, grade, race, and ethnicity

(2) Demographic Data

Demographic data in the form of attendance and discipline data are provided through the ODE. Mobility data must be obtained using district or community school data. Mobility is defined as students not in the same building 120 days before the state testing window. Level 3B.4 (Multiple Risk Factors) asks about the effect of certain demographic characteristics on student performance. Using these characteristics, the DLT/CSLT and BLT members will need to look at the information for those students who have a pattern of low proficiency (pink if using the spotlight method). By each name, notations should be made on a report according to the demographic data. It also may be appropriate to code program data such as afterschool programs, summer-school programs, tutoring, and other interventions provided to students. Coding may look like this:

Code	Definition
PL	Proficiency Level —students who have a pattern of low proficiency, below standards, at risk
M	Mobility —students not in the same building 120 days before the state testing window
A	Attendance —students absent for any reason for five or more days
D	Discipline —students referred for any reason twice or more times, all students expelled or suspended
AS	Afterschool Program —students who attend 80 percent or more of the time
SS	Summer School —students who attend 80 percent or more of the time
T	Tutoring —students who receive tutoring

DLT/CSLT and BLT members should look for patterns in the data. At this point, the leadership teams should not concentrate on individual student names, but rather focus on *patterns across all the students*. It is important for the team not to attach causes to patterns. The DLT/CSLT and BLT members assigned to this task will need to identify the patterns observed for all team members to view when completing the **DF/BDF**.

(3) Program Data

Program data will take unique formats that depend on the nature of the data. Persons assigned to summarize program data will need to determine relevance to Level 3 essential **DF/BDF** questions and decide the most useful and understandable format for reporting.

(4) Process and Procedure Data

Processes and procedures cannot be coded or analyzed. They should be reviewed against the questions in relation to Level 3A. In addition to knowing whether the processes and procedures exist, the district or community school also may know whether they are followed and whether they are effective. For example, requiring each building to have TBTs and establishing procedures for the team to follow are good. The district or community school also must have records, documents, or reports, however, that show how often the team meets and what they do when they meet. In general, the questions for this level are *How frequently is it used? How is it used? How effective is it?*

Completing the DF/BDF to Identify and Affirm Critical Focus Areas— Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter).

The purpose of these meetings is to analyze the data and complete the **DF/BDF**.

The DLT/CSLT and BLT is ready to complete the **DF/BDF**. Although analysis can be conducted with statistical programs and electronic data tools, the process of digging through it, finding patterns and trends, diagramming observations, and collaborating about what is seen is a very powerful process. Completing the **DF/BDF** by the DLT/CSLT and BLT offers new insights and illuminates views that otherwise might not have been seen if the **DF/BDF** had been done by a few people or by individuals. In fact, many districts or community schools and buildings using the OIP find this analysis and interpretation to be the most valuable part of the process. As team members analyze the data and respond to the **DF/BDF** questions, not only do they see more clearly, they engage in their own professional growth with their own data. The **DF/BDF** not only includes essential questions, but also supplemental questions to assist in probing deeper through all levels. Teams will need to be selective in the use of the supplemental questions, basing decisions on the data and concerns raised by the DLT/CSLT and BLT. Many of the supplemental questions probe the performance of student subgroups, early learning, health and nutrition, and family engagement and are designed to deepen investigation of root causes of discrepancies in student achievement. The questions do not replace but rather supplement the essential questions in the **DF/BDF** and can be used as appropriate in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation stages of OIP.

B. DLT/CSLT and BLT Member Presentations— Data Summaries by Levels and Areas; Analysis and Completion of DF/BDF

All data summaries should be submitted to the facilitator or cofacilitators prior to the session. Submitting the information in advance of the meeting is necessary so that the support staff has time to prepare packets for the team members. This will give the team time to become familiar with the content before the meeting. It is also recommended that DLT/CSLT and BLT members know that they will be asked to give a three- to five-minute presentation on their data summaries by level and area. An organizer such as the **Data Source Identification, Resource 6**, to record the data summary is advisable. The role of the recorder will be critical to having a record of the DLT/CSLT and BLT discussion. As a reminder, Levels 1 and 3 produce the district or community school goals.

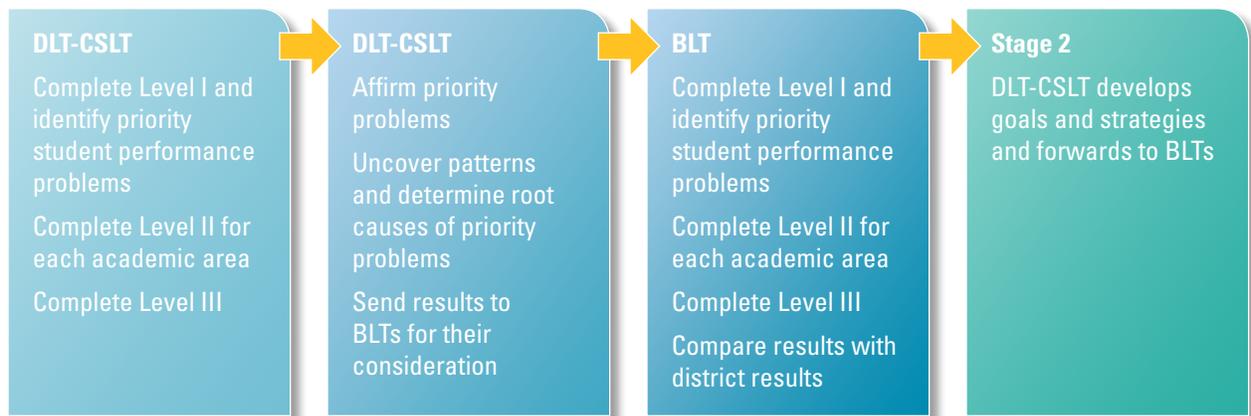
Initial discussions relative to the **DF/BDF** often focus on using existing data to the greatest extent possible. That being said, it is also clear that there are important questions that need to be discussed at most sites for which data do not often exist. For example, few districts or community schools and buildings can describe with any accuracy the level and alignment of instructional practice. Similarly, many do not know whether the “aligned” district or community school curriculum is used. Teacher mobility is not part of most discussions even though it may be an issue in medium or large districts, community schools, and buildings. In addition, many sites do not conduct student surveys or parent or community surveys. The district or community school and buildings should consider whether a need exists to collect this type of information and, if so, the best method of collection.

In the meantime, DLT/CSLT and BLTs should be led to honestly discuss whether there is sufficient and reliable data and what data might need to be collected as soon as possible. In many cases, it is best to plan for collecting the information before making judgments about the **DF/BDF** questions.

There are two options for sequencing how completion of the **DF** by the DLT/CSLT and completion of the **BDF** relate to one another.

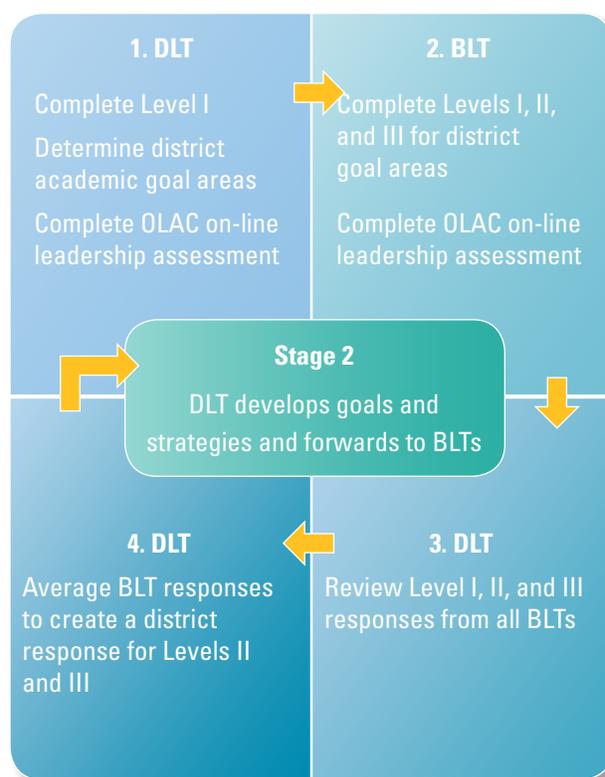
Option 1: In the option shown in Figure 9, the DLT/CSTL completes the entire **DF** before the BLTs complete the **BDF**. The BLT receives the **DF** as a basis for comparison. While the BLTs are completing the **BDF**, the DLT/CSLT begins Stage 2 by developing goals and strategies. The goals are then forwarded to the BLTs so they may create action steps aligned to the district or community school goals and strategies, while considering building needs.

Figure 9. Option 1 for Completing DF/BDF



Option 2: In the option shown in Figure 10, the DLT-CSLT completes Level 1, identifying academic goal areas. The DLT-CSLT then asks the BLTs to complete Levels 1, 2, and 3, allowing them to complete Stage 1 before the DLT completes Stage 1. The DLT then aggregates the BLT responses and averages the ratings to compute a district or community school average rating. At this point, Stage 1 is complete. The DLT then uses the results of Stage 1 to begin Stage 2.

Figure 10. Option 2 for Completing DF/BDF



C. Presentation on Current Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) Performance

Knowing whether implementation of the current **CCIP** (district or community school plan) achieved its desired results may help inform development of the proposed plan. A presentation on how well the plan was implemented and the impact of plan implementation on improving student and adult performance should be reviewed as another source of data.

D. Analyzing Data and Completing the DF/BDF

Once the **DF/BDF** is complete, the DLT/CSLT and BLT look at the results by level and identify the district or community school and building priority problems. After going through Level 1, district or community school priority problems relating to student performance should be identified. This list can be created by looking at the level and area from the **DF/BDF** with the lowest scores and highest level of concern.

E. Reviewing Results and Confirming District Priority Problems

An understanding of the factors that contribute to each of the high-priority critical problems is necessary to set goals and identify strategies and actions to address those problems. Only those problems designated as high priority will be addressed in the improvement plan. The district, community school, or building will use the information from Stage 1 to consider the causes of these problems.

The **DF** District Profile or **BDF** Profile is an algebraic accumulation of all **DF/BDF** cell responses provided by the team throughout Stage 1. Multiple responses for each topic (e.g., Reading: Curriculum Alignment) result in a percentage level of either results (student data) or implementation (perception data). As a team reviews the **DF/BDF** Profile results, the

team should select a few high-priority areas. Focusing on more than a few will cause staff, students, and families to be overwhelmed and struggle to respond to them effectively. Once the highest priority areas are selected, saving the selections will automatically and electronically result in a district, community school, or building needs assessment. This needs assessment then becomes the basis for development of the focused plan in Stage 2, as well as the **CCIP** needs assessment (as an electronic submission into the **CCIP** during the window period allowed by ODE).

From the needs assessment, the DLT/CSLT will identify one or two academic goal areas, as well as one climate and conditions area designated for goal development in Stage 2. Other indicators from the needs assessment can be used as a basis for strategy development in the focused plan. For example, the data may show that students who have low proficiency in reading also are the students who have poor attendance. Attendance data emerge from Level 3 but relate to reading and may be one cause of low reading performance. Therefore, this critical problem is not universal. If, however, the data from Level 3 show that processes and procedures are not implemented with sufficient consistency across the district or community school, the problem may be a critical one that focuses on adult behaviors and environmental issues. The problem would then become one for the expectations and conditions priority area. The content priority area(s) and expectations and conditions priority area become the district or community school goals. These goals will need to be communicated to the BLT because the analysis of the **BDF** will need to coincide with the **DF** analysis.

Before beginning Stage 2, the leadership team should take time to affirm that the right content and expectations and conditions priority areas have been selected. This will occur through dialogue among the members. Looking back at how the questions for this area were answered in the **DF/BDF**, the team should reaffirm their answers to the following questions:

- Were the responses to the questions accurate and reflective of data rather than opinions?
- Are the data to support the selection of these priority areas strong, for example, quantitative and qualitatively balanced, high response rate on surveys?
- Is the ratio of questions to the rating high?
- Do these areas have the leverage to improve student learning and change teacher practice?

Once the DLT/CSLT is satisfied with the answers to these questions and it has communicated them to the BLT, it is ready to begin development of the focused plan (Stage 2). The DLT/CSLT and BLT also may want to consider what the district or community school could do to improve the Stage 1 process and record this information for use in Stage 4.

F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The completed **DF/BDF** that includes the profile report should be sent to all DLT/CSLT and BLT members. The facilitator or cofacilitators will need to identify any obvious data gaps found while completing the **DF/BDF** and determine how these gaps will be addressed (possibly as actions in the plan that will be developed in Stage 2).

Periodically, use the **Meeting Effectiveness Checklist (Resource 4)** to receive written feedback.

STAGE 2

Developing a Focused Plan

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Reviewing, Revising, and Adopting the Plan	63

Abstract

Stage 2 describes how to create a focused plan based on data priorities from Stage 1. Four working agendas, with relevant talking points, key messages, and resources, are provided to support the facilitation of meetings that focus on key activities for the DLT/CSLT and BLTs to create SMART goals; develop evidence-based strategies, indicators, and actions; and create logical tasks to carry out those actions.

Creating SMART Goals—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). A key point to emphasize is that the district or community school will have two or three focused goals—student performance and conditions and expectations based on the **DF** priority areas.

IF the district or community school has

- A **CCIP** with more goals than two to three
- Multiple plans with multiple district or community school goals AND/OR
- Goals that do not match the two types of goals (student performance and conditions and expectations)

THEN the DLT/CSLT will need to determine how these goals will either be abandoned, revised, or merged with the goals that are developed on the basis of the **DF** priority areas. If previously established goals align with the two types of goals, they can serve as a beginning point or reference.

The purpose of this meeting is to develop SMART goals based on Levels 1 and 3 of the **DF**.

B. Communicating, the Research Base and the Need for Focused Goals

In communicating the relevance of the research and its implications, a few points need to be made:

- Relationship to Leadership Role
 - Setting focused, realistic, and measurable goals is central to an effective planning process.
 - An analysis of 27 studies conducted since 1970 by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) found that when district or community school leaders establish goals and keep those goals in the forefront, there is a strong correlation to improvement in student achievement (T. J. Waters and R. J. Marzano, *School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement* [Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2006]).
 - According to the Ohio Leadership Development Framework, there should be a small number of goals that allow for a concentrated focus on the core work that needs to be done to improve student performance.
- Importance of Goals
 - Help define the district's or community school's mission
 - Provide direction and focus to the district's or community school's work and they help avoid chaos
 - Help motivate staff by clarifying and communicating what the district or community school is striving to achieve
 - Help staff and leaders become aware of problems in a timely fashion, which in turn leads to quick solutions
 - Help the district or community school plan ahead and be prepared
 - Serve as a basis of recognizing and measuring accomplishments and successes
- Types of Focused Goals
 - Student performance goals focus specifically on closing a gap between current student performance and preferred performance levels. These goals generally begin with "*All students....*"
 - Expectations and conditions goals improve or increase the opportunities or potential for improved learning. These goals often focus on adult or student social behaviors and environmental issues.

Note: A district or community school might need to develop an additional goal in a cross-content or systemwide area.

- Goal, Strategy, Action, Indicator Definitions

Share **Grain Size and Definitions of Goal, Strategy, Action Steps, Tasks, and Indicators, Resource 8**, and explain the differences between goal, strategy, and action in terms of the grain size and the difference between the performance indicator (goal) and progress indicators (strategies). The resource should be revisited when strategies and action steps are developed.

It will be helpful to discuss the difference between a district or community school plan and a school plan. The key differences are these:

- District or community school goals and strategies will be used by BLTs to create school actions.
- The district or community school has the responsibility to approve school plans.
- The district or community school will need to provide resources and support to schools in the implementation of plans.
- Schools cannot add or modify goals or strategies but, if building data warrant, they may choose not to address all district or community school strategies in the SIP.

C. Goal Criteria

Goals need to be written using SMART criteria. Review the SMART criteria, providing examples of goals that meet and those that do not meet the criteria. It may be useful to explain the SMART of each goal by providing an anatomy of a poor and acceptable goal.

Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what the district or community school wants to happen. Specifics help focus efforts and clearly define what the district or community school is going to do. Specific is the what, why, and when of SMART:

- **WHAT** are you going to do? Use action words such as *direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, build*.
- **WHY** is this important to do at this time? What does the district or community school want to ultimately accomplish?
- **WHEN** is the district or community school going to do it?

It is best to formulate goals that are very **specific and clear**. Instead of setting a goal to ensure that all students meet or exceed high academic standards, set a specific goal to ensure all students meet or exceed standards and benchmarks in reading.

Measurable

In the broadest sense, the goal statement is a measure for the district or community school: If the goal is accomplished, then it is a success. Goals should address what the district or community school will see when it reaches the goal. For instance, phrasing a goal along the lines of “The district or community school wants to improve reading by X percent” shows the specific target to be measured. In contrast, a goal phrased like “The district or community school wants all students to read with comprehension” is not measurable. A performance indicator is the gauge by which a goal is determined to be achieved. Performance indicators usually are written quantitatively, such as return on investment for financial goals, customer satisfaction rates for parent and community engagement goals, reduction in time for internal business process goals, or increases in student performance for learning goals. In the **CCIP**, the multiyear goal has a performance indicator as well as annual targets that can be used for annual evaluation to determine whether results are on target toward meeting the multiyear goal performance indicator.

Attainable and Achievable

When the district or community school identifies goals that are most critical to improving student performance, it begins to figure out ways it can achieve them. By setting goals that are attainable and achievable, the district or community school can develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacities to reach the goals, and then it will begin to see previously overlooked **opportunities** to move closer to the achievement of its goals.

Realistic and Relevant

Realistic and *relevant* are not synonyms for *easy*. Realistic, in this case, means *doable*. It means that the learning curve is not a vertical slope, that the skills needed to do the work are within reach, and that the goal fits with the mission of the district or community school. A realistic goal may push the skills and knowledge of the people working on it, but it should not break them. The goal needs to be realistic for the district or community school but should not be so incremental that substantive growth is not expected. For example, a goal for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading may not be realistic for some districts and community schools, especially if a large percentage of students are below proficiency. It may be more realistic to set a goal for a designated percentage of students to meet or exceed standards in reading. The district or community school then can choose to work toward increasing the percentage in a realistic, yet ambitious, effort. Sometimes such goals are referred to as stretch goals. If the goals as written are too difficult to attain, then the district or community school is setting the stage for failure, but expectations that are too low send the message that the district or community school is not very capable. Set the bar high enough for a satisfying achievement. Goals also must be relevant, addressing the most important and significant aspirations the district or community school must target in order to improve student learning.

Timely

It is important to set a timeframe that is measurable, attainable, and realistic for each goal. Putting an end point on the goal gives a **clear target** to work toward. If the district or community school does not set a deadline, the commitment is too vague: Without a time limit, there is no urgency to start taking action, making it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve success.

