



**RESEARCH SERIES ON SCHOOL  
EFFECTIVENESS AND SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT: *Characteristics of Effective  
School Improvement Planning and Key Steps***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All schools and organizations have room to improve and for that reason it is important to have informative, clear, and relevant information in order to devise an effective and evidence based School Improvement Plan (SIP). In this planned pursuit, quantitative and qualitative data, and related metrics, are best combined via a mixed methods approach to triangulate findings.

The current trend of flattening out traditional hierarchies and involving school wide stakeholders to generate SIPs are discussed herein. The local context is imperative to a SIP and it has become important not to rely on hierarchical, top down dictums for school change. Not only does the top down approach often miss the specific context of the school, it also does not sufficiently involve school staff, which fails to generate staff *buy in* and acceptance of change.

In summarizing results a few organizing problems are considered followed by an overall framework for SIP.

### What are the suggested areas of focus in School Improvement Planning?

In order to avoid incongruences in understanding between schools and central office, data must be looked at by both groups. This data is best directed towards learning centres that can aid in school improvement planning and act as a buffer between those two groups. Further, professional development for teachers and school staff that is holistic, ongoing and receptive to feedback is of importance.

### How do we set goals?

Goals must not simply be top down, as this has been shown to only have marginal success. There must be coherence amongst applicable stakeholders in terms of the goals that are set which will lead to potent motivation to reach targets. The goals selected must be challenging, but still attainable and measurable.

### How do we monitor?

The central areas to closely monitor as markers of success or failure of SIPs include, improved effectiveness of schools, responsiveness to the varying needs of the communities, and increased student achievement and well-being. Two international examples of systems that

undertake monitoring of these areas are the School Management Quality Assurance (SMQA) system of South Africa and the School Improvement Through Teacher Inquiry (SITTI) model of New Zealand.

### How do we improve?

Three approaches discussed in this brief are pre-service and professional development, coaching, and action learning. The pre-service model includes providing more intensive teacher training using the '*Finnish Approach*' while teachers are taking their teaching training. Coaching interconnects trained coaches in SIP development with school stakeholders who assist in co-construction of the plan. Action learning involves continuous reflection by front line staff with the intent of getting things done more effectively.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Building upon years of advancement within its design, the SIP still maintains many of its original steps such as data collection, analysis of data, reflection upon data, and action. Each of these components will be examined in more detail.

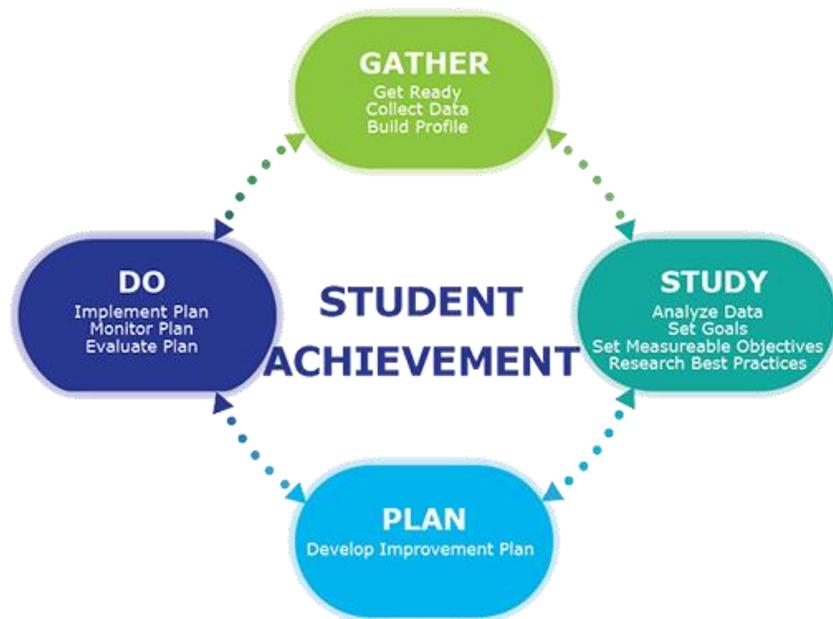
Both the collection and analysis of data are best completed by employing a mixed methods approach. The varied perspectives of quantitative and qualitative data provide useful data through triangulation. The qualitative mode helps identify overall themes, whereas quantitative data allows statistical treatments to reveal variable impacts and to determine whether or not there are any significant correlations and/or effects. Using these combined data analysis modes permits deeper reflection in a continuous cycle that informs analysis, planning, and refined implementation. Subsequent data collection, planning, and analysis undertaken within a school, informs actions and/intervention which is closely monitored and modified if needed.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SIP should utilize a **mixed methods approach** combining the collection of qualitative and quantitative data
2. **Data analysis** should inform the initial development of goals, targets, and strategies for SIP and should be used to monitor progress, evaluate success, and make changes

3. SIP should promote **distributed leadership** so that all stakeholders understand the objectives and feel invested in achieving success
4. SIP should be linked to **increasing capacity** through things like professional development, coaching and action learning
5. SIP should involve **active collaboration between all key stakeholders** at all stages of the planning and implementation cycle: development of goals/strategies, collection of data, analysis of data, reflection on progress/results, and development of further actions/targets (see Figure 1)

**Figure 1: The School Improvement Cycle**



**Source:** Michigan Department of Education (2016)

## BACKGROUND

School Improvement Plans are considered roadmaps for driving improvements in student achievement and currently they are implemented globally as important parts of most educational development (Hall & Hord, 2011; Huber & Conway, 2015). Commonly the SIPs include targets, goals, aims, enablers, and identify those who will be responsible for each element, phase, or stage of the educational change. Strategies, processes, data, and timelines come together to produce a SIP with related images that detail: who, what, how, where, why, and when the changes are implemented (Learning Point Associates, 2004). These aspects and

actions need to be audited, observed, assessed, monitored, evaluated, and reviewed in an ongoing and recursive manner that suits the SIP while also ensuring its sustainability (Dolge, 2015), similar to the five stage school climate improvement process depicted in Figure 2.

