



California's System of Support 1–Set Direction and Purpose

Module 1A: Overview of Continuous Improvement and the Local Control and Accountability Plan

Updated January 2019



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California's System of Support Goal

To help local educational agencies (LEAs) and their schools meet the needs of ***each student they serve***, with a focus on **building local capacity to sustain improvement** and to **effectively address disparities** in opportunities and outcomes.

- California Department of Education (CDE)
California's System of Support web page



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Overview of Modules

1. Set Direction and Purpose
 - 1A. Overview of Continuous Improvement and the Local Control and Accountability Plan

2. Assess Local Needs and Determine Causal Factors of Greatest Needs
 - 2A. Planning a Needs Assessment for Continuous Improvement
 - 2B. Designing a Needs Assessment for Continuous Improvement
 - 2C. Introduction to Root Cause Analysis



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Purpose of Module 1A

To assist LEAs and local stakeholders as they plan and implement their continuous improvement efforts through the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and school planning processes.



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Overview of Continuous Improvement and the LCAP

Introduction to Continuous Improvement



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Why Continuous Improvement?

The goal of continuous improvement is to reduce “the gap between **actual** practice and the **most effective** practice.”

- Layland and Corbett. 2017. *Utilizing Integrated Resources to Implement the School and District Improvement Cycle and Supports – Guidance for Schools, Districts, and State Education Agencies*. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).



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What is Continuous Improvement?

Continuous improvement is a process of:

- Identifying what is working and what needs to change
- Developing a sound plan (e.g., LCAP, school plan) and including more effective, or evidence-based practices in the plan
- Implementing the plan
- Using data to monitor outcomes and make timely adjustments to improve those outcomes



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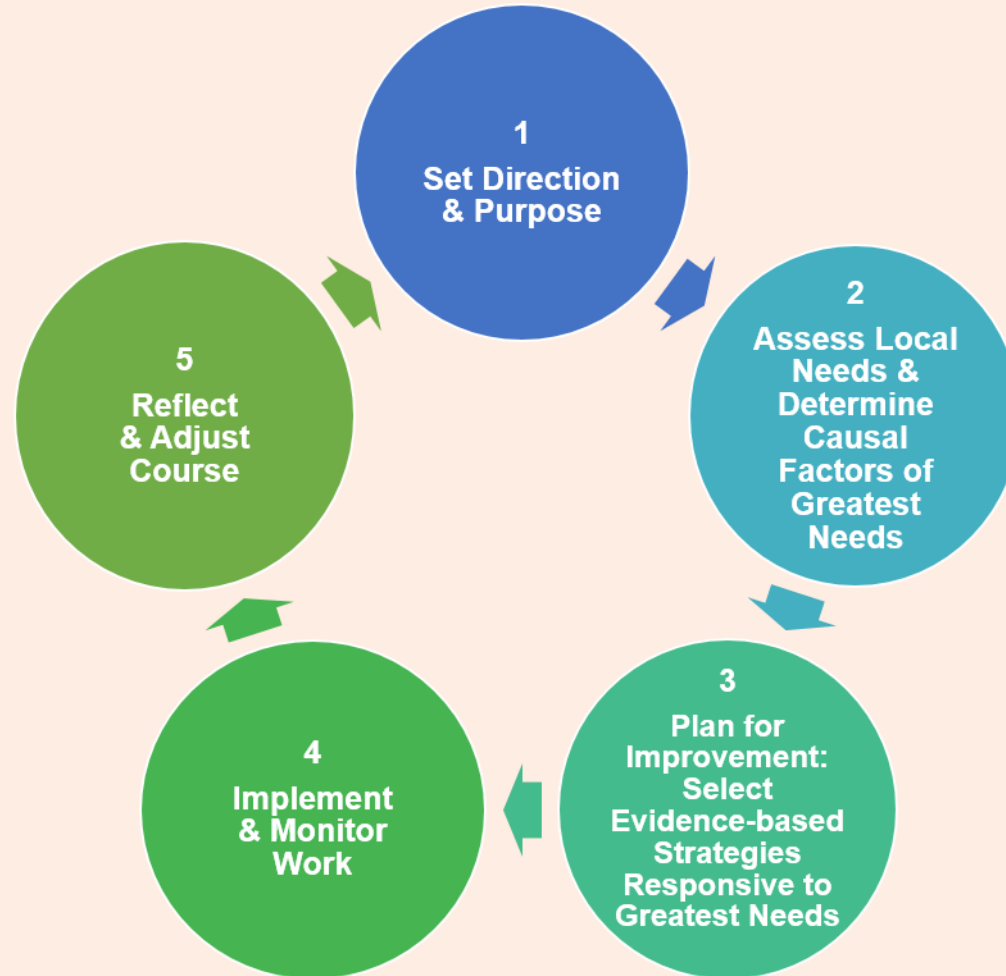
What Drives Continuous Improvement?

