GUIDEBOOK for

Equity-driven Continuous School Improvement

that disrupts the status quo

Updated for the 2019-20 School Year

I get so little respect.
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“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.” - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
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Introduction to the Guidebook

Welcome to the Guidebook for Equity-driven Continuous School Improvement! First, thanks for being here. Thank you for showing up and agreeing to lend your strengths to this work. It’s important to acknowledge that school improvement never has been, nor will it ever be, easy.

If it has ever seemed easy, it has probably only benefited one thing: The Status Quo. This is a good time to introduce The Status Quo, since it will be sure to follow us around as we go through the Guidebook. The Status Quo does not like continuous school improvement, and it would rather you just stop here, turn around, and keep doing what you were doing. That’s because The Status Quo gets to stay in place, maintaining the way things are, as long as we never try to change anything.

The Status Quo is in direct conflict with equity-driven continuous school improvement. You see, The Status Quo benefits the dominant culture. Inequitable outcomes are The Status Quo’s bread and butter. Conversely, disrupting systems that result in inequitable outcomes is at the heart of equity-driven continuous school improvement.

So, don’t be surprised if you see The Status Quo pop up along your journey of school improvement. The Status Quo is very powerful, and there are people, institutions, laws, policies, and systems all set on maintaining it. Trying to disrupt The Status Quo is hard, scary, and can even put you at risk. Like we said before, The Status Quo benefits some while marginalizing others. People who benefit from The Status Quo will fight back when they think those benefits are being taken away.

However, doing nothing, allowing The Status Quo to remain, isn’t an option. The Status Quo hurts our students and families of color and others from historically marginalized and oppressed groups. So, while we engage in the process of equity-driven continuous school improvement, we need to constantly ask ourselves and one another, “Are we maintaining or disrupting the status quo?”

This Guidebook has been updated for the 2019-20 school year. It will start by briefly describing the equity-driven continuous school improvement process. Next, it will focus on using a team (or teams) to drive improvement work, before walking you through the process of developing and monitoring your School Improvement Plan, the foundation of your improvement process. Lastly, there is a section at the end with additional resources to explore and utilize as you engage in equity-driven continuous improvement. A new video training series on The Source has also been created to help walk you through the process of school improvement described in this guide.
Overview of Equity-driven Continuous School Improvement

Below is an equation that helps describe the theory of action for school improvement. In order for schools to see meaningful changes in student outcomes, they need to start with an evidence-based practice aligned to their goal, they need the right infrastructure in place to support implementation, and they must implement the practice with fidelity.

A frustrating cycle

Implementation science, the study of what it takes for organizations to effectively put research-based practices into place, has confirmed what many of you have likely encountered in your career in education: that no matter how many or which evidence-based practices we seem to try, we don’t see that meaningful change we’re expecting. This can be terribly frustrating, especially when inequitable outcomes for students make our work feel so urgent.

Often, we can’t point to why we’re not seeing the meaningful change we want, and need, to see. This is usually because we haven’t attended to the middle of the equation: did we give people what they needed to be able to actually implement the practice? did we implement it the way we were supposed to?

Without systems in place to assess infrastructure and measure fidelity, we can’t definitively say whether the evidence-based practice failed to improve student outcomes because it wasn’t implemented well or because it wasn’t the right strategy to begin with.

1 Adapted from the University of North Carolina’s State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practice Center
When we are unable to answer the question of why we aren’t seeing improvements in student outcomes in a highly political environment, we find ourselves in a vicious cycle of selecting a new initiative, quickly deciding that “it doesn’t work” (maybe within a year, or less, of not seeing student outcomes change), discarding the initiative and any capacity that has been built to support it and moving on to something new.

When this happens over and over again, it’s no wonder staff become protective of their time and effort, making it harder and harder each time to get that essential buy-in and investment for any new initiative, no matter how promising.

*Above all, this cycle means that we continue to maintain the status quo, to the detriment of our students and our broader community.* The status quo ensures that some students are benefiting from access to strong educational practices in some pockets, while many are not. Maintenance of the status quo within a system that has contributed to the oppression of students of color and those from historically marginalized groups protects white supremacy and the power structures that privilege the dominant culture. It is imperative that we end this cycle and radically change the way that we work to implement the research-based strategies that we know will lead to increased academic achievement of all students and the closing of our achievement gaps.

**Everyone should be involved in continuous improvement**

In the Introduction, we talked about how challenging continuous improvement work can be, and the “flavor of the month” cycle that many teachers and staff have experienced is one reason. Another reason why continuous improvement efforts can frustrate teachers and staff is because it can often feel like something done to them, rather than something done with them.

*It is important to adopt the mindset that continuous school improvement is something that all members of the school community are engaged in all of the time.* The continuous school improvement process is not one person’s job, or the job of your ILT or other leadership team alone. Everyone in your school, regardless of role or level of experience, should feel meaningfully involved in this work, especially if improvement efforts in the past have fallen to the wayside or otherwise lost steam over time.

If you’re trying to shift this mindset among teachers and staff in your school, you may need to acknowledge past practices and validate people’s feelings about those practices, in addition to talking about how things will be different moving forward. But the most powerful way to shift mindsets is to take real action that feels and looks different, communicate early and often with stakeholders, and ask them for their feedback and input along the way.
Alignment to MDE’s School Improvement Theory of Action
The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has also identified continuous improvement, based on implementation science principles, as best practice for Minnesota schools. MDE’s own theory of action for school improvement, summarized below, aligns well with MPS’s own vision for equity-driven continuous school improvement; both school improvement blueprints emphasize the importance of strong implementation as a means of improving student outcomes and eliminating persistent disparities between student groups.

If Minnesota:

- Focuses school improvement efforts on equity and underserved student groups.
- Builds districts’ and schools’ capacity to use the principles of active implementation.
- Focuses school improvement on developing implementation infrastructures that include innovation-specific capacity, general capacity, and enabling context for implementation and continuous improvement.

Then:

- Districts and schools will have the capacity to implement evidence-based practices using continuous improvement processes.
- All schools will have highly effective educators and instructional leaders.
- Educators and stakeholders will be meaningfully engaged in the improvement process.
- District and schools will be standards-focused and ensure educational quality.

And the result will be:

- Improved outcomes for all students.
- The elimination of achievement gaps between groups of students.
- Increased capacity of districts and schools to implement sustained continuous improvement processes.
- Increased educator effectiveness.
- Improved conditions for teaching and learning.
What about the equity-driven part?

As stated in Policy 1304, Minneapolis Public Schools believes that all students can learn and succeed. **MPS is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate the achievement gap and institutional racism in all forms.**

Adult behaviors must be concentrated on the elimination of gaps, particularly those that are predicated on a student’s race, ethnicity, home language, personal characteristics or culture, and on assurance of educational equity between students. The diversity of our student body, our community, and our staff is a strength of this district that should be fostered, rather than seen as a problem to be fixed.

**The continuous school improvement process, when done well, is an equity strategy.** In order to disrupt The Status Quo and ensure that we are achieving equitable outcomes for all students, we need to systematically evaluate the outcomes we are getting, what has led to those outcomes, and then plan to change course when the outcomes we’re getting aren’t the ones that we want.

The only way to achieve equity is to have processes in place whereby we determine where and how programs, processes, and outcomes are inequitable in the first place and then set out to disrupt them.

However, it isn’t enough to just go through the motions of the continuous school improvement process. You could easily set goals, put strategies in place, and progress monitor during the year while still maintaining The Status Quo. For the process to really be equity-driven, all of the components of the continuous school improvement process need to be in place **and** you need to critically interrogate every step along the way using an equity lens.

Don’t confuse a lens with a tool. We take a tool out of our tool box when we know that using that particular tool will help us get the job done. Then we put the tool away. That is not how you should view making continuous school improvement equity-driven. We’re not going to say, “Ok, we’ve reached this point - so now is the time to ‘do equity’/have the ‘equity conversation’/etc.”

**A lens is not like a tool.**
**A lens changes the way you see the world.**
The process should be equity-driven, because every step of the way you and your team are hyper-focused on issues of equity and whether or not whatever you’re doing at that point in the process (having a conversation, analyzing data, deciding which strategy to use, providing professional development, monitoring implementation) is maintaining or disrupting the status quo. You are either actively working all of the time to radically alter the outcomes for students from historically marginalized and oppressed groups, or you aren’t. And if you aren’t, then your continuous school improvement process is not equity-driven.

That’s not to say that using an equity lens is easy. It’s not. It takes practice. It takes courageous conversations. It takes the ability to consistently fail over and over again and still re-set each time with intentionality and humility.

*Using an equity lens is hard because the bias-based beliefs about students from marginalized and oppressed groups that have historically formed the foundation of school structures, policies, and pedagogy, are extremely hard to challenge and replace.* It is especially hard for people whose identities have afforded them power and privilege, exactly because those bias-based beliefs help them maintain their power and privilege.

The activities and discussion questions that you’ll encounter in this Guidebook are designed to help you and your team use an equity lens as you engage in your continuous school improvement work.

A key to having an equity-driven continuous school improvement process is to make sure you have as many diverse perspectives at the table as possible - with the deliberate intention of meaningfully including voices of people who have been historically marginalized. Wherever possible, you should also include the voices of students.

As we’ve said many times, this is hard work - it takes time, practice, patience, and life-long learning for most. *Just like we encourage our students to always strive to grow, we need to push ourselves to grow, too.* If you’re looking for more resources to help you personally, your team, or your school community use an equity-lens throughout the continuous school improvement process, or just in general, there are resources listed in the resources section at the end of this Guidebook.

The next page offers some guiding reflections you can use personally, or as a team, to check yourself and challenge each other throughout the process of equity-driven continuous school improvement. You’ll see similar questions re-framed at different points in the Guidebook, to make them applicable to each part of the process. Think about using these questions to help norm the team(s) that will be engaged in continuous school improvement during the year.
Check-In with Yourself
Thoughts, Questions, and Reminders

**Remember!** From Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching*, pp. 14-15

1. *This isn’t going to be easy.* Whether we’re talking to people who share our particular cultural group or skin tones, or we’re in mixed company, speaking about race, classism, patriarchy, homophobia, and the like is going to be uncomfortable.

2. *There is no “right way” to have these conversations.* We’re going to struggle to find the right words and get them out; we’re going to blunder and stumble.

3. *We have to do it anyway.* We need to gather skills, manage our own discomfort, and engage in conversations about race, class, privilege, and power because children need us to.

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**Beliefs**

We all hold strong beliefs. They are often developed over time based on our personal lived experiences. As you engage in this equity-driven process, it is important to recognize when your thoughts and actions are being driven by **deficit-based beliefs about students and their families**, which are often driven by our own biases. It is also important, since you’ll be doing this work with colleagues, to recognize when your thoughts and actions are being driven by deficit-based beliefs about the people you work with. While beliefs may be strongly held, we can change them. You can check yourself along the way by reflecting on these, or similar, questions:

- What **bias-based beliefs** may be behind the way I’m thinking about this topic? How have my experiences in education shaped my beliefs? What do I need to replace or reframe that belief to think about it in a different way?
- Am I acting on a **bias-based belief** about my students, their families, or my colleagues? If I replace or reframe that belief, how might my actions change? How may I be treated differently if I replace or reframe my beliefs?

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**Emotions**

Having difficult conversations, particularly about race, can often lead us to shut down. This is usually because they bring up strong emotions that are uncomfortable. Many of us have been taught that “getting emotional” is a bad thing, and we try to avoid it. People in privileged positions also have the power to silence and oppress marginalized groups by utilizing the argument that emotions get in the way of having productive conversations. Emotions are bound to come up when we delve into difficult topics that make us feel threatened. Instead of trying to shut down or avoid it, recognize the emotions you’re feeling. Try to identify where they are coming from. And also important, allow others to feel and express their emotions. Try using the **Courageous Conversations** protocol and **compass** to stay engaged. You can also use these, or similar, questions to check-in with yourself:

- What emotions am I feeling as we talk? Where do I think those emotions are coming from?
- How can I describe the emotions that I’m feeling to others? How can they support me?
- Am I creating a space for others to express their emotions? How can I check-in with and affirm others when I sense they are feeling strong emotions?