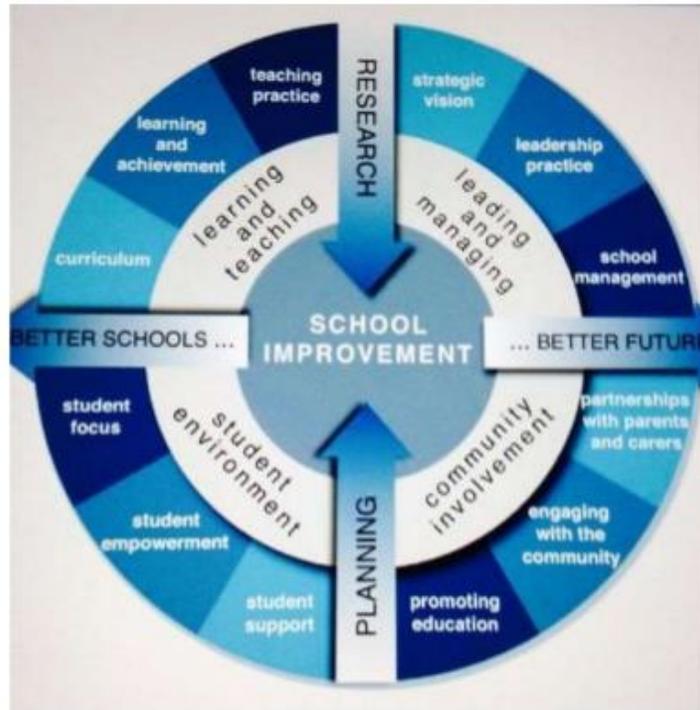
**Figure 2: Five-Stage School Climate Improvement Process**



*Source:* National School Climate Center (2016)

School improvement must be linked to **capacity** building and governance that enables improvement (Farrell, 2015). The traditional hierarchy may remain in place but those placed in various positions need to collaborate and work outside the hierarchy. For instance, the following SIP framework (see Figure 3) illustrates a circle that is ordered into equal parts thereby demonstrating a form of **capacity** and **equity**. The **balanced** and **aligned** framework could be extended vertically, but two dimensions communicate its functionality efficiently.

Figure 3: School Improvement Framework 2015-2019



Source: Macquarie Grammar School (2015)

A SIP embraces local context by putting a shared vision of **values** forward that reflects the organization’s mission statement. Individual school profiles are centred upon **equity** and alignment. **Leadership is distributed** and the culture is fixated on high standards, equity, and coherence. The SIP is **inclusive**, including targets, directions and dates to ensure momentum and communication. Expectations are learned, shared, and developed by all and a model (visual/text) is agreed upon that is supported within local contexts. This may require changes, which must happen within the context of an open culture that values the opinions and ideas of all community members. In sum, the SIP should be inclusive, equitable, built upon shared values and beliefs, and embrace distributed leadership that welcomes organizational change while increasing capacity.

#### Summary of Key Aspects of SIP

1. Targets, strategies, and key actions are designed through collaboration between all relevant stakeholders reflecting shared values and beliefs
2. Goals are set with local context and capacity in mind, promoting distributed leadership and a sense of shared responsibility for school improvement
3. The plan includes a clear timeframe and outline of who will be responsible for what including ways to equitably distribute resources/tools to increase capacity

## What are the suggested areas of focus in School Improvement Planning?

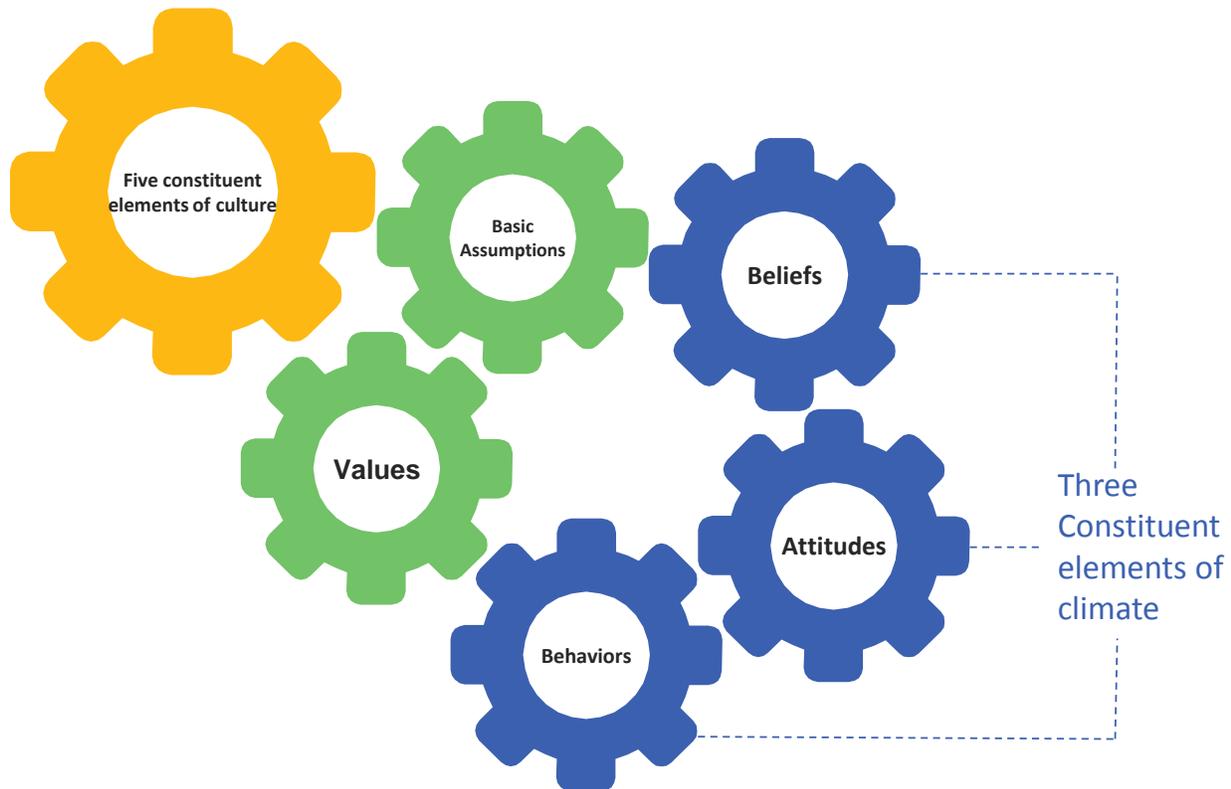
**Culture:** It is widely known that “. . . creating a culture in which all school and central office personnel regularly share” (Cross & Joftus, 2013, p. 80), has been somewhat elusive and difficult to nurture in traditional systems. Common practice has dictated that all schools, learning centres, and administration “identify and implement new programs or interventions based on student achievement trends, use evaluation data to make decisions about educator promotions and rewards, [yet this] . . . could take years” (Cross & Joftus, 2013, p. 80).