D. Creating District or Community School Goals

There are generally three hurdles that DLTs/CSLTs experience as they develop a goal:

First Hurdle: Timeline

Goals are generally multiyear and DLTs/CSLTs often struggle with when to set the end point, particularly in light of federal requirements that impose deadlines. The plan, however, is not an accountability plan but a performance improvement plan. Therefore, the DLT/CSLT should consider a timeline that is realistic, generally three to five years. The question is *What is the appropriate timeline for the goal?*

Second Hurdle: Reasonable and Realistic Measure

Not all grades in all content areas are ordinarily at the same starting point (baseline measure) nor are subgroups within those grades and content areas. Districts and community schools generally want to set a specific percentage of improvement to close a performance gap, for example, a 7 percent increase in proficiency. This percentage may not, however, be appropriate for all grades or subgroups. One option is to select a percentage and then determine how that percentage of increase—for example, 7 percent—will affect all grade levels. For example, if third-grade reading is at 85.5 percent proficiency and the special education subgroup is at 65 percent, fourth grade at 78 percent and the special education subgroup at 56 percent, fifth grade at 53.8 percent, and the special education subgroup at 40 percent, is a 7 percent gain reasonable and does it set the district or community school on the right trajectory for all students to be proficient? Also, is the 7 percent calculated on the baseline or added to the baseline? (Does 53.8 percent go to 60.8 percent or to 57.6 percent?) Averaging percentages across grades or subgroups is not advisable. Another option is to set a separate increase for each grade or subgroup. These are sticky questions that must be tackled if the goal to be measured is to be reasonable and realistic. The question is *What is a reasonable and realistic measure for the goal that addresses all grade levels and subgroups?*

Third Hurdle: Assessment Instrument for Measurement

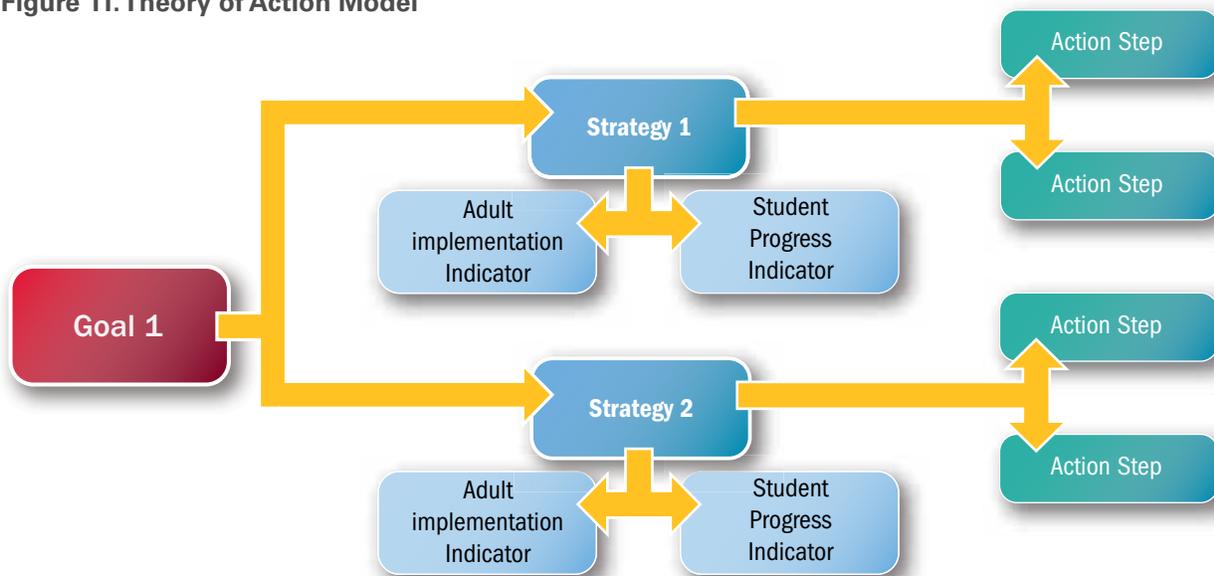
Identifying a summative assessment for Grades 3–8 and 10 is relatively easy because the state-required assessments provide this annual data for multiple years. Districts and community schools do not always have summative data for Grades K–2, 9, 11, and 12 and may not have a clearly articulated assessment system. The district or community school should describe its current assessment system. Gaps in the system may inform development of strategies, progress indicators, and actions. Data to measure goals is usually available annually. Some instruments can be used both for summative (annual) assessment and formative assessment. For example, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) provides data that measures from the beginning to the end of a year (summative) but also provides progress monitoring data monthly or more frequently (formative). Most reading and mathematics testing series provide formative assessment data such as skill or theme tests but may not provide summative data. Some assessment instruments provide only summative data, such as the state-required assessments. If the district or community school has only state assessment data available, it may choose to include only those grades tested in the goal until such time as data for the other grades are available. If the district or community school chooses to use state-required assessment data to measure goal progress (goal indicator and annual goal targets), it will be important to determine how each grade level and subgroup supports the achievement of students on those assessments and write strategies that address all grade levels. The question is *What summative assessment will be used to measure progress for all grade levels and subgroups?*

E. Introducing a Theory of Action

Once goals have been developed, the DLT/CSLT will need to consider its theory of action. Absent an explicit statement and a clear understanding of how a plan is expected to produce changes in student learning, the implementation of educational innovations “can be based only on intuition, trial and error, superstition, popularity or random means unlikely to be quickly productive in any way” (C. Maddux & R. Cummings, “Fad, Fashion, and the Weak Role of Theory and Research in Information Technology in Education,” *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 12,4 [2004], 511–533). With a theory of action, educators find, understand, and communicate the connections between the plan and what we know or suspect about how students learn and how teachers change practice. The theory of action provides us with guidelines for implementation that have a good probability of resulting in educational benefits (Maddux & Cummings, 2004).

The theory of action specifies what is to be done and why, and the implementation plan specifies how it will be done. The theory of action for the OIP is depicted in Figure 11. The DLT/CSLT will need to use the model to identify goals, strategies, and actions—in general terms only—and to represent what they believe to be connections among them that are likely to result in improvement.

Figure 11. Theory of Action Model



F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The superintendent will need to share how the goals will be approved by the board of education. Endorsement of the goals is of paramount importance at this juncture in the process because the goals are the platform for the remainder of the plan. The approved goals will be used by the DLT/CSLT as the basis for developing strategies.

The facilitator or cofacilitators should summarize the next steps, including the date of the next meeting and a draft agenda for the next meeting. Periodically, use the **Meeting Effectiveness Checklist, Resource 4**, to receive written feedback.

Developing Evidence-Based or Research-Based District or Community School Strategies and Indicators—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments:

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). A key concept to emphasize is that the district or community school will have a few (recommend two or three) focused strategies for each of the two to three goals.

The purpose of this meeting is to create evidence-based or research-based strategies based on the **DF** profile results and develop indicators for each strategy.

A district or community school strategy must influence education throughout the district or community school or have significant impact on overall district or community school performance. It must be flexible enough to enable different buildings, grade levels, disciplines, and administrative functions to craft actions appropriate to their setting, the groups they serve, and their data needs. Because of this, it is important that the membership of each goal workgroup be tailored to the goal. To ensure that the strategies address the needs of all students, consideration should be given to including representatives with expertise in the areas of special education, instruction of limited English proficient students, and gifted education. Each group must include building-level representation. Building-level representation is important because each building will use goals and strategies as the foundation for creating its own SIP. Generally, goal workgroups should be no more than 10 persons. If the group needs additional input on a specific strategy, select individuals should be brought in to consult with the group, but they should not become standing members of the group.

B. Strategy Criteria and Examples

Strategies are action oriented and they describe the key approaches the district or community school will implement. They are written as specific, measurable statements about what is going to be accomplished to meet a need and get closer to reaching a goal within a given time. Defining strategy is important in the plan development process because educators typically reach for short-term remedies that are popular, such as authentic assessment, professional learning communities, and curriculum mapping, without having an overall strategy that justifies the choice or allows the district or community school to evaluate whether the remedy is working to achieve the goals.

Strategy criteria are as follows:

- Limited to a reasonable number per goal (2–3)
- Written using clear, jargon-free language that is able to stand on its own without additional explanation
- Focused
- Feasible
- Practical
- Often multiyear
- Based on **DF** profile results
- Consistent with current evidence and research

To help the goal workgroups prepare to write strategies, sharing a sample strategy that meets the above criteria and working as a group to build a sample strategy will help them know what is expected and allow questions to be raised that may inform the process. It also may be helpful to show strategy examples from the **CCIP** and compare them to the sample. A sample goal and strategy might look like this:

Goal:

By 2011, all students in Grades K–12 will improve performance on the state assessment (Grades XXX) and local summative assessments (Grades XX) by ___ percent each year in reading.

Strategy:

Implement the standards-based curriculum to focus every administrator, teacher, staff member, and student on understanding and application.

C. Creating Evidence-Based or Research-Based Strategies

The purpose of this activity is to identify cross-cutting ideas that will result in a manageable number of strategies. Using the **DF** profile, share the recurring ideas and seek agreement on two to four strategy categories. This may require prioritizing and merging of ideas or the use of a process (examples would be a [fishbone diagram](#) or a tree diagram) that examines the cause and effect among the areas. Consider having each goal work group divide into subgroups according to the strategy categories and have each subgroup write a first draft of a strategy statement that will address the needs in their category. It may be necessary to show how the strategies that will be developed differ from strategies that have been developed in the past. Showing examples of strategies from the **CCIP** and examples of well-developed strategies may be helpful.

Once the strategies are drafted, they need to be checked against the most current evidence and research available on the topic and for the subgroup(s) addressed. This task serves two functions: (1) to help provide focus on the strategy and (2) to increase the likelihood of improving student performance overall and for the specific student subgroups addressed, assuming that the strategy is successfully implemented. The amount of empirical research to support educational improvement is somewhat scant because it requires the publication of findings in refereed journals (scientific publications that employ a process of peer review), duplication of the results by other investigators,

and a consensus within a particular research community about whether there is a critical mass of studies that points toward a particular conclusion. Even if educators have access to the scientific evaluation, the research literature sometimes fails to provide clear direction. In these cases, educators must rely on their own reasoning processes as informed by experience.

The ODE defines research-based practices as the process of reviewing, assessing, and applying proven strategies to address data-determined needs. Research-based solutions should be evaluated on two dimensions: quality and relevance. The questions that need to be answered are as follows:

- To what degree are our strategies grounded in research or evidence?
- Are there systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment?
- Is there rigorous data analysis that is adequate to test and justify the general conclusions drawn?
- Has the strategy been evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects?
- Is there sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication?
- Has the strategy been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts?

If the group cannot answer a question with a source or explanation, then it may need to call on others in the district or community school or search for the answers through the Internet or by interviewing experts in the field. Once the group feels confident that the strategies it has developed are based on prioritized data needs from Stage 1 and are grounded in scientific- or evidence-based research, the group is ready to give a presentation to all the goal workgroups.

D. Indicator Criteria and Examples

A strategy indicator is the gauge by which a strategy is determined to be met. There are two types of strategy indicators: adult implementation and student performance. Data sources for indicators may include observations of classroom practices, survey data, formative assessment results, analysis of lesson plans, team meeting notes, or other documents.

A baseline measure is established for each type of indicator. Short-term progress measures are set in order to assess degree of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, practices, or student performance. It is easiest to begin from the baseline and list progress measures that demonstrate a change, for example, an increase in percentages. It also is advisable to identify the data source for each indicator, for example, as measured by ____.

Indicators are developed for each strategy, generally one adult implementation and one student performance. Because of variation in subgroup performance, it may be necessary to have multiple parts to the student performance indicator. It is possible and desirable that some of the same indicators be used across strategies. Therefore, indicators cannot be finalized until all strategies have been developed.

The questions that the DLT/CSLT needs to ask itself are as follows:

- What evidence would make us feel we are making progress?
- How can we collect this evidence?
- Of all the measures we could have chosen, why did we choose these?

For each strategy, two types of measures will need to be developed:

- **Baseline measures:** These help to identify the starting point for change and provide a reference point in identifying realistic progress measures.
- **Progress measures:** These assess movement toward implementing strategies. They are short-term (for example, quarterly for districts or community schools or monthly for buildings) measures of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, practices, and student performance. They help to determine whether the district or community school is improving.

Strategy indicator criteria are these:

- Data should be available, reliable, accurate, and valid and should reflect reality.
- It should be possible to collect the data regularly, for example, quarterly for districts or community schools, monthly for buildings.
- Data should be understandable, meaningful, and easily communicated.
- The cost of getting data should be acceptable.

Share an indicator that meets the criteria and build a sample indicator with the group to help the group know what is expected and allow for questions to be raised that may inform the process. This may be done in pairs, triads, or as a whole group, as appropriate to the size of the group and the time allotted to the task.

A sample goal, strategy, and indicator might look like this:

Goal:

By 2011, all students in Grades K–12 will improve performance on the state-required assessments (Grades XXX) and local summative assessments (Grades XXX) by ____ percent each year in reading.

Strategy:

Implement the standards-based English language arts (ELA) curriculum to focus every administrator, teacher, and student on understanding and application.

Adult Implementation Indicator:

100 percent of K–12 teachers, students, and administrators in the district or community school will consistently implement the district or community school standards-based ELA curriculum as evidenced by an analysis of lesson plans and classroom observations.

Baseline Measure:

Fewer than 20 percent of K–12 teachers, 5 percent of students in Grades K–12, and 35 percent of administrators can articulate the district or community school K–5 standards-based curriculum. Level of implementation is unknown.

Progress Measure:

10 percent every four months

E. Creating Progress Indicators

Goal workgroups will need to review the final draft of the strategies. All data applicable to the goal and strategy should be made available to the group. The groups should work on the same strategies they developed and devise baseline and progress measures by responding to the following baseline and progress questions:

Baseline Questions

- What does the data say about how the district or community school measures up in relation to this strategy?
- If there is insufficient data to create a baseline, what data can be immediately collected to form a baseline, and how will it be collected?

Progress Questions

- How would it be determined whether the district or community school was successful at the end of the period of goal attainment if this strategy were fully implemented with integrity?
- What are the changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policy, practices, and student performance that should be seen during the course of the goal attainment?
- What are the changes in student performance and the reductions in achievement gaps that should be seen during the course of the the goal attainment?
- What evidence will be needed to know whether the changes occur?
- What data need to be collected or are available to document the changes?
- What procedures will be followed for collecting the data?
- How will the data be displayed and communicated?
- How will consistent and accurate measurement of each indicator be ensured?

F. Evaluating and Refining Strategies and Indicators

Each of the goal workgroups will need to share their strategies and indicators with each other. These should be provided in writing and also displayed so that all participants can see them. They should either be written on chart paper or projected on a screen.

As each goal workgroup presents its strategies and indicators, they will need to describe how the strategies and indicators meet the criteria discussed in the previous section and respond to questions from the other goal workgroups. Each group then should meet to make any necessary revisions and submit the revisions to the DLT/CSLT member of their group. The DLT/CSLT will need to meet to review the strategies and indicators, examining them for redundancy, overlap, and coherence in order to ensure a reasonably structured set of strategies and indicators.

Either the DLT/CSLT or the goal workgroups should review all goals and strategies and evaluate the strategies and indicators using **Focused Plan Descriptors Checklist, Resource 9**. Ensure that strategies will accelerate the rate of subgroup performance to match the expected performance of all students.

G. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

It may be helpful to identify a goal or strategy manager who oversees implementation. This provides opportunity for shared leadership across the DLT/CSLT. The facilitator or cofacilitators should summarize the next steps, including the date of the next meeting, a draft agenda for the next meeting, and procedures for gathering stakeholder input. The strategies and indicators should be

It is important to “meaningfully involve all relevant stakeholders to assist the superintendent and board members in establishing district goals.”

Ohio Leadership Development Framework, Area 4, Community Engagement Process

written and sent out to the DLT/CSLT in preparation for developing actions. Periodically, use the **Meeting Effectiveness Checklist, Resource 4**, to receive written feedback. The superintendent will need to share how the strategies and indicators will be communicated to the board of education.

Soliciting stakeholder input into the goals, strategies, and indicators will occur at this juncture. There are several options for obtaining feedback from stakeholders. A brief explanation of each follows.

Electronic or Paper Survey

Creating a survey can be a relatively easy and inexpensive method of collecting feedback about the goals, strategies, and indicators. Some surveys use open-ended prompts. This type of survey often is mailed to stakeholders, who complete the survey and mail it back to the district or community school.

Surveys also can be electronic. There are websites where surveys can be produced and analyzed for free (if the number of respondents is relatively low and the survey is relatively simple in design) or at minimal cost. This type of survey can use a combination of forced responses and short-answer questions. Among the benefits of an online survey are that they are inexpensive to administer and that the software program analyzes the data. The data also can be sorted by respondent group. The downside of using this technology is that it may not be readily available to all stakeholders from whom the district or community school desires responses.

Focus Groups

Focus groups, or focused group interviews, are facilitated group discussions in which an interviewer asks a group a series of questions. Group members provide responses to the question and a discussion ensues.

DLT/CSLT Interviews

Another method to gather stakeholder input about the goals, strategies, and indicators is for each member of the DLT/CSLT to interview persons who represent their constituent group. Questions for the interviews should include qualitative and quantitative questions. Once the questions are finalized, they should be included in a spreadsheet or project management tool that can easily be updated and forwarded to DLT/CSLT members.

Producing Evidence-Based or Research-Based Actions for Districts or Community Schools and Buildings and Aligning Resources—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). Two important things to remember are (1) each action implemented to realize the district or community school strategy should have either a direct or an indirect impact on students, such as ongoing professional development and capacity building, and (2) the building must carry over the district or community school goals, strategies, adult implementation indicators, and student performance indicators to the building plan.

The purpose of the meeting is to create evidence-based or research-based action steps to operationalize the strategies and achieve the goals.

Each district or community school will approach action development differently as befits their organization. If a district or community school has groups or teams that work on specific initiatives, such as reading, technology, or professional development, then these are the groups or teams that need to be organized for this task. If a district or community school has departments that have defined work plans (written or unwritten), such as Curriculum or Teaching and Learning Department or Team, or Assessment Department or Team, then these are the groups or teams that need to be organized for this task. Basically, any structure (team, department, workgroup) within a district or community school that has responsibility for a plan or scope of work needs to engage in this part of the process.

Note: The DLT will need to determine how to ensure consistency of this process across all schools.

BLTs will develop building actions that respond to identified critical needs (**BDF** results) and align to district or community school goals and strategies.

B. Reviewing District or Community School Goals, Strategies, and Indicators and Action Criteria

Engage the DLT/CSLT, BLT, and goal workgroups in reviewing goals, strategies, and indicators approved by the board of education. A thorough understanding of them is the basis for developing the district-level or community school-level and building-level actions.

Descriptors for actions are included in the **Focused Plan Descriptors Checklist, Resource 9**. Actions are often short-term and can be assigned. Each action statement should begin with a verb.

C. Keeping, Dropping, or Modifying Actions From Current Plans, Programs, and Practices

District or Community School Leadership Team and Goal Workgroups

Each district or community school workgroup, team, or department needs to review its current plans, programs, and practices for three purposes.

1. The first and most important purpose is to decide which actions should or should not continue on the basis of their consistency with the Stage 1 results. It is important to remember that the plan will have a small number of actions to implement the strategies and achieve the goals.
2. The second purpose is to ensure that the actions meet federal, state, and district or community school requirements. For example, districts or community schools are federally required to coordinate and integrate services and to include appropriate actions to promote effective parent involvement.
3. The third purpose is to ensure that proposed actions are grounded in evidence and research. Federal law requires districts or community schools to use scientifically based research to guide decisions about which actions to implement. There are many actions a site could identify to implement a strategy. As the Institute of Education Sciences points out, many of these actions claim to be able to improve educational outcomes and, in many cases, to be supported by evidence. (See www.ies.ed.gov for more information on connecting research, policy, and practice.) This evidence often consists of poorly designed or advocacy-driven studies. Districts and community schools must sort through these claims to decide which interventions merit consideration.

This is one of the most difficult parts of the process because it generally requires abandonment or modification of programs, practices, or plans to which someone or some group in the district or community school is wedded because of tradition, ownership, and so on. It is important to remember that the intent is to have *one focused plan* that drives district or community school work, not another plan to add to existing plans.

The number of current plans the district or community school has may make it necessary to use small groups for this task.

Use current plans (also any related initiatives, applications, performance reports or agreements, event calendars, and other documents that require the department to take action) to accomplish the following:

- Match each action to the approved strategies.
- Keep actions that do not fit with one or more strategies on a separate list for future discussion with the DLT/CSLT. It is important that district or community school staff know that the final set of actions will become the work for which they will be held accountable. In addition, every district or community school department or team may not have actions for every goal and every strategy.

- Determine whether each action should be kept, dropped, or modified. If an action requires modification, make the adjustments by some means that will make proposed changes obvious. The following criteria may be used when deciding whether to keep, drop, or modify an action:
 - *If the action is fully completed, will it contribute to implementation of the strategy?*
 - *Does the action reach the targeted student population and content area(s)?*
 - *Does the action reach a critical mass of targeted school staff, students, or families?*
 - *Given the overall goal of improving student performance, do the benefits outweigh the costs, that is, time, people, money, materials, supplies, technology?*

Building Leadership Team

The BLT will then need to

- **Keep:** Transfer district or community school actions that must be implemented at the building level to the building plan.
- **Drop:** Ignore district or community school actions that do not apply to the building.
- **Modify:** Adjust the wording as appropriate for the building plan.

D. Generating New Actions

Identify possible new actions by examining causes and effects and the **DF/BDF** profile to check whether the priority causes are addressed either by existing actions or by new actions. It is possible that a cause may need to be worded as a possible action. An example of reworking is as follows:

Cause: The bargaining agreement prevents us from offering afterschool professional development.

Possible action: Negotiate the bargaining agreement to allow afterschool professional development on a pilot basis.

Providing examples may help. For example, if the strategy is “Strategy A: Implement the standards-based curriculum so as to focus every administrator, teacher, staff member, and student on understanding and application,” actions may include the following:

- **Action A.1:** Provide professional learning to TBTs on the district or community school standards-based curriculum for effective implementation.
- **Action A.2:** Monitor student formative and summative assessments to assure alignment to the standards-based curriculum (Ohio TBT 5-Step Process 1, 2, and 5).
- **Action A.3:** Monitor implementation of TBT-designed instruction through quarterly observations (Ohio TBT 5-Step Process 3 and 4).
- **Action A.4:** Provide feedback and support to BLTs on implementation of actions A.2 and A.3.

E. Prioritizing Evidence-Based or Research-Based Actions

Once a complete list of possible actions for each strategy has been developed:

1. Identify actions that may be missing that are generally considered to be important for accomplishing a strategy, that is, professional development, communication, technology, resource management, and data. The group should ask the following questions:
 - What, if any, professional development and support actions are needed to achieve this strategy?
 - What, if any, communication needs to take place in regard to this strategy?
 - What, if any, technology is needed for this strategy to be implemented efficiently and effectively?
 - What, if any, resources (time, people, materials, supplies, and funds) are needed to support this strategy? Will this strategy require reallocation of resources?
 - What, if any, data are needed to support this strategy?