- **Change in practice** is the core driver of improvement.
- This is true for a state educational agency, LEAs, schools, and individuals.



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What is the Continuous Improvement Process? (1)

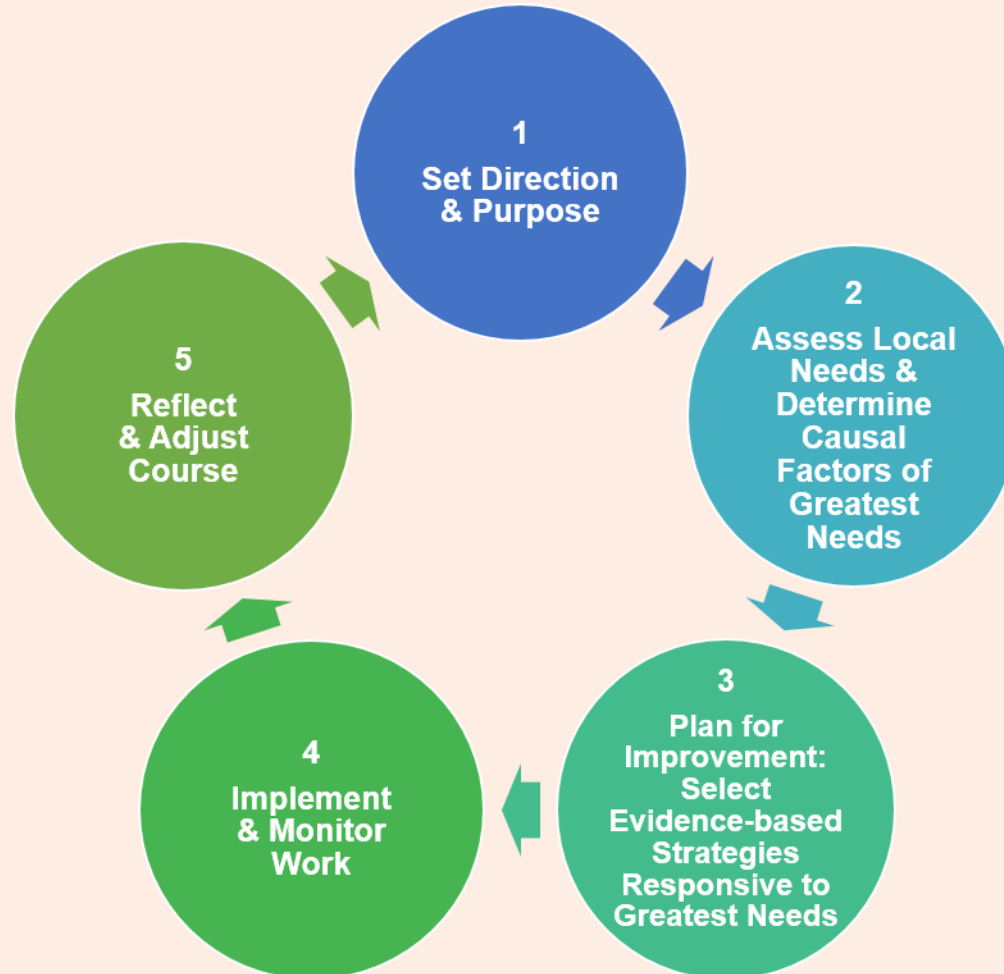


The continuous improvement process is sometimes described as “**Plan, Do, Study, Act**” (PDSA) or the “**planning cycle.**”



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What is the Continuous Improvement Process? (2)



The cycle to the left defines the “Plan” phase in more detail, breaking it down into additional steps:

1. Set Direction and Purpose
2. Assess Local Needs and Determine Causal Factors of Greatest Needs
3. Plan for Improvement: Select Evidence-based Strategies Responsive to Greatest Needs



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Crosswalk with “Plan, Do, Study, Act”

Module 1A Continuous Improvement Cycle	Plan, Do, Study, Act
Set Direction and Purpose	Plan
Assess Local Needs and Determine Causal Factors of Greatest Needs	Plan
Plan for Improvement (select evidence-based actions and services that respond to greatest needs)	Plan
Implement and Monitor Work	Do, Study
Reflect and Adjust Course	Study, Act



