

Implementation Guide

Planning for Improvement Strategy Implementation

Overview of Strategy Implementation

School improvement strategies have the potential to create meaningful and lasting changes in educational outcomes for students, but a successful strategy hinges on strong implementation, along with a progress monitoring approach that is carefully planned and executed with fidelity (Figure 1). Implementation Science draws on data and observations from improvement efforts throughout the arena of human services to identify how the *implementation* of strategies must be supported if they are to result in authentic and measurable changes in practice. **This guide incorporates insights and guidance from Implementation Science to provide research-based considerations for creating site-specific implementation plans.**

Resources in this Document:

- [Planning Worksheets](#)
- [Planning Templates](#)

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with other CDE-created resources, including the Strategy Guides, to help you design a site-specific school improvement action plan. This guidance can also be used to implement any well-defined educational strategy, as it presents the general practices that support strong strategy implementation in a variety of contexts.

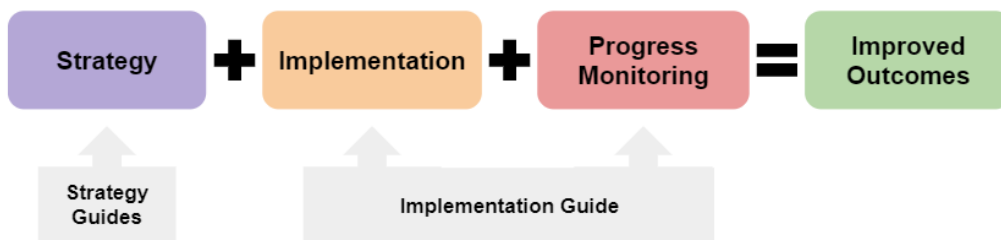


Figure 1

Where does this guide fit in the Improvement Planning process?



Figure 2

Selecting and implementing a successful improvement strategy depends on a thorough review that assesses the current state of a school or system and that identifies and prioritizes key challenges for improvement in the coming year or planning cycle (Figure 2). This data analysis should include an exploration of the possible root causes for these challenges; these root causes, in turn, should inform the strategy ultimately adopted. For resources and guidance on data analysis and root cause identification, visit CDE's page on [Root Cause Analysis](#).

Pre-work: Selecting a Strategy

Since different strategies require different kinds of work and target different root causes for performance challenges, carefully considering and selecting an improvement strategy is an important step in the improvement planning process. The questions below can help you determine whether a given strategy is right for your school, or what adjustments you might need to make in implementation.

- Is there already support or appetite for this strategy at your school, or will you need to build investment?
- Does this strategy focus on a prioritized performance challenge and its root cause(s)?
- Do key leaders support this strategy? Do leaders have the capacity to continue leading the strategy in an ongoing way?



- Are the time, effort, and resources needed for implementation feasible for the staff involved?

Visit CDE’s web page on [Major Improvement Strategies and Action Steps](#) for additional resources for selecting strategies or assessing contextual fit.

Contents and Use of this Guide

This guide details the steps needed to create a strong, site-specific implementation plan. Links for each step below will take you to the relevant section of this guide. Each step has an accompanying worksheet or planning template linked at the right. See the [Appendix](#) for the full set of worksheets and planning templates.