Responses to these questions may result in additional actions for the strategy.

2. Determine action by action which actions have strong or possible evidence of effectiveness. If the answer is negative, then the district or community school or building should conclude that the proposed action is not supported by meaningful evidence and should be considered for removal from the list.
3. Contemplate other factors for the actions that are determined to be evidence-based.
 - Whether outcome data identified in the literature is compatible with the demographics of the district or community school or schools.
 - The ability of the district or community schools or schools to adhere to the details of implementation necessary for success (fidelity).
4. Identify overlaps, conflicts, and relationships between and among actions. Combine actions that duplicate or overlap. If there are too many actions, use a process, such as dot voting or some other technique, for reaching consensus on a small number of critical actions for each strategy.
5. Review the set of actions and ask the group to think about these questions:
 - Will this set of actions allow the district or community school to accomplish its goal and strategy and enable the district or community school to meet the indicators that have been set?
 - Is this the right set of actions to sufficiently address the goal and strategies?
 - Does each action meet the criteria of a good action statement? (See Resource 9.) Consider whether the action is to be developed, implemented, evaluated, or monitored.

F. Affirmation and Mapping of Actions by Year

Once the prioritized list of action steps has been examined, ask the whole group to review the plan for coherence and alignment.

Look at the action steps regardless of the strategies during the goal timeframe (for example, three years) and look for commonalities (cross-cutting actions) and what would be the most strategic way to sequence or group the actions to get the desired results.

Activity

1. Write action steps on cards or provide actions typed in a large font on strips of paper.
2. Create headers reading Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 (or write as headers on three pages of newsprint or large note cards)
3. Use an affinity process to arrange cards according to what needs to happen in Year 1, 2, and 3 of the plan and what could be delayed, if appropriate. What would be a natural flow of the work? Use a logical sequence and logical levels of implementation (development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation) to guide the determination of the year to implement.

Responsibilities, timelines, and resources will need to be assigned to each action. Year 2 and 3 actions may be included in the plan and marked as occurring in the future.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities in the plan need to be specifically referenced. They must designate accountability and show a clear relationship between the actions and who has responsibility for them. Guidelines for assigning responsibility are in Table 8.

Table 8. Guidelines for Assigning Responsibilities

Do use position titles, e.g., Mathematics Coordinator.	Do not use specific names, e.g., Mary Smith.
Do create positions with simple organizational relationships, e.g., Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum.	Do not create positions with relationships with multiple departments, teams, or positions, e.g., ELA Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum.
Do assign a position to someone who is employed by the district or community school.	Do not assign someone who is not an employee of the district or community school, e.g., PTA president.
Do assign a position to someone who is actively employed.	Do not assign a position by job title for a post that is currently vacant.
Do assign a position to someone who will be and can be held accountable for completing the action.	Do not assign a position to someone who has no control or responsibility for the action.
Do assign a position to someone who is close to and has a relationship to the action.	Do not assign a high-level administrator to each action, e.g., have the superintendent responsible for every action.

The DLT/CSLT will want to strive for a balance of persons and groups responsible for action steps. In addition to assigning a position to each action, the district or community school may choose to list other key personnel who also will work on the action. By doing this, the leadership team indicates that there are multiple people who will actively participate in completing the action, yet one individual will still be held responsible and accountable for completion.

Timelines

Each action will need a timeline that provides a deadline for the action to be completed. The individuals who will become responsible for the action will create more detailed timelines in the future as they assign tasks to each action. Because timelines are affected by a variety of unforeseen factors, it is advisable for the district or community school plan to use a quarter calendar system for documenting key deadlines. Quarters could correspond, for example, to a fiscal calendar or to the school year calendar. In any case, timelines must be realistic.

As the timelines are being identified, it is helpful for the district or community school to create a plan calendar. This can be easily accomplished by making a chart of each month in the timeline and then abbreviating each action next to the month it should occur. This activity will help the district or community school to determine whether timelines are realistic for the human resources needed to meet them and to ensure there is no duplication of effort. For example, if more than one action calls for teams to work on an action and the team members are likely to be the same individuals, the calendar will help identify when team members have schedule conflicts or whether the pacing of actions for the team is realistic. Major actions that affect many people in the district or community school may need to be placed on the official district or community school calendar that is distributed to all employees.

Resources

Resources needed for each action can be stated in general terms, for example, software licenses, printing costs, or training materials for a specified number of individuals. At a later time, the treasurer or other person responsible for fiscal funding sources will develop detailed budget breakdowns that correspond to the implementation details.

It is the DLTs/CSLT's and BLT's responsibility to intentionally align resources to achieve the plan goals, strategies, and actions. In planning, a resource allocation decision is made for using all available resources, for example, human resources and funding in the near term (that is, one year) to achieve goals and strategies for the future. Resource alignment and allocations have two considerations: First, there is the basic allocation decision, and second, there are contingency mechanisms. The basic allocation decision is the choice of which items to fund in the plan during which year (if the plan includes multiple-year strategies and actions), and what level of funding they should receive. It is best for districts and community schools to have a solid idea of funding resources for each strategy during the period of goal attainment.

There are two contingency mechanisms. There is a priority ranking of items that shows which items to expand or advance if more resources should become available and another priority ranking of some items in the plan that shows which items could be reduced or postponed if funding is reduced.

The DLT/CSLT will need to consider the following basic tenets when aligning and allocating resources:

- Does our resource allocation reflect that student performance is our highest priority?
- Will our budget demonstrate accountability to our internal and external stakeholders?
- Are our budget decisions based upon relevant data?
- Will our budget process measure the results of our goals, strategies, and actions?
- Does our budget leverage resources from a variety of sources to maximize full implementation?
- Are our resource allocation decisions based on population-based need in order to achieve increases in student performance and changes in teacher practice?

G. Checking the District or Community School Theory of Action

Once the plan has been drafted, it is the responsibility of the DLT/CSLT and BLT to determine whether its overall theory of action is plausible. A theory of action assumes that if the DLT/CSLT and BLT implements actions intended to achieve a set of strategies, then goals will be achieved. In other words, the district or community school established **goals** based upon the identified needs of the students. They identified **strategies** based upon identified cause-and-effect relationships. They made the assumption that if these strategies were followed with at least 90 percent fidelity, then the district or community school would meet the improvement goals. For each strategy, **indicators for adult implementation and student progress** were established along with progress measures for periodic monitoring throughout the plan. The DLT/CSLT (and BLT) identified the **action steps** necessary to effectively carry out the strategies.

A check of the theory of action can be accomplished by asking these questions:

1. If we successfully complete the actions we have described with 90 percent fidelity, will we accomplish our strategy? Ask this for each strategy.
2. If we successfully accomplish our strategies, will they achieve our goal? Ask this for each goal.

Record any refinements to the Theory of Action Model.

H. District or Community School and Building Monitoring Process

Once all actions are complete for Year 1, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to identify the monitoring evidence and data sources that will be used to document that the action is implemented. This discussion should occur as part of the larger conversation on the approach the DLT/CSLT will take to monitor the entire plan. Considerations may include the following:

- Actions in the plan that ensure that monitoring occurs
- Development of a separate document that describes the monitoring approach
- Frequency—for example, quarterly—of discussions for monitoring results at DLT/CSLT meetings

It is advisable to have no more than two forms of evidence for each action in order to keep the most important information and so that the amount of information collected is manageable. It also is likely that the same form of evidence may apply to multiple actions. On the plan, evidence can be denoted in key terms or coded according to a list of evidence that has been generated. Sources may include observation summaries, schedules, written policies or procedures, professional development training, analysis of logs, analysis of assessment results, meeting summaries and decisions, and other concrete sources.

The decisions reached may prompt the DLT/CSLT to schedule a separate session to discuss specific monitoring processes or the DLT/CSLT may identify a subcommittee to develop alternative proposals for presentation to the whole DLT/CSLT. It is important to schedule time and attention to monitoring processes. The monitoring process needs to be communicated to each BLT, and the appropriate processes, timelines, and instruments for data collection need to be fully understood.

Note: It is important to define what will be reported at each predetermined interval. This is the core of the communication plan because the team does not need to report all steps of the completed actions.

I. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The superintendent and building administrator will need to share how the plan will be reviewed, revised, and adopted. The facilitator should summarize the next steps, including the date of the next meeting and a draft agenda for the next meeting.

The plan should be put into the **CCIP**, which automatically populates the Implementation Management/Monitoring (**IMM**) tool with the goals and strategies. **Focused Plan (IMM) Templates, Resource 10**, provides a Microsoft Word version of the **IMM**. Overall improvement work, focused on how to implement a plan to improve student learning, is of greater importance than completing each plan cell perfectly.

As a last step, districts and community schools should review the compliance components of the **CCIP** and flag parts of the plan that address the components. Districts and community schools must add an action and flag it to address any compliance component that has not already been addressed through plan development. The ODE provides a list of requirements for each of the compliance components. ODE's Office of Federal Programs can provide assistance in addressing compliance components. The plan should be edited and sent to the DLT/CSLT, BLT, and goal workgroups.

Tasking the District or Community School Plan and Aligned SIPs—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter).

The purpose of the meeting is to create tasks for actions and ensure that they are logically sequenced and coordinated.

B. Completing the Task Implementation Template

Tasks for each action will be generated by the person or groups responsible for each action and reviewed by the strategy manager to ensure equitable distribution of assignments. Tasks are a list of activities that need to be undertaken for someone to complete an action.

Note: Ensure that there is a balance of action and effort over time so the district, community school, or building has the capacity to take on and accomplish the work in the plan. When identifying financial resources, be sure to include the treasurer and federal programs coordinator in the conversation and decision making.

Activity

1. Model development of tasks using one of the actions. Review the definitions of action and task from **Grain Size and Definitions of Goal, Strategy, Action Steps, Tasks, and Indicators, Resource 8**. It may help to have participants brainstorm using a logical order of action verbs (for example, initiate, identify, develop, implement, communicate, monitor, evaluate).
2. Brainstorm all the tasks needed for each action. Write each one on a separate note card. Once all the tasks are listed, check them against the definition of a task. Be sure to start each task with a verb.

3. Put the tasks in a logical order, looking for overlap or duplication.

Transfer agreed-upon tasks to the **Task Implementation Template, Resource 11**.

Once there is agreement on the process of developing tasks, the strategy or action manager will need to be charged with

- Creating tasks for their assigned actions
- Establishing dates and times for persons responsible to meet
- Identifying resources needed to implement tasks and actions
- Identifying the timeline for completion or revision of actions and tasks
- Identifying the evidence for each of the actions that measure progress toward plan implementation
- Determining which tasks will be monitored

Research suggests that the most salient variable in improving student achievement is not the brand name of any program but the degree to which the process is implemented.

Douglas Reeves, Transforming Professional Development Into Student Results (ASCD, 2010).

C. Coordinating and Sequencing Tasks

The group should discuss the information requested in the template and agree on its contents. The DLT/CSLT and BLT should set a deadline for completing the template. Once completed, the DLT/CSLT and BLT and strategy or action manager or a subcommittee of the DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to convene and compare the task lists to coordinate and sequence the tasks. Comparing task lists to coordinate and sequence the tasks can be accomplished by listing all the tasks by frequency (quarterly for districts or community schools, monthly for schools), regardless of their associated strategy or action, and then sequencing them from beginning to end. The tasks can then be studied for duplication of effort and logical order. It also may be necessary to study the proposed actions and tasks by person responsible to make sure there is a balanced workload. Workgroups may be formed around similar tasks (for example, selecting or planning professional development and purchasing materials).

D. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Seek and document agreement on the following:

- Timelines for completing the **Professional Development Alignment Template, Resource 18**, or a similar template. (See Stage 3.)
- Timelines for coordinating and sequencing tasks.
- Timelines for monitoring plan implementation.
- Procedures and schedule for monitoring plan implementation.

Reviewing, Revising, and Adopting the Plan

Holding a Public Hearing

Engaging a broad base of stakeholders to review the draft plan will help build ownership and commitment to plan implementation. Section 3302.04 of the Ohio Revised Code (S.B. 55) requires districts and community schools to hold at least one public hearing (with at least two weeks prior notice) about the final draft of the plan before the board adopts it. Major federal and state plan requirements are available from the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) should this information be needed. The degree to which the board wants to engage their constituents in reviewing the plan will dictate which of several formats to use. Following is a range of options for the board to consider.

Standard Board Meeting

Boards hold regularly scheduled meetings and follow standard procedures under the Open Public Meetings Act to inform the public about such meetings. One option is for the board to put the plan before the public by placing it on the agenda of a regularly scheduled board meeting. This will necessitate making the plan available to the public prior to the meeting, perhaps on the district or community school website, or to present the contents of the plan at the board meeting.

Public Hearing

The main purpose of most public hearings is to obtain public testimony or comment. Some form of public notice is required for all public hearings. Because all public hearings are considered public meetings under the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements of Section 3302.04 of the Ohio Revised Code (S.B. 55) must be followed. Board meeting chambers where public meetings usually are held often will be the best place to hold a public hearing. The primary concern is to provide time in the agenda for all attending members of the public to speak if they so desire.

Town Meeting

Town meetings create an opportunity for the general public to give the board direct, substantive feedback on the plan. Town meetings focus on discussion and deliberation among citizens rather than speeches, question-and-answer sessions, or panel presentations. Diverse groups of citizens participate in round-table discussions, deliberating in depth about the plan.

Districtwide or Community School–Wide Meeting

Although there has been building and district or community school involvement in plan development, not all staff members will have had the opportunity to review the entire plan. Therefore, the board may wish to have an open meeting for anyone interested in reviewing the plan. This can be accomplished in several ways. The meetings could be held at each building in the district or community school, by job-alike groups (for example, principals' meeting, teacher leader meeting, grade-level meeting) or for the entire district or community school. Districtwide or community school–wide meetings could be held in a fashion similar to that of the town meeting described earlier. Such a broad meeting also presents an opportunity for the district or community school to explain the relationship between the district or community school and school plans. The DLT/CSLT may want to create a synopsis of the plan for distribution to all staff.

Considering Public Hearing Comments

After the public hearing, a few tasks need to be accomplished before the plan is submitted to the board for adoption. Incorporating the information from the public review allows the district or community school one more opportunity to create a plan that is clear to all stakeholders and inspires everyone to embrace its implementation. The DLT/CSLT needs to seriously consider each comment from the public hearing. The DLT/CSLT should develop a response to each comment in a format that can be shared with the local board and, if requested, with those who participated in the public review.

Revising the Plan

The decisions made in response to the public review comments may call for revisions to the plan. If that is the case, the revisions need to be made and approved by the DLT/CSLT. Once changes are made, it is suggested that a single individual (rather than a team) edit the plan and finalize any visuals that are used as illustrations in the publicly shared plan. Tasking one individual with the final editing will ensure consistency in editing and formatting. If the superintendent or board has any guidelines about style or format, they should be made clear at this time.

Securing Board Approval

The final plan should be formally presented at a board meeting. The board may wish to hold a signing ceremony or another event to celebrate adoption of the plan and to recognize those who contributed to its development. The plan should immediately be placed on the district or community school website. A summary of the plan should be made widely available and the local press should be informed.

STAGE 3 **Implementing and Monitoring the Focused Plan**

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Abstract

Stage 3 describes ways to systematically and systemically implement focused strategies and actions identified in Stage 2. Stage 3 also explains how to create an ongoing monitoring approach to gauge the degree of implementation and its effects on adult practice and student performance. Five working agendas, with relevant talking points, key messages, and resources, are provided to support the facilitation of meetings that focus on key activities for DLT/CSLT or BLTs to support implementation and monitoring of the focused plan.

Implementing the Plan Systematically and Systemically

Implementation is the most complex part of the OIP primarily because it requires changes in adult behaviors and practices that are part of the unique culture of every district or community school and every building. The district's or community school's focused plan (**CCIP**) should represent a singular and coherent focus on the goals, strategies, and actions to be implemented to make and sustain needed improvement.

TIP:

Systematically

- Procedural
- Coherent
- Thorough
- Regular

Systemically

- Broad
- Deep
- Sustained
- Shared systemwide

Effective implementation is characterized by district or community school and buildings

- Doing a few things well and deeply
- Focusing on improving classroom practices
- Learning how to learn together
- Providing feedback to each other
- Making good decisions at all levels based on data

The implementation of well-aligned district or community school and building plans resides with the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs. Fulfilling these roles may represent a major cultural shift from how a site has operated in the past. This cultural shift may manifest itself in a reexamination of the essential practices of leadership or adult behaviors, the commitment to implement such practices at all levels of the system, or the role of the superintendent, DLT/CSLT, and BLTs according to the *Ohio Leadership Development Framework*.

The overall intent of Stage 3 is for the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs to use the focused plan in its daily, weekly, and monthly routines; implementation becomes the day-to-day activities or tasks that will effectively put the plan into action. There are common strategies and actions that most districts and schools will execute, whether it occurs in the first, second, or third year or beyond. Two frequent strategies are the use of common classroom formative and interim assessments by TBTs and the delivery of HQPD. To ensure success, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to have systems in place that allow for these strategies to be systematically implemented. Specifically, they will need to do the following:

- Maintain a culture of inquiry through collaborative structures and processes by supporting the work of TBTs.
- Align HQPD across districts or community schools and building plans to achieve results.
- Apply a balanced assessment system for monitoring student performance indicators.

“Historically, districts and schools have been so loosely coupled that they have had little influence on what occurs in individual classrooms and consequently have had little influence on student achievement.”

Getting Serious About School Reform, *Robert Marzano & Associates (2008)*

Effective implementation requires monitoring to gauge success and to inform midcourse corrections. The DLT/CSLT and BLT need to understand what improves student learning, and in some cases, what accelerates student learning to close achievement gaps. The team must be able to provide clear, honest, and timely feedback about how to improve student performance and teacher practice. When reviewing monitoring data at the grade, building, and district or community school level, the DLT/CSLT should understand how the data informs the work that improves instructional practice. Monitoring implementation becomes the heart of the improvement process as the DLT/CSLT and BLTs support the implementation of more powerful instructional practices that improve student acquisition of core content and higher order thinking skills. It will be incumbent upon the DLT/CSLT and BLT to continue to use formative and summative data to inform decision making and make midcourse corrections to the plan.

Maintaining a Culture of Inquiry Through Collaborative Structures and Processes—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter).

The purpose of the meeting is to initiate or repurpose (if they already exist) the district’s collaborative structures so that they are focused on the work described in the district or building plan.

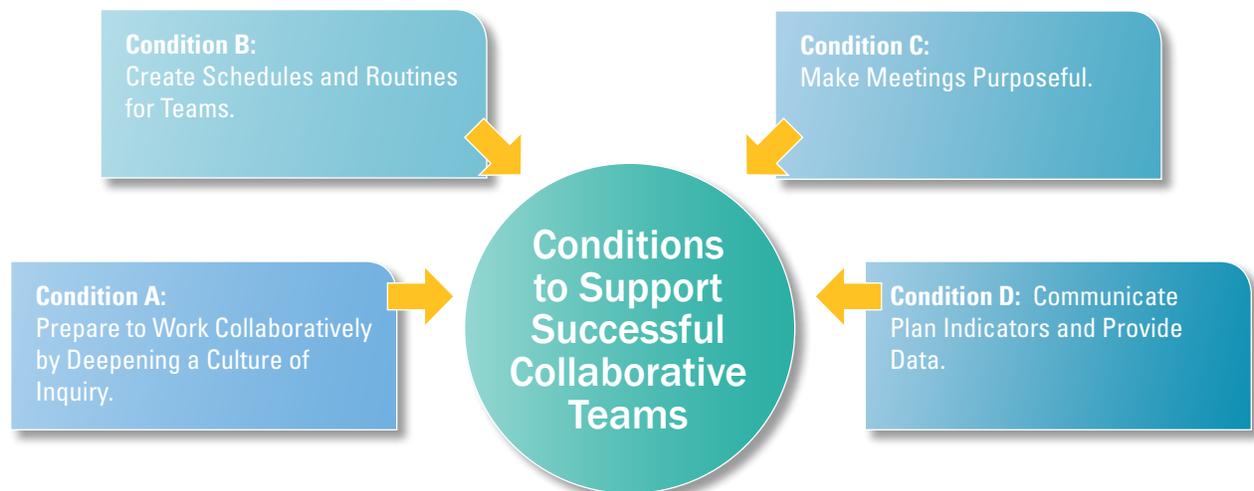
Note: If not all buildings are represented on the DLT/CSLT, it may be appropriate to ask a representative from each BLT to attend this meeting.