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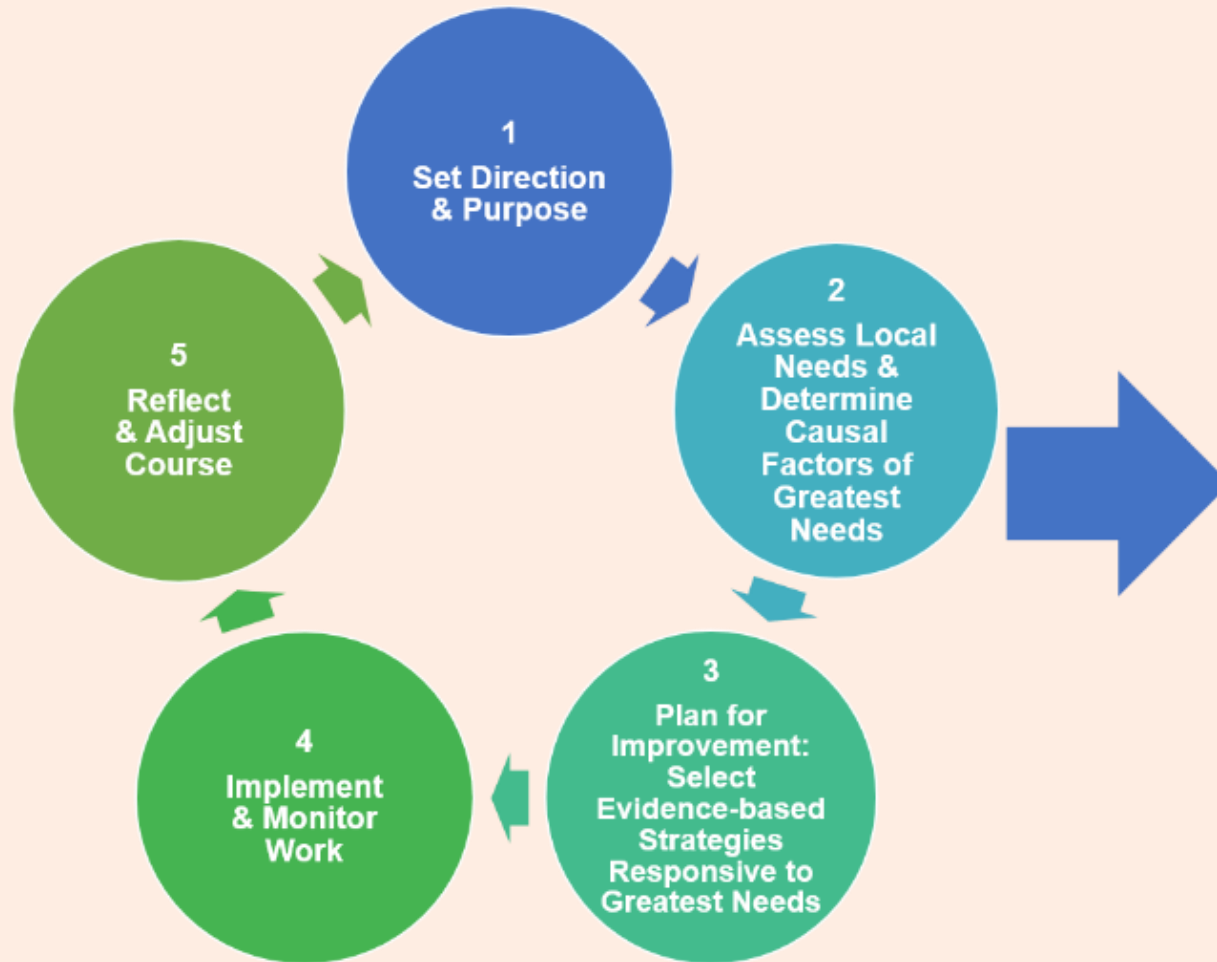
Overview of Continuous Improvement and the LCAP

Implications for the Local Control and Accountability Plan



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Integrating Continuous Improvement and the LCAP



LCAP Year 2017-18 2018-19 2019-20

Local Control Accountability Plan and Annual Update (LCAP) Template

[Addendum:](#) General instructions & regulatory requirements
[Appendix A:](#) Priorities 5 and 6 Rate Calculators
[Appendix B:](#) Guiding Questions: Use as prompts (not limits)
[LCAP Evaluation Rubric:](#) Essential data to support completion of this LCAP. Please analyze the LEA's full data set; specific links to the rubric are also provided within the template.

LEA Name
Contact Name and Title Email and Phone

2017-20 Plan Summary

THE STORY
Briefly describe the students and community and how the LEA serves them.