This guidance has been designed to build progressively and culminate in a fully articulated action plan, and each activity outlined below plays a role in the overall implementation planning process. However, you may choose to skip to a particular section of the guide if you are looking for information about a particular part of this process. Alternatively, you may also skip directly to the [Planning Worksheets and Templates in the Appendix](#) if you are ready to dive into these planning activities immediately.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Clearly Define Your Strategy
Use a Strategy Guide or other research to articulate a clear and concise statement of your strategy. This description should focus on the core components, elements, and activities of the strategy <i>at full implementation</i>.</p> | <p><u><i>Determining a Strategy Focus: Worksheet</i></u></p> |
| <p>2 Determine a Strategy Focus
Compare an audit of your existing systems, structures, and resources with a clear description of your strategy to determine the focus of your improvement efforts in the coming year.</p> | |
| <p>3 Plan for Implementation Considerations
Use the considerations and the questions in the guide below to determine</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) WHO will be involved in your implementation (and how) b) WHAT approaches you will use to changing practices and behavior and what supporting systems and structures you’ll need to install c) WHEN key activities will occur and how you will pace out your work | <p><u><i>Implementation Planning: Worksheet</i></u></p> |
| <p>4 Plan for Progress Monitoring
Identify measures to gauge the success of your implementation activities. Create a cadence for data collection, analysis, and reflection, in order to respond quickly and nimbly to insights from that data.</p> | <p><u><i>Progress Monitoring: Worksheet</i></u></p> |
| <p>5 Plan for Change Management
Ensure you have a clear plan for engaging stakeholders, clearly communicating plan elements and expectations, and establishing clear and open lines of communication to effectively support implementation activities.</p> | <p><u><i>Change Management: Worksheet</i></u></p> |
| <p>6 Turn your Planning Worksheets into an Implementation Plan
The completed worksheets from Steps 1-5 should now contain all of the “building blocks” for your implementation plan. Use these notes and one of the Planning Templates at the end of this guide (or your own template) to capture key action steps needed to install your strategy throughout the year.</p> | <p><i>Optional Resources:</i>
<u><i>Annual Planning Template</i></u> or <u><i>Short Cycle Template</i></u>.</p> |

Strategy

Determining a Strategy Focus

[Worksheet: Determining a Strategy Focus](#)

Robust school improvement strategies generally take more than one year to implement fully; trying to accomplish too much too quickly will split the focus of your team, create frustration, and impede progress. When overwhelmed and frustration due to insufficient focus leads a team to adjust its approach too frequently, this can lead to change fatigue and make team members resistant to further implementation efforts. In planning to phase in your strategy over two or more years, carefully consider what you will aim to accomplish in each year of your plan.

1

Clearly define your strategy.

Make sure you understand the elements of this strategy and know what it should look like once you've reached full implementation.

2

Audit your current state and determine your gaps.

Compare the current state of your school, systems, and practices to the strategy description from Step One. Determine where you already have elements of the strategy in place and where you'll need to create new structures or practices.

3

Prioritize focused changes for plan cycle.

Using the list of gaps and needs identified in Step Two, determine your goals for the end of the plan cycle. I.e., which elements of the strategy will you have fully implemented by the end of your plan? Or, if you're piloting the strategy with a small group, which subset of your staff will reach full strategy implementation at the end of the plan cycle?

As you complete each of the steps above, enter your responses in the ["Determining a Strategy Focus" Worksheet](#).

Implementation

Planning for Implementation

[Worksheet: Implementation Planning](#)

A strategy is only as good as its implementation; no strategy is sufficient by itself to improve school outcomes. Once you've selected a strategy (using CDE's Strategy Guides or external research), creating a site-specific plan for installing that strategy and putting it into practice in your school is crucial. The quality of implementation will determine whether the results established in the research base can be expected in your school. Along with a strong progress monitoring plan, quality implementation of a research-based strategy is a key component in achieving improved outcomes.

There is no single path to implementation for a given strategy. Rather, implementation must be *site-specific* and tailored to the context of that site. This guide provides a framework for building a site-specific implementation plan once a strategy has been selected and clearly defined. This framework is built around three key questions:

- (1) Who needs to be involved in the implementation?
- (2) How will concrete changes be made?
- (3) When will these changes be made?

1

WHO will be involved?

Understanding precisely who is involved and how they are involved in different parts of the strategy helps to ensure that plans make appropriate provision for all stakeholders. Some stakeholders will need training and coaching,



some will need a deep understanding of the strategy in order to effectively clear barriers for the team, and some will need to be thoughtfully included in a communications plan. Use the table below to identify the people involved in or affected by the strategy and its implementation efforts, and capture your list in the [Implementation Planning Worksheet](#) at the end of this document (or a note-catcher of your own).