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**Centering Marginalized Voices**

The voices of historically marginalized groups must be included in the discussion and decisions that are made regarding continuous school improvement. It is important that no matter which table you are at - if you are someone who has privilege and power, you need reflect on whether diverse perspectives are being shared and valued. Check-in by reflecting on these, or similar, questions:

- How often have I spoken? How often have others spoken?
- Whose perspectives seem to be valued most by the group? Why? What are the shared characteristic of those whose perspectives are most valued? Of those whose perspectives are least valued or not heard?
- How can I encourage others who have not had a chance to speak to share their voice?
- What is the impact on our work if everyone’s voice and perspective is not included?
The School Improvement Plan

While the equity-driven continuous school improvement process is not one document, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is an official way to document your process and should serve as the foundation of it.

The SIP is documented using the online School Improvement Planning Portal: http://insights.mpls.k12.mn.us/public/SIP

Each section of the SIP Portal is aligned to the elements of the continuous improvement process, which this Guidebook walks you through in more detail. The SIP Portal has been updated for 2019-20 to simplify the documentation required from schools while still aligning with implementation science best practices and the use of the Implementation Toolkits for the district’s four strategic priorities: MTSS, SEL, Equity, and Literacy.

The SIP is a living document, that can be changed and altered throughout the year as your school engages in continuous school improvement as a community.

The SIP is a place to document your goals, the strategies that will help you reach your goals, and your progress implementing those strategies. When we talk about having your entire school community engaged in the continuous improvement process, we don’t expect everyone in your building or for family members and students to have the SIP memorized or be part of filling everything out. However, the goals that your school is working toward and how you plan on reaching those goals should be something that everyone understands and supports.

The SIP is one tool that can help make sure your continuous improvement process is systematic and intentional. Having it documented online, in one place and in the same format for all schools, also makes it easier for the central office to provide needed supports and resources at the right times and share best practices across sites.

A Note about Title I, Part A Compliance:

For Title schools that operate a schoolwide program, the SIP serves as your Title plan. MDE encourages Title schools to include all activities and strategies they are engaged in as part of their school improvement process in their SIP, even if they don’t initially plan on using Title funding for those activities. This allows for more flexibility, in case you decide to use Title funding in a different way during the course of the year.
Laying the Foundation

While all of the stakeholders in your community play a role in your continuous improvement work, it’s important to identify the group of people who will take on the responsibility of planning, carrying out, monitoring, and communicating about your school improvement activities.

The work of school improvement is complicated and will require a collaborative leadership model.

This section of the Guidebook is all about laying the foundation for your school improvement work by establishing a team or teams, grounding the teams in clear community agreements and purpose, and determining what the specific work of the teams will be, and how that work will be carried out.

Utilizing your collective leadership teams

Q Comp funding has established a collective leadership model for schools that can be easily utilized to drive your continuous improvement work. Based on the purposes of these teams, it’s recommended that you divide your school improvement work across your Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and your Equity & Engagement Team (formerly Positive Schoolwide Engagement and/or Equity teams).

These teams may also have other responsibilities. For example, your Equity & Engagement Team will also be responsible for completing activities outlined in the District Positive Schoolwide Engagement Plan, which are required under the agreement between MPS and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (and formerly with the Office of Civil Rights).

You could consider making specific school improvement responsibilities the role of one or more sub-committees of each team, with the whole team responsible for regularly checking in with these sub-committees and monitoring overall progress.

You’ll also want to consider the role of your Site Council. In order to have families, community members, and students play a meaningful role in your continuous improvement process, consider how and when the Site Council should engage in the work. They likely play a role in giving feedback on the overall school goals and school improvement plan, but as you learn more about the continuous improvement process outlined in the rest of this Guidebook, think about what other roles the Site Council can play. Engaging with a Student Council, or other student representative group, can also strengthen your school improvement plan and process.
Any leadership teams involved in your school improvement work should make sure to develop their own community agreements/group norms, establish a clear purpose for the team, develop a work plan, and understand how to facilitate effective meetings. Each of these steps are outlined in more detail below.

The Equity & Engagement Team, whether focusing on the Equity Implementation Toolkit or SEL Implementation Toolkit, will find more guidance in each Toolkit for some of these foundational activities, like developing group norms.

**Developing community agreements or group norms**
As the team responsible for your continuous improvement work will be meeting regularly, planning, and making important decisions together, it is essential that there are clear community agreements or group norms established.

Also, since this team should be a representative and diverse group of people who will be engaged in equity work, developing and clearly stating group norms will help ensure that unspoken norms from the dominant culture, or among the common identities of the majority of the group, will not prevail in their absence.

If this is an established team, you may already have group norms or community agreements - or maybe all teams in your school are expected to follow the same community agreements. Even if that is the case, when the team comes together at the start of a new school year, especially if there are new staff members, it’s a good idea to at least revisit those norms to make sure they’re still working and to get buy-in from anyone who is new to the team.

Check out [Activity 1: Norm Creation](#) on page 14 for a facilitation plan to guide this process with your team

** Establishing a purpose**
Any team you bring together around school improvement work needs to clearly understands their purpose. This is especially true if ownership of school improvement is just one component of the work that they’ll do during the year.

Any team should clearly understand how their work helps fulfill the mission and vision of the school. So, start by making sure those are established and understood by staff, first.
**Activity 1: Norm Creation**

**Materials:**
- Pens/pencils; scratch paper; markers
- Copies of example norms handout (Appendix A)
- Post-it notes and chart paper

**Purpose:** Any team should develop group norms, also sometimes called community agreements, at the start of their work together. Norms establish clear and agreed-upon expectations for how team members will work together.

**Additional Resources:** The process described below has been adapted from several sources. You can consider using one of the following resources directly for other ideas on how to facilitate the norm creation process:
- National School Reform Faculty “Forming Ground Rules” activity
- National School Reform Faculty “Setting Agreements” activity
- Elena Aguilar *The Art of Coaching Teams* Norm Building agenda
- MPS SEL Implementation Toolkit

**Process:**
1. Start by having team members reflect, in a pair-share or with the large group, on a good experience they’ve had working in a team, and what made that experience positive.
2. Explain what group norms are and why its important to have them, especially in the context of the work that the team will be engaged in this year.
3. Ask each team member to take a few minutes and make a list of the most important agreements they would ask the team to make, so that they can trust the group to become a place where good, difficult work may be conducted. Use the worksheet to help them generate ideas.
4. Have team members pair up with someone else and share their lists. Ask pairs to make a list of their top 5 agreements, which they think are most essential for the entire team to productively work together.
5. Have each pair find another pair (forming groups of four), and share their top 5s with each other. Ask each group of four to identify a final top 5. Each group of four should write their top 5 on post-it notes. One note per agreement/norm. So 5 post-its per group.
6. Collect the post-its, one at a time, from each group. Read them aloud as you post them. Then ask the team to identify commonalities or overlap.
7. Work with the team to narrow down your final list to about 7 agreements. Remind team members that even if a norm that they think is really important for themselves to hold doesn’t make it to the list, they can still personally set an intention to keep that norm.
8. Use a consensus building process like the Six-Position Straw Poll to agree to final norms.
9. Once you have a finalized list, discuss as a group what those norms look like in action. Also talk about how you want to hold one another mutually able to hold these norms/agreements moving forward. And plan for a time in the future to intentionally revisit the norms and discuss how they’re working and whether the team needs to modify them.
Once the team is grounded in the schools’ mission and vision, establish a statement of purpose for the team’s work. This may be done ahead of time by the administration and presented for review and feedback by team members, or could be co-construction with team members. Either way, every member of the team should understand why the team exists.

An example purpose statement for your ILT may sound like:

*The ILT’s purpose is to develop, implement, and monitor our school improvement strategies related to curriculum and instruction; to plan professional development to support these improvement strategies; and to communicate regularly and transparently with our school community regarding the progress we’re making toward achieving our goals with these strategies.*

An example purpose statement for your Equity & Engagement Team may sound like:

*The Equity and Engagement Team’s purpose is to develop, implement, and monitor our school improvement strategies related to climate, equity, and student engagement; to plan professional development to support these improvement strategies; to complete the activities required by the District Positive Schoolwide Engagement Plan; and to communicate regularly and transparently with our school community regarding the progress we’re making toward achieving our goals by completing these activities and implementing our improvement strategies.*

As you develop or revise a purpose statement for your team, remember that the team may be responsible for more than just your school improvement work, and that should be reflected in the purpose statement.

**Developing a work plan**

Once you have a team that is clear on its purpose, and once that team has developed or bought into your school improvement plan, you can outline the specific work the team will do throughout the year, including how team meetings will be used to achieve the team’s purpose.

A work plan should be developed once the school improvement strategies have been identified. Then, the work plan will be driven by when the team anticipates moving through the exploration activities, or through the installation and implementation steps, of each strategy. That process is described in more detail in the Installation and Implementation section of this Guidebook.
“Leaders need to be very thoughtful about decisions to stray from the plan or stick to it… Sometimes we might make suggestions: to hold to the plan, to go forth and see what happens (sometimes plans fail because they were given up to early), or to shift the plan (sometimes plans fail because they were adhered to rigidly in spite of other data that indicated a need to shift).”

- Elena Aguilar, The Art of Coaching Teams

Once your team is ready to map out their work for the year, consider using this calendar as a way to identify the high-level objectives of weekly team meetings and other school improvement aligned activities, like professional development or Professional Learning Community meetings, throughout the year. Completing a week-by-week calendar like this can also help you and your team realize if you have taken on more work than you have the capacity for. When we get to the Selecting Strategies section of this Guidebook, we’ll talk more about the importance of focusing your school improvement plan on just the essentials.

Like your school improvement plan, you should never consider your work plan written in stone. You may need to change course during the year, especially since implementation is more of an art than an exact science. At the start of the year, you may plan to have worked through installing and implementing at least three core components of a strategy by Winter Break, but find that you’ve only gotten through one or two in that time. If so, it’s okay to modify your plan. We’re working with people and within complicated systems, so we’ll likely need to adapt and be flexible along the way. Just like we modify and adapt for our students, we can modify and adapt for ourselves.

Running effective meetings
Having clear group norms, a team purpose, and a work plan will lay the groundwork for effective team meetings. The work plan will establish what needs to be accomplished at each meeting, and the group norms will help the team hold one another mutually able to achieve those outcomes. Some other things to consider and plan for to run effective meetings include:

- **Agenda Setting**: Make sure there is a clear agenda set ahead of time, with team member input, if possible. Include the Three Signature SEL Practices, which means setting aside enough time for a welcome activity that will help team members connect to one another and the task at hand, and a time for a closing activity that will make sure team members are leaving with clear next steps and with an optimistic feeling about the work. Find an example agenda/meeting notes template here, which includes space for your SIP goals and group norms.
Key Roles: Make sure there are specific people on the team identified to fulfill essential roles during the meeting. Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching Teams* has a great resource for identifying key roles for team meetings and their responsibilities. Consider whether you’ll ask one person to play the same role all year, or whether roles may switch each meeting, at different points in the year, or depending on the agenda.

Decide How to Make Decisions: It’s likely that this team will need to make important decisions, especially as it relates to professional development or other supports that staff need in order to effectively put your improvement strategies into place. Make sure the team recognizes *when* it is making decisions and has a clear process for *how* decisions will be made. It’s important for team members to understand what level of empowerment they have in the decision making process. Some examples of decision making processes that feel very different to participants, depending on which is used, include:

- Participants voice opinions and recommendations to one person, who listens to all voices and makes the final choice.
- Participants voice opinions and recommendations and then vote. Each participant gets the same amount of voting power, and the choice that receives the majority of the votes is selected.
- Participants voice opinions and recommendations. A choice is not made until there is unanimous consensus.

Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching Teams* has a feedback form that can be used to reflect on decision making, which also identifies the indicators of effective decision making.

Reflect and Collect Feedback: Regularly ask the team to reflect on the effectiveness of the team and of team meetings. As a principal or team leader, consider how you can use that feedback to improve meetings in the future. Use this Team Temperature Check tool from Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching Teams* as an example of how to have a team reflect and give feedback on a regular basis. Another way to reflect as a team would be to use or adapt the Leadership Team Rubric (Appendix F). The rubric reflects the technical and adaptive features that a leadership team needs in place in order to effectively drive school improvement efforts.

Additional resources for running effective meetings can be found in the MPS SEL Toolkit.
Setting Goals

Goals are the destination that you’re working toward; they help you steer the ship and make sure that everyone is on the same page regarding what success looks like. A key step of the continuous improvement process is to set SMART goals that drive your school improvement work.