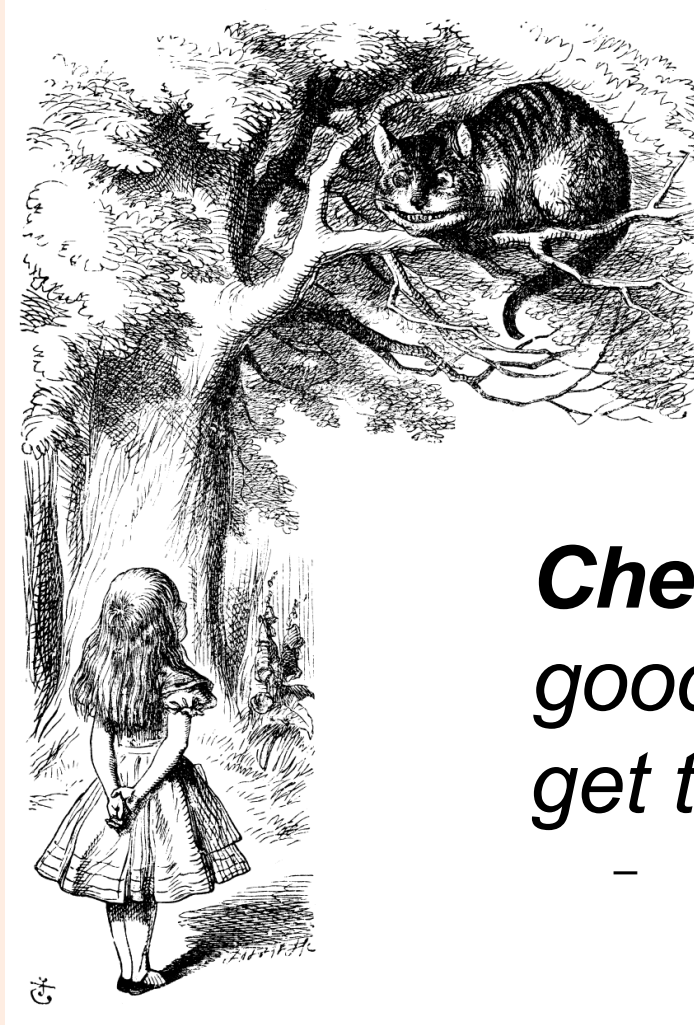
LCAP HIGHLIGHTS
Identify and briefly summarize the key features of this year's LCAP.

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Step 1–Set Direction and Purpose (1)



Alice: *“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”*

Cheshire Cat: *“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.”*

– *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll*



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Step 1–Set Direction and Purpose (2)



- An LEA's direction is used as a **filter for all work**.
- When in place, staff know **how their work influences or impacts student-focused goals** and commits to continuous capacity building and improvement.



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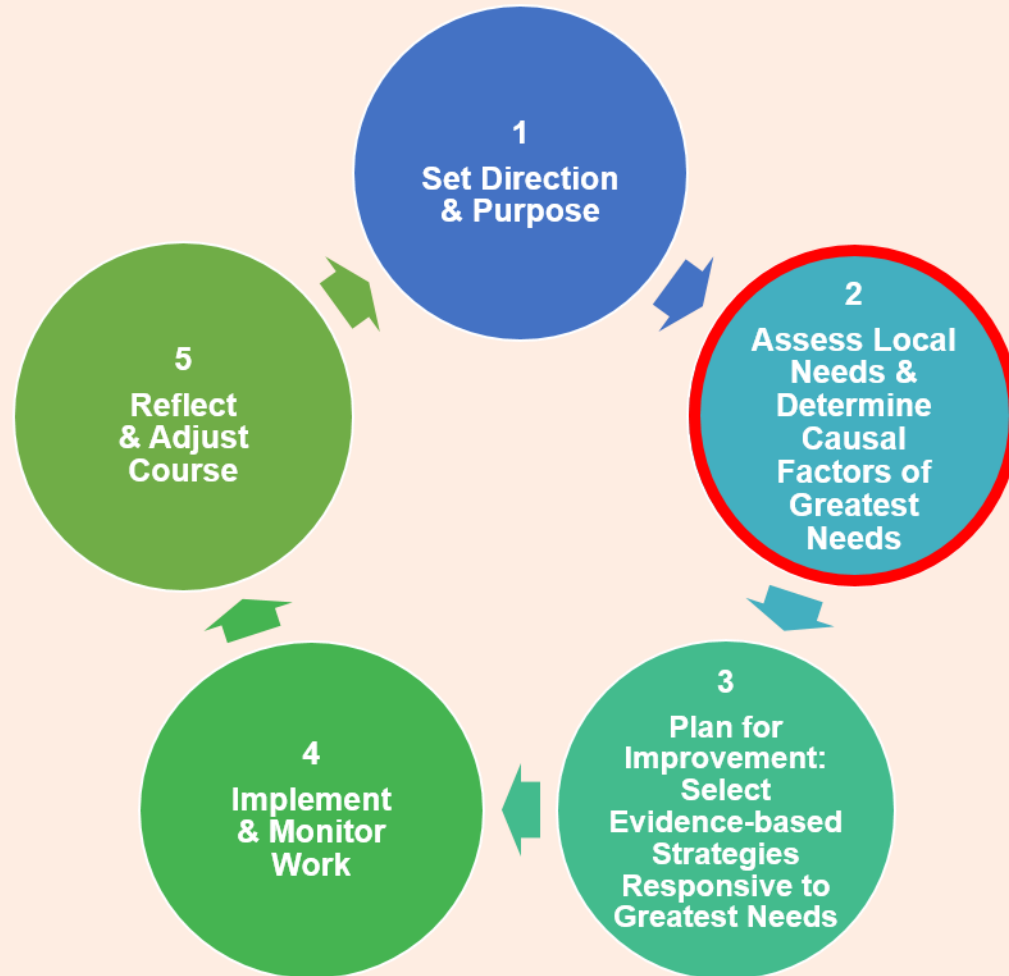
Step 1–Set Direction and Purpose (3)