Recipients	Recipients are usually students or families. Benefits for recipients are the reason for the strategy itself and these stakeholders should factor into all major decisions, especially when considering whether adjustments to the strategy are necessary.
Practitioners	Practitioners are generally teachers or other staff members. These are the people most directly responsible for putting the strategy into practice. Decisions about how to implement or install a strategy should keep the needs of the practitioners at the forefront. Practitioners will need ongoing training and the support of the entire system as they learn new content and shift their practices to align to a new strategy.
Coaches	Research has shown that training and practice alone have little impact on classroom practices; it is the combination of training and practice with thoughtful coaching supports that truly transform classrooms.
Support staff	New systems, structures, and routines may need additional support from admin and other support staff. Admin and support staff also play a key role in supporting practitioners in shifting their practices.
Leadership	Effective leaders set up and maintain conditions and resources to support the strategy and clear emergent barriers. Leadership may also need to make hard decisions about how to re-prioritize or redirect existing time, talent, and resources to support the work necessary to adopt a new strategy.

Key Insight **The entire organization must take responsibility for the success of strategy by effectively supporting practitioners.** *Obstacles, challenges, and support needs are reported “up” from practitioners to leadership (coaches, instructional leaders, and school leaders). Support and resources flow “down” from these leaders to the practitioners. The entire organization takes responsibility for the strategy by actively supporting practitioners and being responsive to their needs, in pursuit of benefit to students.*

Since a successful strategy is a full team effort, requiring the time and investment of everyone involved, all stakeholders will need to be considered in a change management plan. (See “[Planning for Change Management](#),” below, for additional guidance.)

Implementation Team

The function of the Implementation Team is to monitor the progress of the plan, provide implementation support to practitioners and their coaches, clear barriers to strong implementation that are reported up to them, and respond quickly with course-corrections or recommendations when implementation activities are off track or when practitioners encounter obstacles.

Key Insight **A strong implementation team can mean the difference between an initiative that persists and gets refined through difficulty and one that gets dropped when challenges arise.** *Having a team in place before the implementation begins will help you remain nimble and responsive as the plan progresses and the context evolves. An existing team (e.g., Instructional Leadership Team) may serve the role of Implementation Team, as long as the team has adequate capacity to dedicate to implementation activities.*

Make-up of Implementation Team: The Implementation Team should be relatively small (3-5 people). It should have enough capacity to address needs as they emerge, while remaining agile when action needs to be taken quickly. The team should include substantial representation from building and instructional leadership; as noted

above, an existing Leadership Team or Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) may even take on the role of the Implementation team, provided they have adequate capacity. The Implementation Team also benefits from the perspective and the leverage of team members with a few different lenses or spheres of influence within the school.

Competencies of Implementation Team Members: Implementation Team Members should be deeply familiar with and invested in the selected strategy. Additionally, they should be collaborative and approachable, with strong communication skills. They must be able to weigh different needs, competing interests, and trade-offs thoughtfully and carefully in order to make well-considered decisions. Finally, they should be decisive and able to act quickly to make or recommend changes. This helps to ensure that barriers in implementation can be cleared quickly so they don't become bottlenecks that impede the progress or effectiveness of the strategy.

Setting the Implementation Team up for success: To ensure that the Implementation Team can track progress and respond effectively when needed, leaders may need to free up their time and capacity. Consider redistributing school or district responsibilities; setting aside regular, protected meeting times; and establishing clear communication loops to ensure that the Team both has access to leadership and is available to practitioners.

2 HOW will changes be made?

A set of well defined and concrete actions and “deliverables” will help change behaviors and practices to bring the new strategy to life.

Changing Practices and Behaviors

There are three major tools that can help schools change practices and behaviors in order to implement new improvement strategies: Professional Development (PD), Coaching, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). When used in tandem, these mechanisms can inform, reinforce, and build on one another to create opportunities for meaningful and sustained change.

Professional Development & Training

Practitioners and other staff will likely need professional development to build new knowledge and shift behaviors. This PD should include both demonstrations of new skills and opportunities to practice them (ideally with feedback). PD includes beginning-of-year trainings as well as any training that continues throughout the school year, and it should be tailored to the needs and roles of staff. (E.g., When training new coaches, instructional coaches and culture-focused coaches will need training for different sets of knowledge and skills.) If existing staff capacity and expertise will not allow for effective internal facilitation of PD, or you may need to contract with an external provider to run a PD session (or series).

