

2012

# Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) Guide

Facilitating Districtwide Improvement  
in Instructional Practices and Student Performance



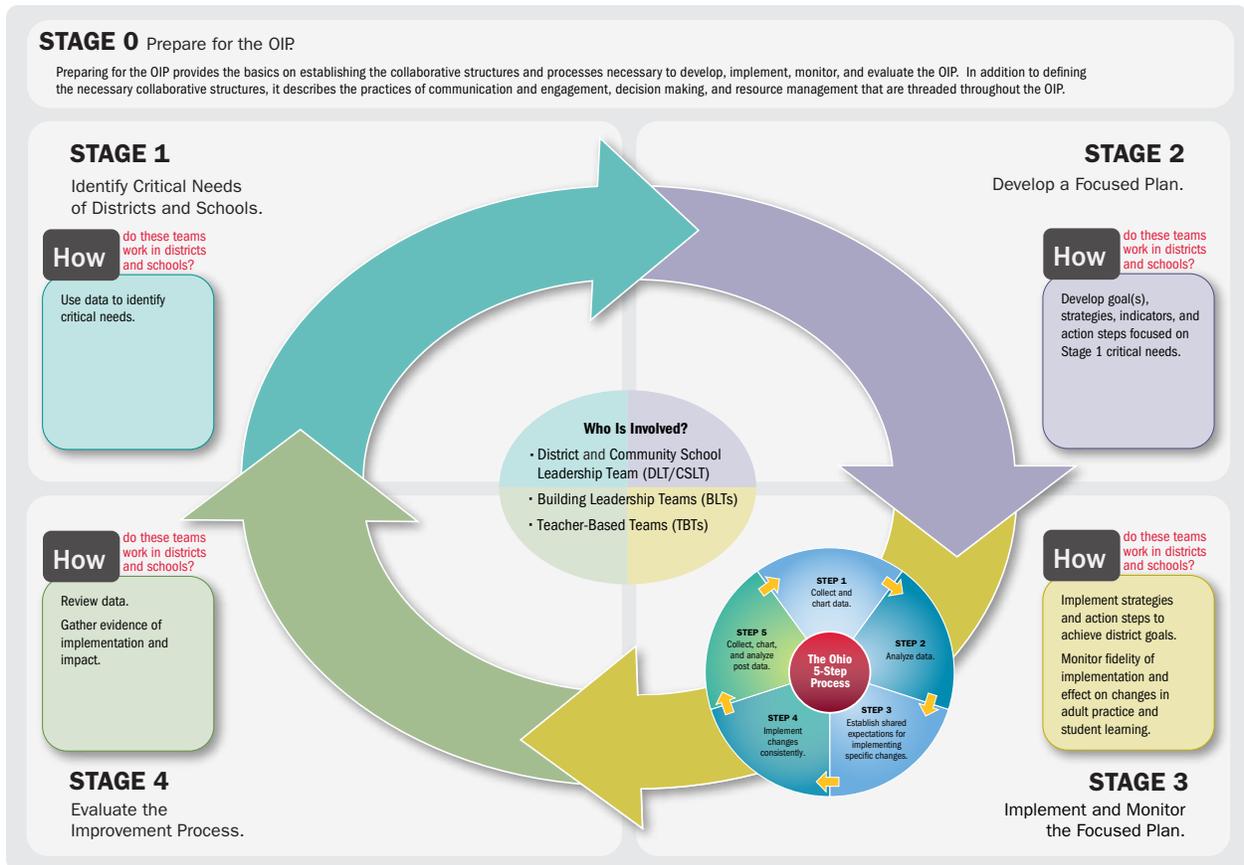
Department  
of Education

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# The Ohio Improvement Process

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



This guide is intended for districts, community schools, and buildings implementing the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and their leadership teams. Research that is the basis of the OIP can be found in the Ohio Leadership Development Framework Modules on the website [www.ohioleadership.org](http://www.ohioleadership.org). Further online training on each stage (Stages 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4) also appears on that website.

# 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.

## **The complete OIP Guide covers the following content to help ensure the aims are accomplished.**

### **Stage 0: Preparing for the OIP**

- Collaborative structures
- District Leadership Team or Community School Leadership Team (DLT/CSLT) and Building Leadership Team (BLT), and Teacher-Based Team (TBT) membership and roles and responsibilities
- OIP orientation for DLT/CSLT or BLTs
- Shared leadership: supporting ongoing, two-way communication and engagement
- Intentional data decision making and resource management

### **Stage 1: Identifying Critical Needs**

- Understanding the structure and requirements of the decision framework (DF) and building decision framework (BDF)
- Collecting, organizing, and summarizing data
- Completing the DF/BDF to identify and affirm critical focus areas

### **Stage 2: Developing a Focused Plan**

- Creating SMART goals
- Developing evidence-based or research-based district or community school strategies and indicators
- Producing evidence-based or research-based district or community school and building actions and aligning resources
- Tasking the district or community school plan and aligned school improvement plans (SIPs)
- Reviewing, revising, and adopting the plan