Your school improvement goals should be focused on improving student outcomes. While we recognize that we’ll need to change adult practices and implement new strategies first, the ultimate outcome of those actions should be to improve measures of student success and achievement.

If you really focus on each part of the SMART goal with intention, you can ensure that your goals and your action plan are equity-driven.

In order to set SMART goals for your school improvement plan, you’ll want to review goals that you’ve set in the past and reflect on whether those goals are still relevant or need to be revised. You may consider looking at your SIP from the last school year, your Annual Evaluation of your most recent SIP, and any relevant or updated student outcome data.

Check out Activity 2: Setting Goals on page 20 for a facilitation plan to guide this process with your team.

Each letter of the SMART acronym is broken down on the next page, with tips to keep in mind. While you engage in goal setting, keep asking yourself whether achieving these goals will really disrupt The Status Quo.

What About a Comprehensive Needs Assessment?

In the past, schools have been asked to complete a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) every year and then set goals based on that assessment. For Title compliance, a CNA is only required the first year a school receives Title I funding. Schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under ESSA were required to complete a CNA during 2018-19. Completing a CNA, though, will help any school choose meaningful goals and strategies to include in their SIP. Reach out to school.improvement@mpls.k12.mn.us if you’d like more information on how to plan and complete a CNA at your school.
As you work through **Activity 2: Setting Goals**, keep the SMART part in mind:

**S**
Specific

**M**
Measurable

**A**
Attainable

**R**
Relevant

**T**
Time-bound

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**Which students?**
Pick a specific group of students to target. You can select more than one group. *(Tip: Even if a strategy is designed to impact all students, you can still be focused on the outcomes for a target group)*

**How many? How much?**
How will you measure progress? How much of an impact do you want to have? *(Tip: Could be a percentage or a raw number)*

**Is it possible?**
How did similar students do last year? What is ambitious, but achievable? *(Tip: Figure out how many actual students would make up a percentage point change in your measure)*

**What’s the bigger picture?**
Will achieving this goal have greater impacts for students or the school? How will achieving this goal achieve equity?

**By when?**
When do you expect to achieve this result? It’s okay to set a goal that is further out than one school year, but be specific. *(Tip: If the goal is more than a year away, how will you monitor progress toward it in the meantime?)*

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**Example SMART Goal:**
The percentage of African American students who are proficient on the MCA Reading test in 3rd grade will increase from 32% to 50% by 2020-2021, representing an increase of about 30 additional students proficient.

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**SMART goals? Why bother? Who cares if you aren’t specific about what you’re trying to achieve for students? The Status Quo is just fine.**
Activity 2: Setting Goals

Materials: Pens/pencils; scratch paper
- Copies of the Setting Goals worksheet (Appendix B)

Purpose: Setting goals is the first step to aligning your action plan and selecting your improvement strategies. You need goals to align your work across systems and understand whether you’re getting to your vision of success and equity.

Process:
1. Have as many copies of the Setting Goals worksheet as needed. You can fill one sheet out as a team, or have people work as individuals or in smaller groups first.
2. Think as a team about the challenges that you’ve identified in past years, your SIP goals last year, and how well you did at making progress toward those goals. Decide on the key areas that you want to set goals around based on this previous work. You don’t want to set too many goals, because it will be hard to maintain focus on too many things at once. **Three goals is an ideal number.** Think about setting goals around both student achievement and engagement. You should set goals that will be key levers for closing achievement gaps and achieving your vision of success for all students.
3. Complete the Setting Goals worksheet. If individuals or small groups did work on their own, have them share out with the full team before building consensus around your final list of goals.
   - **Tip:** As people work on the worksheet, they can look at the Goal Setting page in the SIP Portal to see the recommended goal categories and student outcome measures that can be used when setting goals.
3. Debrief at the end to help team members process. Consider using the following questions:
   - Which goal are you most excited about working on this year? Which do you think you can personally make a difference on in your own work?
   - Which goal are you most anxious about working on this year? Why? What can we do to help make sure that it becomes a goal that everyone is excited about?
   - What will be smooth in attaining this goal and what might we expect as a barrier to achieving it?
   - How do you think the school community will react to these goals? How can we create buy-in with our whole community about reaching these goals?
Selecting Strategies

Your goals are the **why**. Next you need to identify the **what**. What will you do to achieve your goals?

At the start of this Guidebook, we looked at our theory of change:

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Once you know **what** you’re trying to implement, you can focus on putting the necessary infrastructure and supports in place, and then you can monitor the level of fidelity and change course when needed.

Sometimes those middle pieces of the equation are missing because the adults who we’re expecting to implement a new strategy or change their practice don’t understand what they’re being asked to do. Have you ever experienced that as a school leader, teacher, or staff member? It can be really frustrating when you feel urgency to do better for your students, but you don’t know what it is that you’re supposed to do.

We can turn to best practices from implementation science to understand what you need for each of your selected improvement strategies:

1. A clear definition of what the strategy is, including what outcomes can be expected
2. A clear identification of the strategy’s essential features, which must be in place in order to expect that you’ll get the meaningful change you want to see; often referred to as core components
3. Operational definitions of the strategy’s essential functions that describe what someone is doing or saying when implementing with fidelity; this is most often done through the use of practice profiles
4. A practical way to assess whether staff are implementing the core components with fidelity (i.e. for progress monitoring); should use the most efficient and effective way to look for the strategy in practice

“To improve student outcomes on a useful scale, WHAT we are trying to do needs to be teachable, learnable, doable, and assessable in typical education settings.”

- The National Implementation Research Network’s [Active Implementation Hub](https://www.nirp.org/active)

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2 Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network’s [Active Implementation Hub](https://www.nirp.org/active); In implementation science literature, strategies are also referred to as usable innovations or usable interventions
You’ll need to have figured out those four essential things before you’ll be ready to install and implement a strategy, the two stages of the implementation process that are the focus of the next section this Guidebook. Even if a strategy in your improvement plan isn’t new to your school, you’ll need to make sure you have those four things figured out before moving forward.

**MPS strategic priorities**

At the start of the 2017-18 school year, Superintendent Ed Graff made clear the strategic priorities for the district: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Literacy, and Equity. Practices within each of these areas have a strong basis in research, and if implemented with fidelity, will support increased student achievement for all students and the closing of persistent achievement gaps.

While many schools named one or more of these priorities as a strategy in their school improvement plans for 2017-18, schools requested more specific guidance on how to operationalize them in practice. Simply, those four things on the previous page that we said are essential to figure out before trying to implement had yet to be clearly communicated.

Recognizing that the groundwork hadn’t been laid to support schools with implementing the district’s strategic priorities, cross-departmental teams worked throughout the spring of 2018 to develop Implementation Toolkits for each of them, which provide definitional tools and break down the implementation process into manageable chunks of work for school teams. Cross-departmental teams are continuing to add content and resources to the Toolkits each year.

*Schools are again expected to select either MTSS or Balanced Literacy, and either SEL or Equity in 2019-20.* As Balanced Literacy is only relevant to grades PK-5, secondary schools will all focus on MTSS in their school improvement plans in 2019-20, in addition to either SEL or Equity. Schools are free to select more than two of the Toolkits to work on.
Once you’ve identified which of the Implementation Toolkits you’ll include as strategies in your school improvement plan, you’ll need to determine what other strategies - if any - to also include.

**Selecting other strategies**

It can be tempting to load up your school improvement plan with lots and lots of strategies. We want our stakeholders to know that we’re working hard to improve outcomes for students, and doing more is always an indication of working harder, right? School improvement plans can also become loaded with too many strategies during times of scarcity. Maybe if I can get something related to my role into the school improvement plan, then I’ll be more likely to be seen as essential.

But the best practice, for all kinds of organizations - not just schools, is to be as focused as possible. Mike Schmoker does a great job of making this case in his book, *Leading with Focus: Elevating the Essentials for School and District Improvement.* It’s all about finding out what is essential as the first step, and then obsessively focusing our stakeholders on those essentials.

Your school improvement plan is not meant to document everything that your school does. There are lots of things that adults in your building do that are aligned to your SIP goals, but that doesn’t mean that you should consider them all school improvement strategies.

Your school improvement strategies are the things that your leadership teams are going to spend their limited time together installing, implementing, and progress monitoring. Only the strategies that you’ll have the capacity to engage with meaningfully in that process should end up named as an improvement strategy in your SIP.

“Success hinges on how much time we can devote to ensuring mastery and successful implementation of any new practice, especially during the early stage. When will we learn that even one new initiative requires far more time for training, practicing, and monitoring than leaders typically allot?”

- Mike Schmoker, *Leading with Focus*
**Activity 3: Selecting MPS Priorities**

**Materials:** Pens/pencils; scratch paper
- Copies of selecting MPS priorities worksheet (Appendix C)
- Optional: One-page handouts that summarize priority Implementation Toolkits, there is one for Elementary and one for Secondary.

**Purpose:** For 2019-20, schools are expected to select at least two of the Implementation Toolkits to incorporate as school improvement strategies. This activity will support the selection of the MPS strategic priorities. Schools should select either MTSS or Balanced Literacy (note: Balanced Literacy is only relevant for grades PK-5, so secondary schools will all be selecting MTSS), and either SEL or Equity.

**Process:**
Ensure that prior to this meeting you’ve clearly determined how a decision will be made, and that you communicate this to participants at the start. Will they be giving input to someone who is the ultimate decision maker? Will they be voting and going with the majority? Will they need to come to a unanimous decision?
- For majority vote consider using: Dot Voting, or Forced-Choice Stickers
- For unanimous consensus consider using: Six-Position Straw Poll
- To focus discussion consider using: Criteria Matrix

1. Welcome everyone and explain the purpose of engaging in this activity. Ensure that all participants understand the expectations that have been set regarding alignment between school improvement plans, the district’s strategic priorities, and the Implementation Toolkits.
2. Handout copies of the Selecting MPS Priorities Worksheet (Appendix C). Determine whether the group will complete the reflection as a large group, as small groups, or as individuals. Consider having participants reflect individually, then pair-share, and then share out with the large group.
   - Ensure that people know where to find the Implementation Toolkits. The link is posted on the landing page of the staff intranet. Or ensure that everyone has a copy of the one-page summaries, which are linked above under “Materials.”
3. Once the group has reflected on each of the Implementation Toolkits using the worksheet, facilitate a large group discussion and employ the decision-making process that you identified at the start of the meeting.
4. After you’ve selected the MPS priorities/Implementation Toolkits that you’ll incorporate in your SIP this year, consider using the following discussion questions:
   - Which of the priorities that we’ve selected are you most excited about supporting this year? Why?
   - Which of the priorities that we’ve selected are you most nervous about supporting this year? Why?
   - If there are barriers we’re anticipating when it comes to one of the priorities, how can we try to overcome them?
   - If we were successful in putting these strategies into place with fidelity at our school, how would things be different for students? For their families? For us?
You may decide that your school has the capacity to work on more than two of the Implementation Toolkits, and you want to include at least one other strategy in your School Improvement Plan. If that’s the case, then you’ll want to be very thoughtful about selecting additional strategies, and then laying the groundwork to ensure that you have what’s necessary to be able to install, implement, and progress monitor.

Check out Activity 4: Assessing Other Strategies on page 26 for a facilitation plan to guide this process with your team.

If you’re looking for ideas for evidence-based practices, one of the best resources is the What Works Clearinghouse. A source for SEL specific strategies is the CASEL guide.

In order to be able to engage in the installation and initial implementation process with any other strategies, you’ll need those four essential things that we know from implementation science:

1. A clear definition of what the strategy is and what outcomes can be expected
2. A clear identification of the strategy’s essential features, or core components
3. Operational definitions of the strategy’s essential functions, or practice profiles
4. A practical way to assess whether staff are implementing the core components with fidelity, or progress monitoring tools

It will likely take some time to find or create those things, which is another reason to limit the number of strategies you select.