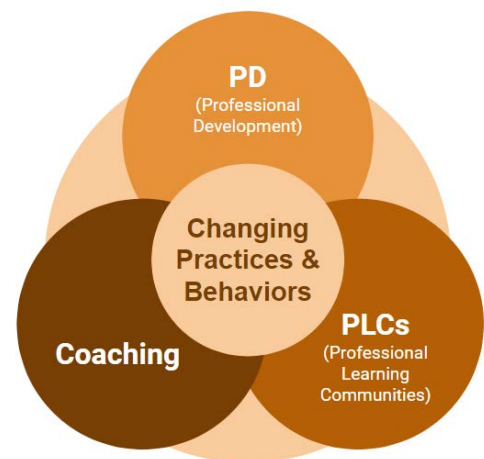


Figure 3



Coaching

Research has demonstrated that while professional development can be effective at building teachers’ knowledge and skills, coaching that builds on and reinforces that PD is essential to transforming practices in classrooms (see Figure 4). If your school or system does not already have coaching systems and practices in place, consider starting with the [Coaching Strategy Guide](#) to build these systems. Once a coaching strategy is firmly in place at your school, this structure can improve the effectiveness of any future strategies you choose to implement and increase your system’s capacity for meaningful change.

TRAINING COMPONENTS	OUTCOMES (% of participants who demonstrate knowledge, demonstrate new skills in a training setting, and use new skills in the classroom)		
	Knowledge	Skill Demonstration	Use in the Classroom
Theory and Discussion	10%	5%	0%
+ Demonstration in Training	30%	20%	0%
+ Practice & Feedback in Training	60%	60%	5%
+ Coaching in Classroom	95%	95%	95%

Figure 4

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) or Collaborative Learning structures

Along with coaching, Professional Learning Communities that are focused on teacher practice can be a key lever for reinforcing training and professional development, making sure new practices are actually put into practice and helping to sustain improvement strategies over the long term. If PLCs are not currently in place in your system and you are interested in implementing them, there is a [Professional Learning Communities Strategy Guide](#) available to support you.

Setting the necessary conditions

Once you know what is going to change, consider what adjustments are necessary to school systems and structures, or to available tools and resources. Adjustments should be backwards planned from the changes to practices and behaviors you’ve identified above, and they should usually be in place before students or teachers return for the new school year.

Systems and Structures

Many strategies require adjustments to school systems and structures. These could include student- or staff-facing routines and procedures (e.g., school entry, passing period, or lunch routines; common expectations for lesson plan elements or classroom setup; attendance procedures; etc.), class schedules or meeting cadences, or standing agendas for regular meetings or coaching check-ins.

Tools and Resources

New improvement strategies may require new tools or materials. For example, schools adopting a new curriculum or a new suite of assessments will need to acquire and organize these new materials. Strategies may also require new data collection and tracking systems, either as part of the strategy itself or as part of a progress monitoring plan. Finally, staff capacity is itself a resource that must be managed carefully; you’ll need to ensure that key staff have adequate time and capacity to devote to implementation activities. *If this is a new initiative, consider what local, state, or federal sources of support may be available to you.*



Leaders must assign and/or re-direct resources to ensure that practitioners have the time, capacity, and resources they need to effectively implement the strategy. Assigning adequate resources may mean redirecting existing resources (or adding new resources) to support the strategy. If the new strategy is yet another thing put on the team’s plate without something being taken off, it is likely that the team will not be able to devote the time and energy needed to make the strategy successful. Leaders should



carefully consider how to free up team capacity by reconfiguring workloads and/or reprioritizing responsibilities so that those who need to devote additional time to the strategy can do so.

3 *WHEN will changes be made?*

The “[Determining a Strategy Focus](#)” section, above, identifies aims or priorities for the end of the plan cycle; backwards planning annual (and even term-level) goals from this identified end-point will help you pace out implementation activities and build momentum towards your aims without trying to do too much too quickly. Consider identifying multiple phases of implementation: e.g., Installation, Year 1 Implementation, and Year 2 Implementation. *Note that the suggestions below assume that a school is implementing a completely new strategy. Schools who are focusing on a strategy that is already in progress at a school should adjust this plan to reflect their current starting point.*

Installation: Setting up the necessary conditions

During the Installation phase, focus on gathering resources and setting the necessary conditions to support a successful roll-out of the strategy. This phase will most likely take place during the spring and/or summer before the school year and plan cycle officially begin. Typical activities during this phase include acquiring necessary materials (e.g., purchasing a new curriculum or set of assessments), creating new systems or routines for staff and/or students, making changes to class or teacher schedules, creating tracking systems to monitor progress throughout the year, arranging professional development opportunities throughout the year (e.g., contracting with an external provider or ensuring that an internal team member with sufficient expertise is set up to have the capacity and resources needed to provide strong training), establishing coaching assignment and expectations, and targeted change management communications or conversations.