Within the TDSB, change is evident in the creation of learning centres which “could help cut down on bureaucracy so schools get help faster when they need it. It’s an attempt to bring a sense of *small* to Canada’s largest board, so that schools don’t feel isolated and parents and communities feel more connected” (Rushowy, 2016, para. 2-3). The creation of an intermediary learning centre buffers the action between central administration and schools. The learning centre needs to be responsive and supportive in a regional manner rather than to one central office trying to meet the needs of a large urban board. “It is important for teaching and learning centres to find ways to influence their institutional **cultures** at multiple levels, through multiple channels, and with short and long-term goals in mind” (Garbove et al., 2012, p. 9). There is a need to change in response to changes in society and “in order to effect such change, teaching and learning centres must be perceived as valuable resources” (Garbove et al., 2012, p. 12).

Traits associated with school change and improvement fit within a “. . . culture that aims for excellence: The first [step is] the transformation . . . and the second is the strategy . . . where everyone participates as a teacher and as a learner” (Loertscher & Koechlin, 2015, p. 12).

Within our schools and our educational system, the focus on developing “learning cultures is the primary task, with professional development and appraisal as enablers, not drivers. Professional learning should be designed as a holistic, ongoing formative feedback cycle with continuous collaboration at its center” (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014, p. 57). This movement can be viewed as **culture** change within a long-term multifaceted process that can take years to fully unfold; however, small beneficial changes can happen quickly (Fullan, 2014). Figure 4 displays key elements of school culture that can be adopted (Mac Rory, 2009).

Figure 4: Elements of School Culture



Source: (Mac Rory, 2009)

**Data:** All staff and administration should: “look at what *all* types of data are telling them [not] just cherry-pick data and draw conclusions from a few data points without studying the linkages among the different types of data” (Bernhardt, 2015, p. 61); become aware of programs and processes together in an inclusive exercise that leads to clarity from the inside out; identify what is working and what is not and this understanding leads to realizations of what next steps to take in a continuous recursive action upon basic assumptions, values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour underpinning the shifting culture.

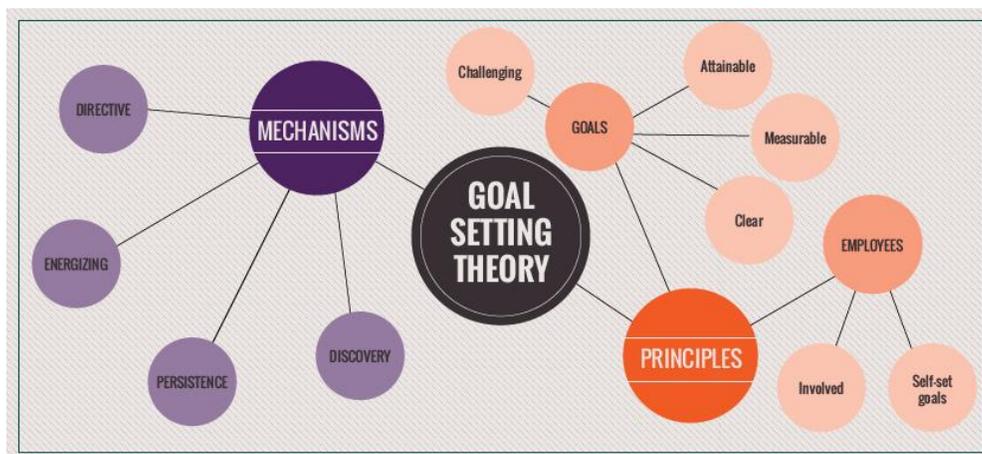
### How do we set goals?

The path to present day educational practices is littered with SIPs that have failed to meet their expectations due to the fact that they were top-down trends that were filled with helium and stayed above the people they were supposed to impact (Fernandez, 2009; Reeves, 2011). Consequently, today “there is the chance that schools will set goals that are inappropriate or

fail to meet specific subgroup needs” (Huber & Conway, 2015, p. 57). This begs the question: How should we set goals and targets in 2016? Goals and goal setting should be inclusive in a manner that allows for teacher and community input. If this is done effectively, the goal-setting process will likely be something that is empowering, diverse and not just something revisited from the past (Caputo & Rastelli, 2014). “If administrators only create a SIP because it is required (rather than because it is a valued process in a school), they are unlikely to utilize effective strategies for achieving goals, or mechanisms for frequent monitoring of goal progress” (Huber & Conway, 2015, p. 57). Teachers and the school community need to have a voice setting goals since they are often the people who value the process on a local level. Teachers are also the people in classrooms teaching and arguably have the largest impact on improvement if it is to be demonstrated via achievement scores (Caputo & Rastelli, 2014). Developing goals can be as simple as agreeing with stakeholders upon a common target or need, for instance teacher professional development (PD). However, as with all goals the PD effort must be measureable, attainable, and challenging with clear aims and linked to teaching practice (OECD, 2014).

Locke (2004) found goal setting effective for any task where people have control over their performance (see Figure 5), and setting targets and goals for SIPs using concepts from goal setting theory can lead to a higher chance of successful outcomes.

**Figure 5: Goal Setting Theory**



**Source:** Aurel Brudan (2010)

**Internal:** In the past, ‘whole-school design’ “approaches combined elements from the school effectiveness and school improvement (frameworks) research bases. The evidence to date suggests that many of these external interventions, although very well-intentioned, have had patchy and variable success” (Harris et al., 2013, p. 9). Questions can be a helpful way to frame goal setting and strategy development for school improvement. For example, five questions are the essential features of Hawaii’s *Continuous School Improvement Framework* which asks: “Where are we now? How did we get here? Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there? Is what we’re doing making a difference?” (Bernhardt, 2015, pp. 56-57).

**Coherence:** “Crafting organizational coherence is not an outcome. Rather, it is an ongoing process that depends on competent leaders, particularly those skillful in adaptive leadership” (Durand, Lawson, Wilcox, & Schiller, 2016, p. 50). Stakeholders involved in school improvement planning must be flexible and realize that all leaders have strengths and weaknesses; there is a need to match the leader with the challenge and not just expect all leaders can do it all equally. Some leaders are good at bridging (communications) strategies, some are good at buffering (protecting others from harm) strategies and/or brokering (getting agreement from others), while some may have multiple outstanding skills (Durand, Lawson, Wilcox, & Schiller, 2016).