- Setting the direction is the **foundation** upon which an improvement cycle is built. It is comprised of identifying the LEA's:
 - Mission and/or vision
 - Goals
 - Goal performance measures (e.g., Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes)
 - Statement of purpose (**theory of action**) for its improvement efforts
 - This is discussed in more detail in Module 2C.



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Step 2–Assess Local Needs and Determine Causal Factors (1)



The needs assessment process allows the LEA to:

- Address the **problem** itself, rather than the **symptoms** of the problem
- Prioritize causes by those most likely to have a **significant impact** on the problem
- Focus on **actionable causes** of the problem



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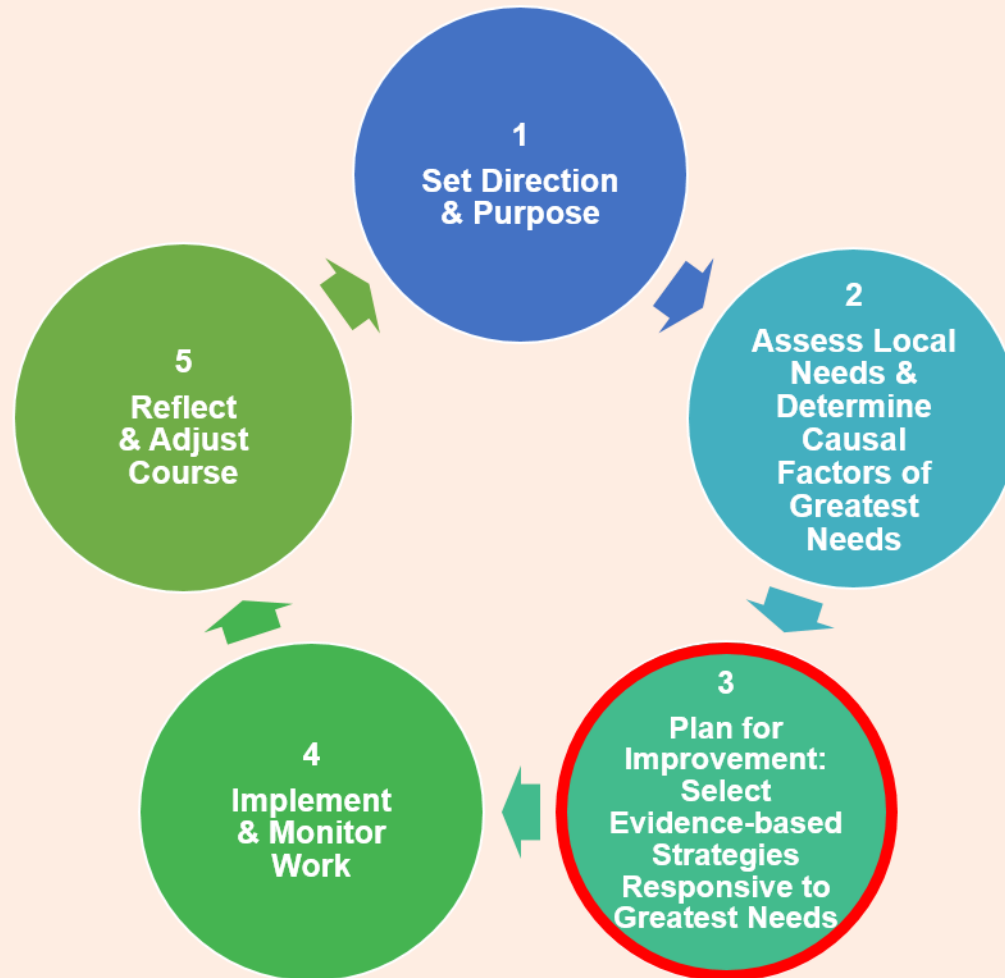
Step 2–Assess Local Needs and Determine Causal Factors (2)

- A needs assessment is used to identify strengths and weaknesses within the context and constraints of the LEA and dig deeper into **root causes**.
- The needs assessment goes **beyond student data** to include data on the **effectiveness of current practices**—to evaluate what is and isn't working (e.g., Annual Update process in the LCAP).
- This step is addressed in Modules 2A–2C.