Year 1 Implementation: Focusing on foundational practices or a pilot group of practitioners

Year 1 represents the initial roll-out of the strategy. Which part of strategy is implemented first? Or which group of practitioners will pilot before rolling out to all? During this stage, coaching should be more frequent, with a greater focus on reinforcing professional development and supporting practitioners as they put strategy elements into practice. This stage will likely be somewhat messy and may feel difficult for the team – challenges will emerge, and kinks will need to be worked out. The [Implementation Team](#) will be particularly crucial at this stage to help the team rise to challenges and troubleshoot obstacles.

Year 2 Implementation: Extending and further developing practices

Once foundational strategy elements have been put in place, Year 2 should build on this momentum, either rolling the strategy out to new groups of practitioners or refining and further developing those foundational elements. The table below lists three possible approaches to Year 1 and Year 2 Implementations for a school who has not yet begun implementing the strategy:

	Year 1	Year 2
<i>Approach 1</i>	Implement with Pilot Group	Expand implementation to full staff
<i>Approach 2</i>	Implement foundational strategy elements	Add additional components to foundational strategy elements to reach full implementation
<i>Approach 3</i>	Introduce all strategy elements to all staff	Continue support through coaching to increase level of fidelity/implementation

Full Implementation

Full implementation is the final stage of strategy adoption, when all components of the strategy are in place and attention shifts to maintaining these new practices. This should be the end goal of your full planning arc (which may extend beyond your current plan cycle). Expect to have 50% of your practitioners using the strategy with fidelity at



this point. Continue to support implementation through coaching and PLCs; use carefully planned trainings to on-board new staff members, in order to keep the strategy in place. In the coming years, maintaining and exceeding this 50% fidelity threshold will help maintain strategy momentum even with staff turnover.



Implementation is Iterative

Finally, keep in mind that phases or stages of implementation may be iterative, rather than fully linear. For example, you may need to return to a planning phase, or to pause your implementation activities in order to install a necessary system or support, as needs emerge. The [Implementation Team](#) will play a crucial role in iterating on the implementation plan and activities; their depth of knowledge and investment in the strategy, combined with their agility and decision-making power, will help them reap the benefits of these iterative learning cycles to continually refine the implementation plan and activities.

Progress Monitoring **Planning for Progress Monitoring & Improvement Cycles**
[Worksheet: Progress Monitoring](#)

A strong progress monitoring plan will enable you to effectively track the progress of your strategy adoption, to intervene early in response to emergent challenges, and to ensure that support is flowing to the practitioners or groups that need it most. Progress Monitoring plans should include Implementation Benchmarks to track the progress of implementation activities and Annual Targets to gauge the impact of the strategy on student performance.

Setting Implementation Benchmarks

Implementation Benchmarks enable you to effectively pace out and monitor a strategy. Implementation Benchmarks name *specific, measurable adult actions or systems that are key to the implementation of a strategy or initiative* (see Sample Implementation Benchmark at right). They highlight major milestones in a significant or system-wide change, or they mark points in the roll-out by which changes will be implemented.

Sample Implementation Benchmark
By September 15, an audit of daily lesson plans will show that 70% of teachers are incorporating language objectives into their daily lesson plans.

Effective Implementation Benchmarks enable you to monitor whether implementation is happening as planned; benchmarks that are consistently met indicate that an implementation plan is progressing as planned. Benchmarks can also help you identify issues or gaps in implementation before these gaps begin to influence student outcomes. Rather than waiting for student outcome data to confirm that progress is not being made, *using missed benchmarks as an opportunity to adjust improvement efforts enables schools to respond nimbly to their ever-evolving contexts to ensure the strongest possible outcomes for students.*



Implementation Benchmarks should be used as fidelity measures and aimed at targeting additional support where it is needed. They should not be used for accountability purposes that feel punitive.