You can find guidance on defining a strategy, identifying its core components, creating practice profiles, and turning practice profiles into progress monitoring tools here (also linked in the Resources section at the end of this Guidebook). The guidance includes tips for facilitating the development of these key pieces with a team, as well as templates for things like practice profiles and progress monitoring tools.
**Activity 4: Assessing Other Strategies**

**Materials:** Pens/pencils; scratch paper
- Copies of the hexagon tool (Appendix D)
- Optional: Research or other literature on the strategies under consideration

**Purpose:** In addition to the MPS strategic priorities that you’ve selected to include in your school improvement plan, you may also want or need to include additional evidence-based strategies. Before selecting additional strategies, you’ll want to assess them as a team. Remember, not everything your school does belongs in your SIP as an improvement strategy. You may identify a curriculum, program, or other activity that you’ll continue or start this year that isn’t included as a strategy in your SIP.

**Process:**
Prior to a meeting where you’ll engage in a collaborative assessment of other strategies, it is important to identify what strategies are under consideration. You may want to ask the team, or specific people on the team, to conduct some research or review materials ahead of time. You could also consider asking team members to come with the Hexagon Tool (Appendix D) already filled out for each the strategies, so that your meeting together can go more quickly. Also, identify ahead of time - and communicate at the start of the meeting - what the decision-making process will be for selecting additional strategies. Will team members give input to someone who is the ultimate decision-maker? Will the team vote and go with the majority? Will the team average their scores on the Hexagon Tool and go with whatever strategy has the highest overall score? Will there need to be unanimous consensus? Or will you use another decision-making process?

1. Welcome everyone and ensure they understand the purpose of the meeting. Make sure they also all understand the decision-making process that will be employed to select any additional strategies for your SIP. Identify each of the strategies under consideration, and ensure that participants have the information, or access to resources to find the information, that they’ll need to use the Hexagon Tool.
2. Handout the Hexagon Tool copies: one per person, per strategy under consideration. (You may want to have people complete these ahead of time). Determine whether participants will work as individuals, in small groups, or as a large group.
3. Ask participants to use the Hexagon Tool for each strategy under consideration, to assign point values based on the criteria.
4. After participants have had time to assign point values, ask them to share their overall reflections and impressions with a partner. Then engage in a full-group discussion about the Hexagon Tool process and overall impressions of the strategies.
5. Employ the decision-making process that has been determined ahead of time to share out scores for each of the strategies under consideration, and determine which, if any of the strategies will be included in your SIP as school improvement strategies.
6. After the decision is made, engage the team in a reflective discussion about the selected strategies. Consider using similar questions from Activity 3 (page 24).
Installing & Implementing

The real improvement work begins once you’ve selected and defined your school improvement strategies, and broken down each strategy into a number of core components.

Implementation stages
Throughout the year, as a leadership team working on putting an improvement strategy into place, you’ll cycle through specific steps of the installation and initial implementation stages of the implementation process.

Implementation science has identified four stages of implementation to attend to, which are explained briefly below:

1. **Exploration Stage**: During this stage, you identify a current challenge and the root cause. Then, you research strategies that could address the root cause and assess each for fit and feasibility. Finally, you select the strategy that you want to implement and communicate the selection to stakeholders to generate buy-in.

2. **Installation Stage**: During the Installation Stage, you lay the groundwork necessary for successful implementation. Before you can expect adults to be able to put the new strategy into place, they need to understand what it is and receive training, resources, and any other necessary supports. In this stage, you also determine how to progress monitor to look for successful implementation.

3. **Initial Implementation Stage**: During the Initial Implementation Stage, you begin progress monitoring to look for where the new strategy is and is not being put into practice with fidelity. Based on the evidence, you determine who needs additional coaching, training, or other support and how best to provide it. You keep monitoring until the majority of adults implementing the new practice are doing so with fidelity.

4. **Full Implementation Stage**: You know you’ve reached the Full Implementation Stage when the practice becomes a fully integrated part of “how things are done,” and the practice is integrated fully across all levels. At this stage, your focus shifts to sustainability, making sure that fidelity doesn’t slip over time, especially during transitions or changes in staffing.

While they are presented above in a way that makes them look linear, the stages of implementation should be seen as iterative, and steps that are cycled through multiple times, especially when you’re implementing something complex.

The recommended process that you’ll find outlined in this Guidebook, which is also reflected in the SIP Portal and on The Source, is to cycle quickly through the installation and initial implementation stages multiple times, for each core component of a strategy.

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3 Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network’s Active Implementation Hub
Instead of trying to install, implement, and progress monitor a complex framework or system, like MTSS, all at once - you’ll tackle one core component at a time. That is why it is so important to start out having already defined the strategy, broken it down into core components, and identified what those core components look like in practice when they’re done with fidelity. This importance will become more apparent when we walk through the smaller steps of the installation and initial implementation stages in more detail later in this section.

**What about exploration?**

But first, a little more about the exploration stage. When it comes to the four MPS strategic priorities, most of the exploration stage activities are already done. The district identified specific challenges, researched solutions, and selected the strategic priorities to tackle root cause issues that we believe to be at the heart of inequitable disparities in academic achievement and other measures of student success. You can find the research behind each of the priorities and the MPS challenges that each is expected to address on the Definitional Tools page of each Toolkit.

In the Implementation Toolkits, you’ll notice that both MTSS and Balanced Literacy have a small set of core components identified for schools to focus on installing and implementing first (Phase I). Additional core components will be identified and built out in the Toolkits for future school years. Both MTSS and Balanced Literacy are large frameworks, not just small interventions, and therefore have many core components and it will take multiple years to get to full implementation of all of them. The Toolkits themselves explain why the Phase I core components were selected as starting places for these priorities.

When it comes to SEL and Equity, you’ll notice that these Implementation Toolkits actually start with exploration stage activities to complete, before moving on to installing and implementing adult SEL core components (in the case of SEL), or selecting one of three strategies to work through with staff (in the case of Equity). This is a reflection of both where MPS is as a district when it comes to SEL and Equity practices, and also where the field of research is currently, especially in the case of SEL.

While we know from research that the SEL skills of both adults and students has a profound impact on school outcomes, the academic field studying SEL is still debating whether and how to develop and measure them. Through our relationship with the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)], MPS is in a position to be part of that work, with the potential to become a model for schools and districts around the country, and around the world.
The first several exploration activities in the SEL and Equity Implementation Toolkits are similar, starting with establishing or identifying a team, norming that team, and establishing common understanding across staff and the school community. These are called activities, because you aren’t going to cycle through installing and implementing them - they’re just steps that must be accomplished to lay the groundwork before moving on.

You may find that you’re still in the exploration stage with one or more of your own strategies. You may have identified a challenge and root cause, and are considering a potential intervention or strategy to address it, but aren’t yet ready to install and implement the practice. That’s okay! The exploration stage is essential, if you’re going to end up with the meaningful change you want to see: remember, the first part of our theory of change equation is that you have the right evidence-based strategy aligned to your goal.

If you’re still in your own exploration stage, keep in mind that the SIP Portal is designed to support you in working through the installation and initial implementation stages with specific core components of other strategies, beyond the MPS strategic priorities. So, you’ll likely want to hold off on putting a strategy into your SIP until you’re done with the exploration stage and you’ve defined the strategy and broken it into specific core components (as described in this guiding document). You may be ready part way through the school year and want to add it to your SIP then, or you may decide to wait until the next school year and make sure that you’ve budgeted for the resources and supports you’ll need to successfully implement.

Rapid cycles of improvement

In order to get to full implementation of a complex practice, you’ll cycle through the installation and initial implementation stages multiple times. The activities involved in this process are displayed graphically on the next page and are explained in more detail in the rest of this section. There are also protocols, starting on page 38, that can be used at leadership team meetings throughout the year as you work through these steps. The relevant protocols are identified after the discussion of each step. The steps of a rapid cycle of improvement mirror what you’ll be asked to summarize in the SIP Portal online for each of your improvement strategies.

**Documenting Rapid Cycles of Improvement Using the SIP Portal**

Unlike 2018-19, in 2019-20 you will not be asked to document every step of a rapid cycle of improvement in detail in the SIP Portal. Instead, you will provide a brief summary of each rapid cycle step, after you complete that step for one of your SIP strategies. Your leadership teams should still take notes on your school improvement plans and progress, but you no longer need to keep those notes in the SIP Portal. One option for planning and tracking rapid cycles with your leadership teams is to use a Strategy Implementation Guide Google Doc, which you can find [here](#) and in the SIP Portal.
Installation & Initial Implementation
A Rapid Cycle of Improvement

**Installation Step 1:** Anticipate, Communicate, Elicit, and Plan for Needed Supports, Training, and Resources

After identifying the core component that you’re working to install and implement, you’ll need to establish a common understanding across your leadership team of what the core component is and what you’d see someone doing or saying when they’re implementing with fidelity (i.e., meeting the expected practice, which is defined in the practice profile).

As a leadership team, you’ll anticipate the professional development, resources, or other supports that staff who are expected to demonstrate this practice will need. In addition to anticipating as a leadership team what people might need, you also need to elicit these ideas directly from them. This will entail communicating with staff about the core component and actually showing them the practice profile.
Ask them, what do you need to be able to meet the expected practice? Once they tell you, and you’ve anticipated other needs they may not have thought about, create a plan for how you’ll deliver to staff. The following protocols can be used at team meetings to support this step:

- **Protocol 1**: Establishing Common Understanding & Anticipating Needs (pp. 38-39)
- **Protocol 2**: Eliciting Needs from Staff (p. 40)
- **Protocol 3**: Planning to Address Needs (pp. 41-42)

**Installation Step 2: Deliver Needed Supports, Training, and Resources**

Once you have a plan, act on it. Deliver professional development, coach people, give them tools or resources they need, let them observe someone who’s already meeting the expected practice. After you’ve delivered on your plan, reflect on how it went. Get feedback from staff. Make sure they’re ready to show you the practice in action and that the majority of them feel they’ve got everything they need to be successful. If the majority of your staff don’t seem ready, plan for how to address their needs; this may require another round of eliciting their needs. If the majority of your staff seem ready to go, you can move on to the next step, but may need to plan for how to bring specific people along as you move into progress monitoring, potentially through individualized coaching.

**Installation is essential!**

At the start of this Guidebook, we talked about that vicious cycle of selecting the next great idea, the thing that’s finally going to move the needle, and then abandoning it when we don’t see the needle moving.

That can easily happen if we fail to provide the folks that we’re asking to do the work with the things that they really need, like a clear understanding of what they’re supposed to do and the training they need on how to do it well. For good reason, we can also alienate people and make them defensive, if we show up to do a learning walk or otherwise check to see if they’re implementing something that they don’t feel prepared to do. Just like in good teaching, we don’t give a final exam on something we aren’t sure we’ve taught, and we collect evidence throughout the process of teaching to make sure.

Remember, we want continuous improvement to be something that we do with people, not to them. Installation Steps 1 and 2 are all about making that happen.

**Installation Step 3: Set a Goal and Make a Plan for Progress Monitoring**

Before you start progress monitoring, you need to set a goal. Your goal should be a percentage of your staff (just the ones who are expected to be implementers) that should be able to meet the expected practice of the core component (i.e., when you observe or look for the practice, what you see and hear reflects the “expected practice” column of the practice profile).
Plan to set a goal between 60-80%. Yes, you want 100% of people to eventually meet the expected practice, but once you get to a majority, others will begin to pick it up more quickly. And you don’t want your improvement process to get slowed down by a couple of people, who are new to the building or may just need some more one-on-one support.

Once you have a goal, you’ll determine your plan for progress monitoring, including what tool you will use and how you will communicate this plan to staff. You need to communicate this plan to staff. You don’t want anyone to feel caught off-guard when you show up to observe or ask to review planning documents. There is a protocol your team can use for planning:

- **Protocol 4**: Developing a Progress Monitoring Plan (pp. 43-44)

**Initial Implementation: Progress Monitoring**

Once you’ve made it through the installation stage, you’re ready to start progress monitoring, which means you’re entering initial implementation.

The core components in the Toolkits, and the guidance for identifying core components for any other strategies, intentionally limit the number of critical elements within a core component because this will make your progress monitoring cycle shorter. With 3-4 critical elements in a core component, you can plan on about a 6-week progress monitoring cycle. With more critical elements, plan for more time for progress monitoring.

Each time you progress monitor, you’re measuring whether you’ve met your goal. You’re determining what percent of staff are meeting the expected practice. If after a round of progress monitoring you’ve met your goal, great! You’re ready to move on. If after a round of progress monitoring you have not met your goal, then it’s time to reflect as a leadership team on where the successes and challenges are, and how you’ll address the barriers that are standing in the way of more people meeting the expected practice on all of the critical elements of a core component.