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Step 3–Plan for Improvement (1)



- Selecting effective practices most likely to produce results (i.e., **evidence-based strategies**) to inform the actions and services in the improvement plan (e.g., LCAP) increases the likelihood of achieving improvement goals.
- Planning allows LEA and county office of education (COE) staff to **coordinate supports and resources** to ensure effective implementation.



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Step 3–Plan for Improvement (2)

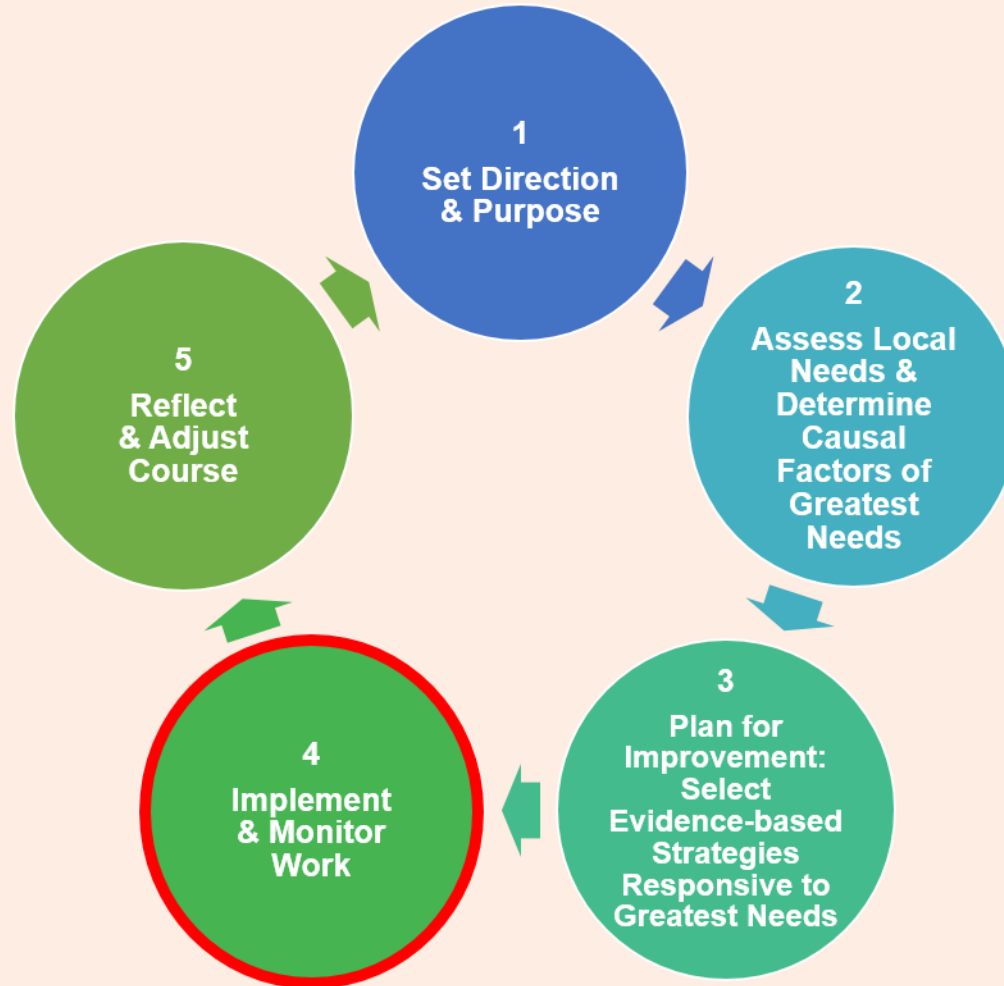
The plan for improvement (e.g., LCAP) is created **based on the prioritized needs** identified through the needs assessment. It focuses on **what the LEA does** to address its improvement needs and includes:

- Strategies (effective, evidence-based practices aligned with needs and context)
- Milestones (implementation indicators, e.g., Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes)
- Actions (steps to the milestone; e.g., Actions and Services, Increased or Improved Services)
- Outputs (produced in completing actions)
- Timeline (for completing actions and milestones)



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Step 4–Implement and Monitor Work (1)



Data from **regular monitoring** can be aggregated across multiple schools in a district (or multiple districts/LEAs in a county) to provide an **overall analysis of progress** relative to particular practices.



