

2012

Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) Guide

Facilitating Districtwide Improvement
in Instructional Practices and Student Performance

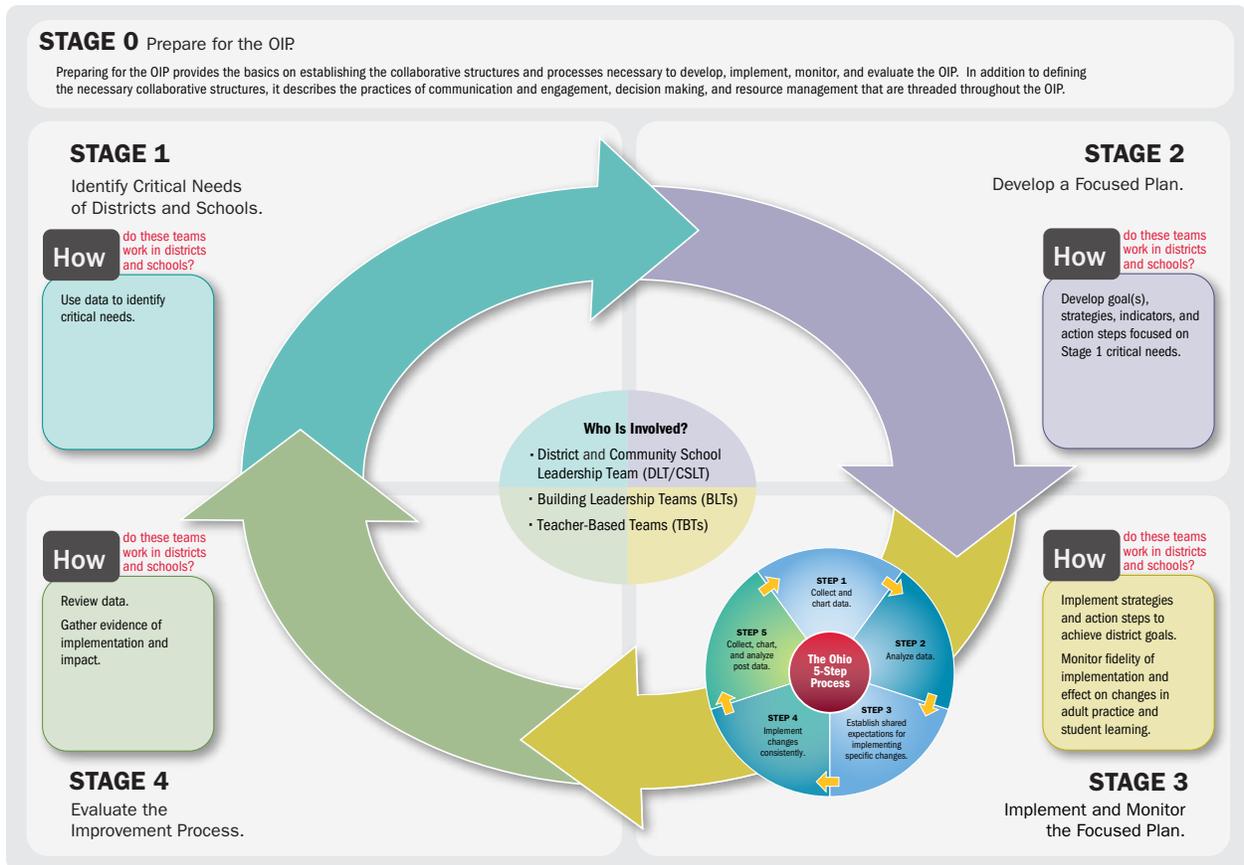


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The Ohio Improvement Process

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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. 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 2

Developing a Focused Plan

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Abstract

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

Creating SMART Goals—Working Agenda

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

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

IF the district or community school has

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Goal, Strategy, Action, Indicator Definitions