If you haven’t met your goal, you should not just turn around and progress monitor again. You’ll likely find the same result. If the majority of staff aren’t meeting the expected practice yet, you’ll need to take action. You may need to elicit more feedback on what people need. Do a few people need some individualized coaching? Do some folks need to observe those people who are meeting the expected practice? Did you miss something during installation, and it turns out there is a specific material that most people don’t have?
You’ll need to address why you think you haven’t met your goal by providing additional training, supports, or resources. Then you can progress monitor again.

Progress monitoring will also allow you to identify which staff members or teachers are excelling. You may find a particular grade level or team is reaching the expected practice sooner than others. Tap into these people as a resource for developing the skills of others. Utilize them as coaches or have other people observe them in action.

Why plan for 6 weeks of progress monitoring? After you’ve completed the installation stage steps and given people a chance to start putting a core component into practice, you’ll collect progress monitoring evidence, identify areas of need, and address them. Then you’ll want to give people a couple of weeks to improve their practice before progress monitoring again. You’ll repeat this process until you’ve met your goal.

Use the following protocol as a leadership team when reflecting on progress monitoring evidence to determine next steps:

- **Protocol 5: Reviewing Progress Monitoring Data (p. 45)**

**Initial Implementation: Reflection**

When your progress monitoring evidence indicates that you’ve met your goal, you’ll want to reflect as a team on your successes, challenges, and what’s needed to sustain this new practice that you’ve successfully put into place. You can use the following protocol when you reach this point:

- **Protocol 6: Reflecting Once You’ve Met Your Goal (p. 46)**

**We reached our implementation goal. Now what?**

First, make sure you take time to communicate this success to your staff! They have put in a lot of hard work to get to this achievement, and they should be acknowledged.

It’s important for staff to feel invested in the progress monitoring around continuous school improvement. *And progress monitoring, if done well, can itself produce a virtuous cycle of increasing collective efficacy, thus inspiring further investment in the improvement process.* Collective teacher efficacy is the “perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students” (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy 2000). Research on collective efficacy has found it to be better at predicting student achievement than prior achievement and socio-economic status.
A progress monitoring and communication plan that allows for recognition of positive success toward short-term outcomes should lead to increased collective efficacy. When people are able to see that something is working, and point to their role in that improvement, they’ll continue to re-invest in the continuous improvement process.

*Now that you’ve got at least one core component of a strategy mastered by a majority of staff, you’re ready to move on to identifying the next core component to install and implement.*

However, you’ll probably need to do some periodic maintenance, even on core components that have been successfully implemented.

In order to truly get to full implementation, where the practice is fully integrated and has become part of “how we do things“ at the school, people who haven’t yet reached mastery may need one-on-one coaching.

You’ll also want to check-up regularly on whether those folks who did reach mastery are maintaining fidelity. One way to do this would be to add “look-fors” from the practice profile into a learning walk. Unlike a progress monitoring tool, where you’re focusing on a limited number of critical elements and not paying attention to anything else, a learning walk allows for monitoring a wider range of practices or actions.

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**While we’re focused on an improvement cycle for one core component at a time, we can still be implementing other core components (or the whole practice).**

A really common question when tackling a rapid cycle of improvement is, “So, are we supposed to stop doing what we were doing?” When we’re talking about implementing a large school-wide framework, which may not be brand-new to the school, the answer is: “No! Keep doing what you’re doing, but focus your efforts as a leadership team on improving one core component at a time.”

For example, if Balanced Literacy is one of your improvement strategies, your teachers will continue to incorporate all parts of the framework into their literacy block, to the best of their abilities. You’re just working with them to get to full fidelity of implementation with one chunk of the framework at a time.

You may also find that you don’t reach your implementation goal on the first round of progress monitoring, but won’t have a chance to progress monitor again for awhile. For example, in the MTSS Elementary Implementation Toolkit, Data Dives & Diagnostics is the second core component. You may find that in your Fall Data Dive, a majority of your staff can’t meet the expected practice. You won’t be able to see if the additional support and training you give them during and following the Fall Data Dive has been effective until the Winter Data Dive. That’s okay! In the meantime, you can still move on to the next core component, which is Long-Term Instructional Cycle. Working on more than one core component at a time, in cases like these, is also okay!
Once staff have been supported through the installation and initial implementation cycle, and their success has been communicated, it would be appropriate to add their newly mastered practice to a learning walk.

Whether using learning walks or other fidelity checks, once a core component has been mastered by most staff, it should be a pretty quick and easy to address when fidelity of implementation has slipped. It may just take a gentle reminder in a communication to all staff.

New for 2019-20: Implementation Check-Ins

Starting in the 2019-20 school year, district school improvement staff (either a Network Team DPF or another member of the school improvement team) will facilitate quarterly implementation check-in meetings with school administrators. These quarterly meetings, which will be held at school sites, will include time to discuss sites’ progress monitoring data & plans and to provide support to sites on documenting their school improvement process using the SIP Portal.

These meetings are not meant to be evaluative. They are a chance for school improvement staff to co-interpret progress monitoring data with school leaders, to provide progress monitoring coaching as necessary, and to improve & align district support for schools.

What about looking at student data?

So far, we haven’t mentioned looking at student data as part of the progress monitoring process. To some people, that may be a relief - especially if you or people on your staff feel like looking at student outcome data doesn’t show you the whole picture. To others, that may be concerning - how do we keep students at the center, and keep our focus on urgent challenges we see in student outcomes, if we don’t look at that data on a regular basis to see if we’re having an impact?

This section on how to install and implement an improvement strategy is largely focused on progress monitoring changes in adult behavior. If we look back at our theory of change equation, we know that we need to put the right infrastructure in place and implement with fidelity before we’ll expect meaningful change in student outcomes. And we acknowledged that is often the part we neglect.

By breaking down a complex strategy into its core components and then painstakingly working to install and implement them one at a time means that we probably won’t see an immediate change in student outcomes. Whether we see or don’t see a change over the short-run is inconsequential if we don’t know why, and we won’t know why unless we’re measuring fidelity of implementation.
The SIP Portal, and this Guidebook, recommend that you look at your student outcome data when you set your goals and again during your Annual Evaluation of your SIP, which is covered in the next section. You’re welcome to review student outcome data on a more regular basis as part of your continuous improvement process, but you should do that while keeping in mind the evidence you have of whether or not adults are effectively implementing your improvement strategy/ies, which is how the Annual Evaluation is designed.

Think about the appropriate timing of reviewing student data by considering the level. Reviewing student data, both formative and summative, should be a regular practice of any teacher and of teacher teams. A teacher uses assessments, both formal and informal, to identify the success of her instruction and adjusts course when needed.

Those adjustments make an impact that can likely be measured immediately, potentially as early as her next assessment. A teacher team that is trying out a collective practice may reflect regularly throughout the year on the impact on all of their students by using shared assessments, maybe on a monthly or quarterly basis.

You’ll likely find that when it comes to improving instruction, something you’ll be working to improve as a leadership team is the regular reflection on evidence of student thinking and learning by individual teachers and teacher teams. This is foundational to both the MTSS and Balanced Literacy Implementation Toolkits.

When we get to the level of the whole school, change takes more time (think about all of the steps of our installation and implementation cycle), and the opportunities to look at student outcomes on measures that are common across all students happen less frequently. So, the data you’ll focus on as a leadership team most often is the evidence you have on whether staff are improving their practices. Less often, you’ll turn to your student data to see whether those improved practices are impacting students in the way you expect.

Unfortunately, school leaders are often forced to assess the effectiveness of improvement strategies half-way through the school year, so that plans can be made to support existing or new initiatives during the budgeting process, which starts as early as December at a district level. You may find that you’ll need to look at student outcomes earlier than you’d like, and if that’s the case, consider using the process described in the next section of this Guidebook.
But wringing my hands over student data and leaving without knowing what to do about it is my favorite!

Shifting mindsets - including our own - to progress monitoring *process* in addition to, and more often than, *results* may be difficult, but it’s the only way we’ll break free of the “flavor of the month” and make real change for students. It will also ensure that we aren’t just gazing at disparities in student achievement, but taking ownership over the role that we all play as individuals, and as a system, in those student outcomes - and identifying concrete things we each can, and must, do to make our educational system more equitable and responsive to our students and our communities.

**What if we’re already at expected practice for a core component?**

You should install and implement every core component for any school improvement strategy you include in your school improvement plan, using the process described in this guidebook. If you believe that you don’t need to go through a rapid cycle of improvement for a core component because staff are already meeting expected practice, use Protocol 7 (on page 47) to do a fidelity check before saying it is fully implemented in the SIP Portal. If you completed a rapid cycle for that core component in 2018-19, you do not need to do a fidelity check using Protocol 7.
### Protocol 1: Establishing a Common Understanding and Anticipating Needs

**Purpose:** Once your team has identified a core component of an evidence-based strategy that needs to be installed and implemented, this protocol can be used at a leadership team meeting to establish a common understanding of the practice, modify the practice profile (if needed), and generate a list of what the team anticipates other staff will need to be able to meet the expected practice. Finally, team members will leave prepared to elicit needs directly from colleagues outside of the team.

**Outcomes:**
- Review the practice profile for the selected core component to establish common understanding
- Generate a list of anticipated training, resources, or other supports that staff will need to be able to meet the expected practice on all critical elements of the core component
- Plan for how to elicit the needs of staff outside of the team

**Materials:**
- Hard copies of the practice profile for the core component (you can have electronic access, but a hard copy will allow people to take notes)
- Pens/pencils
- Optional: Post-it notes and chart paper

**Roles:**
- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opening</strong></td>
<td>Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes.</td>
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| **Review Practice Profile** | Handout copies of the practice profile for the selected core component. Ask team members to silently review the practice profile, marking it according to the following criteria:  
- Put a “C” next to anything that you have a clarifying question about - you just need more information or a definition of the term  
- Put a “B” next to anything that you have a “big” question about - a probing or reflective question that is in need of discussion  
- Put a “R” next to anything that you think needs to be revised or changed in order to make it more reflective of our school’s context, values, or way of doing things  
- In the margins, start a list of training topics, specific materials or resources, or other supports that you think staff who are asked to meet the expected practice will need before they’ll be able to do it |
| **Answer Clarifying Questions** | Once team members have reflected individually, have them pair up with someone else to share their questions and reflections.  
- If partners can answer clarifying questions, then cross them off  
- Between partners, identify the “biggest” of the big questions that you think need to be answered  
- Between partners, identify how you might revise or change the practice profile (without diluting the research-based practice) so that it is more reflective of our school  
- Compare lists of training, materials, resources, or other supports that you think staff will need, and prioritize the top five things that are most essential |
| **Discuss Big Questions** | Once partners have had a chance to share, open up the discussion to the large group. First, focus on answering clarifying questions that couldn’t be answered during partner sharing. Make note of any clarifying questions that the large group cannot answer, and plan for who will find the answer and how they will report back to the team.  
Next, turn to the biggest of the big questions that each pair identified. First, share out all of them across the group (consider using post-it notes). Group common questions or themes together. From your list, identify how many you think the group can answer during your time together, and prioritize the most important to the group. Discuss the prioritized questions. Make note of any questions that the group cannot answer or come to consensus on. Plan for how you will follow-up on those sticky questions. |

*Continued on the next page...*
**Protocol 1: Establishing a Common Understanding and Anticipating Needs**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Identify Revisions</strong></td>
<td>Next, have partners share out the things that they think should be revised in the practice profile. Be careful to consider any potential changes, ensuring that they won’t dilute the impact of the practice. Easy revisions that find quick consensus among the group can be changed immediately. More time-consuming revisions may require a sub-committee or a specific person using time outside of the meeting to draft a revision to bring back to the larger group. If revisions will take place outside of the meeting, identify who is responsible, a deadline, and how the revision will be shared back to the team.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipate Needs</strong></td>
<td>Finally, have partners share out their top five training topics, resources, materials, or other supports they think are necessary to ensure all staff can meet the expected practice (consider using post-it notes or chart paper). Eliminate duplicates or group common themes. Keep this list, which will be added to after group members elicit needs from other staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan for Next Steps</strong></td>
<td>The next step of the installation process is to elicit needs directly from staff who will be asked to put the practice to use. Decide how the larger staff will be engaged and who on the team will be responsible.</td>
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<td>• For example, each team member can plan on taking the practice profile to their next department meeting and use <strong>Protocol 2: Eliciting Needs from Staff</strong>. Then they will return to the next leadership team meeting with a list to share.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leave having clearly identified any other next steps generated during the meeting (clarifying questions, big questions, revisions), who is responsible, and how those action items will be completed and communicated back to the team. <strong>You will need to make any necessary revisions to the practice profile before moving on to the next step of eliciting needs from staff.</strong></td>
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<td>Ensure team members understand their roles and responsibilities for collecting feedback from colleagues, and how to effectively communicate about the strategy and the core component when talking to colleagues.</td>
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Protocol 2: Eliciting Needs from Staff

**Purpose:** This protocol should be used by team members in order to elicit ideas for needed training, materials, resources, or other supports directly from the staff who will be asked to meet the expected practice for the identified core component of an evidence-based strategy. It will likely be most efficient for team members to divide the work, by taking this protocol to a department or grade-level meeting, or other opportunity to engage their colleagues, and then reporting back at a leadership team meeting about what they hear. Alternatively, this protocol could be used by an administrator or other teacher leader a staff meeting to elicit needs from all staff at once.