B. Conditions for Implementing Collaborative Teams

It is the responsibility of the DLT/CSLT and BLT to create specific working conditions (see Figure 12) necessary for teams at the district or community school, building, and classroom levels to be successful. During this discussion, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will want to

- Assess DLT/CSLT readiness to function as a successful team
- Assess readiness of BLTs and TBTs to function as successful teams
- Determine how to communicate expectations and parameters to district or community school staff and building staff
- Identify what barriers need to be removed (use of waiver days, district professional development calendar, cross-building work) to make this happen
- Establish mechanisms for effective use of collaboration time (focus, structure, purpose)
- Offer resources to further support successful collaborative teams (for example, pay for team leads to learn how to work with teams)

Figure 12. Conditions Supportive of Collaborative Teams



Assessing support of collaborative teams at all level examines the conditions that, if not in place, may thwart implementation and monitoring of the plan. Although it is not imperative that all conditions for success be in place before implementation, the DLT/CSLT and BLT should work toward putting them in place.

1. One of the necessary conditions is that of creating schedules and routines that support collaborative teams. Use of the Ohio 5-Step Process as illustrated in Figure 13 is an important routine. The DLT/CSLT and BLT need to develop an understanding of how these five steps can focus them on plan implementation.
 - Divide the group by role.
 - Have those representing the district review **DLT/CSLT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21A**, and imagine and discuss how the template will help structure regularly scheduled DLT/CSLT meetings to support plan implementation.
 - Have those representing buildings review **BLT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21B**, and imagine and discuss how the template will help structure regularly scheduled BLT meetings to support plan implementation.
 - Have each group report on how the two templates align and how they might contribute to coherent implementation across the system.
2. Compare **TBT 5-Step Process Visual, Resource 14**, to the general 5-Step Process in Figure 13. Review **TBT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21C**, to gain a deeper understanding of how the 5-Step Process is customized to support TBTs as they focus on their ongoing role in plan implementation.

3. To ensure meetings are purposeful, protocols are used. A protocol consists of agreed-upon guidelines for an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning. Specifically, protocols are useful for three reasons:

- To create a structure that makes it safe to ask challenging questions of each other. It also ensures that there is some equity in how each person’s issues are attended to.
- Make the most of the limited time people have.
- Have an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning.

Figure 13. Ohio 5-Step Process



Sample Protocols to Support the OIP, Resource 20A, provides a protocol titled “Protocol for Exploring Student Work—

Analysis of Student Work” that may be helpful to TBTs in Step 2 of the Ohio 5-Step Process. In this protocol, the presenter has the opportunity to not only reflect and describe an instructional issue or dilemma but also to have interesting questions asked of him or her and gain differing perspectives and new insights.

4. Complete **Implementation Effectiveness Survey: Conditions to Support Successful Collaborative Teams, Resource 12A (DLT/CSLT) and 12B (BLT)**, to assess the degree to which conditions are in place. Once **Resources 12A** and **12B** have been completed, study the items and have a brief discussion about each, determining what evidence is available to respond to any of the items. Reach consensus. Challenge responses by asking questions such as *Do we do this consistently? Do we do this in some buildings, at some grade levels, or are we just beginning to do this?*
5. Once all statements are discussed, prioritize items. For those with the highest priority, prepare a list of next steps to move them to a higher level.
6. Discuss the results of and reach agreement on the expectations and parameters that the DLT/CSLT wants consistently implemented in all buildings and which are optional (or will be expected at a later time).
7. Identify barriers that need to be removed to put the priority conditions in place.
8. Determine how the BLT representatives attending this meeting will communicate to their BLT and staff the expectations and parameters that the DLT/CSLT wants consistently implemented in all buildings and which are optional (or will be expected at a later time). BLT representatives may want to use the TBT On-Line Learning Module (website), which includes the **TBT Conditions and Next Steps Inventory, Resource 13, and TBT 5-Step Process Implementation Checklist, Resource 15**. The checklist in **Resource 15** describes what is covered in each step of the process to help building teams assess their readiness to function as a successful TBT in implementing the plan. **Resource 15** may be used by the BLT in one of several ways:
 - As a jigsaw activity to deepen understanding of the 5-Step Process
 - As a case study to compare the current and desired functioning of TBTs in a building within the district
 - As an implementation checklist for all TBTs to use
 - In a discussion using a video of a TBT to better understand how the checklist can inform how the 5-Step Process can be operationalized

Some LEAs also may find it helpful to have TBTs coached to ensure fidelity of implementation. **Coaching TBTs: Prompts and Log, Resource 22**, may be useful to guide coaching conversations with the TBTs.

A final discussion to have is on how data and information will be collected, documented, and communicated between and among TBTs, the BLT, and the DLT/CSLT. Specifically,

- Define reporting mechanisms within and across the district or community school, building, and classroom levels.
- Identify how each level will be held accountable for results, including consequences.
- Determine how data on effective use of the selected conditions might inform implementation of adult indicators.

C. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Document agreement on the following:

- Expectations for implementing successful districtwide or community school-wide, building, and teacher teams.
- Changes the DLT/CSLT will need to make to create the conditions for successful teams.

“In schools where teachers examined the evidence of the impact of teaching effectiveness on student achievement and regarded their professional practices as the primary cause of achievement, the gains in student achievement were three times higher than in schools where the faculty and leaders attributed the causes to factors beyond their control.”

*D. Reeves, Ahead of the Curve
(Bloomington, IN: Solution
Tree, 2007)*

Aligning HQPD Across District and Community School Plans and Building Plans to Achieve Results—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, reporter).

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that professional development is focused on plan priorities across the district or community school and buildings, adheres to Ohio’s Standards for HQPD, and identifies how professional development will be assessed for impact on student performance and adult implementation (tied into monitoring). This session is not intended to do an audit of past professional development.

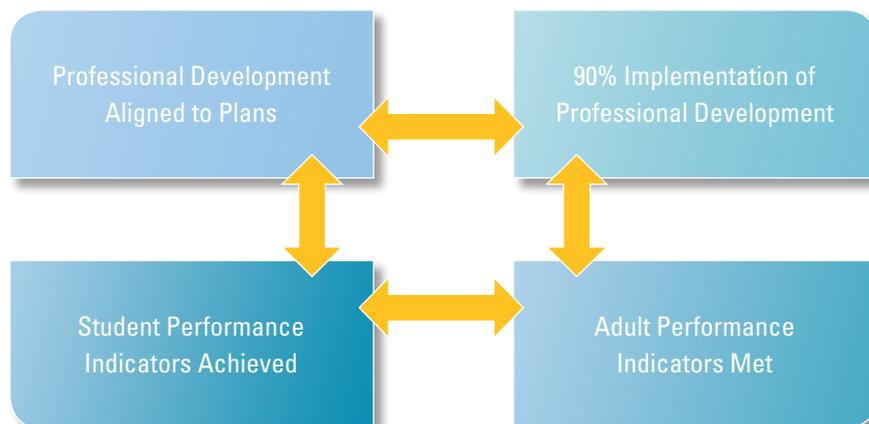
Note: All members of the DLT/CSLT or BLT should be asked to bring their calendars, including district or community school and building schedules, and a copy of their **CCIP/IMM** or SIPs.

B. Revisiting High-Quality Professional Development

Inherent in any district or community school, building, classroom, or individual plan is professional learning. High-quality professional development often is a major investment in any plan, but the alignment of HQPD across sites is often ignored. The relationship between professional development and student results follows a pattern like the following:

- If professional development is systemically aligned to focused plan goals and strategies, it has greater potential to change what educators do across the district or community school and all buildings.

Figure 14. Interrelationships of Professional Development and Student Results



- If all educators’ knowledge and skills change (with 90 percent fidelity), they are able to systematically modify practices to meet adult performance indicators.
- If adult performance indicators are met, student performance indicators are more likely to be achieved.
- When student performance indicators are achieved, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.

The success of this pattern relies on the DLT/CSLT and BLTs ensuring that high-quality professional development (HQPD) is available and taken advantage of by all educators, especially TBTs. HQPD is defined in the Ohio Professional Development Standards (on the ODE website). For successful implementation of the OIP, professional development must be

- Differentiated according to student performance and adult implementation data
- Job-embedded
- Driven by implementation of the plan
- Monitored and assessed for impact

HQPD relies on following the Ohio Professional Development Standards. It is assumed that district or community school and school building staff is familiar with these standards and the rubrics that guide their use. **The High-Quality Professional Development (HQPD) Checklist, Resource 17**, identifies evidence-based characteristics of professional development and aligns those characteristics with the Ohio standards. The checklist can be used by DLT/CSLT and BLTs to assist in planning and implementing professional development. It will help to have the entire DLT/CSLT and BLT on the same page by using the language described in this resource.

Once the checklist is reviewed, one or more of the following could be included in this meeting:

1. Present the evidence or research base that shows that well-designed and well-implemented professional development has a direct impact on improving student achievement.
2. Discuss the Ohio Professional Development Standards using **Resource 17**.
3. Use a series of questions to establish the mindset for HQPD, for example,
 - Think of a powerful learning experience. What were the qualities of that experience?
 - How do these qualities relate to the above characteristics and standards?
 - How do we or could we embed the characteristics and standards into our professional development?

C. Aligning Focused Professional Development Across the District or Community School and Buildings

Once everyone has a shared understanding of HQPD, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will want to revisit the specific content, context, and process decisions to implement professional development in the district or community school and building plans so that it is aligned, coherent, differentiated, and job-embedded. The **PD Alignment Template, Resource 18**, can be used for this purpose. In order to use **Resource 18**, the team members will need to have copies of all plans and ideally invite representatives from each building (if not already members of the DLT) to engage in this dialogue.

An option is to have each building complete the chart in advance of the meeting and aggregate the information into one chart. Note that the chart headers and questions are derived from the Ohio Professional Development Standards. This resource also may be used in a variety of other ways:

- In conversation with potential providers or with a group—for example, a professional development committee—charged with ensuring that professional development is aligned across the district or community school goals
- After the DLT/CSLT portion is complete, for the BLT to align its professional development to the district's by completing the form as building actions and tasks are developed
- To coordinate professional development and maximize professional development resources across the district and buildings
- In collecting information to complete the **DF** in Stage 1
- To ensure a systemic focus of professional development and coordinate evaluation to measure impact

D. Operationalizing the Plan for Job-Embedded Professional Development

Job-embedded professional development is central to achieving results, but DLTs/CSLTs and BLTs need to understand what it is because it has many forms. Job-embedded professional development is primarily school- or classroom-based and is integrated into the workday, consisting of teachers assessing and finding solutions for authentic and immediate problems of practice as part of a cycle of continuous improvement. In line with that definition, job-embedded professional development can be (a) individual (For example, a teacher attends a workshop on formative assessment and applies it in her classroom. She reflects on her experience and blogs about it in her online journal.); (b) one on one (For example, an elementary teacher and the building literacy coach meet to review a lesson the coach observed the day before. They discuss how to better implement a specific reading technique, and the teacher agrees to try it.); (c) in teams, in either the classroom or the school, in real time or shortly before or after instruction, with current students, and centered on issues of actual practice (For example, TBTs implementing the Ohio 5-Step Process).

In order to operationalize job-embedded professional development, DLTs/CSLTs will need to not only create the conditions for collaborative teams and support the implementation of the TBTs in all classrooms, they may also want to

- Support Ohio’s human capital development system by hiring teachers who are prepared to engage in collaborative professional learning.
- Consider making job-embedded professional development a part of the evaluation system.
- Work to develop a school culture among teachers, in which continued learning is considered an essential aspect of professional practice, incorporating it in the bargaining unit contract, local policies, and so on.

Students who started out with the same scores in mathematics and were then assigned to three highly effective teachers in a row gained 50 percentile points more than their peers who had three consecutive ineffective teachers.

W. L. Sanders & J. C. Rivers, Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center, 1996), and K. Haycock, Good Teaching Matters (Washington, DC: Education Trust, 1998)

- Offer incentives and supports for schools to evaluate job-embedded professional development for their teachers, including using data on student performance and adult implementation practices to plan for job-embedded professional development.
- Monitor implementation of job-embedded professional development in schools through observation processes.

E. Assessing Professional Development Impact: Formative and Summative

The purpose of this short discussion is to determine how the DLT/CSLT and BLT has assessed professional development and to extend their thinking about how it could be improved. Assessing the impact of professional development requires formative and summative assessments. Assessments have two purposes: to improve the quality of the professional learning (formative) and to determine its overall effectiveness (summative).

Formative assessment is done at intervals with participants being asked for feedback and comments to enable the provider to make midcourse corrections and do fine-tuning to improve quality. Formative evaluation helps ensure that participants’ needs are being met, outcomes are being achieved, district or school expectations are met through meaningful experiences, and what is learned is being translated into action.

Summative evaluation is done at the conclusion of the professional development learning experiences. It is collected at three levels: educator practices, organizational changes, and student outcomes. **The HQPD Checklist, Resource 17**, describes Guskey’s five levels of professional development evaluation and can be used as a springboard to engage the DLT/CSTL and BLT in determining how they will evaluate the focused professional development. This determination relates directly to the monitoring system, which should collect data on what the leadership team wants classroom teachers to know and be able to do.

- How will you know when you see the desired changes?
- What, when, and how will you observe the desired changes?
- How will you use formative and summative evaluation results from professional development to inform future professional development?

Other possible uses for **Resource 17** are

- As a pre-post checklist when planning and implementing professional development
- As an organizer to give DLT/CSLT and BLTs the big picture around professional development

F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The strategy or action manager should check the work produced against the relevant information in the **Task Implementation Template, Resource 11**, or a similar template to further ensure consistency and alignment.

Applying a Balanced Assessment System for Monitoring Student Performance Indicators—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter).

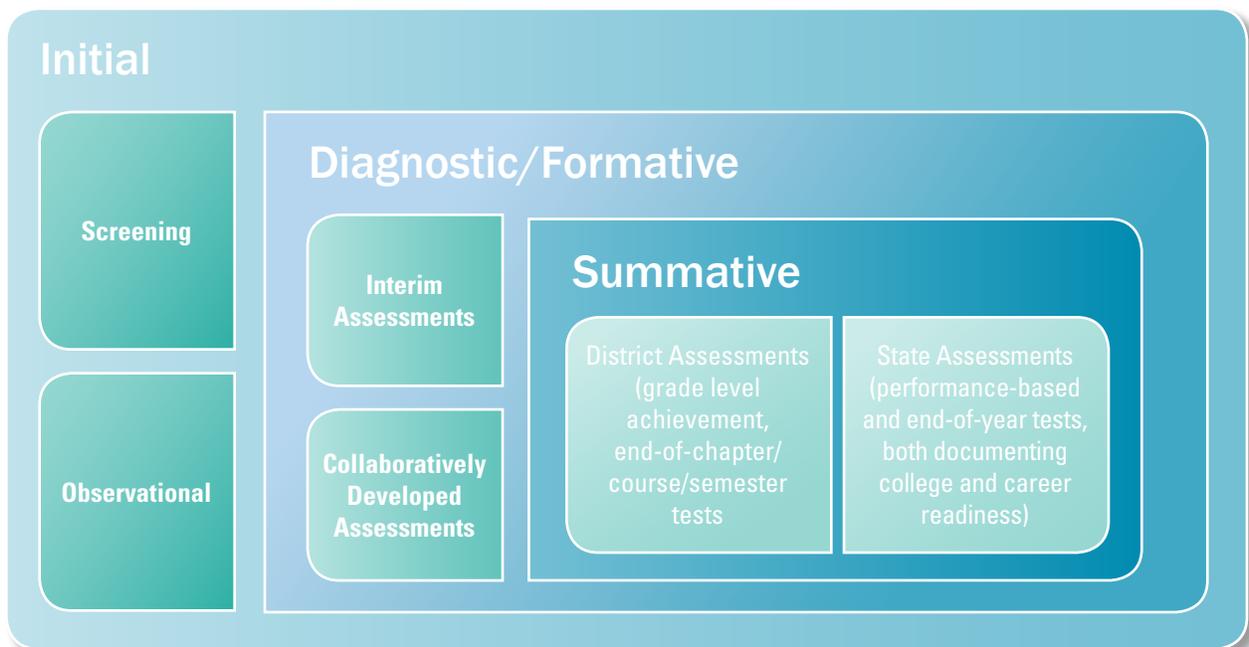
The purpose of this meeting is to conduct a gap analysis of the assessment system in order to identify data results that will provide evidence of meeting the student performance indicators.

It is important to have the right people attend this meeting (for example, a representative from each BLT, representation from all areas/grades, and/or appropriate district staff who may not be members of the DLT, such as the assessment director). Each building representative should bring a sample of each type of assessment to include a sample of the evidence collected. The district should do the same.

An effective comprehensive system for assessing students' performance and progress toward the academic content standards is composed of both state and local or classroom-level assessments. Ohio's Comprehensive Assessment System includes (a) state assessments that include achievement tests and diagnostic assessments and (b) local assessments that include district-developed or school assessments and classroom assessments. Each assessment provides invaluable information to Ohio's educators, parents, students, and communities. Although each piece supports the other, each serves its own purpose.

"The term 'assessment' refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Paul Black & Dylan Willam, "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment," *WEA Education Blog*, November 6, 2001, p. 2). In Ohio, three types of assessment are generally part of a district assessment system: initial, diagnostic/formative, and summative. Categorizing a particular assessment in one of these three types, however, is subject to different interpretations, including the fact that some assessments are

Figure 15. Types and Purposes of Assessments



structured, and so they can be identified as more than one type by the use to which they are put. **Assessment Definitions and Inventory Template, Resource 19**, provides a chart that defines each type, explains the purpose or use of each, and gives examples.

The DLT/CSLT and BLTs will want to align and focus assessments so that the district or community school has a comprehensive, balanced system that allows stakeholders to use the information to inform instruction and monitor progress against the plan indicators. Analyzing its current assessment system and identifying gaps may be a first step in creating or revamping such a system.

Resource 19 also provides a template that can be used by the DLT/CSLT and BLT in examining its current assessment system. If possible, complete **Resource 19** in advance of the discussion to save time and focus the discussion on what data is needed to measure indicator progress. In all likelihood, the largest gap will be in the area of short-cycle/interim/formative assessments, particularly collaboratively developed common classroom formative assessments.

There is ample research to support the assertion that implementation of common formative assessments produces a substantial increase in student performance, if implemented effectively. The ODE website provides information on how to effectively use and develop strong formative assessment strategies aligned to state content standards. There are several benefits to ensuring that formative assessments are included in a balanced comprehensive assessment system:

- Teacher-produced assessments, such as rubrics or performance tasks, make explicit to teachers and students the criteria for successful learning.
- Student feedback is immediate and students become responsible for their learning.
- Feedback to teachers is immediate, thus allowing them to modify instruction and respond to individual student needs.
- Opportunities arise for collaboration among teachers to ensure consistent expectations for learning that are based on common criteria.

B. Research on Student Performance and Review of Student Performance Indicators

The characteristics of a quality assessment system need to be introduced, being sensitive to the district leaders' ownership of the current assessment system (choice, requirements, and use) and what the research says about the effect on improving student achievement. This could be accomplished by jigsawing an article or a slide presentation, or the participants could generate the qualities through brainstorming. Emphasize that common assessments

- Provide a degree of consistency.
- Represent common, agreed-upon expectations.
- Align with priority standards.
- Help identify effective practices for replication.
- Make data collection possible.

Note: It is not advisable to spend too much time researching assessment types and instruments. Most districts and community schools assess more than they realize. The intent is not to revamp the entire district assessment system but to ensure that the district or community school has assessment data to monitor student performance that are consistent with the plan indicators.

C. Identifying Gaps in the Assessment System

Assessment Definitions and Inventory Template, Resource 19, provides a template that can be used by the DLT/CSLT and BLT in examining its current assessment system. After the chart is complete (may be done in advance of the meeting), answer these questions:

- Are there gaps in the assessment system, for example, grade levels, types, purposes?
- Are there student groups that are not being included in the assessment system?
- Are there types of assessment that seem excessive or are missing, that is, too much or too little?
- What is the cost-benefit analysis—that is, the time, effort, and money expended versus what the assessments yield in terms of data to identify student needs, inform instruction, and monitor student progress toward standards?

D. Analyzing Assessments Relative to Plan Indicators

Once the assessment system is fully described, the DLT/CSLT will need to revisit which assessments will provide adequate data to measure plan indicators.

Activity

Using the **CCIP** Adult Implementation and Student Performance Indicators and completed **Resource 19** (or a similar gap analysis), have the DLT/CSLT members answer the following questions for each student performance indicator:

- What the data will tell us if the indicator is met?

- Will the data describe progress toward the indicator in a timely manner (do timeframes match the plan)?
- Do we have the technology and procedures to make these data easily accessible and user-friendly at the district and building levels?

If there are sufficient data at the grade levels that are being monitored and they are accessible, then this will affirm the original plan. If, however, there are gaps, the DLT/CSLT will need to take action such as

- a. To identify a different assessment that is part of the current district assessment system to measure the indicator
- b. To select a new assessment that will become a part of the assessment system in order to measure the indicator
- c. To expand an assessment so that it is administered at the appropriate grade levels

If *a* is chosen, communication across the system will need to occur so that everyone is clear about how the assessment selected will be administered and how results will be used and reported. Refer back to the communication approach that was drafted in Stage 2.