Especially in the earlier stages of implementation, benchmark or “fidelity measures” should be used by the Implementation Teams to identify areas needing additional support. While fidelity measures are often experienced by teachers as “accountability without support” (i.e., lower fidelity measures result in punitive actions), research demonstrates that this use of fidelity measures is counterproductive. Fidelity measures that gauge the extent of implementation should be used to help identify where additional support is needed, and *they should not be used for teacher evaluation purposes*. For additional information on how to set and use Implementation Benchmarks, see the [Implementation Benchmarks Guidance Document](#).



Setting Benchmarks and Targets for Year 1 and Year 2

Because it will take time to train staff in developing new knowledge and skills, time to shift behaviors and build new habits, and time for students to adjust to any new school or classroom practices or procedures, the full impacts of the strategy may not be immediately reflected in student performance outcomes.

Year 1: Set detailed Implementation Benchmarks and modest performance targets.

In the initial stages of implementation, fidelity measures such as Implementation Benchmarks will provide the most useful information about the effectiveness of your plan. Carefully formulated measures will indicate whether practitioner behavior and practices are shifting according to the implementation plan. Attending to these measures and using missed benchmarks as a flag to indicate a need for greater support will enable you to course-correct early on to give your team the best chances of effectively adopting the strategy. Set performance targets for modest improvement in Year 1, knowing that the bulk of your efforts will focus on changing adult habits and practices. The benefits in Year 1 may just begin to be reflected in student outcomes.

Year 2: Set key Implementation Benchmarks and more ambitious targets.

In later phases of implementation, you should expect to see increased impacts on student performance measures, so you should also set more ambitious targets for this year. Once the foundational elements of the strategy have been effectively established, students' performance measures will give you information about whether the strategy is having the intended effect on student outcomes. Relying on key Implementation Benchmarks in Year 2 will help ensure that you are continuing to move forward with Implementation Activities.

Progress Monitoring trackers and regular data reflection

Once you've set strong Implementation Benchmarks to help you track and monitor your Implementation Activities, tracking these benchmarks regularly is key to ensuring that these benchmarks can effectively guide implementation activities. Identify or establish a system for collecting information on these measures and tracking their progress. Determine a plan and cadence for regular data analysis and reflection; identify who will be involved in this data analysis (in addition to your Implementation Team). Create a plan for updating or refining the approach as needed based on implementation progress and/or emergent challenges. (See "[Using Short Cycle Planning](#)," below, for guidance on how to use a short-cycle approach to driving improvement cycles.)

Using Short Cycle Planning to drive improvement cycles

Short improvement cycles (e.g., the "Plan-Do-Study-Act" or "PDSA" cycle) can set the conditions for responsiveness to rapidly evolving conditions and allow you to adjust your implementation approach as needed. Short Cycles should be backwards planned from long-term goals:

- Start with an anticipated improvement arc for the entire plan cycle and annual goals aligned to this arc.
- For Year 1, identify anticipated areas of focus for each short-cycle period. Set implementation benchmarks and interim measures for Year 1.
- Fully plan for first short cycle (e.g., first 90 days). At the end of the short cycle, reflect on your progress.
 - Consider progress relative to (1) short-cycle targets, (2) annual targets, (3) overall plan goals.
- Create a full plan for the second short cycle, based on annual goals, full-arc plan goals, progress made towards these goals, and lessons learned during the first short cycle.

Change
Management

Planning for Change Management

[Worksheet: Change Management](#)

Finally, the success of an implementation plan also hinges on effective leadership and change management practices that occur at all levels of the strategy improvement plan (Figure 5).