**Outcomes:**
- Review the practice profile for the selected core component to establish common understanding
- Generate a list of training, resources, or other supports that staff say they need to be able to meet the expected practice on all critical elements of the core component

**Materials:**
- Hard copies of the practice profile for the core component (you can have electronic access, but a hard copy will allow people to take notes)
- Pens/pencils
- Optional: An electronic standardized template for documenting the needs identified by participants

**Roles:**
- Facilitator/Note taker
- Timekeeper

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<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Make sure participants understand the purpose and intended outcomes of taking the time to engage in the meeting. Make sure participants know ahead of time who else is being engaged in the same process and how they can expect follow-up on what they identify as their needs.</td>
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<td>Establish for participants which evidence-based school improvement strategy is the focus of this discussion. This is an opportunity to communicate and clarify the school improvement work of the school, and the important part that staff play in that work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Practice Profile</td>
<td>Handout copies of the practice profile for the selected core component. Ask participants to silently review the practice profile, marking it according to the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Put a “C” next to anything that you have a clarifying question about - you need more information or a definition of the term</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Put a “B” next to anything that you have a “big” question about - a probing or reflective question that is in need of discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• In the margins, start a list of training topics, specific materials or resources, or other supports that you personally need to be able to meet the expected practice on all critical elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer Clarifying Questions</td>
<td>Once participants have had a chance to reflect, open up the discussion to the whole group. First, focus on answering clarifying questions. Make note of any clarifying questions that the facilitator or other participants cannot answer, and plan for who will find the answer and how they will report back to these participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss Big Questions</td>
<td>Next, ask participants to share out one “big” question each. Write down each of them, and identify where there is overlap or themes. From that list, identify how many you think the group can answer during your time together, and prioritize the most important to the group. Discuss the prioritized questions. Make note of any questions that the facilitator or participants cannot answer or come to consensus on. Plan for how you will follow-up on those sticky questions with participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Needs</td>
<td>Finally, ask participants to share out what they’ve listed as the training, materials, resources, or other support that they each need to be able to meet the expected practice on the practice profile. Identify where there is overlap or themes. While you’ll be bringing the entire list back to the leadership team, given likely limits to time and resources, ask participants to identify their highest priorities for training, materials, resources, or other supports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan for Next Steps</td>
<td>Thank participants for their feedback. Explain when the list they’ve generated will be shared with the leadership team. Explain when and how they can expect to receive communication on how needed training, resources, and support will be delivered. Explain the process that participants should go through if they don’t feel like their needs are being met.</td>
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Protocol 3: Planning to Address Needs

Purpose: After team members have elicited needs from their colleagues, the team will need to share and compile their lists. The team will need to identify commonalities and outliers, and then plan for how to address deliver on training, resources, or other supports that staff need to be able to meet the expected practice for the core component. This is an opportunity for staff to see that their voices have been heard, increasing buy-in for the continuous school improvement process.

Outcomes:
- Share out the ideas for training, resources, and support that were elicited from other staff
- Prioritize common needs across staff
- Plan for how to deliver training, resources, or other support

Materials:
- Each team member will need to bring the list of needs that they elicited from staff
- The large group list of needs identified by the leadership team before eliciting ideas from staff
- Post-it notes
- Pens/pencils/markers
- Optional: An electronic standardized template for finalizing the needs identified by team members

Roles:
- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker

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<td><strong>Opening</strong></td>
<td>Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes. Consider starting with a whip around (or another method for getting the voices of all team members into the space) where each team member shares a brief reflection on the process of engaging their colleagues in the eliciting needs protocol.</td>
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</table>
| **Pair-Share-Categorize** | Have team members pair-up. Have them share the lists that they each elicited from colleagues, finding commonality and difference. Ask pairs to combine their two lists into one list, taking care to eliminate duplicates and also categorize the needs into the following buckets:  
  - Training  
  - Materials  
  - Resources  
  - Other |
| **Share Out** | Start with the large list that was generated by the leadership team prior to eliciting needs from staff. Go around the room and ask each pair to name one need from their combined list, asking them to note which category the need falls into. As you go from pair to pair, add each need to the large group list (could be kept on chart paper, projected on a screen, or typed into a shared Google Document). Ask that no one repeats - if a pair hears someone else name something on their list, they can cross it off and don’t need to say it again. If it is already on the list from the previous meeting because it was anticipated by the leadership team, it does not need to be said again and can be crossed off pair’s lists. Go around in a circle, asking for one need at a time from each pair, until every pair has shared their entire list. Once the full list is generated, ask the team to identify an commonalities or overlap, and combine ideas if possible, or group them into themes. |
| **Optional: Prioritize** | If you think that time or resources will limit your ability to meet all needs that have been named, go through a process of prioritizing. This could be accomplished by asking each team member to look at the large list and silently write down the top 5 most important for ensuring fidelity of implementation. Then have each person pair up, and ask each pair to take their combined list of 10 and narrow it down to the top 3. Have each pair share out their top 3, eliminate duplicates, and then vote on an appropriate number based on time and resources (i.e, top 3, top 5, top 10). |

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**Protocol 3: Planning to Address Needs**

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<td><strong>Plan to Address Needs</strong></td>
<td>Once you have a final large (or prioritized) list of needs, discuss with the team how you’ll plan to deliver needed training, materials, resources, or other supports. Note the plan for each next to the need on the list. Consider how you can combine delivery of multiple needs. For example, can a professional development day or staff meeting be used to deliver training on multiple topics? Once you have planned for how to address needs, ensure that team members understand their specific roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the plan, if any.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication &amp; Next Steps</strong></td>
<td>Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear plan for communicating how needs will be addressed back to their colleagues. If a prioritization process was used to narrow down the list, ensure that all team members are prepared to communicate about that process. Have one member of the team add a brief summary of your plan for addressing staff needs to the SIP Portal on the <em>Strategy Progress Monitoring</em> page. Once you have carried out the plan for addressing staff needs, have one member of the team update the SIP Portal <em>Strategy Progress Monitoring</em> page with a brief summary of the training, resources, and/or support you provided.</td>
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Protocol 4: Developing a Progress Monitoring Plan

Purpose: After staff who are being asked to meet the expected practice of a core component of one of your school improvement strategies have been given the training, resources, or other supports that they need, you can begin progress monitoring. This protocol will support a leadership team in setting a goal for the level of implementation you want to reach and determine how to measure progress toward that goal.

Outcomes:
- Set a goal for the level of implementation to reach for the core component
- Identify or design the progress monitoring tool(s) to use
- Plan for how to conduct progress monitoring

Materials:
- Pens/pencils/markers
- Copies of the practice profile (hard copies or electronic access)
- Copies of the progress monitoring tool from the Implementation Toolkit for this core component, if available, or copies of a blank progress monitoring tool template
- Copies of Appendix G: Progress Monitoring Planning tool for note-taking

Roles:
- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker

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<td>Opening</td>
<td>Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes. Determine ahead of time how decisions will be made and clearly communicate the decision-making process to team members at the start. There needs to be a decision about the goal for implementation, as well as decisions regarding what progress monitoring tool to use and how to collect progress monitoring data. Team members should know upfront whether they are being asked to make decisions (and if so, how) or if they are being asked for input and the decisions will be made by a specific person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set a Goal</td>
<td>Ask team members to silently identify what they think is an achievable and relevant goal for the percent of staff who should be able to meet the expected practice on all critical elements of the practice profile. After team members have had a chance to think, ask them to pair up and share their response with a partner and explain their rationale. Finally, have each team member share their response with the large group. Identify the spectrum of responses and see if there seems to be consensus. Allow team members time to ask questions of their colleagues to better understand where there may be differences of opinion. Use whatever decision-making process has been identified at the start of the meeting to determine the goal that will be set. <strong>Remember:</strong> Your goal needs to be more than 50%, as you need a majority of staff meeting the expected practice before moving on to the next core component. It’s recommended that you set a goal between 60-80%.</td>
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## Protocol 4: Developing a Progress Monitoring Plan Continued...

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<tr>
<td><strong>Identify the Progress Monitoring Tool(s)</strong></td>
<td>If this is a core component from one of the Implementation Toolkits, review the progress monitoring tool provided in the Toolkit and ask the team to provide feedback on its strengths, weaknesses, and whether they would like to revise anything about it. If this is not a core component from one of the Implementation Toolkits, or if it is lacking a progress monitoring tool, have the team review the blank progress monitoring tool template as a team. Ask the team to provide feedback on its strengths, weaknesses, and whether they would like to revise anything about it. If you'll use the blank template or revise it, assign the responsibility of filling it out using the core component’s practice profile to a specific person(s). Use whatever decision-making process has been identified at the start of the meeting to determine which progress monitoring tool(s) will be used.</td>
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**Keep in mind that you’ll need both of the following:**
- A tool to identify whether an individual person is meeting the expected practice on each critical element of the core component, and if not, what are that person’s areas for growth (the tool you use during an observation or when reviewing a plan or other document)
- A tool to summarize how many - among some or all staff - are meeting the expected practice on each critical element of the core component, and if not, a summary of common areas for growth across them (the tool your leadership team uses to determine whether you’ve met your goal)

| **Create a Progress Monitoring Plan** | Discuss what the most efficient and effective way will be to use the progress monitoring tools to collect evidence of implementation, and who should take responsibility for collecting the evidence. Discuss what the most efficient and effective way will be to use the progress monitoring tools to collect evidence of implementation, and who should take responsibility for collecting the evidence.|

**Keep in mind:**
- While we often rely on observations to look for an expected practice, that may not be the most efficient and effective way to do it; consider whether you can collect planning documents or coaching notes to look for the expected practice. It is best if you can collect progress monitoring evidence on ALL staff who are implementing. If that isn’t possible, be mindful of choosing a smaller group of staff to monitor.
- The people who collect the progress monitoring data should be the ones who will be responsible for planning and/or delivering training and coaching to staff on the practice. For example, if you have an instructional coach who will need to deliver staff PD or individualized coaching on the practice, that person should collect the data. Then they will have the necessary context and will have directly seen what gaps need to be filled.
- If your team doesn’t have the capacity to observe or look for the expected practice for each staff person/teacher individually, consider whether you can have department or grade-level teams (with the support of someone from the leadership team) reflect on their practice using the progress monitoring tool and self-report whether they’re meeting the expected practice and their areas for growth. Be mindful of the limitations of self-reported data, however. A self-reflection is not a replacement for collecting rigorous progress monitoring evidence through observation or document review.
- District school improvement staff will meet with administrators at each site periodically to review progress monitoring data, and provide coaching on progress monitoring, as a way to better support sites with their school improvement work.

You’ll want to plan for who and how the data will be summarized for review by the leadership team and district staff, or whether the leadership team is the appropriate place to review the data. Especially if trust is low among staff, consider bringing un-identifiable progress monitoring data to the leadership team. Or consider having coaches, if available, and the admin team use Protocol 5 to review, plan next steps, and then present their plan to the leadership team. Use whatever decision-making process has been identified at the start of the meeting to determine the progress monitoring plan and then assign or volunteer for specific roles and responsibilities to carry out that plan. |

| **Communication & Next Steps** | Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear plan for communicating back to their colleagues when, where, and how progress monitoring will be conducted. Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear identification of any next steps, especially anything they are personally responsible for doing to carry out the progress monitoring plan. Have one member of the team add a brief summary of your progress monitoring plan to the SIP Portal on the Strategy Progress Monitoring page. |

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### Communication & Next Steps

Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear plan for communicating back to their colleagues when, where, and how progress monitoring will be conducted. Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear identification of any next steps, especially anything they are personally responsible for doing to carry out the progress monitoring plan.