Choosing *b* may require changes to the action plan and a change to the timeframe because when the indicator can be measured may be accelerated. Whether making such changes will be long-term or short-term depends on the type of assessment selected. For example, a district decision to implement common formative assessments across the system will require considerable time for test development, professional development, and implementation systemwide.

Choosing *c* may require the expansion of an assessment across the system or heighten expectations that assessments will be used. For example, if a district has a reading series that includes formative assessments but they are not used consistently across the system, then the expectation that the assessments be administered and used and the data reported may need to be expressed.

Note: The choices between *a*, *b*, and *c* are not mutually exclusive.

E. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Building on the choices made to this point, the DLT/CSLT will need to determine a set of tasks to implement the choice. The tasks may become part of a strategy manager's responsibility, or a separate district team may be formed to respond to the need. If the latter is needed, it would be best if the team is cross-functional and include those responsible for managing, administering, using, and reporting results. Professional development in assessment literacy, including familiarity with reliability and validity, may be needed. If funds or other resources are needed, the team should inform the DLT/CSLT so it can take appropriate action, for example, by reallocation of resources or targeted funding.

Monitoring and Analyzing Changes in Student Performance and Adult Implementation to Make Midcourse Corrections and Report Plan Progress

Monitoring can be used for many purposes. For our purpose, it is part of the larger district or community school internal accountability system for continuously monitoring whether instructional practices are having the desired effect on student performance. DLTs/CSLTs and BLTs will have three areas of focus, which are described in the working agendas:

“In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results, and the strength of effort is the measure of the results.”

—James Allen, *As a Man Thinketh* (1902)

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it.”

—Popular saying

- Designing an intentional, consistent system of monitoring adult behavior and student performance indicators districtwide, community school-wide, and buildingwide
- Making midcourse corrections on the basis of the gap between the projected and actual measures, utilizing a feedback loop back to the appropriate groups
- Determining a vehicle to generalize successes across the district so that the lessons learned become systemic

Monitoring implementation of the district or community school and building improvement plans should be a standing agenda item of DLT/CSLT and BLT meetings. The importance of monitoring for improvement—not compliance—needs to be reinforced. In general, the DLT/CSLT will respond to specific questions as it considers each part of the monitoring system. These questions are embedded into each agenda topic.

Designing an Intentional Monitoring System—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). There is no question whether a monitoring system will address staff needs of understanding the indicators and how they translate into behaviors, creating good observations, and interpreting and analyzing the results. Some would argue that professional development is needed on those issues before staff is asked to monitor. But that might delay moving forward on a data collection process that is critical to understanding where students are. Creating districtwide or community school-wide expectations and requirements to monitor and submit student and adult performance data on the indicators provides a focus for discussion and creates a more urgent need to learn how best to improve. The discussion of student performance data will naturally lead back around to a discussion of how best to assess proficiency on the indicator, what

the student performance tells you about what students know and do not know, and how the formative assessment data can be used to plan instruction to support students in demonstrating proficiency. This discussion frequently uncovers areas in which staff needs to build capacity, and that self-diagnosis provides a stronger motivation for acquiring the appropriate knowledge and skills.

The purpose of this meeting is to affirm and provide a description of the district plan indicators and develop or revise the monitoring system.

All members of the DLT/CSLT should be asked to bring with them their calendars, including district and building schedules.

B. Review and Description of Plan Indicators

A good monitoring system relies on having well-thought-through and clearly defined indicators. They serve as the barometer for the district to know whether it is improving. Remember that the OIP is about learning together for improvement, not punishment.

Pull the goals, strategy, and indicator sections of the plan and create a separate document for the DLT/CSLT members to use for this activity. Doing so will help keep everyone focused on the indicators.

Activity

Using the plan indicators, divide the DLT/CSLT into groups to review all the adult implementation indicators, for all goals and strategies.

Have each group, using chart paper, write the indicator and underneath the indicator draw two columns with headers that read “Indicator Descriptor” and “Definition” as in Figure 16. The facilitator asks each group to describe the key concepts. Ask guiding questions and write how they would define the indicator, for example,

- How often is implementation expected, for example, daily, weekly?
- Who is expected to implement, for example, specialists, all certified staff, all employees?
- What terms need definition, for example, consistent, integrity?
- Is the focus clearly understood, for example, does guided reading have the same meaning to everyone?

Figure 16. Chart for Adult Implementation Indicators

Indicator:	
Indicator Descriptor	Definition

Once all indicators have been described and key concepts defined, have the DLT/CSLT discuss the results and record answers to the questions in the What to Monitor box.

What to Monitor

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- How well written are the indicators?
- Will the indicators tell whether the goal/strategy is achieved? Will the intended impact be made?
- How much is too much/too little to monitor?
- To what degree should/are indicators cross-strategy?
- How would you know whether student performance is improving if you did not have state assessments?
- How clear are the indicators described so everyone knows what they mean?
- What additional indicator descriptors are needed that may be unique to a building or grade level?

Note: Indicators will need to be completed by the DLT/CSLT before working with the BLT. Indicators may vary by year.

C. Identifying the “Look Fors”

Whenever monitoring occurs, those monitoring will be looking for specific student and adult behaviors. These behaviors will need to be explicit and transparent to everyone—to those monitoring and to those being monitored. The focus is on what is seen rather than what is not seen at the district or community school, building, department or grade, and classroom levels.

“Look-fors” and processes used at the building level will look different from those used at the district or community school level and need to be customizable to sites. The facilitator has several methods that can be used to develop the “look fors.” Some methods are

- Identify groups of teachers (cross-building and grade level) to develop “look fors” on the basis of district or community school indicators and definitions. Once a draft set of “look fors” is developed, send to a larger pool of teachers (or all teachers if practical for the district size and culture) and ask for feedback. Using feedback, revise the “look fors” and present them to the DLT/CSLT.
- A variation of the method would be for cross-building or grade-level teachers to develop a small group of “look fors” that are consistently used across the district or community school with individual buildings adding to the core set of “look fors.”
- Have all buildings develop “look fors” on the basis of the district or community school indicators/definitions (and other district or community school guidelines, as appropriate) and submit them to the DLT/CSLT. The DLT/CSLT then can aggregate and decide those that will be expected districtwide or community school-wide and which can be added at the discretion of the building.

- Using the indicator descriptors and definitions, divide the DLT/CSLT into a logical number of small groups, generally, three to five people. Have each group add two columns to their chart of assigned descriptors and definitions. One column should read Classroom “Look-Fors” (Adult Behaviors) and the second column should read Classroom “Look-Fors” (Student Behaviors). A third column for environmental “look-fors” may be desired as well. The OIP facilitator may wish to provide an example of each that follows a common format.
- Purchase an observation process that has flexibility in selecting what will be observed from a bank of “look fors.”

Regardless of which method is used to develop “look fors,” they should meet specific criteria in order to achieve extensive (90 percent or higher) implementation. A “look for” must be

The single most important influence on student learning is the quality of teaching. But despite this recognition, most school districts have not defined what they mean by good teaching.

—Charlotte Danielson, in John Simmons, *Breaking Through: Transforming Urban School Districts* (New York: Teacher College Press, 2006).

- Explicit about what is to be seen
- Evidence-based
- Transparent to everyone
- Focused
- Specific to the strategy or indicator
- Aligned to Ohio grade level expectations, where applicable

A protocol to develop “look fors” is in **Sample Protocols to Support the OIP, Resource 20**.

Three examples of “look-fors” are described in Part C of **Monitoring System Components and Methods to Monitor Student Performance and Adult Implementation (Resource 24)**, primarily to give the OIP facilitator format options for creating the “look-fors.” There are many additional examples of “look-fors” (for example, mathematics, literacy) on the Web.

Some cautions: (1) The indicators and behaviors must be specific to the district or community school plan, so using previously generated “look-fors” may not be appropriate. (2) Choose a **few** “look-fors” in order to keep the process consistent, focused, and manageable. (3) “Look-fors” must provide data specific to the district or community school indicators; therefore, they need to be written in precise language that relates to the indicator and can be monitored over time. (4) It is likely that the district or community school will first need to establish a baseline in order to measure improvement. This may require the district or community school to preassess knowledge and skills relative to the “look fors” in order to identify appropriate professional development. It is critical that the “look fors” be communicated to everyone, but especially teachers. Once the DLT/CSLT has determined which method to use to develop “look-fors” and that method is underway, the facilitator should have the DLT/CSLT summarize responses to the questions in the What to Gather box.

What to Gather

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are as follows:

- What will the DLT/CSLT look for when they monitor?
- What data will buildings be expected to collect?
- What data will classroom teachers be expected to collect?
- What evidence will show the DLT/CSLT that the indicator is met?

D. Establishing a Monitoring Schedule

Now that we know what we are monitoring, and what the acceptable evidence is, the DLT/CSLT will need to establish a schedule for monitoring to occur.

When to Gather and Submit Data

Questions that should be answered and responses recorded in this part of the agenda are

- When should the DLT/CSLT collect data on the indicators and behaviors?
- How frequently should this occur?
- Should different indicators have different timetables?
- How often should buildings collect data on the indicators and behaviors and how frequently should this occur?
- When will buildings be expected to submit monitoring data, and to whom?
- How will data flow to and from the DLT/CSLT to BLT, BLT to TBT?

The district or community school plan is typically written so that the DLT/CSLT monitors quarterly and the building does so monthly. Some indicators, however, may need to be monitored more or less frequently. Since the ultimate goal is to have teachers regularly collecting, discussing, and using the data to inform classroom instruction, the DLT/CSLT may wish to ensure that building administrators monitor what is happening every two weeks but only report monthly. The schedule for monitoring may be developed during the DLT/CSLT meeting or a subcommittee may do so separately with the draft schedule presented to the DLT/CSLT for adoption. In either case, district and building schedules should be available. If a subcommittee approach is used, the DLT/CSLT should establish any parameters to guide the schedule development. For example:

- Identification of dates to avoid because of conflicts with district or community school and building calendars
- Frequency with which each building should be monitored
- Sampling of classrooms or buildings
- Prioritization of indicators for monitoring
- Timeframe for receiving monitoring data, aggregating data, discussing results, and making midcourse corrections
- Monitoring frequency needs to consider the layers: district or community school, building, grade or department, classroom, student

E. Identifying Monitoring Processes

The DLT/CSLT will now need to determine which process(es) to use. It is possible that the district or community school already has a monitoring process, and if that is the case, this discussion may be how to revise the process to align to the indicators.

The process will need to consider procedures for conducting, collecting, and recording data from common formative assessments (monitoring of student performance) and processes for conducting, collecting, and recording observation or self-reporting data (monitoring of adult implementation). **Monitoring System Components and Methods to Monitor Student Performance and Adult Implementation, Resource 24**, provides a description of items that must be in place and followed in order to begin ongoing data collection and analysis of student performance. **Resource 24** also provides an overview of the common elements of observations, including limitations, and describes four processes that can be considered:

- Classroom observation overview
- District walk-through protocol (generic)
- Observation checklist protocol
- Selected document review

The **TBT 5-Step Process Rubric for Self-Assessment and Monitoring, Resource 16**, provides a rubric that can be used for monitoring implementation of the 5-Step Process. The DLT/CSLT can either read the descriptions in advance or use a jigsaw technique during the meeting to familiarize everyone with the content. It will be important to emphasize that monitoring is not a “gotcha” or for individual evaluation purposes. Once everyone is familiar with the options, the team could brainstorm the pros and cons of using each process. Once a decision is made about the most feasible process(es), a subcommittee can take ideas from the DLT/CSLT to produce a written description that is customized to the district. The subcommittee also may need to determine any professional development that is needed. It may be necessary to send a draft to a wider audience for input prior to adoption by the DLT/CSLT. The DLT/CSLT also will need to decide whether different processes are needed for different types of indicators and behaviors. BLTs will need to go through this same thought process. Once the various processes have been discussed and one or more have been agreed on by the DLT/CSLT, record answers to the questions in the How to Gather Data box.

How to Gather Data

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- How can the data be gathered so it is a model of support—descriptive, not evaluative?
- What conditions need to be present in order for the DLT/CSLT to implement data gathering so it is perceived as supportive and not punitive?
- What process(es) could be used to monitor?
- Are different processes needed for different types of indicators or behaviors? If so, describe the process for each.

F. Identifying Monitoring Responsibilities

The DLT/CSLT and BLTs needs to consider who will be responsible for ensuring that monitoring occurs and who will monitor. Will teams or individuals do this? If teams, will the district team include building-level staff? If building-level teams, will they be cross-grade or department-level? The facilitator will want the DLT/CSLT to discuss and record responses to the questions in the Who Will Gather box.

Who Will Gather

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- What is the role of the DLT/CSLT, BLT, TBTs in gathering data?
- Who (individual or team) from the DLT/CSLT will be responsible for monitoring?
- Will this require changes in job function for an individual or team, for example, teachers talking with other teachers about student work and common assessments?
- Should individuals beyond the DLT/CSLT participate in the monitoring process?
- What role do schools play in monitoring themselves or other buildings?

Once those responsible for monitoring are identified, it may be necessary to pilot the instruments and monitoring process and then reconvene the monitors to establish some degree of interrater reliability, that is, *Are all monitors looking for the same things in the same way?* It is important to be consistent with what is used and how it is used to ensure reliability.

G. Recording Monitoring Data

Recording the monitoring data consistently and systematically is important because it provides an important component of the information that will determine whether midcourse corrections are needed.

Recording and Reporting Monitoring Data Templates, Resource 25, provides some examples of how student performance and adult behavior data can be recorded at the BLT and TBT levels. It is important not only to think of how the monitoring data will be recorded but also who, how, and when the data will be analyzed. After a discussion on recording and monitoring data has occurred, have the DLT/CLST record answers to the question in the How to Record Data box.

How to Record Data

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- What format should be used to record the monitoring data? How do formats differ for recording student performance and adult implementation?
- Should the format (e.g., templates, tables, grids, spreadsheets) be used consistently by all schools? If not, which format should be used for which school?
- How will technology facilitate recording the monitoring data?
- What role do schools play in monitoring themselves and other buildings?

H. Communicating Monitoring Expectations and Results

It will be essential for the DLT/CSLT and BLTs to communicate with those who are going to be monitored. Have the DLT/CSLT discuss and record answers to the questions in the How to Communicate Monitoring Expectations and Results box.

How to Communicate Monitoring Expectations and Results

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- How will the DLT/CSLT inform the BLTs about the monitoring expectations and requirements?
- What are the common monitoring messages BLTs need to deliver to their staff?
 - Who or what will be monitored, how they will be monitored, and the monitoring schedule
 - The purpose for monitoring (and nonpurposes, for example, teacher evaluation)
 - How the monitoring data will be used, including confidentiality and anonymity of information
- How will the results of monitoring be aggregated and reported to the DLT/CSLT?
- Who else needs to be informed about the monitoring results?
- What feedback loop(s) is needed for two-way communication to occur?

The contents of the communication should be described in the communication approach that the DLT/CSLT and BLTs will continuously need to review. The district or community school communication approach is included in the IMM, which is accessible to them through their Security Application for Enterprise (SAFE) Web portal account.

I. Managing the Monitoring Results

The **IMM** is the primary tool for managing monitoring progress. Data recorded in the tool provides

- Goal measure descriptions
- Baseline and progress measures for capturing annual goal details
- Determination of progress on actions (for example, complete or in progress).

Beyond recording the cumulative (quarterly, monthly) monitoring data into the **IMM**, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to determine how to manage the periodic (weekly, biweekly, monthly) data by purchasing or creating software that organizes the data for entry into the **IMM**. Data also will need to be verified and checks and balances used to ensure that the data is accurate and complete. Finally, a single point of contact should be identified for managing the data, always ensuring that

the data is accessible to the goal/strategy/action manager, BLT, and DLT/CSLT. After a discussion on managing the monitoring data, have the DLT/CSLT answer and record answers to the questions in the How to Manage Monitoring Data box.

How to Manage Monitoring Data

Questions that should be answered in this part of the agenda are

- What technology is or could be available to help with data organization and access?
- How do we verify the data?
- What checks and balances can be used to ensure the data provided is accurate and complete?
- Who will be responsible for managing the monitoring of data and how will that person make the data accessible to the goal/strategy/action manager?
- What feedback loop(s) is needed for two-way communication to occur?

J. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to summarize what has been agreed to, in the answers recorded in agenda items B through I. Specifically, the DLT/CSLT will need to integrate the following information so a complete description of the monitoring system can be articulated:

- Agreed-upon processes and tools for obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating data on
 - Implementation of professional development
 - Student performance indicators
 - Adult implementation indicators
 - Implementation of plan strategies and actions
- Agreed-upon expectations for monitoring using the above processes and tools
- Agreed-upon uses for formative and summative data on student performance and adult implementation indicators

Making Midcourse Corrections and Reporting Plan Progress—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). This is an ongoing part of Stage 3 of the OIP, in that it determines how system practices and processes need to be revised to ensure continuous improvement.

The purpose of this session is to determine what, if any, midcourse corrections are needed, including changes to the plan.

Packets for this agenda should include (a) progress data on professional development implementation, (b) progress data on student performance, (c) progress data on adult implementation, (d) evidence of implementation of plan strategies and actions, and the (e) **CCIP/SIP**. It is helpful if the information presented is in summary form. Do not provide every member of the DLT/CSLT and BLT with the raw data that supports the summary. It is helpful for each strategy manager, however, to have this raw data in case questions arise. The strategy manager should be prepared to present monitoring data from the relevant resources. This requires him or her or their team to collect and chart the data in advance of the meeting (similar to step 1 of the Ohio TBT 5-Step Process). The strategy manager also should bring his or her completed **Task Implementation Template, Resource 11**. This information may be provided in paper copy or electronically.

Monitoring for midcourse correction generally occurs quarterly at the district level and monthly at the building level.

B. Establishing Decision Parameters

A good starting point is a discussion about decision parameters to decide whether the strategy or action is working, always being sensitive to individuals' ownership of the plan strategy or actions. The DLT/CSLT and BLTs will need to determine how it will make decisions to keep, adjust, change, delete, or replace strategies, actions, and tasks.

In the complexity of educational systems, almost all decisions the DLT/CSLT and BLT make have an impact upon other staff members or teams. Effective decision making takes this into consideration and avoids unexpected impacts. Decision-making parameters make for sound decisions and may change as the DLT/CSLT and BLT learn from experience. Decision-making processes and districts and buildings are not static; they constantly evolve in response to internal and external influences and organizational learning. Consequently, the decision-making parameters are not a set of explicit rules, policies, or procedures. The following is a basic set of parameters for decision making that can be used by the DLT/CSLT and BLT in reviewing their plan against the parameters in order to make course corrections. Consider all evidence (data and information) in order to make a judgment about each strategy or action at the designated time (for example, quarterly for the district, monthly for the building).

Activity

- Review the following decision-making parameters and agree on which will be used to determine whether a strategy or action is working.
 - Effect on student learning
 - Effect on teacher practice
 - Effect on leadership
 - Time requirements
 - Staffing implications, for example, (re)assignment, teams
 - Funding allocation and consequences
 - Effect on teacher, administrator, or other staff learning (professional development)
 - Effect on public relations or communication
 - Legal implications and compliance issues
 - Plan, policy, or procedure alignment

If initiatives or programs that are outside the plan are affecting the ability of the district or community school or building to implement its focused plan, now may be the time to review these initiatives and their success. The result may be organized abandonment or inclusion of them as a plan strategy or action.

C. Analyzing Adult Implementation and Student Performance Relative to the Data

Activity continued

- Post the agreed-upon decision parameters so all members can easily refer to them when listening to presentations and determining whether the strategy, actions, or tasks are on target.
- Ask each strategy manager to present the monitoring data for their strategy and actions. Designate a specific amount of time for each strategy and action presentation.
- As the members listen to the report and ask them to jot notes on whether they believe the strategy, actions, or tasks are on target. Options for recording notes are
 - Plus, minus, zero
 - A tuning protocol (see **Sample Protocols to Support the OIP, Resource 20**)
 - A two-column graphic organizer
- After each presentation, reach agreement.

It is possible that not all information from the following will be available each time the DLT/CSLT and BLT meets to make course corrections:

- Progress data on professional development implementation
- Progress data on student performance
- Progress data on adult implementation
- Evidence of implementation of plan strategies and actions

Note: A BLT would examine data from TBTs and building-level adult implementation data. A DLT/CSLT would be examining summary data provided by the BLTs as well as their own collection of data.

D. Determining Midcourse Corrections for Refinement of the Focused Plan Relative to the Data Needs

If the strategy, actions, or tasks do *not* appear to be on course toward successfully meeting the goal, teams need to consider the following and determine what needs to be done:

- Was the strategy the correct strategy to reach the goal?
- Is the strategy being implemented as designed?
- Has the strategy had enough time or support for implementation to have an impact?

- Are the actions occurring as tasked, for example, timelines met, resources available and being used?
- Are there sufficiently defined actions for strategies or tasks for actions, that is, are critical actions or tasks missing, for example, professional development?
- Is implementation of actions occurring in all buildings and for all stakeholders?
- Are there sufficient resources (for example, human, financial, material, technical) to support implementation?
- Is the timeline established for adult implementation and student performance indicators realistic and doable?