**Acknowledgement:** Educators must acknowledge each other’s skills and capacities and work organically from this base line of acknowledgement to move away from the status quo to an outcome that may be unexpected yet desired (Caputo & Rastelli, 2014).

### How do we monitor?

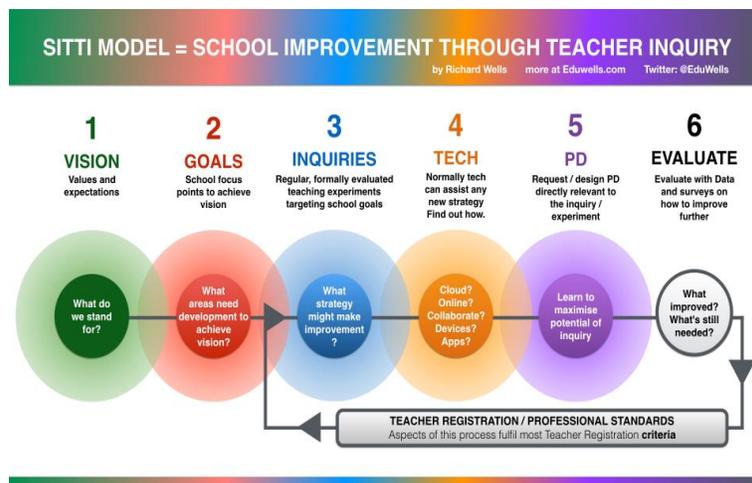
The monitoring of a system begins often with the intentions and aims of the change action. In this case, the creation of learning centres is one of the “key elements of the strategy to **improve the effectiveness** of our schools, make us **more responsive** to the needs of our communities, and **increase student achievement** and **well-being**” (Toronto District School Board, 2016, p. 1). These four elements become audit targets that can be scrutinized via data collection that centres upon variables for measuring **effectiveness, responsiveness, student achievement, and well-being**.

**Systems:** In South America, Chile has developed the *School Management Quality Assurance System* (SACG) which currently involves assessment phases and an accountability element that is aimed at improving student achievement.

SACG purported to provide schools with tools that could generate an evaluation culture, accountability processes, and improvement . . . When schools entered SACG, the staff had to engage in three phases: (a) assess key management practices in five management areas; (b) design, implement, and monitor an improvement plan; and (c) report to the community. For each practice, schools needed to produce evidence of the level of implementation and score this evidence following a rubric provided by the system. A **self-assessment** report containing the evidence and scores was assembled and submitted to an external appraisal panel. (Montecinos, Madrid, Fernández, & Ahumada, 2014, p. 242)

The self-assessment and self-evaluation are processes used in many regions of the world; consider the New Zealand model (see Figure 6) where teachers look to improve collectively via individual improvement reflective inquiries, which when collated advance school improvement.

**Figure 6: SITT Model**



**Source:** Wells (2014)

**Audit:** Monitoring by auditing is a way to begin “improving the quality of a SIP while allowing a school to focus their improvement efforts on subgroups of students who are making fewer gains than their peers” (Huber & Conway, 2015, p. 59).

### How do we improve?

Accountability is still a driver within school improvement and educational change. As systems become more effective, the challenge is to identify meaningful evidence beyond the traditional test data and define modes and paths that may lead to advanced outcomes (Caputo & Rastelli, 2014).

**Pre-Service and Professional Development:** In the “Finnish approach” (Sahlberg, 2009, 2011, 2012), schools use an “. . . alternative lever for educational reform and improvement, very much centered on teacher initial training, esteem, and professional motivation” (Scheerens, 2015, p. 28) when there is a need to emphasize the importance of pre-service and professional development in the improvement of the school effectiveness process. Educators should take an interest in what is happening in teacher training centres (Faculty of Education) and from those centres hire the best, while putting in place an in-service teacher inquiry mode that keeps the improvement opportunities moving forward.

**Coaching:** A feedback loop related to coaching can maintain the momentum of a SIP. Nelson and Ehren (2014) claim,

feedback, which offers personal praise or criticism is less effective, although drawing attention to past performance may help focus attention on goals, and is to be preferred to the comparison of performance with that of others. Feedback needs to be specific, but not so detailed as to be confusing to the recipient. (p. 10)

Farrell (2015) also suggests coaching and professional development are important to school improvement concluding:

Human capital, technology and tools, and organizational practices need to be aligned in order to increase knowledge flow . . . [and] human capital resources, such as dedicated

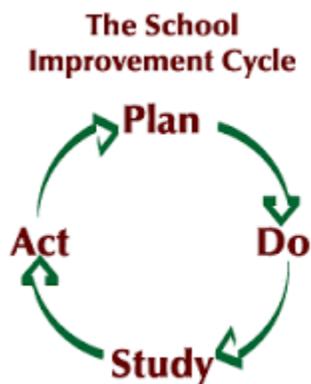
support positions (e.g., coaches) and professional development, are critical for collaboration, co-construction of new ideas, and joint work. These social interactions help establish social norms around information sharing and provide opportunities for shared sense-making. (p. 461)

**Action Learning:** In South Africa, action research and inquiry has been utilized to facilitate “learning and capacity building, leading to improved performance. Action learning enhances continuous reflection by people working on real-life issues with the intention of getting things done, thereby placing a strong emphasis on action-to-be-taken” (Van Der Voort & Wood, 2014, p. 2). According to the same authors, the SIP is an agenda that “School Management Teams could use to improve school functionality, as well as acting as an accountability tool” (p. 1). They suggest looking towards international research on school improvement which emphasises that “the futures of hundreds of thousands of young people are in serious jeopardy if the lowest-performing schools do not sustain development. A school improvement plan is regarded as a vital component of such improvement” (p. 1).

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Improvement planning is a “continuous and cyclical process of analysis, planning and implementation . . .” (Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO], 2005, p. 1). “The true measure of improvement planning effectiveness, of course, is the degree to which improvement planning, implementation and monitoring produce positive changes in student achievement and growth over time” (EQAO, 2005, p. 2). Collective responsibility and decision-making have long been cornerstones of successful planning. These concepts are rooted in the 1939 work of Shewhart as noted in Figure 7 (Bernhardt, 2004).