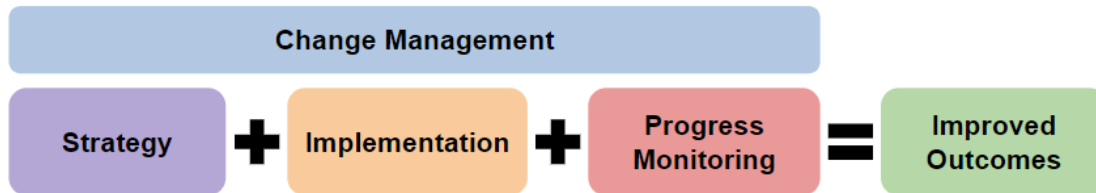


Figure 5

Effective change requires *readiness* to make a change; research shows that mandates to change are counter-productive. Instead of mandates, change management practices should occur early and throughout the improvement plan period. The following guidance will help you develop your team's readiness and build support for an improvement strategy.

Stakeholder Input and Involvement in Decision-Making: Determine which stakeholders should give input about decision points and/or be involved in decision-making. This group should be a mix of school and teacher leaders, staff who are directly impacted in or responsible for changing practices, and vocal, informal leaders within the building (e.g., teachers who are highly regarded by their peers and whose involvement will encourage others to support the shift).

Core Messaging to Stakeholders: Clearly communicating your strategy and the reasons for it is a crucial step in investing your team and your community in the improvement efforts. To that end, make sure you have concise answers for each of the following questions and use them as needed when talking with stakeholders about the strategy:

- Why is this shift necessary? What problem is currently occurring that needs attention?
- What is your crystal clear, concrete description of the strategy being adopted or precise shift being made?
- What is the reasoning behind this shift? How will it solve the problem/improve outcomes?
- What is the emotion-based appeal in this strategy? I.e., What argument can you make for the change that appeals to the emotions or heart of your team?

Communication with Stakeholders: Identify who needs to know what and when in order for changes to be rolled out smoothly, then ensure there are mechanisms in place for these purposes. Consider drawing on some or all of the following communication structures:

- (1) **Targeted 1:1 conversations:** Identify where you might encounter resistance or reluctance on your team and consider looping in these team members individually ahead of time. Identify who will be most impacted by the change (those who gain or lose by the change, or those most responsible for making it happen); if possible, include these stakeholders in the input and/or decision-making phases.
- (2) **Regular team meetings:** Establish regular team meetings to talk through implementation updates and troubleshoot problems as they come up. Ensure that team members (especially practitioners) have clear avenues for communicating challenges, barriers or support needs to leadership.
- (3) **Ongoing Responsiveness:** Maintaining staff investment and momentum requires that leaders remain responsive to practitioner needs, experiences, and feedback. Establish clear mechanisms for gathering feedback, being receptive to ongoing feedback, and following up with stakeholders so they understand how their feedback was applied.

Turning your Planning Worksheets into an Implementation Plan

If you have completed the worksheets as you progressed through this guide, those worksheets should now contain all of the “building blocks” for your implementation plan. Use these notes and one of the [Planning Templates](#) at the end of this guide to capture key action steps needed to install your strategy throughout the year.

[Implementation Planning Worksheet](#)

Use the WHO, HOW, and WHEN details to specify the core activities needed to shift systems, practices, and behaviors in implementation.

[Progress Monitoring Worksheet](#)

Use this worksheet to set a data analysis and reflection cadence.

[Change Management Worksheet](#)

Use the content of this worksheet to revise your plan to include key change management steps, to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged throughout the process, and to ensure that plan information is communicated proactively and deliberately.



Create your plan.

Capture your improvement plan in a [Planning Template](#).

A Note on District vs. School Implementation Support

This guide is aimed primarily at school-based leaders who are interested in adopting strategies in their own local buildings or systems. District leaders and district support staff can effectively support school improvement plans and implementation efforts by helping to meet school team needs. Just as the full school staff team should be focused on helping to support the immediate practitioners of the strategy at the school level (e.g., teachers implementing a new classroom instruction strategy), district staff should focus on supporting the school. Valuable supports include clearing obstacles and providing additional resources. District staff that are not based in a school will not be as familiar with the school context, or with the team, school, and community strengths and needs that are impacting implementation activities. Providing clear mechanisms for schools to communicate their needs and to identify the barriers they are encountering will help enable districts to support schools and school-based teams most effectively.