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Step 4–Implement and Monitor Work (2)

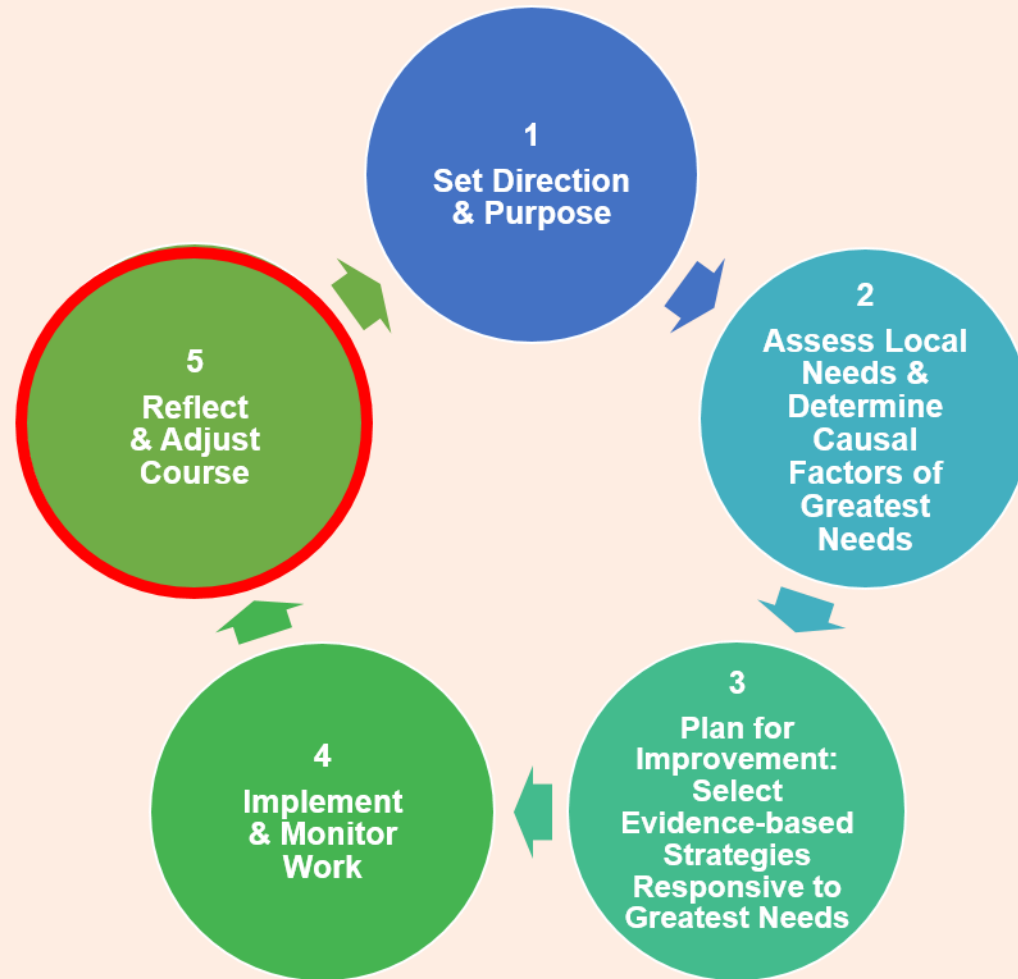
Effective implementation involves regularly:

- **Examining progress** on actions, outputs, and strategy-aligned milestones (e.g., in the Annual Update, Annual Measurable Outcomes [Expected vs. Actual])
- **Meeting** to discuss progress, celebrate successes, and identify challenges and possible solutions
- Providing **status reports** to the leadership team so they can **provide support** and make **timely adjustments**



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Step 5–Reflect and Adjust Course (1)



If strategies are not achieving desired outcomes, leaders use implementation and monitoring data to determine how to adjust course to **stay on track** with goals and **minimize the loss of time and resources**.