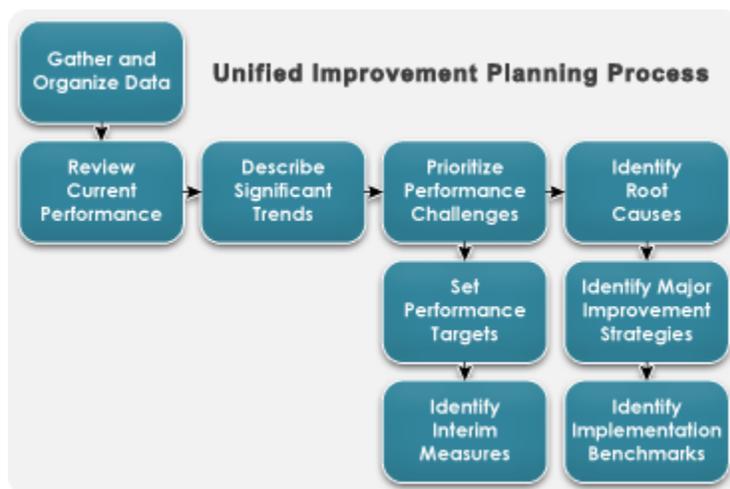
Figure 7: School Improvement Cycle



Source: Learning Point Associates (2004); Shewhart (1939)

Even today, practical planning and recommendations for school improvement include the five stage school climate improvement process depicted in Figure 2 (Huber & Conway, 2015). Specifically, the practical recommendations for school improvement include data collection, action concerning targets, goals, aims, and enablers, identification of who is responsible for each element, phase or stage in the cycle, and the ability to monitor, assess and evaluate in a cyclical feedback loop (Bernhardt, 2004; Dolge, 2015). One current example of an improvement planning process, built upon the work of Shewhart (1939), has been developed by the Colorado Department of Education to support schools and districts as depicted in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Colorado Department of Education Unified Improvement Planning Process



Source: Colorado Department of Education (2016)

## KEY STEPS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### Step 1: Data Collection

What is now universal in education improvement planning is the need to gather and sort data. Data collection and the underpinning methods include both quantitative and qualitative modes. Each mode has its inherent limitations, yet together each mode strengthens the other as “. . . quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; [however] more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, and explain the general quantitative picture” (Creswell, 2015, p. 545). This ‘Mixed Methods’ (MM) approach allows for dichotomous inquiry providing both context and capacity data.

Quantitative data helps us understand most of the measurable landscape via collected and processed data. For instance, a MM research design can include empirical data (i.e., surveys), as this type of research is collected first from a greater population. This data can then be followed-up through qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative portion may consist of document analysis, focus groups, site visits (observations) and interviews in which data can be collected using open-ended questions to gather in-depth and personal explanations to further detail findings realized from the quantitative mode (Creswell, 2015). Today, many agree that the best means of investigation in social sciences is a MM longitudinal approach. For example, Westbrook et al. (2013) recommends:

Future research designs should be of a *larger scale* combining *qualitative and quantitative methods*, with both *baseline and post-tests* measuring student attainment as a result of an intervention or reform and systematic, structured classroom observation. The *indicators and measures* used should include students’ perspectives and experiences of school and classroom life, teachers’ understanding, student discourse and immediate understanding of a concept taught, student participation in class, use and frequency of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and attendance patterns over time. Longitudinal studies looking at long-term impact over more than three years would show how reform or interventions work (or not) in altering practice. (p. 3)

From the onset of the data collection phase, there needs to be agreement on the type and extent of the evidence (scope/data/aggregate) required for the improvement planning process

and on the best method to gather this evidence. Program assessment and evaluation is important for improvement, which links directly to initiatives to accelerate achievement and close achievement gaps and is a strategic step in the continuous school improvement process (Michigan Department of Education, 2016). Having an MM survey tool that yields program data can be used during any phase of the monitoring process to both inform and change what has been done, is being done, and what will be done in the future.

Schools can use MM models and central board administration can also use MM research tools to compare and contrast perspectives. For example, the Michigan Department of Education (2016) requires the completion and submission of the *Program Evaluation Tool* (see Appendix A) for the following reasons:

- a. Evaluation shows the impact of instruction on student achievement and whether gaps are being closed for subgroups.
- b. Program evaluation ensures that high quality planning, implementation and evaluation are part of the district and school continuous improvement process. Evaluation will improve the quality of plans and implementation of these plans with fidelity.
- c. Evaluating with fidelity will ensure ongoing engagement of multiple stakeholders (students, teachers, parents / community, and administrators).
- d. Evaluation maximizes the coordination, focus and use of local, State and Federal funds to impact student learning.
- e. Evaluation provides documentation of program implementation to inform future decision-making. (p. 1)

The need to annually identify what is evaluated can be a joint decision of the central administration and the local school community; however, funding can dictate which decisions are acted upon and which decisions are ignored.

## Step 2: Data Analysis - Review

### *Qualitative Data*

Within the qualitative research approach, data collection and analysis are not separate because they occur simultaneously (Stokes & Urquhart, 2013). Barnsley and Ellis (1987) suggest, “data analysis can begin while the research is in progress as well as after the data has been gathered” (Part V - p. 24). Data analysis can be most simply described as a process of “sifting, sorting,

discarding, and cataloguing in an attempt to answer two basic questions: what are the important themes in this data and how much data support each of these themes” (Sagor, 1992, p. 48).

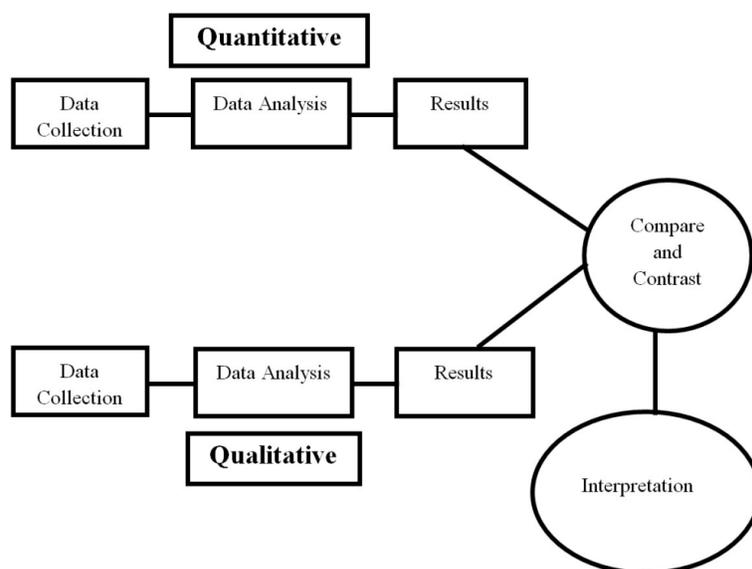
**Quantitative Data**

Analysis of quantitative data often involves the exploration of frequencies of variables, differences between variables, and utilizes statistical treatments designed to estimate the significance of the results and the probability that they did not occur by chance. It is important to keep in mind that quantitative data analysis is mostly counting and comparison via statistical actions. Data can be collected via experiments, observations, questionnaires or simulations and analysed using statistical methods and techniques. Software, such as SPSS, Dedoose, NVivo, QDA Miner, and MAXQDA, are useful in supporting MM research collection and analysis.