Note: Capture the changes as you go. Remember to keep the record of this meeting for future progress monitoring meetings.

E. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The DLT/CSLT and BLTs will need to summarize what has been agreed to and who is responsible for making changes to the plan and schedule the next progress check. The team may want to define what adult and student data will be reviewed at the next progress check meeting and establish communication points for various audiences as needed.

The OIP now begins again with identifying critical needs and refining and revisiting the focused plan. At this point, the DLT/CSLT and BLT may choose not to complete a full **DF/BDF** but select targeted sections consistent with their priorities. The goals and strategies may stay the same, as the data dictate. Actions may continue or be revised. There is no prescribed formula. What is important, however, is that the DLT/CSLT and BLTs understand the cyclical nature of the OIP and how the process results in systems change.

Generalizing Successes Across the District so Lessons Learned Become Systemic

One might think that examining successes is easier than examining failure, and that people would take more readily to the former. It turns out, however, to be far more difficult to practice. Educators may be unsure that their sense of success will match others', and they may spend unnecessary energy on providing evidence of success. Or they may find it hard to position themselves as contributors to success for fear of seeming self-congratulatory. These are common problems that participants should be encouraged to get over.

The Protocol for Analyzing Success described in **Sample Protocols to Support the OIP, Resource 20**, is a vehicle for educators to collaboratively analyze experiences of failure and success—when the plan fell apart, when the implementation was not what was expected, what worked well, and so on. The point of this protocol is to give equal attention after the fact to experiences of success. Here the “problem of practice” is to understand more fully in such cases why things go right.

Generalizing successes can occur concurrently with making midcourse corrections or at a separate time and should be done at the district or community school and building levels.

Stage 4 **Evaluating the Improvement Process**

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Abstract

Stage 4 describes how data, collected through progress monitoring in Stage 3, are analyzed and interpreted to respond to questions posed in the **IMM** Team Narrative Evaluation Report. Results are written in an annual and a summative (multiyear) evaluation report that identifies the causes of the impact. Stage 4 provides an opportunity for the district to confirm or challenge their theory of action and make informed decisions about improvements. Five working agendas, with relevant talking points, key messages, and resources, are provided to support the facilitation of meetings that focus on key activities for the DLT/CSLT and BLTs to evaluate the improvement process and refine the improvement plan on the basis of the evaluation.

Evaluating the Impact of the Plan and Process

The processes and protocols utilized in **Stage 4, Evaluate the Improvement Process**, assist in transforming the view of educational accountability from a list of test scores to a learning system for improved decision making and professional practice.

The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council identified the essential practices against which leadership development could be assessed for the purpose of improving instructional practice and student performance. Two results demonstrate whether these practices are being implemented successfully:

- Improvement of instructional practice districtwide to incorporate higher order thinking and 21st century skills at every level and across all content areas
- 100 percent of students meeting more rigorous minimum proficiency levels

Both results are monitored throughout implementation of the OIP and evaluated to ensure success. It is in the district's best interest to monitor and evaluate its own progress toward these results as measured by its plan goal targets and strategy indicators so that course corrections can be made and it can be a leading and not a losing district. (See Figure 17.) The major tool used in Stage 4 is the **Implementation Management/Monitoring Tool (IMM)**.

Figure 17. The Leadership Learning Framework

↑ Achievement of Results ↓	Lucky High results, low understanding of antecedents Replication of success unlikely	Leading High results, high understanding of antecedents Replication of success likely
	Losing Low results, low understanding of antecedents Replication of failure likely	Learning Low results, high understanding of antecedents Replication of success unlikely
← Antecedents of Excellence →		

Adapted from Douglas Reeves, *Learning Leader: The Leadership for Learning Framework* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2006).

Monitoring and Evaluation as Interrelated Functions

Monitoring and evaluation are interrelated functions of the overall process, but they are not the same. (See Table 9.) Monitoring is performed while a plan is being implemented, with the aim of improving the design and function in the course of implementation. Monitoring provides constant feedback to the DLT/CSLT and BLT on the progress of the plan indicators, the problems being faced, and the efficiency and fidelity with which implementation is occurring.

“The combination of monitoring and regular evaluation is crucial to maximizing and sustaining improvement efforts. Furthermore, use of both formative and summative data to evaluate impact and process is essential to determining reasons for the identified results.”

Dean Fixsen, Developing Programs: Assessing Implementation (Workshop presentation, Columbus, OH, May 2010)

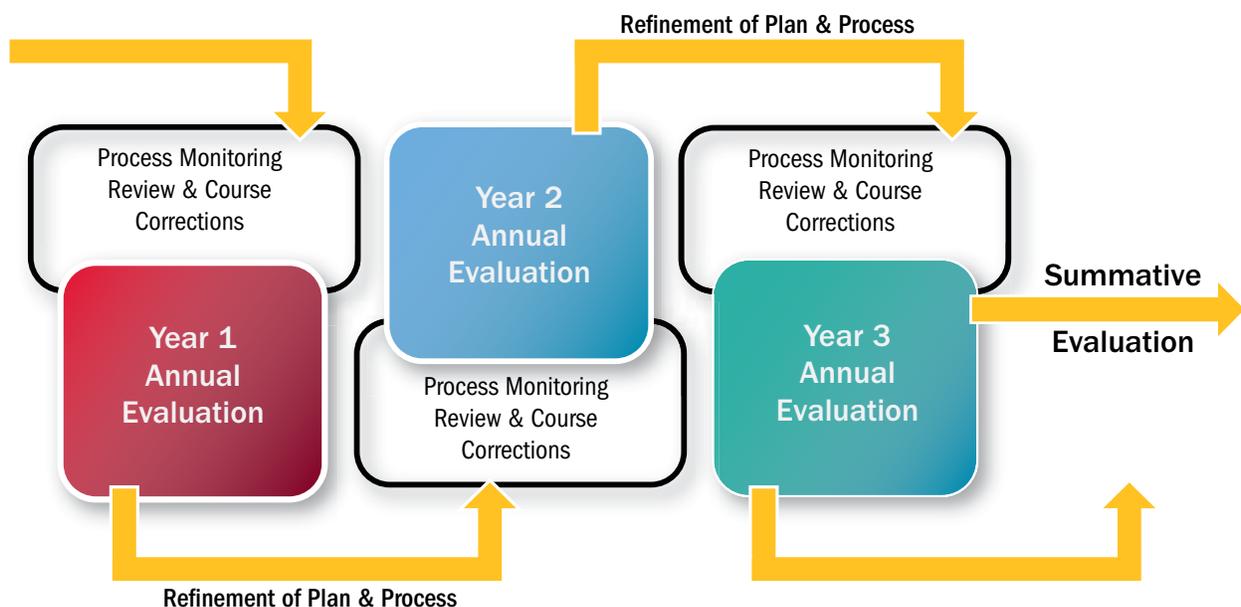
Data is collected through progress monitoring and the midyear review process at the TBT, BLT, and DLT/CSLT levels. This data is used to inform the annual evaluation and confirm or challenge the theory of action. (See Stage 2.) Stage 4 requires a systemic analysis of that data during plan implementation—anticipated and actual outcomes and their impact on student performance. In addition, an evaluation of the impact of the improvement process is conducted by the DLT/CSLT. Evaluation of the impact of the plan and process combine to complete the annual evaluation and subsequent summative evaluation of the multiyear plan.

The Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Model in Figure 18 (also reproduced in **Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Model and Descriptors, Resource 23**) will assist the OIP facilitator in summing up the relationship between monitoring and evaluation over a multiyear planning process. It shows that during each year of the multiyear plan, an annual evaluation will be completed, using data collected during the progress monitoring reviews to inform the annual evaluation and make midcourse corrections. At the end of the multiyear plan, a summative evaluation occurs. It will use data collected during the annual evaluations and result in refinement of the plan and process.

Table 9. Monitoring Versus Evaluation

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Definition	The practice that DLTs/CSLTs and BLTs use to supervise the plan in progress to ensure that the tasks, actions, and strategies are on course and on schedule for meeting goals as measured by progress against indicators	The practices that DLTs/CSLTs and BLTs engage in to critically examine and analyze monitoring data to assess the extent to which the plan implementation produced the desired results
Purpose	Refining strategies and actions during implementation	Refine the plan and process
Focus	Actions and strategies	Goals, collective strategies, and collective actions and their impact on indicators and targets
When	While a plan is being implemented	At the end of a plan year
Frequency	DLT/CSLT: minimum of quarterly BLT: minimum of monthly TBT: minimum of twice a month	DLT/CSLT and BLT: annual, multiyear
Feedback	Continuous to DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBT on progress of plan indicators, problems being faced, and efficiency of implementation	Informs the refinement and design of future improvement efforts

Figure 18. Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Model



Importance of Transparency

In the OIP process, it is essential that both monitoring and evaluation be transparent throughout all stages of the process. A district or community school and building should strive to create open and ongoing communication that allows all stakeholders to understand the workings of the data collection and analysis system as it relates to the focused plan and ultimately student achievement. Districts and community schools should develop their progress monitoring and evaluation data, including the role that the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs will play, with the expectation the data used to make decisions will be transparent and easily accessible by all stakeholders. In doing so, they

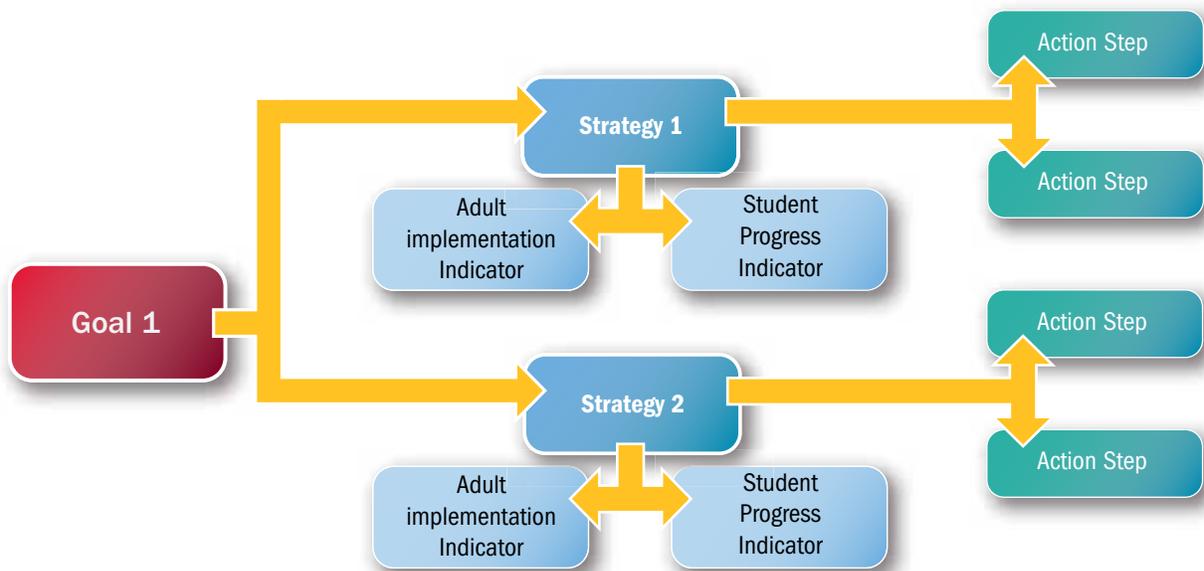
- Allow the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs to have access to timely information
- Open lines of communication
- Allow for broader based participation in decision making
- Promote timely decisions
- Encourage the whole system to become a learning organization

Foundation for Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

Stage 4 provides the opportunity for teams (DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs) to reflect on the outcomes and impact of their work annually and over the course of a district's multiyear continuous improvement plan. In Stage 2, the theory of action for improvement in adult practices and student performance was illustrated as a part of the planning process. In Stage 3, action research took place during the implementation of the plan. Stage 4 is the culmination of the action research.

During the annual evaluation or summative evaluation of Stage 4, the DLT/CSLT and BLT will test the theory of action. In the OIP theory of action, the district or community school established **goals** that were based upon the identified needs of the students. They identified **strategies** based upon identified cause-and-effect relationships. They made the assumption that if these strategies were done with at least 90 percent fidelity, then the district would meet the improvement goals. For each strategy, **indicators for adult implementation and student progress** were established along with progress measures for periodic monitoring throughout the plan. **Action steps** necessary to effectively carry out the strategies were identified by the DLT/CSLT. BLTs then aligned their action steps to the district plan.

Figure 19. Theory of Action Model



In order for the district to engage in Stage 4 successfully, it must have built a foundation in the prior stages. Specifically, the DLT/CSLT must have

- A **needs assessment** based on valid, thorough, and reliable data (Stage 1). The DLT/CSLT and BLT should ensure that
 - The data are compelling and defensible
 - The data are comprehensive
 - Discussions about the data were deep enough (**DF/BDF Essential and Expanded Questions, Resource 7**, provides many questions that an OIP facilitator can use to foster a deeper discussion on the part of the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs. These expanded questions are organized by level and area of the **DF/BDF** tool.)
 - The right people were involved in the discussion and decision-making process
 - The appropriate group techniques were used for a thorough understanding and analysis of the data to identify the most critical needs
- A **focused plan with aligned measures (Stage 2)**. The DLT/CSLT should be as confident as possible that implementation of actions and strategies will lead to the desired results. The DLT/CSLT will need to ensure that
 - There is a positive relationship between strategy indicators and goal targets
 - The actions will result in implementation of the strategy
 - The strategies will result in achievement of the goal

- **A monitoring system that yields data relative to plan implementation (Stage 3).** Although data are used to monitor implementation of the focused plan during Stage 3, they are used for another purpose in Stage 4. Stage 4 takes the data collected in Stage 3 and analyzes them from a systems perspective to determine outcomes and impact of overall plan implementation (including the process used to develop, implement, and monitor implementation of focused strategies and actions) during the annual evaluation each year, as well as during the summative plan evaluation at the end of the multiyear plan. Use of effective data and data-based decision-making are the key to continuous improvement; therefore, the DLT/CSLT must ensure that
 - The monitoring system is comprehensive
 - The system yields substantial data to document progress

These foundations support a model predicated on the use of a multiyear continuous improvement planning process. During the course of each year, teams perform ongoing review of adult implementation and student performance data and make the appropriate course corrections where they are needed. As Table 9 suggested, the DLT/CSLT should monitor at least quarterly, reviewing and making course corrections as necessary, and BLTs should monitor at least monthly. Both the DLT/CSLT and BLT should probably check midyear to assess plan progress and process. At the end of each year, the DLT/CSLT and BLTs perform an annual evaluation of progress toward meeting the annual targets as specified in the plan and the effectiveness of the process. At that point, the DLT/CSLT and BLTs refine the plan or the process. **DF** student data priority responses and **DF** implementation questions relative to the goals and strategies should be revisited annually to ensure that the **CCIP** needs assessment (derived from the **DF** Profile) and action plan reflect the current needs and progress made by the district.

At the conclusion of the plan cycle (three, four, or five years—the duration depends on the goal timeline), the DLT/CSLT conducts a summative evaluation and the entire OIP process begins again. This may mean revisiting the entire DF (for now there should be significantly more quantitative and qualitative data to review and use in responding to the priority responses and probes); rewriting and revising goals, strategies, and indicators; and creating new action steps. This cycle of needs assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation illustrates the recursive nature of the OIP.

Monitoring data must be considered within the larger context of the district-identified or community school goals, strategies, and actions, as well as the building actions aligned to those goals. Pursuing isolated discussion focused on discrete indicators could result in not seeing the forest for the trees. Consideration of both monitoring data and summative data will be important in how districts and buildings track their progress, make decisions about course corrections, and learn together about the implications of the data being gathered. Although the evaluation process needs to be doable, DLTs/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs have to be able to provide enough depth of data for meaningful analysis and insight. The job of an OIP facilitator is to ask questions that enable the leadership teams to engage in the analysis in order to make course corrections and understand implications of strategies and actions.

Annual Evaluation of Impact and Plan Process—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Review meeting purpose, previously developed group rules, and meeting assignments (for example, timekeeper, recorder, or reporter). Evaluating the impact of the plan and the improvement process is critical for learning and understanding what changes in adult practices throughout the system resulted in changes in student performance. A set of predetermined questions are identified in the **IMM** Team Narrative Evaluation Report, but the district also may choose to add other questions for which they are seeking answers.

The purpose of this meeting is to complete an annual evaluation of the impact of the plan and process.

The DLT/CSLT needs to identify the audience(s) for the evaluation results, the timeline during which the evaluation will occur, resources, and most important, the specific questions that the evaluation will attempt to answer. The facilitator will need to review and prepare the available information and data from the monitoring reports. This preparation includes collecting summary data and information and developing charts that illustrate the data so the maximum amount of team time can be spent in analyzing the data.

The following data should be collected for the district and all buildings, including information for all students, including those who may be served outside the district (for example, preschool, career tech, special needs placements, alternative education). Specifically,

- Secure the most recent annual data relative to plan goals and targets (for example, KRA-L,* ECO,* SPP,* SWIS,* value-added data, state required assessments).
- Secure the progress monitoring data from **IMM** relative to the student performance and adult implementation indicators.
- Gather DLT/CSLT and BLT summary monitoring data and reports, which includes TBT summary data for the current year.
- Collect DLT/CSLT process summary data (for example, meeting schedule and minutes and notes, member attendance for DLT/CSLT and BLT, including TBT, **IMM** Communication, and **IMM** Implementation Timeline).
- Compare district to building annual goal target data and student performance and adult implementation data.

* Refer to Acronyms and Glossary.

Summaries and charts that provide data to answer the first three of the predetermined evaluation questions will need to be created. (See Figure 20.) Support of others in the district experienced in using data and generating spreadsheets may be needed. Here are some tasks that will help the group address these questions:

- Export or manually enter **IMM** data into a spreadsheet (for example, Excel, for the creation of charts).
- Prepare charts, graphs, or tables that provide comparisons and trends. These will be unique to each district. Do not provide every member of the DLT with the raw data that supports the summary. It is helpful for each goal, strategy, or action manager to have these raw data in case questions arise.
- The strategy or action manager also should bring his or her completed **Task Implementation Template, Resource 11**. The facilitator will need to decide how much of this information should be provided in paper copy and how much electronically.

Figure 20. Graphic Organizer of Evaluation Questions

IMM Evaluation Question 1: How do plan results compare to actual goal target (s) in student performance?			
Subquestions	Findings: What We Know From the Data	Evidence or Data Source	Reason—Why or Why Not Occurred
Subquestion a			
Subquestion b			
IMM Evaluation Question 2: How do adult implementation results compare to student performance results?			
Subquestions	Findings: What We Know From the Data	Evidence or Data Source	Reason—Why or Why Not Occurred
Subquestion a:			
Subquestion b:			
Subquestion c:			
IMM Evaluation Question 3: Has the plan been implemented as designed, on time, and within budget?			
Subquestions	Findings: What We Know From the Data	Evidence or Data Source	Reason—Why or Why Not Occurred
Subquestion a:			
Subquestion b			

B. Review and Description of the Purposes and Processes for the Evaluation

A good starting point is a discussion about the conditions necessary for a quality evaluation, that is, needs assessment based on valid, thorough, and reliable data; focused plan with aligned measures; and monitoring system that yields data relative to plan implementation. Reinforce the reason for evaluating—not to punish, but to improve. Here are some specific benefits from evaluation:

- Projected results can be compared with actual results.
- The extent to which changes in adult practices affect student performance can be assessed.
- The fidelity to the plan and its degree of implementation can be analyzed.
- The strategies and actions that have had the greatest impact become clear and decisions can be made about which should be continued, modified, or deleted.
- Lessons learned can be applied to ongoing improvement efforts.
- Plans can be made to institutionalize successes and eliminate unsuccessful practices.

Review what data has been gathered, organized, and summarized and how it was completed.

C. Presenting Summary Data for IMM Evaluation Questions

Walk the DLT/CSLT through the documents (either individual copies or posters large enough for all to read).

Orient DLT/CSLT to the content of the documents, presenting specific data that addresses each question. Options are

- Gallery walk of posters
- Individual review (if individual copies provided)
- Group review, that is, by grade spans, goal, and strategies

D. Answering IMM Evaluation Questions 1–3

Divide the DLT/CSLT by the number of goals and assign each group one goal. Be sure to assign the roles of facilitator, recorder, and reporter.

Create a graphic organizer that includes the subquestions, data, and cause. Be sure one of the columns answers the why or why not question for each as this gives cause. See Figure 20.

In groups, complete the chart, summarizing findings from a review of the data, citing the evidence and data source and listing the cause, that is, why the expected event did or did not occur. Complete for **IMM** Questions 1–3 using the Directions for Answering the Six IMM Evaluation Questions and **Subquestions With Evaluation Report Template, Resource 26**.

- Report out findings and conclusions to the whole group.
- Answer the overall question on the basis of the conclusions from the subquestions.