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

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

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

C. Goal Criteria

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

Specific

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

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

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

Measurable

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

Attainable and Achievable

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

Realistic and Relevant

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

Timely

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

D. Creating District or Community School Goals

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

First Hurdle: Timeline

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

Second Hurdle: Reasonable and Realistic Measure

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

Third Hurdle: Assessment Instrument for Measurement

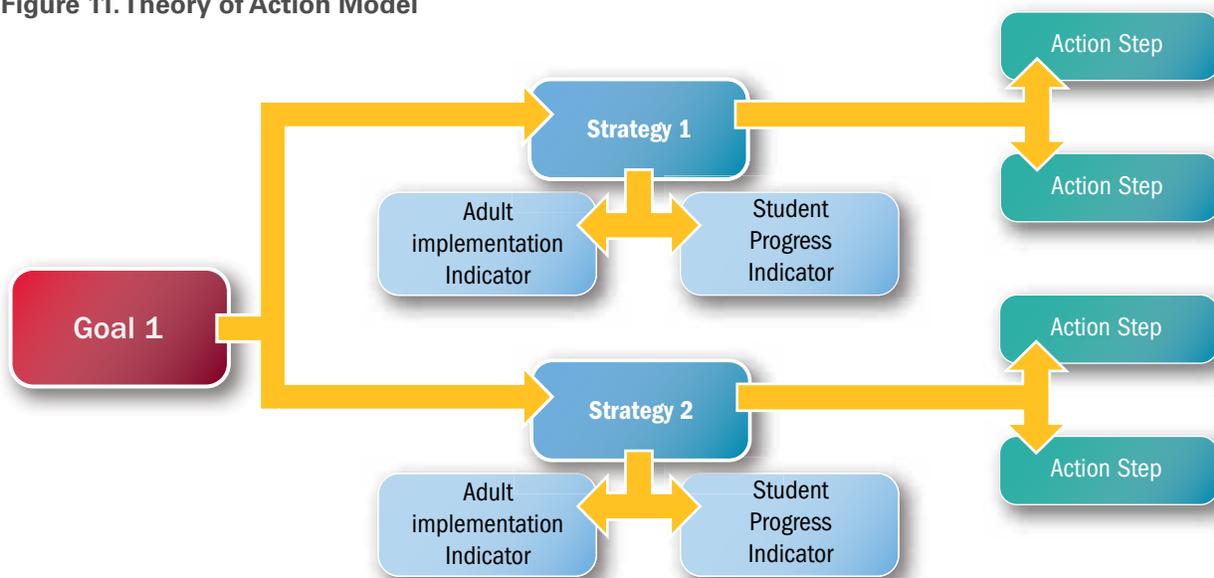
Identifying a summative assessment for Grades 3–8 and 10 is relatively easy because the state-required assessments provide this annual data for multiple years. Districts and community schools do not always have summative data for Grades K–2, 9, 11, and 12 and may not have a clearly articulated assessment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

E. Introducing a Theory of Action

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

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

Figure 11. Theory of Action Model



F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. Strategy Criteria and Examples

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

Strategy criteria are as follows:

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

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

Goal:

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

Strategy:

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

C. Creating Evidence-Based or Research-Based Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Indicator Criteria and Examples

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy indicator criteria are these:

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

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

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

Goal:

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

Strategy:

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

Adult Implementation Indicator:

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

Baseline Measure:

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

Progress Measure:

10 percent every four months

E. Creating Progress Indicators

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

Baseline Questions

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

Progress Questions

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

F. Evaluating and Refining Strategies and Indicators

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

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

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

G. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

Ohio Leadership Development Framework, Area 4, Community Engagement Process

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

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

Electronic or Paper Survey

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

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

Focus Groups

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

DLT/CSLT Interviews

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

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

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

District or Community School Leadership Team and Goal Workgroups

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Building Leadership Team

The BLT will then need to

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

D. Generating New Actions

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

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

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

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

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

E. Prioritizing Evidence-Based or Research-Based Actions

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

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

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

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

F. Affirmation and Mapping of Actions by Year

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

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

Activity

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

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

Responsibilities

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

Table 8. Guidelines for Assigning Responsibilities

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

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

Timelines

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

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

Resources

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

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

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

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

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

G. Checking the District or Community School Theory of Action

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

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

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

Record any refinements to the Theory of Action Model.

H. District or Community School and Building Monitoring Process

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

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

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

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

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

I. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

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

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

A. Purpose, Ground Rules Review, and Meeting Assignments

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

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

B. Completing the Task Implementation Template

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

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

Activity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Coordinating and Sequencing Tasks

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

D. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Seek and document agreement on the following:

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

Reviewing, Revising, and Adopting the Plan

Holding a Public Hearing

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

Standard Board Meeting

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

Public Hearing

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

Town Meeting

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

Districtwide or Community School–Wide Meeting

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

Considering Public Hearing Comments

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

Revising the Plan

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

Securing Board Approval

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

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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