**Mixed Methods**

Qualitative and quantitative analyses are similar in that both forms of data analyses involve inference (the use of reasoning to reach a conclusion based on evidence), a public method or process revealing their study design in some way, comparison as a central process, identification of patterns or aspects that are similar or different, and striving to avoid errors, false conclusions, and misleading inferences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

**Figure 9: Mixed Methods Research Design Approach**



*Source:* Adapted from Creswell (2015, p. 321)

### Step 3: Reflect

Within improvement planning, reflection is a continuous and cyclical process that informs analysis, planning, and implementation. Reflection in education can be attributed to Schon (1983), who described two necessities: 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflect-on action'.

Stakeholders involved in the improvement planning look for trends in data, for causes of past outcomes and for targets that need to be in place moving forward. Bolton (2010) states:

Reflection is a state of mind, an ongoing constituent of practice, not a technique, or curriculum element. Reflective practice can enable practitioners to learn from experience about themselves, their work, and the way they relate to home and work, significant others and wider society and culture. It gives strategies to bring things out into the open, and frame appropriate and searching questions never asked before. It can provide relatively safe and confidential ways to explore and express experiences otherwise difficult to communicate. (p. 3)

### Step 4: Action

What constitutes action is a matter of definition, since conversation is often all that is needed to move people to act, and change. Indeed, conversation ". . . can lead to action, follow action or be part of action. Through the intermingling of conversation and action, praxis [practice] comes about with its growth of knowledge, understanding, and theory through action" (Feldman, 1999, p. 133). Action can also be non-verbal via behavior and collected documentation that is linked to evidence-informed strategies and smart goals which are frequently specific, measureable, attainable, and ambitious. By moving through these steps we identify expectations, areas of strength, and areas of growth that inform the orientation of the organization and help form new expectations, benchmarks, monitoring goals, and evaluation schemes.



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*This Program Evaluation Tool from the Michigan Department of Education can be used both during implementation to make mid-course corrections as well as following implementation to identify why results turned out as they did and how to improve implementation that will lead to increased student achievement.*

Strategy / Program/ Initiative Description
What is the name of the strategy/program/initiative being evaluated?
<i>(In addition to the name, identify whether it is a strategy, program, or initiative)</i>
Provide a detailed description of the strategy/program/initiative being evaluated.
<i>(Include population being served – number of students, grade, demographics, etc.; who is implementing; delivery model; frequency of intervention; start date; assessments used to measure objectives, etc.)</i>
What is the need being addressed by the strategy/program/initiative?
<i>(Include the gaps identified using baseline/subgroup data)</i>
What is the reason for selecting the strategy/program/initiative, including intended results?
<i>(Include the connection to the need cited above and the SMART objective(s) identifying intended results)</i>
Cite the research supporting the strategy/program/initiative, including a brief summary of research findings and targeted population.
<i>(Research should be current and evidence-based with a brief summary)</i>

1. Readiness: What is the readiness for implementing the strategy/program/ initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, stakeholders are well-prepared to implement the program. They have read and can articulate the research foundation and regularly use the terms in conversation with each other, students, and with parents. Staff, students and parents express a high level of interest in, support for and commitment to the program. Specific concerns have been identified and solutions have been planned/implemented. Staff is able to seamlessly integrate the program within the context of other building/district initiatives.

What is the evidence regarding stakeholder (staff/students/parents) understanding of the need as well as stakeholder ability to articulate the reason for the choice of the strategy/program/initiative?

- Meeting agendas/minutes
- Books/papers about the program
- Staff surveys
- SI Plan elements
- Professional development materials
- Conference/workshop attendance
- Data collection plan; data analysis work
- Stakeholder survey results
- Suggestion box ideas collected
- SI team agendas
- Focus group interviews
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding stakeholder (staff/students/parents) understanding of the need as well as stakeholder ability to articulate the reason for the choice of the strategy/program/initiative?

*(Include conclusion, aligned to evidence, regarding stakeholder understanding of the need & the reasons for selecting the strategy/program/initiative)*

What is the evidence regarding stakeholders (staff/students/parents) having a shared vision and strong commitment to the strategy/program/ initiative?

- Meeting agendas/minutes
- Books/papers about the program
- Staff surveys
- SI Plan elements
- Professional development materials
- Conference/workshop attendance
- Data collection plan; data analysis work
- Stakeholder survey results
- Suggestion box ideas collected
- SI team agendas
- Focus group interviews
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding stakeholders (staff, parents, students) having a shared vision and strong commitment to the strategy/program/ initiative?

*(Include a conclusion, aligned to evidence, regarding stakeholders having a shared vision and a strong commitment to the strategy/program/initiative)*

What is the evidence regarding how stakeholder (staff, parents, students) concerns were identified and addressed?

- Meeting agendas/minutes
- Books/papers about the program
- Staff surveys
- SI Plan elements
- Professional development materials
- Conference/workshop attendance
- Data collection plan; data analysis work
- Stakeholder survey results
- Suggestion box ideas collected
- SI team agendas
- Focus group interviews
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding how stakeholder (staff, parents, students) concerns were identified and addressed?

*(Include concerns of each stakeholder group and how they were addressed)*

What is the evidence regarding the ability of staff and administrators to integrate the strategy/program/initiative with existing work?

- Meeting agendas/minutes
- Books/papers about the program
- Staff surveys
- SI Plan elements
- Professional development materials
- Conference/workshop attendance
- Data collection plan; data analysis work
- Stakeholder survey results
- Suggestion box ideas collected
- SI team agendas
- Focus group interviews
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the ability of staff and administrators to integrate the strategy/program/initiative with existing work?

*(Explain how strategy/program/initiative fits into current work)*

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose one overall self-assessment of the readiness for implementing the strategy/program/initiative.