### **Stage 3: Implementing and Monitoring the Focused Plan**

- Implementing the plan systematically and systemically
- Maintaining a culture of inquiry through collaborative structures and processes
- Aligning HQPD across district and community school plans and building plans to achieve results
- Applying a balanced assessment system for monitoring student performance indicators
- Monitoring and analyzing changes in student performance and adult implementation to make midcourse corrections and report plan progress
- Designing an intentional monitoring system
- Making midcourse corrections and reporting plan progress
- Generalizing successes across the district so lessons learned become systemic

### **Stage 4: Evaluating the Improvement Process**

- Evaluating the impact of the plan and process
- Annual evaluation of impact and plan process
- Reporting evaluation results
- Revising the plan: completing the **DF/BDF**
- Revising the plan: goals, goal targets, strategies, indicators, and actions
- Refining the monitoring approach

As districts and community schools improve through effective continuous planning, the planning process itself also will improve. This may be difficult to believe when the first written plan is just being implemented, but districts and community schools that are willing to continue focusing their efforts on the effective use of data and planning eventually will notice that the process seems effortless and that it is essential to their continued success.

## Stage 0 Preparing for the OIP

Collaborative Structures	1
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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.

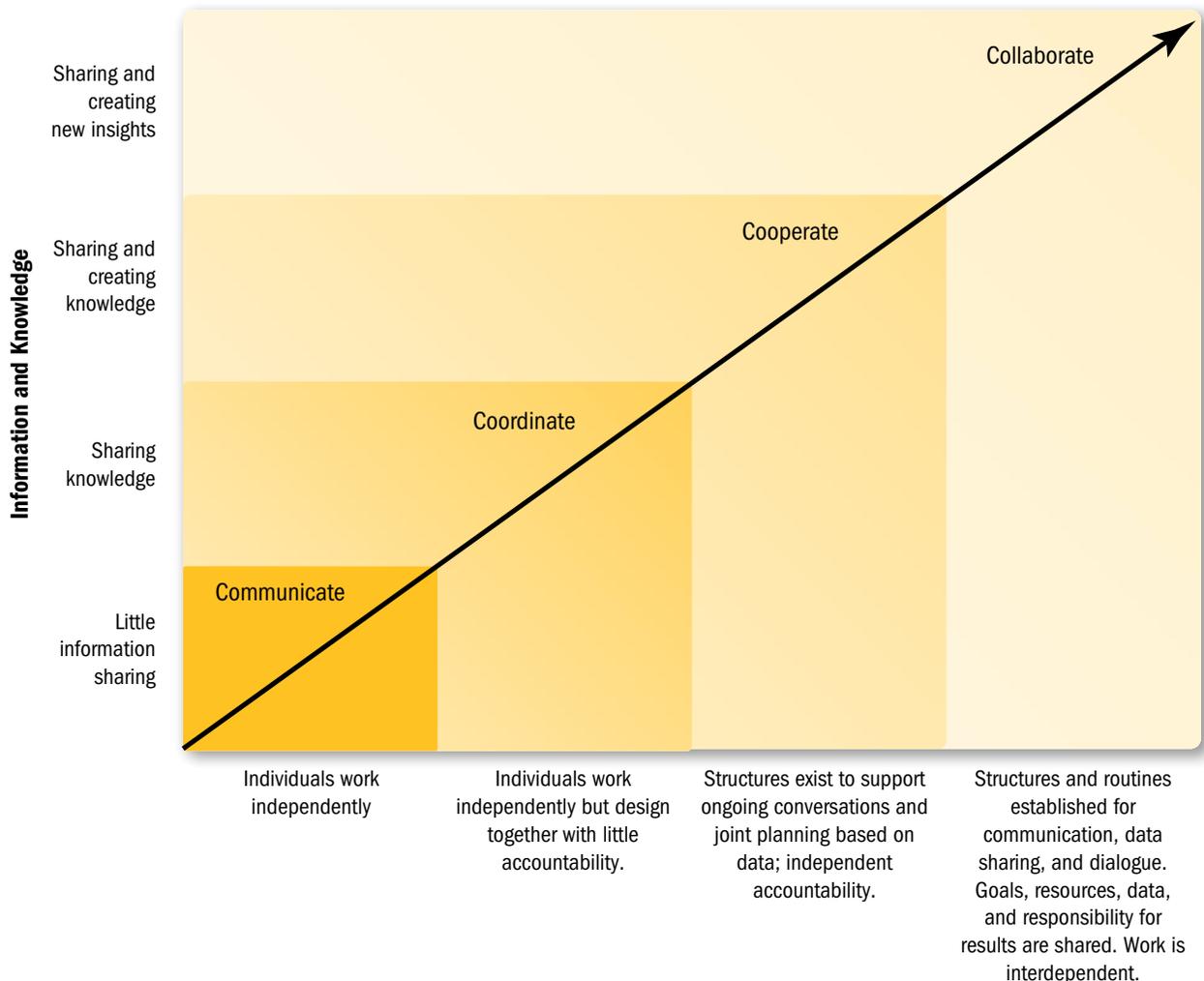
“Collective work in trusting environments provides a basis for inquiry and reflection into teachers’ own practice, allowing teachers to take risks, solve problems and attend to dilemmas in their practice.”

