**Monitoring and Reporting on Action Plan Progress**

Creating a Process to Support Effective Use of the Action Plan;

Reporting on Progress to Build Understanding and Trust

**Why This Step is Important:** For many schools and districts, an action plan marks a change in practice. School or district teams may not be accustomed to monitoring and reporting on an action plan in progress and will need to develop the routines and structures that support their effective use of the plan. For example, in the area of monitoring, school or district leaders may want to define action plan team roles and responsibilities; develop expectations and a process for how benchmark owners will report on progress; and discuss how teams will adjust the action plan when benchmarks are not met. In the area of reporting, for example, school or district leaders may want to define action plan team roles and responsibilities and create an accessible format and process for sharing progress with various stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and families.

Work on the monitoring and reporting process can occur at any point during action plan development or throughout plan development. Thinking about how the action plan teams will monitor and report on benchmarks will be helpful to the teams as they set these benchmarks.

**Affinity Mapping Protocol:** While many protocols may be useful as teams begin to design the monitoring and reporting process, one protocol that has proven helpful in the *Planning for Success* process is the Affinity Mapping Protocol. The Affinity Mapping Protocol, which includes guidelines for facilitators in how to work with groups to conduct this process, was adapted by Ross Peterson-Veatch and is available from:

* The National School Reform Faculty (NSRF), at <http://www.nsrfharmony.org/system/files/protocols/affinity_mapping_0.pdf>
* The School Reform Initiative (SRI), at <http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/affinity_mapping.pdf>

**The Monitoring and Reporting Process:** As the action plan team begins to design the monitoring and reporting process, it can be helpful to review the big picture of action planning, its purpose, and the ways in which this process will affect the practices and culture of the school or district. One model that can prove useful in framing this big picture is the Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA) cycle. Information about the PDSA cycle and some suggested text for facilitation slides about PDSA is included below. In the PDSA cycle, the action plan monitoring process is work that supports the “Study” phase.

As the action plan team begins to design the monitoring process, it is helpful to provide guidance and criteria for this work by reviewing the characteristics of effective monitoring routines. These characteristics, adapted from *Deliverology in Practice: How Education Leaders Are Improving Student Outcomes* (Barber, Rodriguez, & Artis, 2016), are included in suggested text for facilitation slides below.

If the school or district team conducted a SWOT Analysis when preparing to action plan, as described in the *Planning for Success* guide, “Analyzing District Planning Practices and Culture,” results of that analysis can be very helpful in the design of the monitoring and reporting process. The action plan team may want to review these results for guidance about how the monitoring and reporting process can provide an opportunity to address some of the organization’s existing practice and cultural issues.

The guiding question the action plan team will want to focus on in designing the monitoring and reporting process is: *What is the monitoring and reporting routine that will best support our [school or district]?* As teams address this question, they should consider the characteristics of effective routines and imagine what a monitoring and reporting process looks like that:

* Addresses identified practice and culture needs
* Supports their school or district improvement process
* Supports their community’s understanding of and commitment to that process

Whether teams identify characteristics of the monitoring process through use of the Affinity Mapping Protocol or another process, teams can then use the *Planning for Success*: Designing the Action Plan Monitoring Process worksheet included with this resource to plan and record the details of their proposed monitoring routine. This worksheet guides teams to consider existing structures such as meeting schedules they might make use of, the frequency of the routine, the leader responsible for the routine and those who should participate, and the process for sharing monitoring updates.

Once the team has proposed a monitoring routine, members should begin planning the work they will do in preparation for that routine. For the monitoring routine to be successful, it is essential that up-to-date information about the implementation status of benchmarks be available. Each strategic initiative action plan team can use the *Planning for Success:* Gathering Action Plan Progress Information worksheet included with this resource to plan and record the details related to information gathering responsibilities for their initiative.

The process below describes how to use the Affinity Mapping Protocol in designing a monitoring and reporting system.

1. Review results from the SWOT Analysis, if conducted, to refresh the team’s memory of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the team identified in relation to school or district planning practices and culture.
2. Pose the guiding question: What is the monitoring and reporting routine that will best support our [school or district]?
3. Organize into strategic initiative action plan groups. Allow approximately 20 minutes for small groups to conduct the Affinity Mapping Protocol.
4. Ask the facilitators of all small groups to share the categories their groups created with the protocol. Review and identify common themes across categories.
5. Provide small groups with the *Planning for Success*: Designing the Action Plan Monitoring Process worksheet and ask them to design a monitoring routine based on the characteristics their group identified.
6. Ask the facilitators of all small groups to share their group’s recommended routine. Identify common themes across groups and seek consensus on a monitoring routine for the team.
7. Provide small groups with the *Planning for Success:* Gathering Action Plan Progress Information worksheet and ask them to identify the information that will need to be gathered for their assigned strategic initiative in preparation for the team’s monitoring routine.

**Time Required**: This session requires approximately 1.5 to 2 hours to complete, depending on the number of participants and small groups that will report out.

**Note to Facilitators:** As noted earlier, the existence of the action plan and the effective implementation of a monitoring routine will require a shift in culture and practice for most schools or districts. Facilitators who would like to explicitly engage teams in exploring the shifts that will be required for success may want to make use of the “PDSA—Who Am I?” resource provided by the Active Implementation Hub of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. With this resource, teams can assess their own readiness, strengths, and gaps in relation to their monitoring process. The “PDSA—Who Am I?” resource is located here:

<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/AIModules-Activity-5-2-PDSAWhoAmI-final.pdf>

**Text for Facilitator Presentation Slides:** Some suggested text for presentation slides to support developing an action plan monitoring and reporting process is included below.

**Slide 1: Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA)**

“a vehicle for constant, continual improvement and innovation…”

**circle of continual improvment: plan, do, study, act**

Roehm, H. A., & Castellano, J. F. (1997). The Deming view of a business. *Quality Progress, 30*(2), 39-45.

**Slide 2: PDSA Cycle**

**circle of continual improvment: plan, do, study, act**

Moen, R. D., & Norman, C. L. (2010). Circling back. *Quality Progress*, 43(11), p.27.

**Slide 3: Creating Monitoring Routines: Characteristics**

* Regularity: Does the routine occur frequently enough to support effective implementation?
* Strong execution: Is the routine well run with strong facilitation, clear roles and responsibilities, and necessary progress data available?
* Focus on performance: Is the routine clearly focused on data/evidence and does it support the development of shared understanding?
* Action on performance: Does the routine encourage hard conversations, creative problem solving, and ownership of issues?

Adapted from *Deliverology in Practice: How Education Leaders Are Improving Student Outcomes* (Barber, Rodriguez, & Artis, 2016, p.195)

**Slide 4: SWOT Results**

* *What do SWOT reflections say about what you would like to see in a monitoring and reporting process?*

*[Insert SWOT Result Slides Here]*

**Slide 5: Designing the Monitoring and Reporting Routine**

* *What is the monitoring and reporting routine that will best support our [school or district]?*
* Consider the characteristics of a strong monitoring routine
* Imagine what a monitoring and reporting process will look like that:
  + