

2012

# Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) Guide

Facilitating Districtwide Improvement  
in Instructional Practices and Student Performance

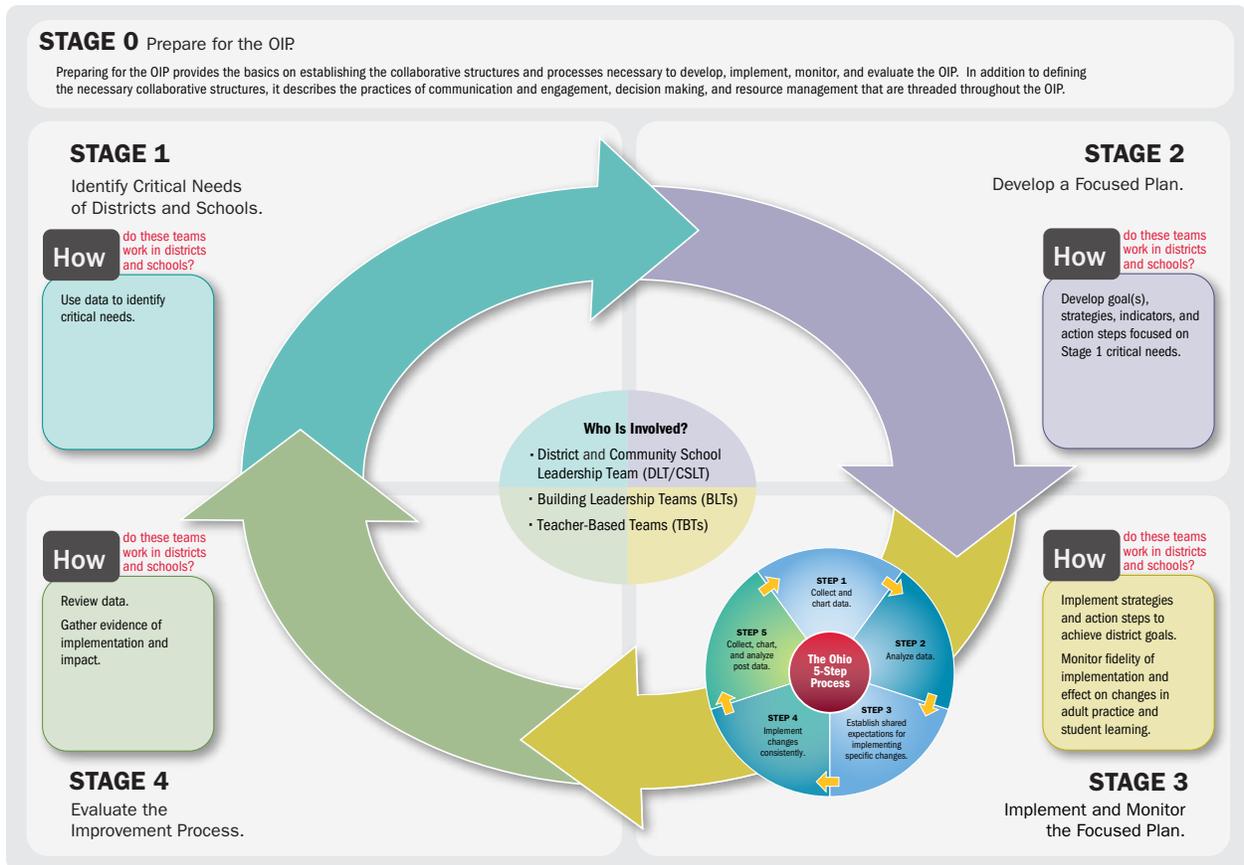


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# The Ohio Improvement Process

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



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

# Overview

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

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

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

## Seven Principles of the OIP

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

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

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

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

## Large-Scale Change

The OIP principles and process supports large scale change by

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

## Integrated, Research-Based Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### **Abstract**

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

## **Implementing the Plan Systematically and Systemically**

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

### **TIP:**

#### Systematically

- Procedural
- Coherent
- Thorough
- Regular

#### Systemically

- Broad
- Deep
- Sustained
- Shared systemwide

Effective implementation is characterized by district or community school and buildings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

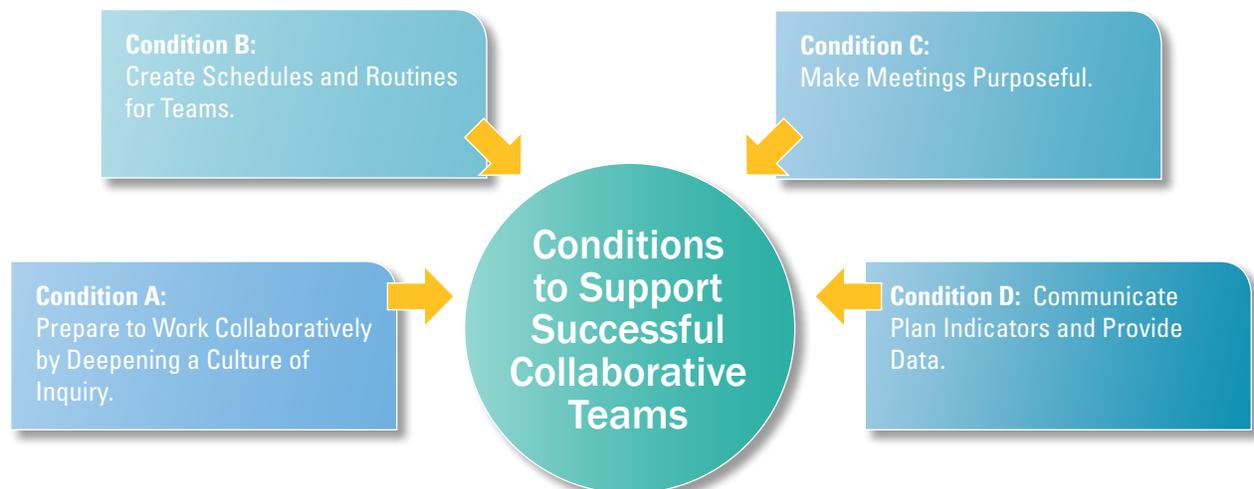
*Note:* If not all buildings are represented on the DLT/CSLT, it may be appropriate to ask a representative from each BLT to attend this meeting.

## B. Conditions for Implementing Collaborative Teams

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

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

**Figure 12. Conditions Supportive of Collaborative Teams**



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

1. One of the necessary conditions is that of creating schedules and routines that support collaborative teams. Use of the Ohio 5-Step Process as illustrated in Figure 13 is an important routine. The DLT/CSLT and BLT need to develop an understanding of how these five steps can focus them on plan implementation.
  - Divide the group by role.
  - Have those representing the district review **DLT/CSLT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21A**, and imagine and discuss how the template will help structure regularly scheduled DLT/CSLT meetings to support plan implementation.
  - Have those representing buildings review **BLT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21B**, and imagine and discuss how the template will help structure regularly scheduled BLT meetings to support plan implementation.
  - Have each group report on how the two templates align and how they might contribute to coherent implementation across the system.
  
2. Compare **TBT 5-Step Process Visual, Resource 14**, to the general 5-Step Process in Figure 13. Review **TBT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template, Resource 21C**, to gain a deeper understanding of how the 5-Step Process is customized to support TBTs as they focus on their ongoing role in plan implementation.
  
3. To ensure meetings are purposeful, protocols are used. A protocol consists of agreed-upon guidelines for an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning. Specifically, protocols are useful for three reasons:
  - To create a structure that makes it safe to ask challenging questions of each other. It also ensures that there is some equity in how each person’s issues are attended to.
  - Make the most of the limited time people have.
  - Have an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning.

Figure 13. Ohio 5-Step Process



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

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

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

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

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

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

## C. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

Document agreement on the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

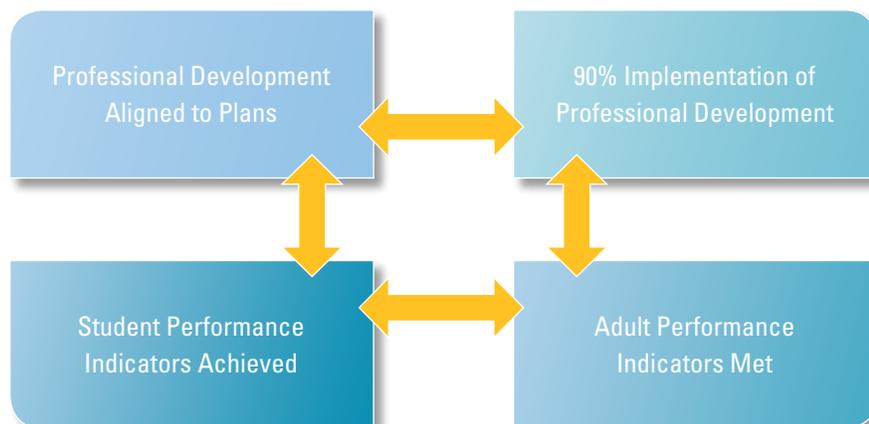
*Note:* All members of the DLT/CSLT or BLT should be asked to bring their calendars, including district or community school and building schedules, and a copy of their **CCIP/IMM** or SIPs.