*(Align rating to evidence)*

- Stakeholders were fully prepared to implement
- Support and commitment were generally high, but some concern or work remains
- Some promising elements exist, but were mixed with major gaps in knowledge or confidence.
- Interest and/or commitment were low

What action steps are needed to increase readiness to implement the strategy/program/initiative?

*(Deduce action steps for READINESS from the evidence and rating)*

2. Knowledge and Skills: Did the staff and administrators have the knowledge and skills to implement the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, personnel are able to clearly articulate what successful implementation looks and sounds like and how specific practices will change as a result of its implementation. Staff and administrators can articulate specific outcomes and specific criteria for evaluation. Personnel can demonstrate their ability to apply the knowledge and skills required to successfully implement with fidelity, and professional learning opportunities are provided to address gaps in knowledge and skills.

What is the evidence regarding staff and administrators' plan for how practice would change as a result of the strategy/program/initiative?

- Minutes of professional conversations
- Self-assessment checklists
- Staff surveys
- Superintendent or administrator observations/walkthroughs
- Professional learning agendas, sign-in sheets
- Program simulations, administrator observations
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding staff and administrators' plan for how practice would change as a result of the strategy/program/initiative?

*(Provide examples of how practice would change)*

What is the evidence regarding administrator knowledge of and ability to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the strategy/program/initiative?

- Minutes of professional conversations
- Self-assessment checklists
- Staff surveys
- Superintendent or administrator observations/ walkthroughs
- Professional learning agendas, sign-in sheets
- Program simulations, administrator observations
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding administrator knowledge of and ability to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the program/strategy/initiative?

*(Cite how administrator's professional learning supported the monitoring and assessment of effectiveness)*

What is the evidence regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for staff to learn the knowledge and skills identified as essential (the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements) to the strategy/program/initiative?

- Minutes of professional conversations
- Self-assessment checklists
- Staff surveys
- Superintendent or administrator observations/ walkthroughs
- Professional learning agendas, sign-in sheets
- Program simulations, administrator observations
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for staff to learn the knowledge and skills identified as essential (the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements) to the strategy/program/ initiative?

*(Include evidence of initial professional learning. Address sufficiency and effectiveness of professional learning, including meeting identified learning outcomes)*

What is the evidence regarding staff ability to apply the acquired knowledge and skills?

- Minutes of professional conversations
- Self-assessment checklists
- Staff surveys
- Superintendent or administrator observations/ walkthroughs
- Professional learning agendas, sign-in sheets
- Program simulations, administrator observations
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding staff ability to apply the acquired knowledge and skills?

*(Include results drawn from quantifiable evidence of staff's knowledge/ability to implement strategy/program/initiative)*

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose one overall self-assessment of the participants' knowledge and skills to implement the strategy/ program/ initiative.

*(Align rating to evidence)*

- Participants had sufficient knowledge and skills to succeed.
- Much knowledge and skill were evident, but few skills (or some knowledge bases) still need work.
- A solid start was documented, but many skill levels and much knowledge need to be acquired.
- Participants were beginning to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

What action steps are needed to improve participants' knowledge and skills?

*(Deduce action steps for KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS from the evidence and rating)*

3. Opportunity: Was there opportunity for high quality implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, building and district administrators provide significant support for project implementation. Sufficient funds have been allocated and continue to be managed by the building principal and/or program director. Adequate resources are available for full implementation, including time for staff collaboration in various forms. Clearly defined structures/protocols are in place to collect and review formative implementation data.

What is the evidence regarding the sufficiency of administrative support to achieve the intended results?

- Agendas/minutes
- Action plans
- Email correspondence
- Focus group and/or anonymous surveys
- Budget sheets
- Logs, school schedules
- Inventories
- Curriculum pacing guides
- Collaboration models (such as PLCs, Collaborative Action Research, Lesson Study Teams)
- Staff meeting results
- Protocols for reviewing formative assessments
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the sufficiency of administrative support to achieve the intended results?

*(Include specific examples of administrative support/lack of support and draw conclusions from examples you cited)*

What is the evidence regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for on-going professional learning, including modeling and coaching?

- Agendas/minutes
- Action plans
- Email correspondence
- Focus group and/or anonymous surveys
- Budget sheets

3. Opportunity: Was there opportunity for high quality implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, building and district administrators provide significant support for project implementation. Sufficient funds have been allocated and continue to be managed by the building principal and/or program director. Adequate resources are available for full implementation, including time for staff collaboration in various forms. Clearly defined structures/protocols are in place to collect and review formative implementation data.

- Logs, school schedules
- Inventories
- Curriculum pacing guides
- Collaboration models (such as PLCs, Collaborative Action Research, Lesson Study Teams)
- Staff meeting results
- Protocols for reviewing formative assessments
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for on-going professional learning, including modeling and coaching?

*(Include examples of opportunities/lack of opportunities for on-going professional learning, including modeling and coaching; draw conclusions from examples you cited)*

What is the evidence regarding the sufficiency of resources – including financial, time and personnel - to achieve the intended results?

- Agendas/minutes
- Action plans
- Email correspondence
- Focus group and/or anonymous surveys
- Budget sheets
- Logs, school schedules
- Inventories
- Curriculum pacing guides
- Collaboration models (such as PLCs, Collaborative Action Research, Lesson Study Teams)
- Staff meeting results
- Protocols for reviewing formative assessments
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the sufficiency of resources – including financial, time, and personnel – to achieve the intended results?

*(Include examples of resources/lack of resources and draw specific conclusions from examples you cited)*

3. Opportunity: Was there opportunity for high quality implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, building and district administrators provide significant support for project implementation. Sufficient funds have been allocated and continue to be managed by the building principal and/or program director. Adequate resources are available for full implementation, including time for staff collaboration in various forms. Clearly defined structures/protocols are in place to collect and review formative implementation data.

What is the evidence regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for staff collaboration to support implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

- Agendas/minutes
- Action plans
- Email correspondence
- Focus group and/or anonymous surveys
- Budget sheets
- Logs, school schedules
- Inventories
- Curriculum pacing guides
- Collaboration models (such as PLCs, Collaborative Action Research, Lesson Study Teams)
- Staff meeting results
- Protocols for reviewing formative assessments
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for staff collaboration to support implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

*(Include examples of staff collaboration/lack of collaboration supported by data and draw conclusions from examples you cited)*

What is the evidence regarding structures being in place to collect and review implementation data?