- Ask DLT/CSLT members to make notes about changes they believe should be made to the plan on the basis of answers to the subquestions. As they identify the reason (why or why not), the DLT/CSLT may wish to consider unanticipated factors that enhanced or inhibited the process or progress.

It is important to examine all questions for each goal because the questions and subquestions inform each other.

E. Answering IMM Evaluation Question 4

The task here is to review the primary work of the DLT/CSLT, BLTs, and TBTs as inquiry and learning and review the fact that the overarching purpose of the OIP is to create districts and schools that learn. (See Glossary for definitions of inquiry and learning.) One purpose of this stage is to consolidate gains from the important lessons learned. The task is to now answer this question:

IMM Question 4: What were the strengths and opportunities for improvement in each OIP stage?

DLT/CSLT should be guided through a discussion of the OIP, reflecting on the three foundations for evaluation (first, needs assessment based on valid, thorough, and reliable data; second, focused plan with aligned measures; third, monitoring system that yields data relative to plan implementation) and their experience in answering the IMM questions. Options for discussing each subquestion identified for IMM Question 4 found in Directions for Answering the Six IMM Evaluation Questions and **Subquestions With Evaluation Report Template, Resource 26**, are as follows:

- Individual reflection followed by group discussion
- Complete an individual survey using the subquestions, rating them 1–4. Have individuals [dot](#) or mark their answer on a posted survey. If a question has all high marks, then not much discussion is needed. Concentrate on the questions that have disparate or low marks.
- Reach agreement on how to improve the process.

F. Answering IMM Evaluation Question 5

From the data and conclusions from IMM Questions 1–3, recommendations to the plan can be made by answering **IMM Question 5: What changes should be made to the plan to ensure improved student achievement?** and its subquestions found in Directions for Answering the Six IMM Evaluation Questions and **Subquestions With Evaluation Report Template, Resource 26**.

Record ideas on chart paper or use an LCD to provide a visual group memory. Another option would be to have the plan put on large posters and make the agreed-upon changes on the posters.

G. Answering IMM Evaluation Question 6

From the data and information and conclusions from IMM Questions 4–5, recommendations to the process and plan as well as systemwide policies, procedures, and practices can be made by answering **IMM Question 6: Based on lessons learned as a result of implementing this plan and process, what should be done to eliminate unsuccessful practices and institutionalize successes?** and its subquestions found in Directions for Answering the Six IMM Evaluation Questions and **Subquestions With Evaluation Report Template, Resource 26**.

Options for facilitating this discussion are

- Have individuals list three lessons learned.
- In pairs or small groups, have members share the lessons learned, combining or more thoroughly describing the lessons learned.
- Chart the lessons learned, being sure that each lesson is specific, clear, and actionable (something can change as a result of the lesson learned).
- Have one pair or group report out.
- As the next pair or group reports, check items on the first list that are duplicates and cross the items off the list. Continue until all groups have reported. The result should be a list of lessons with multiple checks.
- Taking the items with multiple checks, brainstorm how the lessons can be institutionalized.

Another option for identifying successful practices is to use the Protocol for Analyzing Success in **Sample Protocols to Support the OIP, Resource 20D**.

Note: Institutionalize means to incorporate into a structured and well-established system. In order to institutionalize successes in a district, changes in policies, procedures, resource dedication, or employment practices would need to occur.

“We gush with enthusiasm for effects—‘Just show me the results!’—but pay little attention to the causes.”

Douglas Reeves, Transforming Professional Development into Student Results (Arlington, VA: ASCD, 2010)

H. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The DLT/CSLT will need to summarize what has been agreed to, who is responsible for making changes to the plan, and assign person(s) to revisit the communication plan in relation to the evaluation findings.

Reporting Evaluation Results—Working Agenda

Once consensus is reached on progress and impact, the DLT/CSLT should prepare a report for stakeholders. The report may be one of the most challenging pieces for the leadership team to complete because it is the document that describes the culmination of their work, either annually or multiyear. It is what most people, including the community, will know about how the district or community school is engaging in continuous improvement.

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

Be prepared to show the **IMM** Evaluation Report in a format that is easily visible to the group, as well as the data charts and graphs that supported responses to the **IMM** evaluation questions and the current **CCIP/SIP** with proposed changes prior to the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to determine what, how, and to whom the evaluation results will be reported.

B. Selecting Methodology to Report

The DLT/CSLT and BLTs will need to determine the most important information that all members need to know about the methods used to organize, analyze, and interpret the evaluation data. Begin with the most important methods that would be of interest to all potential audiences. Think about how the public perceives the types of data. For example, qualitative data may not be viewed as equally important with quantitative data.

C. Summary of Findings and Causes

One technique for compiling formal reports is to have a short (two pages maximum) executive summary, as well as a full report that contains more details. Each finding, organized by the three **IMM** evaluation questions, should be followed by a chart that supports the finding. The DLT/CSLT may find it is important to personalize each finding in the report. This may be done by including verbatim comments from stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, administrators) to provide context for the readers of the report.

If the DLT/CSLT and BLT want to list findings by priority rather than by question, they can create a large table of the findings on a spreadsheet and then sort on a priority column. This would put all high-priority items at the top. The table can then be split and any graphics or headers added as needed.

D. Prioritizing Recommendations and Actions for Improvement to Report

The DLT/CSLT and BLT may need to make choices about which recommendations and actions for improvement should be included in a formal, public report. Both process and impact recommendations and actions have been identified and should be reported, although the weight of each in the report may vary.

Recommendations for improving the process can be described as reinforcement of or changes to district or community school or building procedures. They might be listed in the report as practices to reinforce or sustain the process. The weight of process recommendations may be lighter because generally only internal stakeholders are interested in the process changes, unless they have ramifications for changing policy or affecting schedules. That is, parents may not be interested in the specific amount of monitoring conducted by a DLT/CSLT or BLT, but they would be interested if there were less instructional time as a result of an increase in TBT time.

Plan and practice improvements may be additions, deletions, or modifications of existing strategies, actions, timelines, or resource reallocations (people, time, money, materials, technology) and are recorded in the **IMM** Implementation Details. It is not likely all of these will be reported in full in a public evaluation report. The last question of the **IMM** Evaluation Report provides a place to record lessons learned. It is likely that most lessons learned will be translated into changes in the plan. All these changes may be too many to report publicly, and therefore, it is best for the changes to be prioritized so that the most significant and important changes are reported publicly. One technique for prioritization is

- Put each practice on a large sticky note.
- Stick the sticky notes on a wall.

- Group the sticky notes in predefined or emergent categories, for example, goal or strategy topics, near-term/far-term changes, changes affecting stakeholder groups. This is often referred to as affinity analysis.
- Assign priorities to each practice by asking each DLT/CSLT member to dot the five that are the most important for stakeholders to know about. If the number of DLT/CSLT members is small, each member could be given a differently colored dot. When your group assigns priorities, this color coding would highlight whether many members thought the same change in practice was a priority or whether one or a few members thought the change was a priority. A minor variation on the sticky note approach is to put the practices on 3" x 5" note cards and arrange them on a flat surface for grouping.

The final question on the **IMM** evaluation report also describes the practices that should be eliminated or institutionalized. The DLT/CSLT also may want to prioritize them to determine which should be included in a public report.

The DLT/CSLT may decide to create two versions of the recommendations and actions for improvement, one for internal stakeholders and another for external stakeholders.

E. Making the Report Usable

The content, format, and wording of the report should be evaluated for usability. An evaluation report template is provided at the end of this agenda. The DLT/CSLT may want to verify that the report format will be useful to the intended readers early in the process, then get feedback once the evaluation report is drafted. Asking other groups, such as the PTSA, union leadership, school board, or others to critique the report can provide a political benefit, assuming that the DLT/CSLT is willing to make changes to the report. Some questions to ask

- Is the report too long or too short?
- Is there enough detail to understand the impact of the plan and process and recommendations and actions for improvement?
- How much detail do you want on the methods that were used?
- Does the inclusion of charts, graphs, and tables make it easier to understand?
- Is the language clear and tactful?

Make sure that time and people are allocated for drafting the evaluation report. Getting usability data back to the DLT/CSLT quickly enhances credibility.

Do not forget to list the positive things that the DLT/CSLT finds about the process and impact and include those in the executive summary and any summary or conclusions in the longer version of the evaluation report.

F. Communicating the Evaluation Report Results

Audiences

The DLT/CSLT should create the mailing list for the report and be cautioned not to send it to anyone else unless there is permission from the superintendent or building administrator. Audiences may include any of the following:

- certificated and noncertificated staff members of the board of education
- parents
- general public
- community groups
- students
- other

Evaluation reports sometimes have political consequences, so make sure that the DLT/CSLT is clear about who gets the report and for what purpose. The leadership team should identify who will be the spokesperson(s) for these audiences. The DLT/CSLT must consider how the report will be used by BLTs and TBTs to increase their understanding of the impact on their work.

Formats

It is possible that different versions of reports (with the same information at different levels of detail) will be targeted to different stakeholders. Some format considerations are the following:

- Videotaped highlights. Highlight tapes can educate and be powerful, but they are time-consuming to create. Keep in mind that the length of a highlight tape should be matched to the audience. An executive tape might last 10–15 minutes, whereas a tape for the board or BLT teams might last 30–60 minutes.
- Segments of the report released through the media or newsletters. The results would be chunked and meted out over a designated period of time.
- Orally by a panel or individually
- Websites

Timelines and Responsibilities

The DLT/CSLT will need to decide the timelines for and who will assume responsibility for

- Gathering data
- Drafting the report
- Editing and finalizing the report
- Distributing the report

G. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The DLT/CSLT and BLTs will need to summarize what has been agreed to, who is responsible for drafting the report, how and when communication will occur, and the process for final approval. The facilitator will need to follow up and ensure the next steps are completed. The DLT/CSLT also may want to have a way to gather feedback about the report from stakeholders.

H. Completing the Evaluation Report Template

Here are suggestions for what to include in the evaluation report. (A general outline is in **Resource 26**.)

Note: Remember to keep the evaluation report as succinct and easy to understand as possible. **Resource 26** provides the content of the report.

Introduction

- Brief description of the district or community school student, parent, and teacher demographics
- Vision, mission, principles, and structures for continuous improvement (DLT/CSLT, BLT, TBT)
- Data about student diversity that may have an impact on strategies to help all students meet standards: enrollment by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, disability status, primary disability, poverty status, etc.
- General description of plan (goals and strategies)

The narrative section of the report may be supported by bulleted lists, charts, or graphs.

Methodology Used for Evaluation

- Overview of evaluation process and purpose
- Data sources used to develop the report
- How the data was gathered and organized

Bullet lists or a table would be one option for listing the types of data, data sources, and explanation of method. See Figure 21.

Figure 21. Presenting the Data

TYPES OF DATA	SOURCES OF DATA	EXPLANATION OF METHODS
Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administrator, teacher, student, and parent surveys ▪ BLT Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre and post electronic surveys were sent to all using district Intranet accounts. ▪ Two DLT/CSLT members interviewed each BLT.
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Classrooms ▪ TBTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stratified, random sample of 25% of classrooms were observed twice during the year. ▪ At least two TBT meetings were observed in each building at the beginning, middle, and end of year
Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BLT meeting agendas/minutes ▪ BLT monthly reports ▪ IMM progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All BLT monthly meeting agendas and minutes were compared with monthly reports. ▪ All BLT monthly reports were reviewed. ▪ All BLT and DLT/CSLT IMM progress reports were downloaded.

Data may be organized so that comparisons among constituent groups (administrators, teachers, students, and parents) could be drawn.

Achievement and other data is organized by school and grade-level clusters of schools to show how individual buildings are progressing and groups of schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) are progressing.

Summary of Key Findings and Causes

- Determination of which are needed for the audience
- Evaluation of progress toward goal achievement
- Evaluation of strategy effectiveness
- Evaluation of plan implementation results (students and adults)
- Evaluation of process implementation (DTL/BLT and TBT effectiveness, monitoring system, communication flow)
- Causes of the results, effect, or impact
- Other key findings important to the audience

Questions 1–3 of the IMM provide a place to record a summary of impact and process findings. For each question, the DLT/CSLT will need to respond briefly and may use graphs or charts to illustrate the data that support these findings.

The causes or reasons for the findings are answered by the why or why not question that accompanies each subquestion under the three questions.

Recommendations and Actions for Improvement

- Changes to plan
- Changes to process
- Next steps

Responses to **IMM Questions 4 and 5** describe recommendations and actions for improvement from two viewpoints—process and plan or practices. This section of the report may be written in narrative form and supplemented with bullet lists, charts, or graphs. See Figure 22.

Example

1. **Recommendations for improving the process** can be described as reinforcement of or changes to district or building procedures. For example, if the DLT/CSLT finds that the BLTs have not been meeting at least monthly or the BLT determines some TBTs have not been following district or building guidelines for TBTs, procedures can be reinforced by clearer communication and more frequent monitoring of the process. They might be listed in the report as practices to reinforce or sustain the process. If the procedures are not working, however, then changes need to be made. For example, if the DLT/CSLT or BLT finds that the observation data that are being collected do not correlate with the indicators, then the observation tool or process may need to be modified. This type of recommendation may be listed either as a practice to change or as an action for improvement.
2. **Recommendations for improving the plan** and practices may be additions, deletions, or modifications of existing strategies, actions, timelines, or resource reallocations (people, time, money, materials, technology) and should be changed in the **IMM** Implementation Details.

Lessons Learned

- As appropriate, include how lessons learned will be integrated into the plan actions or communication approach.
- Include why the practice is successful or unsuccessful.

IMM Question 6 provides lessons learned and practices to be eliminated and institutionalized. An example is in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Organizing Lessons Learned

EXAMPLE	
<p>Lessons Learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learned that TBTs need more training on how to analyze data. • We learned that not all teachers and parents understood the plan. 	<p>Actions for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount and options for training on data analysis and provide weekly follow-up support to TBTs during first semester. • Develop multiple and alternative methods of communicating the plan, e.g., summary on grocery bags at the local market.
<p>Unsuccessful Practices to Be Eliminated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should discontinue the use of a different formative assessment for each grade level because it results in each grade level having a different expectation for quality work. • We should discontinue demonstration classrooms because scheduling them for all teachers is difficult and it creates a competitive rather than collaborative climate. 	<p>Successful Practices to Be Institutionalized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should continue to require that TBTs follow the TBT protocol at least once per week because the protocol provides structure and less than once a week is not enough time to quickly inform instructional changes. • We should continue to have instructional coaches model the TBT protocol with every TBT until such time as all TBTs follow it faithfully.

Modifying Instructional Practice and Revising the Plan

After each annual evaluation, the plan will be revised on the basis of the findings and recommendations, and instructional practices will be modified. At the end of the multiyear plan, however, the DLT/CSLT will need to follow the OIP by identifying critical needs and refining or revisiting the focused plan. At this point, the DLT/CSLT and BLTs may choose not to complete a full **DF/BDF** but should at least revisit priority responses and implementation probes in the **DF/BDF** student data when specifically relevant to the focused action plan and select targeted sections consistent with the evaluation results. The goals and strategies may stay the same if warranted by the data. Actions may continue or be revised. There is no prescribed formula. What is important is that the DLT/CSLT and BLTs understand the cyclical nature of the OIP and how the process can be used to support sustainable systems change.

There are three major activities in revising the plan after the summative evaluation:

1. **Complete the entire or selected parts of the DF/BDF**, using the essential and additional probing questions and the data from the annual evaluations.
2. **Revise the plan**—that is, goals, goal targets, strategies, indicators, and actions—using the findings and recommendations from the annual evaluations.
3. **Refine the monitoring approach** to tightly align to the goal targets and strategy indicators.

Each of these activities is described in more detail in the working agenda that follows.

Revising the Plan: Completing the DF/BDF—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

The facilitator will need to ensure that data has been collected, organized, and summarized; develop an agenda; prepare packets and make meeting arrangements.

The purpose of this meeting is to complete full or selected parts of the **DF/BDF**.

Note: It may be appropriate to spread this agenda over more than one meeting because there may be additional data to analyze beyond the multiyear evaluation data (for example, on-line OLAC performance assessment).

B. DLT/CSLT Member Presentations—Data Summaries by Levels and Areas

The DLT/CSLT is ready to complete the **DF**. Although analysis can be conducted with statistical programs and electronic data tools, the process of digging through it, finding patterns and trends, diagramming observations, and collaborating about what is seen is a very powerful process. Completing the **DF** by the DLT/CSLT offers new insights and illuminates views that might not have otherwise been seen if the **DF** were done by a few people or by individuals. Lessons learned about the process should be applied as the DLT/CSLT moves through the **DF**. As team members analyze the data and respond to the **DF** essential and expanded facilitation questions (see **Resource 7**), not only do they see more clearly as a result of their concrete experience of the data, they engage in their own professional growth by exploring their own data. Although the second time of moving through the **DF** will be easier because of familiarity with the process and significantly more data, the discussions may be deeper for the same reasons, and thus, the time for this stage of the process may not be shorter than the initial time.

All data summaries will need to be submitted to the facilitator prior to the session. Let DLT/CSLT members know that they will be asked to give a three- to five-minute presentation on their data summaries by (all or selected) level/area. The DLT/CSLT may be sent a data packet with all summaries before the meeting to allow them time to familiarize themselves with the content.

C. Analyzing Data and Completing the DF

In Stage 1 of this Guide, a process using a **DF** wall and gallery walk was provided as a technique to facilitate completion of the **DF**. The primary function of the wall is to allow group members to view the data, ask questions, and discuss the data and results. It is advisable that an organizer such as the **Data Source Identification, Resource 6**, be used to record the data summary. The role of the recorder will be critical to having a record of the DLT/CSLT discussion. Remind the leadership team that levels I and III produce the district goals. Some items will not be discussed at all because they have been determined not to be focus areas; others will require extensive discussion on the basis of the evaluation findings or new data presented in the **DF**. It may be possible to cluster other items, or the same data may be used to respond to several items, thus requiring little time for discussion. It is

important for the OIP facilitator to keep the conversation moving and to make decisions as quickly as possible. The amount of time needed depends on several variables, for example, the number of DLT/CSLT members, the quantity and quality of data, and the emotional response to the data.

D. Confirming DF Priorities

Once the **DF** is complete, the DLT/CSLT looks at the results by level and identifies the district priority problems. After going through level 1, district priority student performance problems should be identified. This list can be created by looking at the level/area from the **DF** with the lowest scores and highest level of concern. Since there are now multiple years of data, the DLT/CSLT should be looking for trends and patterns that provide a focus for district goals and strategies.

E. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

The completed **DF**, which includes the profile report, should be sent to all DLT/CSLT members. The facilitator will want to identify any obvious data gaps found while completing the **DF** and determine how these gaps will be addressed. Periodically, use the **Checklist for Evaluating Meeting Effectiveness (Resource 4)** to give everyone in the group an opportunity to provide written feedback.

Revising the Plan: Goals, Goal Targets, Strategies, Indicators, and Actions— Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

The facilitator will need to ensure that data has been collected, organized, and summarized and the **CCIP** and **IMM** are in an easy-to-read format. They also will need to prepare agenda and packets and make meeting arrangements. As a reminder, goals are based on level I and level III of the **DF**. Goal targets are annual and should be informed by the progress made over the last several years. Goal targets can be broken down by grade level, grade clusters, subgroups, and so forth. The most important thing to remember about actions is that each action for achieving the goal or strategy should have either a direct impact on students or an indirect one, such as ongoing professional development and capacity building. You may wish to revisit Stage 2 of this OIP Guide for more detail.

The purpose of this meeting is to revise the goals, goal targets, strategies, indicators, and actions using the findings and recommendations from the annual evaluation.

Note: The facilitator may choose to spread this agenda over more than one meeting if there are additional data beyond the multiyear evaluation data.

B. Reviewing Research and Criteria for Plan

According to the *Ohio Leadership Development Framework*, there should be a small number of district goals that allow for a concentrated focus on the core work that needs to be done to leverage sustainable improvements in adult practice and student performance. A key concept to emphasize is that the district will have a few (no more than four) focused strategies for each of the two to three goals. During this part of the agenda, the DLT/CSLT will

- Review types of focused goals (student performance goals and expectations and conditions goals).
- Review goal, target, strategy, action, indicator definitions, and criteria.
- Share goal, strategy, action, task, and indicator definitions (**Resource 10**).
- Review the difference between district and school plans.

C. Revising Goals and Goal Targets

If goals have been accomplished, that is, performance indicators have been met, the DLT/CSLT may need to create a new goal (see Stage 2) or keep the same goal with a new goal indicator. If the goal was not accomplished, which means the goal targets were not met, targets will need to be reset on the basis of the evaluation results.

D. Revising Research-Based Strategies and Indicators

The purpose of this activity is to identify cross-cutting ideas that will result in a manageable number of strategies. Using the **DF** profile, share the recurring ideas and seek agreement (a manageable number, for example, two to four) on the strategy categories. This may require prioritizing and merging of ideas or accepting, rejecting, or modifying strategies from the existing plan. Divide each goal work group by the number of strategy categories and have each subgroup write a first draft strategy statement that will address the needs listed.

