

Organizational Tool for Evidence-based Continuous Improvement Planning

STEP 1

Take time to get organized and build your knowledge base by gathering necessary materials and building a well-informed team to complete subsequent steps.

Things to consider:

Who is involved?

Identify which departments or programs should be represented; then identify the individuals who will participate. What are their respective roles and responsibilities in the group (e.g., note taker, facilitator)?

Department or Program	Name	Contact Information	Role/ Responsibility

What do we need to know?

Gather and organize documents and other materials that describe the planning and related support processes to schools in your local educational agency (LEA). Consider the value of having graphics or models from sources other than your own department or program. Review documentation and ensure that all participants have strong foundational knowledge of the information. Does everyone have a common understanding of the subject matter (e.g., LEA improvement frameworks, requirements, evidence-based strategies)?

Document or Material (title, description, source)	Why It Is Important? (what everyone should know)

Attend to logistics.

What will the meeting schedule be? Where will you meet? What materials do you need (e.g., chart paper, Post-its)?

STEP 2

Briefly describe the context of your process for engaging with schools in evidence-based continuous improvement planning and decision-making, and for providing support to schools.

Questions to consider:

- What model or framework have you defined that guides this work with schools?
- What services, resources, or other supports are you required to provide to schools (e.g., based on funding or other programmatic requirements)?
- How is evidence-based decision making part of this process? Where does it fit in?
- What is produced as a result of going through the continuous improvement planning process?

Describe your continuous improvement planning and decision-making process:

STEP 3

The first column of the table below outlines the five steps of a recommended evidence-based continuous improvement process, including key decision-making elements. In the second column, map the steps in your LEA's continuous improvement process. Be sure to include how each step uses evidence. Note that there may be more than one step in your process for each step in the recommended process (e.g., the Inform step of the recommended process might include both "Needs Assessment" and "Goal Development" from your LEA's process). In the third column, identify any gaps or needed changes in order for your LEA's process to incorporate the elements of the recommended process.

Questions to consider:

- Does your LEA's current process address all of the steps in the recommended process? If not, what are the gaps?
- Does your LEA's current process address all of the steps in your state's process, if applicable? If not, what are the gaps?
- How is the use of research or data integral to each step of the continuous improvement process? That is, how is each step designed so that it must be successfully completed by incorporating research or data?

Continuous Improvement Steps	Your Continuous Improvement Process Steps	Gaps or Possible Changes
Inform: Analyze local needs, adjust focus.		
Select: Identify and select evidence-based strategies.		
Plan: Develop implementation strategies.		
Implement: Proceed with improvement strategies.		
Analyze: Conduct assessment of performance.		

STEP 4

In the table below, identify the supports that your LEA offers (e.g., Webinar, guidebook, training, side-by-side coaching, regional forums) to build school capacity in each of the five steps of a continuous improvement process. List the supports in chronological or sequential order and indicate which of the steps each support relates to. In the last column, indicate whether the resource supports or incorporates the use of evidence or data to inform decisions. After filling in the table, review what you have listed and identify gaps or needed changes (e.g., redundancies, timing issues, lack of resources).

Questions to consider:

- Do the supports that you provide address all of the steps? Is the timing or sequence appropriate?
- How do your supports leverage state supports?
- Are the supports strong enough to allow schools to navigate the process independently, or is additional direct support from the LEA or from intermediaries still required?
- How effective are the supports, and what seems to make them effective? How do you know?
- Does everyone who needs support receive it?
- Are there adequate supports for the use of evidence or data to inform decisions?

Timing or Sequence	Specific Support Provided	Inform	Select	Plan	Implement	Analyze	Evidence?

STEP 5

Review the results of your inventory of current practice (Steps 2–4), select priority areas to address, and describe next steps, including action items, persons responsible, and due dates.

Questions to consider:

- What changes in the structure of your current evidence-based continuous improvement process need to be made in order to include each step of the recommended continuous improvement process (or, alternatively, align with the state's process), and to incorporate research or data throughout the process?
- What can you change, add, or remove in order to have the biggest impact?
- What changes in support might be most beneficial?
- What resources (time, funding, personnel) will you need?
- How will you communicate any changes to others in the LEA, to support providers and schools?
 - Priority area(s) to address
 - Next steps

Adapted from *Evidence-based Improvement: A Guide for States to Strengthen Their Frameworks and Supports Aligned to the Evidence Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act*

<https://www.wested.org/resources/evidence-based-improvement-essa-guide-for-states/>