- Agendas/minutes
- Action plans
- Email correspondence
- Focus group and/or anonymous surveys
- Budget sheets
- Logs, school schedules
- Inventories
- Curriculum pacing guides
- Collaboration models (such as PLCs, Collaborative Action Research, Lesson Study Teams)

3. Opportunity: Was there opportunity for high quality implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, building and district administrators provide significant support for project implementation. Sufficient funds have been allocated and continue to be managed by the building principal and/or program director. Adequate resources are available for full implementation, including time for staff collaboration in various forms. Clearly defined structures/protocols are in place to collect and review formative implementation data.

- Staff meeting results
- Protocols for reviewing formative assessments
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding structures being in place to collect and review implementation data?

*(Describe structures in place to collect and review implementation data; derive conclusions from structures/lack of structures to collect and review implementation data)*

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose one overall self-assessment of the opportunity for high quality implementation.

*(Align rating to evidence)*

- Necessary support and resources (time, funding, and attention) were solidly in place.
- Many necessary resources were aligned with program goals, but more are needed.
- Basic resources and opportunities were available, but significant gaps need to be filled.
- Opportunity and resources were just beginning to align in support of the program.

What action steps are needed to ensure opportunity for high quality implementation?

*(Deduce action steps for OPPORTUNITY from the evidence and rating)*

4. Implementation with Fidelity: Was the strategy/program/initiative being implemented as intended?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, all personnel involved in the program implement the strategies with fidelity according to the research, carrying out responsibilities by their proposed timelines. They use clearly defined protocols to collect and review formative implementation data to identify unintended consequences. Program leaders consider adjustments guided by implementation data while maintaining the integrity of results.

What is the evidence regarding a process being in place to monitor fidelity of implementation of the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements of the strategy/program/initiative, including timelines and responsibilities?

- Principal's walkthroughs
- Number of staff implementing with fidelity
- Model lessons
- Surveys
- Coaching schedule
- Agendas and minutes of common planning time/meetings
- Record of funds used
- Lists of acquired resources
- Focus group interviews
- Debriefing following model lessons
- Collegial observations/visits
- Training agendas & material
- Program Time Line
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding the fidelity of implementation of the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements of the strategy/program/initiative, including timelines and responsibilities?

*(Provide specific evidence of a process to monitor fidelity of staff implementation of the strategy/program/initiative; draw specific conclusions regarding fidelity of implementation from examples)*

What is the evidence regarding positive or negative unintended consequences that may have occurred, if any?

- Principal's walkthroughs
- Number of staff implementing with fidelity
- Model lessons
- Surveys
- Coaching schedule

4. Implementation with Fidelity: Was the strategy/program/initiative being implemented as intended?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, all personnel involved in the program implement the strategies with fidelity according to the research, carrying out responsibilities by their proposed timelines. They use clearly defined protocols to collect and review formative implementation data to identify unintended consequences. Program leaders consider adjustments guided by implementation data while maintaining the integrity of results.

- Agendas and minutes of common planning time/meetings
- Record of funds used
- Lists of acquired resources
- Focus group interviews
- Debriefing following model lessons
- Collegial observations/visits
- Training agendas & material
- Program Time Line
- Other

What does the evidence show regarding positive or negative unintended consequences that may have occurred, if any?

*(Provide specific examples of positive and/or negative unintended consequences, and draw conclusions from the examples provided)*

What do implementation data and student achievement results suggest for implementing/modifying the strategy/program/initiative?

- Principal's walkthroughs
- Number of staff implementing with fidelity
- Model lessons
- Surveys
- Coaching schedule
- Agendas and minutes of common planning time/meetings
- Record of funds used
- Lists of acquired resources
- Focus group interviews
- Debriefing following model lessons
- Collegial observations/visits
- Training agendas & material
- Program Time Line
- Other

How might these affect the integrity of the results?
<i>(Include modifications made/being considered and discuss possible impact of modifications on the integrity of implementation)</i>
Given the evidence you've assembled, choose one overall self-assessment of the fidelity of high quality implementation.
<p><i>(Align rating to evidence)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All research-based elements have been implemented with fidelity following the proposed timelines.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Critical elements have been implemented, but work on consistency and depth remains.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The overall design was in place, but variations in practice were evident and may be adversely affecting results.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parts of the program were working, but others have yet to be implemented.</li> </ul>
What action steps are needed to ensure faithful implementation of program plans?
<i>(Deduce action steps for FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION from the evidence and rating)</i>

<p>5. Impact: What was the impact of the strategy/program/initiative on students?</p> <p>IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, the school's achievement results on state or district-wide assessments meet proficiency standards. Achievement gaps between each of the relevant subgroups and their counterparts have been narrowed as proposed in the School Improvement Plan's measurable objectives. Interim assessment results indicate progress toward proficiency for all students to the satisfaction of all stakeholders</p>
What is the evidence and what does it show regarding achievement of the measurable objective for all students when compared to baseline state and local data?
<i>(Include data sources aligned to measurable objectives for all students and draw conclusions from data)</i>
What is the evidence and what does it show regarding achievement of the measurable objective for subgroups and their counterparts when compared to baseline state and local data?
<i>(Include data sources aligned to objectives for each subgroup and draw conclusions from the data for each subgroup)</i>
What is the evidence and what does it show regarding stakeholder (staff/students/parents) satisfaction with the results?
<i>(List stakeholders involved, describe methods used to measure each stakeholder's satisfaction and specific data results for each stakeholder group)</i>

Were the objectives for this strategy/program/initiative met?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<b>Impact Conclusion</b>
Should the strategy/program/initiative be continued or institutionalized?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What is the evidence and what does it say regarding whether this was the right strategy/program/initiative to meet your needs?
<i>(Provide conclusion relating data to identified need)</i>
What is the evidence and what does it show regarding whether the benefits of the strategy/program/initiative are sufficient to justify the resources it requires?
<i>(Provide conclusion relating data to cost effectiveness)</i>
What adjustments, if any, might increase its impact while maintaining its integrity?
<i>(Discuss potential adjustments with rationale)</i>
What is needed to maintain momentum?
<i>(Discuss specific actions, resources, changes that will maintain momentum)</i>
How might these results inform the School/District Improvement Plan?
<i>(Identify how results will impact measurable objectives, strategies, and/or activities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP)/District Improvement Plan (DIP))</i>

**Source:** Michigan Department of Education (2016)