Once the strategies are drafted, they need to be checked against the most current evidence and research available on the topic and for the subgroup(s) addressed. This task serves two functions: (1) to help provide focus to the strategy and (2) to increase the likelihood of improving student performance overall and for the specific student subgroups addressed, assuming that the strategy is successfully implemented. Research-based solutions should be evaluated on two dimensions, quality and relevance. The goal workgroups will need to share their strategies with each other.

The DLT/CSLT will need to review the strategies, examining them for redundancy, overlap, and coherence in order to ensure a reasonably structured set of strategies. Once complete, all goals, strategies, and indicators should be reviewed using **Focused Plan Descriptors Checklist, Resource 9**.

TIP:

Ensure that the strategies if implemented will accelerate the rate of subgroup performance to match the expected performance of all students.

Indicators are developed for each strategy, generally one adult implementation and one student performance. Because of differences in the performances of subgroups, it may be necessary to have multiple parts to the student performance indicator. It is possible and desirable that some of the same indicators will be used across strategies. Therefore, indicators cannot be finalized until all strategies have been developed.

The baseline measure established for each type of indicator will be reset on the basis of the evaluation results. Short-term progress measures are set to assess the degree of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, and practices and student performance.

E. Generating, Keeping, Dropping, or Modifying Actions

Determine whether each current action should be kept, dropped, or modified. If an action requires modification, make the adjustments by some means that will make proposed changes obvious. The following criteria may be used when deciding whether to keep, drop, or modify an action:

- If the action is fully completed, will it contribute to implementation of the strategy?
- Does the action reach the targeted student population and content area(s)?
- Does the action reach a critical mass of targeted school staff, students, or families?
- In light of the overall goal of improving student performance, do the benefits outweigh the costs, that is, in time, people, money, materials, supplies, technology?
- What do the evaluation results say about the actions we have in our current plan?

Identify possible new actions by examining the cause-and-effect diagrams or the **DF** profile to check that the priority causes are addressed either by existing actions or by new actions. It is possible that a cause may need to be worded as a possible action.

Review all action steps in the plan, regardless of their related strategies, in consideration of the multiyear plan. Look for commonalities and cross-cutting components among all action steps. Strategically sequence or group the action steps so the work can be as streamlined as possible, while still getting the desired results.

Activity

- Write action steps on cards or provide actions typed in a large font on strips of paper.
- Create headers reading Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 (or write as headers on three pages of newsprint or large note cards)

Use an affinity process to arrange cards according to what needs to happen in Year 1, 2, and 3 of the plan and what could be delayed, if appropriate. Consider: What would be a natural flow of the work?

TIP:

Continually ask

How does the improvement work relate to the ongoing work of the district?

How do these actions replace and change the work rather than add onto the work of the district?

F. Testing the Theory of Action

Once the draft plan is completed, the DLT/CSLT should determine whether its theory of action is well conceived, and therefore, whether success can be predicted. This can be accomplished by asking these questions:

- If we successfully complete the actions we have described with at least 90 percent of staff implementing as intended, will we accomplish our strategy? Ask this for each strategy.
- If we successfully fulfill our strategies, will they achieve our goal? Ask this for each goal.

G. Completing the IMM Implementation Details

Once all actions are complete for Year 1, ask the DLT/CSLT to identify the monitoring evidence and data sources that will be used to document that the action is implemented. Responsibilities, timelines, and resources also will need to be assigned to each action. Year 2 and 3 actions may be included in the plan and marked as occurring in the future. The DLT/CSLT will want to strive for a balance of persons and groups responsible for action steps. Complete the **CCIP** and **IMM** Implementation Details with this information.

Tasks for each action will be generated by the persons or groups responsible for each action and reviewed by the strategy manager to ensure equitable distribution of assignments. Tasks are a list of activities that need to be undertaken for someone to complete an action. At this point, the resources needed for each action can be stated in general terms, for example, software license, printing costs, or training materials for a specific number of individuals. At a later time, the treasurer or other person responsible for fiscal funding sources will develop detailed budget breakdowns that correspond to the implementation details.

H. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

It is the superintendent's responsibility to secure the approval of the local board of education. Endorsement of the plan is of paramount importance because it establishes the district work for the next several years. Soliciting stakeholder input into the plan will occur at this juncture. As a last step, districts should review the compliance components of the **CCIP** and flag parts of their plan that address these components. The district or community school must add an action and flag it to address any compliance component that has not already been addressed through plan development. The ODE provides a list of requirements for each of the compliance components. ODE's Office of Federal Programs can provide assistance in addressing compliance components. The plan should be edited and sent to the DLT/CSLT and goal workgroups.

Refining the Monitoring Approach— Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

The most important thing to remember about monitoring is that it provides the core of the district's internal accountability system in determining whether instructional practices are having the desired effect on student performance. Revisit Stage 3 of this Guide for more detail.

The purpose of this meeting is to refine the monitoring approach to align with the revised plan.

B. Revisiting Plan Indicators

The indicators are the gauge by which goals and strategies are determined to be successful. It is important that these be clearly written so that data can be collected to determine progress. The DLT/CSLT and BLT should review the indicators against the descriptors in **Focused Plan Descriptors Checklist, Resource 9**.

C. Aligning Monitoring Processes to Plan Indicators

It is likely that the monitoring processes will change as the DLT/CSLT and BLT have more sophisticated assessment and data management systems in place. This is particularly true of processes for collecting and analyzing student performance data. It also is likely that monitoring processes can be streamlined, eliminating the collection of extraneous data. For example, if a DLT/CSLT or BLT have consistently used classroom observations as a process, it may find that it can focus the type of observations to be directly connected to the indicator. It also is possible that those conducting the observations have enough experience and conversation to increase interrater reliability, thus making the data more valid and reliable.

The DLT/CSLT and BLT will need to study their current monitoring process and more tightly align (or replace) to plan indicators by asking these questions:

How well did the monitoring processes we used produce the data we needed to measure progress? Why or Why not?

How well were those who implemented the monitoring processes adequately prepared to collect, organize, and report the data?

What procedures did we follow to ensure interrater reliability?

Was the data collected valid and useful? Why or Why not?

How can the current processes be modified to align to our current plan indicators?

Whichever process is adapted or selected (**See Monitoring System Components and Methods to Monitor Student Performance and Adult Implementation, Resource 24**, for options), it needs to be directly connected to plan indicators, followed consistently and the data used regularly.

D. Reviewing Procedures and Tools for Recording Monitoring Data

Recording the monitoring data consistently and systematically is critical because it provides an important component of the information that will determine whether midcourse corrections are needed. The processes used will determine whether the DLT/CSLT and BLT wish to modify the procedures and tools for recording monitoring data. Questions to ask may include

Are the recording tools clearly understood, that is, are the items defined in such a way that anyone using the tool has the same interpretation?

Are the recording tools easy to use and consistently used in all buildings? Are the appropriate people recording the data thoroughly and consistently?

Can the data be easily extracted from the tools so comparisons can be made and analysis be conducted?

Are the procedures for collecting, recording, and reporting the data defined and followed?

E. Establishing a Monitoring Schedule

Revisit the monitoring schedule from the prior period and determine whether it can be replicated or needs adjustments.

F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Tools and procedures may need to be revised. Professional development may need to occur. And communication about the changes will need to be planned and carried out.

In summary, this transformational Stage 4 of the OIP has been accomplished when leadership teams have completed the following:

- Checked the district's or community school's theory of action through a thorough analysis of data collection throughout the process
- Assessed the level of fidelity of OIP use to support full implementation of the districtwide strategies and actions to reach goals and its impact on desired changes in adult practice and student achievement
- Reported summative progress and evaluation results
- Made recommendations that are based on summative progress and evaluation results
- Taken actions based upon recommendations to institutionalize successful practices, to eliminate unsuccessful practices, and to modify, revise, or develop a new multiyear focused plan
- Reinforced the recursive nature of the OIP by going back to Stage 1 and progressing through Stage 4

Acronyms

BDF—Building Decision Framework

BLT—Building Leadership Team

CCIP—Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan

CSLT—Community School Leadership Team

DF—Decision Framework

DIBELS—Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DLT—District Leadership Team

ECO—Early Childhood Outcomes Summary Form

ELA—English language arts

ELL—English language learners

ESC—Educational Service Center

HQPD—High Quality Professional Development

IMM—Implementation Management/Monitoring

IPDP—Individual Professional Development Plan

KRA-L—Kindergarten Readiness Assessment—Literacy

LEA—Local education agency (district)

LEP—Limited English proficient

MAAP—Matrix of Achievement and Progress

ODE—Ohio Department of Education

OIP—Ohio Improvement Process

OLAC—Ohio Leadership Advisory Council

PD—Professional development

PTSA—Parent-Teacher-Student Association

SAFE—Security Application for Enterprise

SIP—School improvement plan

SMART Goals—Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely goals

SSoS—Statewide System of Support

SPoC—Single point of contact

SPP—State Performance Plan

SST—State Support Team

STARS—System to Achieve Results for Students

SWD—Students With Disabilities

SWIS—Schoolwide Information System

TBT—Teacher-Based Team

OIP Glossary

Achievement Gap: The disparity in academic performance on tests among identified groups or the difference between how a group performs and what is expected of that group. Typically, the disparity is defined as a difference between white students and students of color or between students who receive a free or reduced-price lunch and those who do not.

Actions: Specific steps to operationalize a strategy and reach a goal.

Adult Implementation Indicator: Gauge by which a strategy is determined to be met in terms of changes in practices expected of adults.

Annual Goal Target: Gauges against which to judge whether an annual goal is met.

Baseline: Starting point from which an indicator can be measured.

Building Leadership Team (BLT): A team of individuals who promote a culture of common expectations or commitment by maintaining a schoolwide focus on improving student achievement. The team fosters shared leadership and responsibility for the success of every child through the creation of purposeful communities.

Capacity Building: Providing opportunities—such as job-embedded staff development, coaching, and time for reflection on effective instructional practices—that enhance the ability of teachers and administrators to positively affect student learning.

Collaboration: Highest level of functioning in a continuum of how information, knowledge, and working together operate in any organization.

Collaborative Structure: A structure designed to increase teacher or district staff capacity in meeting the challenge to close achievement gaps and raise the bar for all students. Other terms may be used, such as data teams, grade-level teams, department teams, to describe a professional learning community in a district or building. Characterized by continuous school-based or district-based professional development, mutual support, and coaching with peers; dedicated time for collaborative work; and permission to take risks as a staff to learn, practice, and hone their skills. Effective school and district leadership is fundamental to creating collaborative structures.

Common Formative Assessments: Teacher-generated periodic or interim assessments that are collaboratively designed by teams for specific units of instruction. Common formative assessments are created as short matching pre- and postassessments to ensure same-assessment-to-same-assessment comparison of student growth. Common formative assessments usually contain a blend of item types, including selected response and constructed response, representing power standards.

Communication: Exchange of ideas and information by any of a variety of methods.

Community School Leadership Team (CSLT): See District Leadership Team.

Comprehensive Assessment System: The means by which a district measures student performance from the time that the student enters education to the time the student leaves. Includes three types of assessments:

1. Initial or diagnostic assessments that identify student strengths and weaknesses or identify what a student already knows about a topic and identify any gaps or misconceptions.
2. Formative or interim assessments used by teachers and students during instruction that provide feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement or intended instructional outcomes.
3. Summative assessments given periodically to determine, at a particular point in time, what students know and do not know relative to content standards.

Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP): A unified grants application and verification system that consists of two parts: the Planning Tool and the Funding Application. The Planning Tool contains the goals, strategies, action steps, and district goal amounts for all grants in the CCIP. The Funding Application contains the budget, budget details, nonpublic services, and other related pages. The CCIP should be the district's focused plan for improvement.

Consensus: After discussion, a group has reached consensus on a decision if most team members agree with the decision and if those who disagree are willing to accept the decision and try to make it work. Consensus allows those who disagree to gather more data and raise an issue if indicated.

Content Standards: Specific, measurable descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at each grade in each curriculum area.

Continuous Improvement Framework: The concept that effective schools are engaged in a long-term process of improvement of teaching and learning that is demonstrated by a pattern of continuous improvement of learning for every child. The continuous improvement cycle includes determination of prioritized needs, planning for focused improvement, implementation of the plan, and monitoring and evaluation of the results.

Culturally Relevant Educational Practices: Using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically or economically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them.

Data-Driven Decisions: Decisions that districts and schools make by knowledgeably and effectively using a range of data at the classroom, school, and district levels to improve instructional support and practices.

Data-Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2): An ODE initiative that provides a systematic approach for Ohio educators to access data and align resources. Users are able to identify and access resources to meet specific needs from different systems that communicate using common standards, for example, Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) to ensure consistent data standards and the Ohio Standard Identifier Code (OSIC) to show alignment to Ohio's Academic Content Standards.

Data Teams: See Teacher-Based Teams.

Decision Framework (DF): An electronic tool that ultimately provides the **CCIP** needs assessment by using essential questions that can be answered with student achievement data, perceptual data, and other forms of data at the state and local level. The essential questions are organized around levels with a focus on student achievement and growth in content areas by grade level, building, and subgroup, followed by essential questions related to the critical student performance problems identified and uncover possible causes of these problems tied to the following: curriculum, instruction, assessment, managing educator talent, and expectations and conditions, for example, school climate, parents and family, community involvement, and allocation of resources.

Decision Parameters: Factors that help make sound decisions that serve as guidelines rather than policy, rule, or procedure.

District Leadership Team (DLT): A team of individuals who promote a culture of common expectations or commitment by maintaining a districtwide focus on high achievement for all students.

Early Childhood Outcomes Summary Form (ECO): Measurement of every preschool child with a disability using a seven-point scale to document the child's progress in each of three categories (positive social and emotional skills, acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and taking appropriate action to meet needs).

English Language Learners (ELL): A student subgroup described by instructional needs that change as students gain English language proficiency; ELL students receive services based on their achievement on academic assessments.

Evaluation: The practice that DLTs and BLTs engage in to critically examine and analyze monitoring data to assess the extent to which the process and plan implementation produced the desired results.

Evidence-Based: The process of reviewing, assessing, and applying proven strategies to address data-determined needs.

Evidence of Success: Tangible documentation that shows progress toward achieving a strategy.

Expectations and Conditions Goal: A broad statement that specifies a desired change in order to improve or increase the opportunities or potential for improvement in learning and identifies the end result to be achieved within a given timeframe.

Extended Learning Time: An increase in the amount of time students have available for school by providing opportunities before and after school and during the summer, modified school calendars, and changes in the structure of the school day. Extended learning time also can be provided by reducing or eliminating pullout programs that interrupt regular instructional time, increasing the focus on learning during scheduled class time by reducing extraneous activities and scheduling longer blocks of time for classes.

Fidelity: The degree to which the plan accurately produces its effect: exact correspondence with the process and faithful to the OIP nonnegotiables and OLAC principles in the face of obstacles.

Focused Plan: A blueprint based on identified needs that directs all district work and resources and leads to improvement in student achievement.

Formative Assessment: A continuous instructional process used by teachers to obtain evidence of student understanding for the purpose of improving teaching or learning. To be effective, teachers must be skillful in using various assessment strategies and tools, such as observation, student conferences, portfolios, performance tasks, prior knowledge assessments, rubrics, feedback, and student self-assessment. More important, they must have a deep understanding of the formative assessment process and understand its close relationship to instructional scaffolding.

Grade- or Department-Level Teams: See Professional Learning Community.

Implementation Management/Monitoring Tool (IMM): An electronic tool that provides a way for districts to document how their district and school plans will be implemented. The district or school can identify items to be measured, resources needed, persons and groups responsible, timeline for implementing, and completion status of implementation items.

Indicator: There are two types of indicators. A *performance indicator* is the gauge by which a goal is determined to be met. A *progress indicator* is the gauge by which a strategy is determined to be successful. Progress indicators have a baseline measure established and short-term progress measures to assess degree of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, and practices; and documentation is identified to provide evidence that the indicator is met.

Inquiry: A search for knowledge; an investigation or research that has the aim of augmenting knowledge, resolving doubt, or solving a problem by questioning and seeking the truth.

Institutionalize: The translation of a district's mission, policies, vision, and continuous improvement plan into actions applicable to the daily activities of its administrators and staff; the integration of OIP principles into the district culture and structure.

Job-Embedded Professional Development: Ongoing professional development grounded in day-to-day teaching and designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning; aligned to learning standards and school and district improvement plans (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Hirsh, 2009; NSDC, 2010).

KRA-L: Assessment that measures young children's literacy skills at the beginning of the kindergarten year on six elements or indicators: answering questions, sentence repetition, rhyming identification, rhyming production, letter identification, and initial sounds.

Learning: Acquiring and applying new knowledge, behaviors, skills, or values; knowledge acquired by systematic study.

Mission: The district's purpose or the reason it exists. Fulfilling the mission is how a district realizes its vision.

Mobility: The degree to which a student population of a building 120 days before a test window is not in the same building at the time of the test window.

Monitoring: The practice that DLTs and BLTs use to supervise the plan in progress to ensure the tasks, actions, and strategies are on course and on schedule in meeting goals as measured by progress against indicators.

Multiple Risk Factors: A multiplicity of reasons for which students may be at risk of academic failure, for example, high levels of both discipline occurrences and absences.

Nonnegotiable Goal: Goals upon which all staff members act.

Observation: A statement that reflects an opinion, testimonial, or comment about data.

Pattern: Data that show a relationship within the same set of data.

Professional Learning Community or Team: *See Collaborative Structures.*

Recursiveness: The repeating of a cycle or process, either indefinitely or until a specific point is reached.

Research-Based Practices: The process of reviewing, assessing, and applying proven strategies on the basis of empirical evidence to address data-determined needs.

Root Cause: The deepest underlying cause of positive or negative symptoms within any process that if eliminated would result in elimination or substantial reduction of the symptom.

SAS EVAAS: Valuable diagnostic information about past practices and reports on students' predicted success probabilities at numerous academic milestones, K–12.

School Improvement Plan: The school's focused plan for improvement.

Schoolwide Information System (SWIS): Web-based information system designed to help school personnel use office referral data to design particular interventions for individual students and general interventions for all students.

Shared Leadership: Leadership shared by team leaders and team members—rotating to the person with the key knowledge, skills, and abilities to address the particular issues facing the team at any given moment with the focus on “improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role” (Elmore, 2006).

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Attainable, Results-Oriented, Targeted) Goal: A broad statement that specifies a desired measurable change in student performance to close a gap or an improvement opportunity or potential for improvement in learning and that identifies the end result to be achieved within a given time.

Stakeholder: Anyone who affects or is affected by the success of the district. Typical stakeholder groups include students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, school administrators, students' immediate family members, school board members, community leaders, local business and industry representatives, and citizens who live in the community.

Standards: Subject-matter benchmarks to measure students' academic achievement. Curriculum standards drive what students learn in the classroom.

State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators: A strategic framework of 20 measures on which the state collects data in order to determine a district's or building's level of performance, to set targets for improvement, and to develop improvement strategies to improve the performance of students with disabilities in the state.

Strategy: A set of specific, measurable written statements about what a district is going to accomplish to meet a need and get closer to reaching a goal within a given time.

Strategy Indicator: The gauges by which a strategy is determined to be met in terms of student performance and adult practices.

Student Performance Goal: A broad statement that specifies a desired change in student performance to close a gap and identifies the end result to be achieved within a given time.

Students With Disabilities (SWD): Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; have a record of such an impairment; or are regarded as having such an impairment. Students with disabilities are those students served under “Assistance for Education of All Children With Disabilities” (Part B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Subgroups: A smaller group distinguished in some way from other members of the larger group of which it is a part. Under federal law, each school and district is assessed to determine whether it has achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all students in communication arts and mathematics, as well as among each subgroup (Asian and Pacific islander, black, Hispanic, American Indian, white, free or reduced-price lunch, individualized education program [IEP], limited English proficient [LEP]) unless there are 30 or fewer students in the subgroup. There must be at least 50 students in the IEP and LEP subgroups for a school or district to be accountable for AYP.

Summative Assessment: Assessments—for example, state assessments, district benchmark assessments, end-of-term or semester exams—given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know relative to content standards to help evaluate the effectiveness of programs, goals, or alignment of curriculum.

Tasks: A list of steps in order to complete an action.

Teacher-Based Teams (TBT): Teacher-Based Teams (TBTs) are teams composed of teachers working together to improve instructional practice and student learning through shared work. As part of the OIP use of collaborative structures, TBTs follow a common set of guidelines described in a five-step process connected directly to the focused goals, strategies, and actions described in the school improvement plan.

Trend: A statement based on at least three years of data from the same data source.

Value-Added Data: A component of Ohio’s accountability system that measures growth or improvement over a period of time to determine the value gained by a student during that time period.

Vision: A shared understanding of what the district wants to create (picture of the future) by stakeholders who are committed.

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