### B. Revisiting High-Quality Professional Development

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

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

**Figure 14. Interrelationships of Professional Development and Student Results**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## D. Operationalizing the Plan for Job-Embedded Professional Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

## E. Assessing Professional Development Impact: Formative and Summative

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

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

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

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

Other possible uses for **Resource 17** are

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

## F. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

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

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

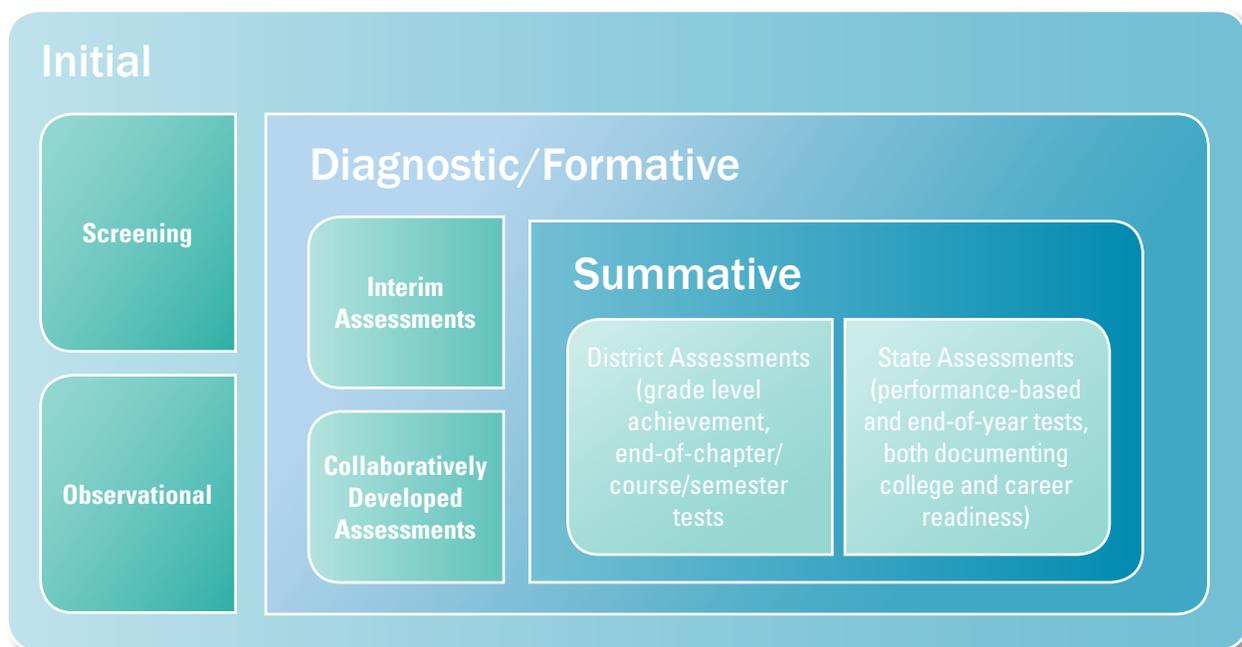
The purpose of this meeting is to conduct a gap analysis of the assessment system in order to identify data results that will provide evidence of meeting the student performance indicators.

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

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

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

Figure 15. Types and Purposes of Assessments



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## C. Identifying Gaps in the Assessment System

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

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

## D. Analyzing Assessments Relative to Plan Indicators

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

### Activity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## E. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Popular saying

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

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

## Designing an Intentional Monitoring System—Working Agenda

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

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

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

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

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

## B. Review and Description of Plan Indicators

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

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

### Activity

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

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

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

**Figure 16. Chart for Adult Implementation Indicators**

Indicator:	
Indicator Descriptor	Definition

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

### What to Monitor

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

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

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

## C. Identifying the “Look Fors”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### What to Gather

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

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

## D. Establishing a Monitoring Schedule

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

### When to Gather and Submit Data

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

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

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

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

## E. Identifying Monitoring Processes

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

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

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

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

### How to Gather Data

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

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

## F. Identifying Monitoring Responsibilities

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

### Who Will Gather

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

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

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

## G. Recording Monitoring Data

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

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

### How to Record Data

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

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

## H. Communicating Monitoring Expectations and Results

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

### How to Communicate Monitoring Expectations and Results

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

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

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

## I. Managing the Monitoring Results

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

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

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

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

### How to Manage Monitoring Data

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

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

## J. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

# Making Midcourse Corrections and Reporting Plan Progress—Working Agenda

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

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

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

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

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

## B. Establishing Decision Parameters

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

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

### Activity

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

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

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

### Activity continued

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## E. Next Steps and Summary of Discussion and Decisions

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

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

## Generalizing Successes Across the District so Lessons Learned Become Systemic

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

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

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

# 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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