Sources Consulted & Additional Reading

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Appendix:

Planning Worksheets



Strategy

Determining a Strategy Focus: Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help you determine which components or elements of a strategy your school is ready to implement in the next two years. Use the Strategy Guide (or your own research) and an audit of your school’s current state to complete this worksheet.

1 Clear Description of Strategy **DETERMINE A STRATEGY FOCUS**

Core Component / Element If using a CDE Strategy Guide, you can copy or short-hand these directly from that guide.	2 Current State What systems/structures or practices are already in place that can support this strategy?	Gaps Compare “Core Components” and “Current State.” Where will system/structures and practices need to be created or added?	3 Priority Will you prioritize this in the current plan? Or will this be prioritized later?



Implementation

Implementation Planning: Worksheet

Use the priorities identified in your completed “Determine a Strategy Focus” worksheet to answer the following questions regarding the WHO, HOW, and WHEN details of your implementation plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

1 WHO should be involved?
List Practitioners here

List staff providing support for practitioners (leaders, admin) here

List Implementation Team Members here

2 HOW will you make changes?
What will PD focus on?

*How will **coaching** and/or PLCs be used to reinforce PD?*

*What changes are needed to **structures, systems, and routines**?*

*What **tools and resources** will need to be created, acquired, or assigned?*

3 WHEN will things be done?

<i>What needs to be in place prior to Year 1?</i>	<i>What foundations will be laid during Year 1?</i>	<i>How will the strategy be developed in Year 2?</i>
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Progress Monitoring

Progress Monitoring: Worksheet

Use the WHO, HOW, and WHEN responses from in your “Implementation Planning” worksheet to help you determine how you will monitor the implementation and impact of your strategy in the spaces below.

DATA COLLECTION

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS – How will you know that your strategy is being implemented as planned throughout the year?

<i>Measure & Method of collection (e.g., class observation, lesson plan or student work audit, etc.)</i>	<i>Actor/Owner</i>	<i>Target or aim</i>	<i>Date</i>

INTERIM MEASURES – How will you know if your strategy is impacting student outcomes as planned?

<i>Assessment (e.g., curriculum-based assessment, NWEA MAP, iReady, DIBELS)</i>	<i>Student Group</i>	<i>Target or aim</i>	<i>Date</i>

MONITOR & IMPROVE

DATA ANALYSIS & REFLECTION – When will you analyze and reflect on benchmark and interim measure data?

<i>Meeting Focus</i>	<i>Attendees</i>	<i>Date</i>



Change Management

Change Management: Worksheet

Use the questions and prompts below to build out a change management plan for your strategy implementation. After you've created your implementation plan, use this worksheet to add in key change management activities or tasks (e.g., staff meetings, stakeholder input sessions, family information nights, etc.).

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

<p>Clear Statement of Problem to be solved (prioritized challenge)</p>	<p>Clear description of the strategy (and how it will address challenge)</p>
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Stakeholder Engagement		
<p><i>Who should give input?</i></p>	<p><i>Who should have veto-power?</i></p>	<p><i>Who should be involved in decision-making?</i></p>

Communications Planning			
<i>Team member or Stakeholder group</i>	<i>What do they need to know?</i>	<i>Method? (e.g., Email, staff meeting, 1:1?)</i>	<i>When do they need this information?</i>



Planning Template for Annual Plan

ACTION PLANNING for YEAR 1		
BOY (before teachers return) – <i>Adjust supporting systems & structures</i>	Owner	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
School Year Launch: BOY Trainings & Prep (before students return)		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
First 6-8 weeks – <i>Install foundational practices; coaching to reinforce training</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
By Mid-Year – <i>Reinforce and refine foundational practices</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
By EOY – <i>Increase strategy adoption/use; monitor progress and impact.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		



Planning Template for Short Cycle Plan

ACTION PLANNING for 90-DAY SHORT CYCLE		
Before Cycle – <i>Adjust supporting systems & structures</i>	Owner	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
Cycle Launch: Trainings & Prep (before students start term)		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
First 4-6 weeks – <i>Implement “bite-size” next step; coaching to reinforce steps</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
Through End of Cycle – <i>Reinforce practices; monitor progress and impact.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
Prepare for Next Cycle – <i>Reflect on progress, determine next steps, plan.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		