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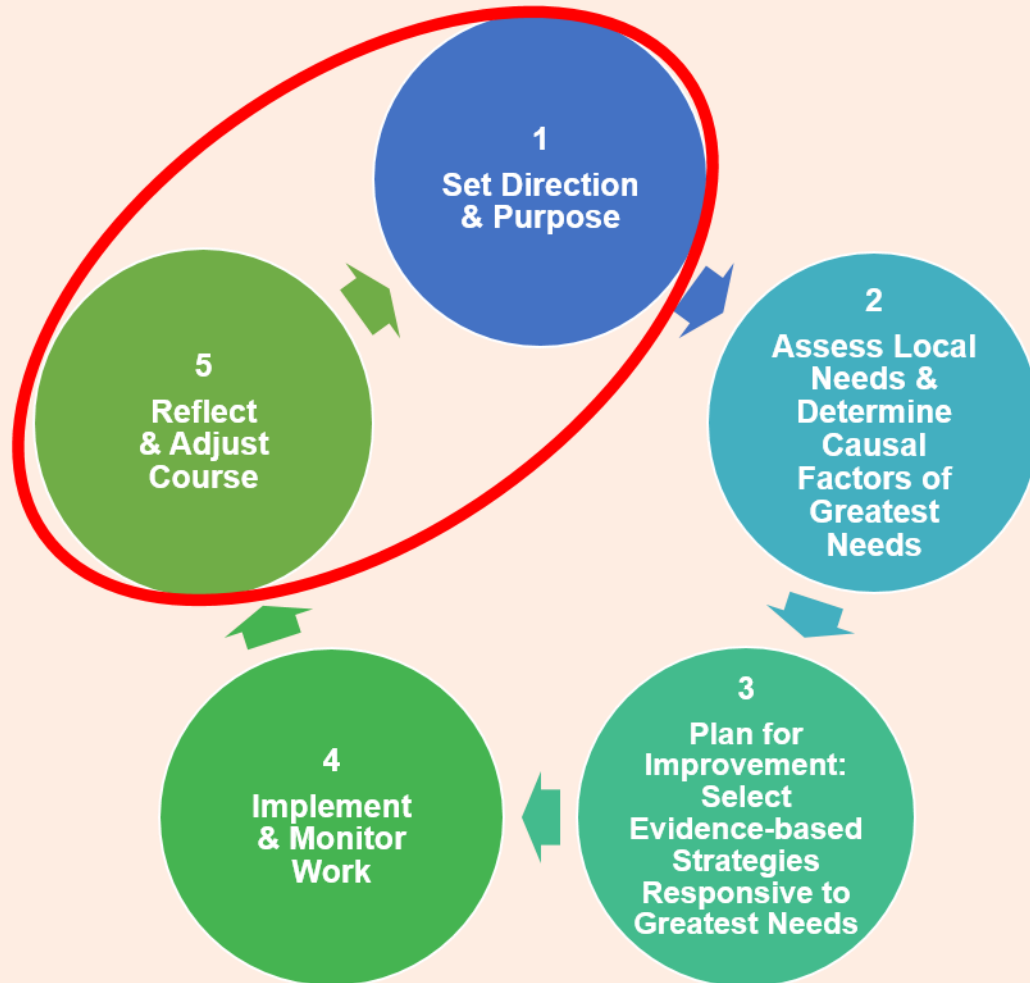
Step 5–Reflect and Adjust Course (2)

- Implementation data are used to make adjustments to the plan and are monitored carefully to determine if they are positively impacting progress.
- Monthly and quarterly reviews inform what adjustments are needed.
- Reporting routines built across the system keep data accessible and stakeholders in the loop.



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Step 5 → Step 1 (1)



- Discussions are more **results-focused** than compliance-driven.
- Adjustments to the plan are determined collaboratively, justified, and communicated to the staff (promotes **buy-in**).
- LEAs use school-level data to make adjustments so their responsive supports are **more effective**.



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Step 5 → Step 1 (2)

- The continuous improvement cycle is **ongoing**.
- At the end of each year, milestones are reviewed and those not completed are examined and **adjusted based on data results** (e.g., Annual Update).
- Other milestones are added and action plans are detailed.



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Questions to Outline Your Continuous Improvement Process

1. Will you work with a framework of effective practice? If so, which one(s)? (You may incorporate portions of more than one.) **See Module 2A.**
2. How does the needs assessment fit into your overall theory of action for improvement? **See Module 2C.**
3. How do the results from the needs assessment inform the creation of a plan? **Series 3 to be determined (TBD).**
4. How do the results from the needs assessment inform immediate next steps for the school, the LEA, and the COE? **Series 3 TBD.**
5. How do the monitoring processes (by the school, LEA, and/or COE) connect back to the needs assessment? **Series 4 TBD.**
6. How do the results from the monitoring processes inform future needs assessments and subsequent improvement plans? **Series 5 TBD.**



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Resources & Tools

- California School Dashboard
<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/#/Home>
- Continuous Improvement Resources web page
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/continuousimprovement.asp>
- *Utilizing Integrated Resources to Implement the School and District Improvement Cycle and Supports*
<https://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/utilizing-integrated-resources-implement-school-and-district-improvement-cycle-and>
- *Using Needs Assessments for School and District Improvement: A Tactical Guide*
<https://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NeedsAssessment-Final.pdf>



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References

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