Have one member of the team add a brief summary of your progress monitoring plan to the SIP Portal on the Strategy Progress Monitoring page.
Protocol 5: Reviewing Progress Monitoring Data

**Purpose:** After progress monitoring data has been collected, the team needs to determine whether the goal for implementation of the core component has been reached, and if not, what is needed to increase fidelity of implementation before the next round of progress monitoring. Progress monitoring data needs to have been collected and summarized prior to the meeting where this protocol is used.

**Outcomes:**
- Determine whether the goal for implementation of the core component has been reached
- Plan for next steps to improve fidelity of implementation

**Materials:**
- Pens/pencils/markers
- Copies of the practice profile (hard copies or electronic access)
- Summarized data from the most recent round of progress monitoring

**Roles:**
- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker

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| **Opening** | Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes.  
Determine ahead of time how decisions will be made and clearly communicate the decision-making process to team members at the start. There needs to be a decision about whether or not the goal has been met, and decisions regarding any next steps that are needed to improve fidelity of implementation prior to the next round of progress monitoring (if needed).  
Consider starting by having the team members who were involved in collecting the progress monitoring data share briefly about the experience and any insights or feedback they received from staff during the process. Note any next steps or follow-up that is needed based on what is shared. |
| **Review Progress Monitoring Data** | Review the summarized progress monitoring data as a team. Consider having team members review silently on their own, then pair-share their reflections with another person, and finally share out reflections from each pair with the large group.  
Make a determination, using whatever decision-making process has been selected, of whether or not the goal has been met for this core component. Did you achieve the percent that you wanted of staff who are meeting the expected practice on all critical elements? |
| **If Goal is Not Met: Plan for Next Steps to Address Needs** | If you determine that you have not met your goal, the team needs to identify what is necessary to increase fidelity of implementation before the next round of progress monitoring.  
Review the summarized progress monitoring data, with a focus on the critical elements that are the weakest across staff and the areas identified for growth. Ask team members to brainstorm the training, materials, resources or other supports that staff need to be able to grow in the identified areas. Consider having team members make a list with a partner, then prioritize their top 3 things, and share each pair’s top 3 with the large group. List them, identify overlap, and come to consensus on the most pressing needs to address.  
Once the needs have been identified, plan as a team how to explore options for addressing them, and assign roles and responsibilities for any next steps. You’ll also need to revisit your progress monitoring plan, determine when the next round of progress monitoring will take place (remember: you need to address needs and give staff time to improve before progress monitoring again) and who will play which roles in that process. |
| **If Goal is Met: Plan for Next Steps to Complete Reflection** | If you determine that you have met your goal, the team needs to identify when it will complete a team reflection on the core component and the process. You can use Protocol 6: Reflecting Once You’ve Met Your Goal to complete this step. |
| **Communication & Next Steps** | Ensure that all team members are leaving with a clear plan for communicating back to their colleagues about the results of the progress monitoring. If the goal has not yet been met, they should be prepared to tell colleagues when, where, and how they will receive any additional training, support, or resources - as well as when, where, and how the next round of progress monitoring will take place. Ensure that all team members are also leaving with a clear identification of any next steps for which they are responsible. |
Protocol 6: Reflecting Once You’ve Met Your Goal

**Purpose:** After the team determines that the goal has been met for implementation of the core component, they need to reflect on the overall process of installation and initial implementation, so that any key learnings can inform the next cycle. The team will also determine how best to communicate and celebrate this success with the larger staff or school community.

**Outcomes:**
- Reflect on the installation and initial implementation process for this core component
- Determine if next steps are needed to improve or sustain implementation
- Plan for how to communicate this success to the larger staff
- Identify the next core component of the strategy, or of another strategy, to tackle next

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening</strong></td>
<td>Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider opening the meeting by doing a whip around (or another method of getting everyone’s voice in the room) where each team member uses one word to describe how they’re feeling after a successful installation and initial implementation cycle of the core component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure that team members have all had a chance to review the most recent progress monitoring data, which should have been analyzed using Protocol 5: Reviewing Progress Monitoring Data, to determine that you’ve met your goal with this core component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflect on Successes</strong></td>
<td>Ask team members to think-pair-share the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What specific critical elements of the practice profile did staff seem to have the most success implementing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Why do you think those were the most successful or easiest critical elements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How will we carry forward what we have discovered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflect on Challenges</strong></td>
<td>Ask team members to think-pair-share the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What specific critical elements of the practice profile seemed to be the most challenging for staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Why do you think those were the most challenging critical elements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How will we carry forward what we have discovered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determine Next Steps to Improve or Sustain Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Ask team members to think-pair-share the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How can we make sure that we improve fidelity of implementation, so that eventually all staff are meeting the expected practice on all critical elements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How can we make sure that we sustain the implementation of this core component over time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan for Communication</strong></td>
<td>Ask team members to think-pair-share the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do we want to celebrate this success and communicate with all staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do we want to celebrate and communicate this success with our larger school community? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have a note taker summarize the discussion in the meeting notes. Ask team members to take responsibility for some of the communication steps that are identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have one team member add a summary of how you used progress monitoring data to address needs on the SIP Portal Strategy Progress Monitoring page. Check the “Full Implementation” box for this core component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify the Next Core Component of Focus</strong></td>
<td>Review the list of core components for this strategy as a team and identify the next core component of focus. Identify the next meeting during which time this team will complete Protocol 1: Establishing Common Understanding &amp; Anticipating Needs. Ensure that all team members are leaving with clear next steps for communicating with colleagues, and any personal responsibility for communication activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Protocol 7: Fidelity Check

**Purpose:** If your team thinks that staff is already meeting the expected practice of a core component, as defined in the practice profile, a fidelity check should be completed. This fidelity check will inform whether the school is really ready to move on to the next core component, or if the installation and initial implementation steps do need to be completed.

**Outcomes:**
- Determine what percent of staff the team thinks are currently implementing the core component with fidelity
- Determine whether progress monitoring evidence needs to be collected before making a final decision
- Identify appropriate next steps based on the fidelity check

### Materials:
- Pens/pencils/markers
- Hard copies of the practice profile (can have electronic access, but you’ll want people to be able to take notes)
- The list of core components for the strategy (hard copies or electronic access)

### Roles:
- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening</strong></td>
<td>Make sure team members understand the purpose of the meeting and the intended outcomes. Determine ahead of time how decisions will be made and clearly communicate the decision-making process to team members at the start.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Review Practice Profile

Handout copies of the practice profile for the selected core component. Ask team members to silently review the practice profile, marking it according to the following criteria:
- Put a “C” next to anything that you have a clarifying question about - you need more information or a definition of the term
- Next to each critical element, identify how many staff who are expected to be implementing the practice are currently meeting the expected practice using the following criteria:
  - “None” - 0% - 15% of staff
  - “Some” - 15% - 50% of staff
  - “Most” - 50% - 80% of staff
  - “All” - 80% or more of staff
  - “N/A” - Don’t know

Once team members have reflected individually, have them pair up with someone else to share their questions and reflections.
- If partners can answer clarifying questions, then cross them off
- Compare and contrast how you each rated the number of staff who are currently meeting the expected practice. Describe your rationale to one another, and decided on a final score between you.

### Answer Clarifying Questions

Once partners have had a chance to discuss, come together as a large group and answer any clarifying questions that couldn’t be answered during partner sharing. Make note of any clarifying questions that the large group cannot answer, and plan for who will find the answer and how they will report back to the team.

### Determine Perceived Fidelity Level

For each critical element, go around in a circle and ask each pair to share out their perceived level of implementation (none, some, most, all, or N/A). Once each pair has shared, try to find consensus as a group about where you would rate the implementation fidelity level of the critical element. Repeat for each critical element of the practice profile.

If the group comes to consensus that on every critical element, that “Most” or “All” staff are currently meeting the expected practice, then the group can consider skipping the core component. If the group has not reached this consensus, or if many on the team put “N/A,” then the team should consider either collecting progress monitoring evidence, or deciding to move straight to installation of the core component.

### Identify Next Steps

Based on the decision made regarding the perceived level of fidelity, determine next steps.

If you need to collect more evidence before making a decision, create a plan for how the information will be collected (consider using the progress monitoring tools in the Toolkit), and assign roles to team members.

Ensure that all team members leave understanding the next steps for which they are responsible.
Reflecting at the End of the Year

Completing an Annual Evaluation is a requirement for Title I funded schools, and a best practice as part of every continuous school improvement process.

The Annual Evaluation is an opportunity to look at each of your school improvement strategies more holistically and bring student outcome data into the picture. You’ll use this reflection to start developing your school improvement plan for the next year.

There are specific questions you’ll need to answer as a team, each of which is aligned to the theory of action for school improvement equation. The SIP Portal section for the Annual Evaluation is designed to provide a place to document each part of this reflection.

Check out Activity 5: Completing the Annual Evaluation on page 49 for a facilitation plan to guide this process with your team.

In addition to your regular group norms, your team may also need to identify the assumptions that they want to work under as they undertake this important part of the continuous improvement process. Below are some example assumptions to adopt or adapt when looking at student data, which have been adapted from The Data Coach’s Guide to Improving Learning for All Students:

Example team assumptions about reviewing data for school improvement:
- We have a collective responsibility for student learning, a commitment to equity, and a trust in our process of collaborative inquiry for school improvement.
- We can make significant progress in improving student learning and closing achievement gaps.
- It is not children’s poverty, race, or background that stands in the way of achievement, it is school practices, policies, and the beliefs that underlie them that pose the biggest obstacles. We are committed to removing those obstacles.
- Data have no meaning. We impose meaning through our interpretation, which is influenced by our frames of reference and the way we see the world. We will critically examine our frames of reference and assumptions when we analyze data.
- We care deeply about our students. Sometimes when data challenges our assumptions about how we’re doing, it can bring up strong feelings. We will recognize and name our feelings, and create space to validate one another’s feelings.
- We believe data can be a positive catalyst for questioning our assumptions and disrupting the status quo.
- Using data itself will not improve our school. We must implement sound practices that are grounded in cultural responsiveness and a thorough understanding of the challenges we face and their root causes.
Activity 5: Completing the Annual Evaluation

Materials: Pens/pencils; scratch paper
- Copies of Annual Evaluation worksheet (Appendix E)
- Access to summarized progress monitoring data on SIP strategies
- Access to data or other measures of student outcomes aligned to your goals and available at this point to reflect on the impact of SIP strategies (for example: preliminary MCA data)

Purpose: At the end of the year, you should take time to reflect on the impact of your school improvement strategies and use that reflection to plan for the next year. The Annual Evaluation is a required activity for schools that receive Title I funding. While this activity could be completed with just your leadership team, consider how you can also engage families and students in a reflection on the successes and challenges of your strategies.

Process:
Prior to the meeting, determine whether you want participants to reflect individually, in small groups, or as a large group. Also, consider how you’ll have participants reflect on relevant progress monitoring and student outcome data as part of the Annual Evaluation process. One way to do this would be through a gallery walk.

1. Welcome participants and ensure that everyone understands the purpose of the Annual Evaluation process. Review where they can access relevant data to complete their reflection.
2. Handout copies of the Annual Evaluation worksheet and instruct participants to engage in a reflection using the questions on the sheet, for each strategy in your school improvement plan. Ensure that participants have access to the data they need, if available, to complete the reflection.
3. Include time for the large group to all share their reflections and process together. Synthesize the reflections into one copy of the worksheet, on a large chart paper, or directly in the SIP Portal.
4. Once you’ve had a chance to finalize the reflection to submit, discuss the process and overall take-aways with participants. Consider using the following, or similar, questions:
   - Overall, which of the strategies that we worked on this year do you think we had the most success with? What made it successful?
   - Overall, which of the strategies that we worked on this year do you think we had the most challenges with? What made it challenging?
   - How are you feeling about our school improvement work as the year winds down?
   - What are you looking forward to working on when we come together again in the fall?
Appendices
Appendix A: Example Norms/Community Agreements

This handout can be used with Activity 1: Norm Creation to help team members generate their own list of group norms or community agreements.