—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](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

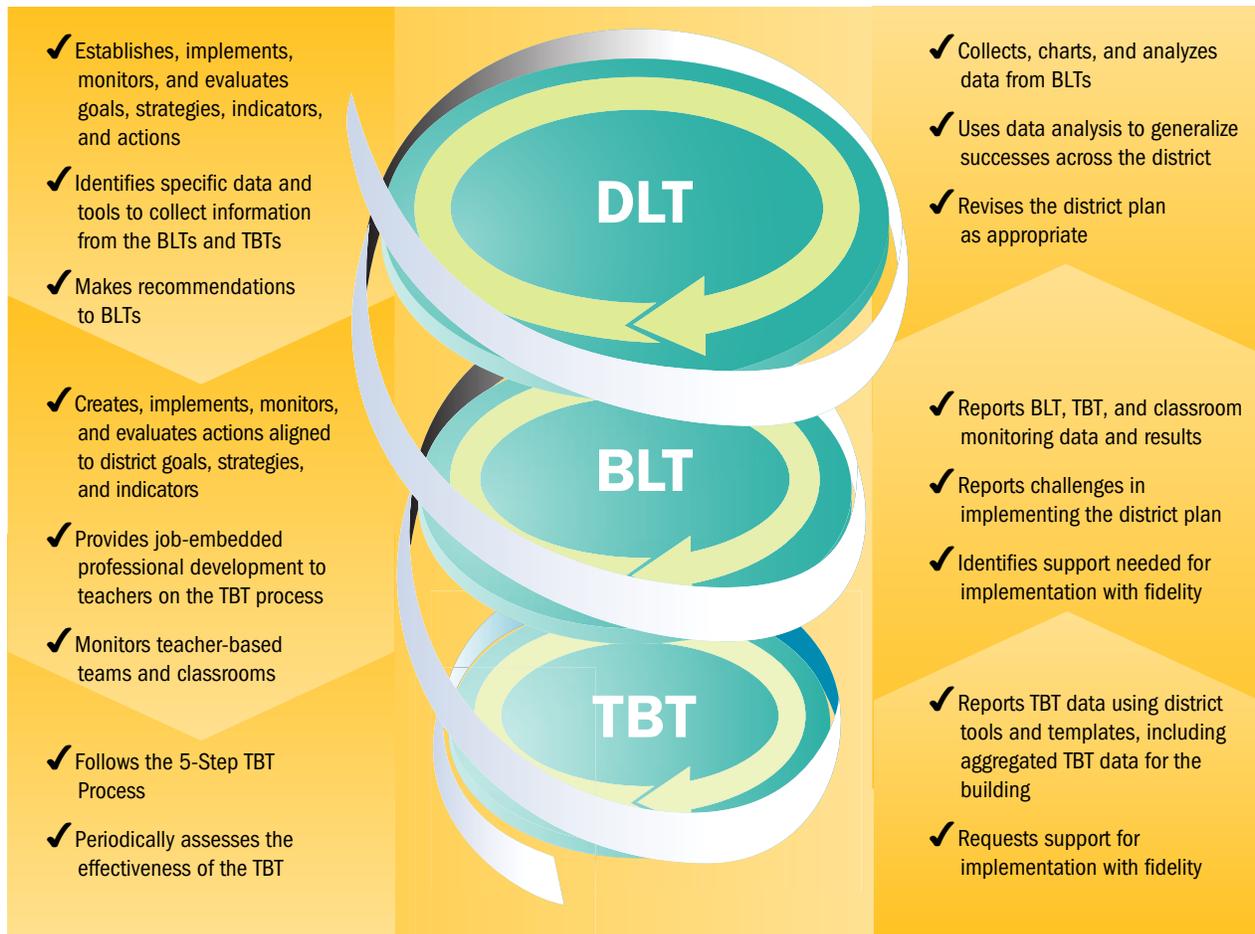
One option for the DLT/CSLT to consider when it reaches Stage 3 is to identify an individual who serves as a goal, strategy, or action manager. This person may or may not be a member of the DLT/CSLT or BLT. Responsibilities of the goal, strategy, or action manager may include

- 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**

	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Summary and Considerations</b>	<b>Final Product</b>
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 <b>DF</b></p> <p>Summary of data to support <b>DF</b> 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 (<b>CCIP</b>)</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 <b>IMM</b>)</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 <b>IMM</b>)</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 <b>CCIP</b> and SIP			●	●	●
Developing many staff as leaders and facilitators	●	●	●	●	●

# 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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