- Demonstrate mutual respect
- Employ skillful listening
- Be fully present mentally and physically
- Keep students at the center
- Tell the truth without blame or judgement
- Assume positive intent
- Pay attention to heart and meaning
- Be open to possibilities
- Be unattached to outcome
- Welcome and manage discomfort
- Challenge our own and others’ assumptions
- Be willing to push each other’s thinking
- Look at every issue from multiple perspectives
- Be responsible for the way we say things; say them so people can hear them
- Follow-through on agreements
- Monitor air-time
- Actively participate
- Invite and welcome the contributions of every team members and listen to each other
- Take risks and be vulnerable learners
- Don’t interrupt each other
- Acknowledge ideas and contributions, even if you disagree with them
- Listen to understand
- Be solutions oriented
- Hold a growth-mindset
- Maintain confidentiality
- Speak your truth in ways that respect other people’s truth
- Take an inquiry stance when things get hard; turn to wonder

These examples are adapted from the following resources:
- The Thinking Collaborative Meeting Working Agreements
- Elena Aguilar’s *The Art of Coaching Teams: Building Resilient Communities that Transform Schools*

Consider how you may want to incorporate the *Courageous Conversations four agreements and/or the use of the Courageous Conversations compass* as part of your group norms or as a regular part of your team meetings, if staff have received training:
- Stay engaged
- Experience discomfort
- Speak your truth
- Expect and accept non-closure
Appendix B: Setting Goals Worksheet

This worksheet can be used along with Activity 2: Setting Goals, to determine the SMART goals for your SIP. Consider also using page 18 in the Guidebook for more information about SMART goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1:</th>
<th>Goal 2:</th>
<th>Goal 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How is this goal...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Attainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Time-bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C: Selecting MPS Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTSS</th>
<th>Balanced Literacy (PK-5)</th>
<th>SEL</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the problem that this strategy is designed to solve resonate with you and your site’s reality? Why or why not? Based on the research, how could this strategy help you achieve your goals around student outcomes? <em>(Check out the Definitional Tools page of the Toolkit for a Call to Action and summary of research)</em></td>
<td>What percent of adults at your site, would you estimate, are already meeting the expected practice on the core components for 2019-20? Or which of the activities, if any, do you think your site has already completed?</td>
<td>Consider your Annual Evaluation from last year’s SIP. How well do the core components or activities in the Toolkit align with work your site engaged in last year? Could working through the Toolkit enhance or build on current successful efforts, or would it detract?</td>
<td>What does your site already have in place (staff, systems, procedures, other supports or resources, etc.), if anything, that could make working through this Toolkit as a site successful?</td>
<td>What challenges or barriers, if any, do you anticipate could make working through this Toolkit as a site difficult?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Hexagon Tool

This tool should be used to determine which additional strategies you’ll include in your SIP. It has been adapted from the Hexagon Tool created by the National Implementation Research Network. Their guidance and a copy of their tool can be found on the Active Implementation Hub website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use a 5-point rating scale:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness for Replication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to Implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes on overall strengths and weaknesses:**

### Appendix E: Annual Evaluation Worksheet

This worksheet can be used to support completion of the Annual Evaluation of your school improvement plan.

The right infrastructure and supports are in place

You have the right evidence-based strategy

| Strategy | How well was this strategy implemented this year? How many core components were you able to install and implement with a majority of staff this year? How was implementation fidelity of core components monitored (ex. observations, learning walks, checklists, surveys)? | Were the right conditions in place to support implementation of this strategy? (i.e., was there common understanding of the strategy? was enough PD and coaching provided? were the right structures, like staffing and schedules, in place?, etc.) | Based on your evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of this strategy, what are your next steps for implementation next year? If you plan to continue implementing, how will you improve implementation fidelity? If you don’t, what will you do to reach your goals instead? |
## Appendix F: Leadership Team Rubric - Page 1

### Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Feature</th>
<th>Needs Development</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Succeeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership &amp; Representation</strong></td>
<td>The team includes only school administrators or supporting administrative staff/specialists.</td>
<td>The team includes content, grade level and parent/family liaison representatives. Other core areas and programs (e.g., special education, multilingual) may also be represented.</td>
<td>The team includes all learning team leaders and representatives from all core content areas or grade levels and programs (e.g., special education, multilingual, related services, parent/family liaison). Other school staff experts are included in team meetings when needed. The ILT membership represents student demographics, racially and linguistically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>The responsibilities of members are informally understood (e.g., attendance, participation, preparation), but not always fulfilled. Roles for successful meetings (e.g., facilitator, note taker, timekeeper) are not identified or carried out effectively.</td>
<td>The responsibilities of members are informally understood (e.g., attendance, participation, preparation), and generally fulfilled. Multiple roles (e.g., facilitator, note taker, time keeper) are defined, but not always carried out effectively.</td>
<td>Responsibilities of members (e.g., attendance, participation, preparation) are defined, documented and adaptable. All necessary roles are clearly defined and carried out at each meeting effectively (e.g., facilitator, timekeeper, note taker).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting Frequency</strong></td>
<td>Team meets once a month.</td>
<td>Team meets twice a month, but does not always meet for enough time to complete necessary activities to fulfill team purpose.</td>
<td>Team meets more than two times per month. Meetings are long enough to complete necessary activities to fulfill the team’s purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting Agenda &amp; Facilitation</strong></td>
<td>A single person creates the agenda without input, during or prior to the meeting.</td>
<td>The agenda is created and shared informally prior to the meeting, and input is informally collected.</td>
<td>The team adheres to a formal process of agenda proposal, development and documentation of meeting results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Feature</th>
<th>Needs Development</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Succeeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The school has a vision and mission, but the team has not developed a purpose aligned to them.</td>
<td>The team has a stated purpose that is aligned to the school’s mission and vision, but it is not known beyond the team. The team’s purpose includes some, but not all, of the following responsibilities: developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan; planning professional development; and communicating regularly with stakeholders.</td>
<td>The team has a stated purpose that is aligned to the school’s mission and vision, and it is known throughout the school. The team’s purpose includes all of the following responsibilities: developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan; planning professional development; and communicating regularly with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Norms</strong></td>
<td>The team has not established group norms.</td>
<td>The team has established group norms, which may be too many. The team may refer to them at the start of each meeting, and they are generally held by most team members, but are not mutually reinforced. No one on the team has the role of process observer.</td>
<td>The team has clearly established a small list of group norms, which they reference every meeting and which are apparent in every meeting. Team members effectively hold one another mutually able to keep the norms, even during difficult conversations. One team member takes the role of process observer each meeting, and shares observations of how well the team succeeded in holding the group norms at the end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This tool has been adapted from a rubric created by the Minnesota Department of Education.
### Function continued...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Feature</th>
<th>Needs Development</th>
<th>Progressing</th>
<th>Succeeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion &amp; Decision-Making</strong></td>
<td>Team discussion only allows a few voices to be heard, through a limited number of discussion techniques. The team does not identify when it is making decisions or have clear processes for decision-making.</td>
<td>The team discussion allows most voices to be heard, but through a limited set of techniques. The team sometimes identifies when it is making a decision and usually uses a clear process for decision-making.</td>
<td>The team members state that team discussion allows for their voice to be heard through the use of multiple discussion techniques. The team always identifies when it is making a decision and consistently uses a clear process for decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Planning</strong></td>
<td>The team does not develop communication plans to ensure that information related to the team’s activities and the progress of school improvement work is shared with the whole staff.</td>
<td>The team develops informal communication plans in an attempt to share information related to the team’s activities and the progress of school improvement work with the whole staff. The responsibilities for who should carry out planned activities is not always clear.</td>
<td>The team's formal communications plan is regarded by staff as effective in communicating the team’s activities and involving staff in School Improvement work. Team members know their responsibilities for communication activities and follow through according to plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback Loops</strong></td>
<td>The team does not have processes in place to ensure that all school staff and other stakeholders can receive information and give feedback on school improvement work.</td>
<td>The team has informal processes in place that generally reach most school staff and some stakeholders, so that they can receive information and give feedback on school improvement work.</td>
<td>The team has a formal process to share information with and get feedback from stakeholders. Staff, families and students state the process is effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improvement Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence-Based Strategies</strong></td>
<td>School improvement strategies are selected based on anecdotal evidence from other schools or educators. Selected strategies are not well defined, and operational definitions of the practice are not developed.</td>
<td>The team researches and selects evidence-based strategies aligned to the goals. Selected strategies are somewhat well defined, but operational definitions of the practice are either not well developed or not well understood.</td>
<td>The team researches and selects evidence-based strategies aligned to the goals. Selected strategies are well defined, and the operational definitions of the practices are well understood by both the team and staff who are implementing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Progress monitoring is limited to summarizing student outcome data and reviewing it occasionally as a team. These reviews do not lead to team actions that improve implementation of strategies.</td>
<td>Progress monitoring is informally conducted for at least one strategy on a semi-regular basis to gather evidence of fidelity of implementation. These reviews sometimes lead to team actions that improve implementation of strategies.</td>
<td>Progress monitoring is systematically conducted for all strategies on a regular basis, gathering evidence of fidelity of implementation that leads to direct team actions that improve implementation of strategies over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapid Cycles of Improvement</strong></td>
<td>The team does not engage in rapid cycles of improvement. The team &quot;lets it happen&quot; after selecting the strategies, and will determine at the end of the year if the strategies worked or not.</td>
<td>The team engages in rapid cycles of improvement, but not always effectively or for all strategies. The team is sometimes able to determine when and where additional training, resources, or support are needed to improve implementation.</td>
<td>The team engages systematically in rapid cycles of improvement, effectively and for all strategies. The team is able to quickly determine when and where additional training, resources, or support are needed, which leads to quick improvements in implementation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Implementation Progress Monitoring Planning Tool

This tool can be used to make a plan for collect and use implementation progress monitoring data, as part of a rapid cycle of improvement. It can be used along with Protocol 4: Developing a Progress Monitoring Plan.

**Strategy:**

**Core Component:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question(s)</th>
<th>Action Step(s)</th>
<th>Who’s Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What progress monitoring tool will we use to collect evidence of how many staff members are at expected practice on this critical element? (Tools will need to be created by the site or adapted from the Implementation Toolkit.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will collect the progress monitoring evidence? ILT members? Grade-level teams? Instructional coaches? Others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will progress monitoring evidence be collected? Will evidence be collected during planning, in the classroom, via student work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What system will be used to allow for analysis of evidence? (e.g. Excel, Google Sheets, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is our goal for implementation of this strategy? What percent of teachers need to be at “Expected” on the practice profile before moving on?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will we communicate this progress monitoring plan to staff?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This worksheet can be used along with Protocol 3 as you plan for Professional Learning.

**Identified Professional Learning Experience (from site PD Calendar)**

Which SIP Goal is the PD Aligned with (if any)?:

**What type of learning experience is this?**

- Informational (e.g. MTSS Overview, Environmental and Safety Training)
- Specific Strategy for Immediate Implementation (e.g. Curriculum Training, Responsive Classroom)
- Systematic Learning used in PLC (e.g. planning, assessments, student equity, SEL)

**Will we collect evidence around the implementation of this learning?**

- Yes
- No

If No, Is this learning necessary?

**What evidence of learning do we want to see in our school as a result of this learning experience?**

**How will we collect this evidence?**

**When will we collect this evidence?**

**Who will review the evidence?**

- Teachers/Staff
- Admin
- ILT

**Communication Plan?**

**What is our goal for implementation?**

**Who will determine if we need to change our plans in response to this evidence?**
Resources

Developing and Using An Equity Lens:


- *The Color of Fear* film

Equity and SEL:


Leading Teams around Equity-Driven Continuous School Improvement:


Implementation Science:
- The National Implementation Research Network’s Active Implementation Hub
- The University of North Carolina State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center
- MPS Guidance for Getting Ready to Implement an Evidence-Based Practice

Collective Teacher Efficacy:

Other MPS School Improvement ESSA Guidance:
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment—Guidance & Resources for Schools
- School Improvement Planning—Guidance & Resources for Schools
- Getting Ready for School Improvement—Guidance & Resources for Schools

Other MPS School Improvement Guidance:
- The Source: Continuous School Improvement Training Series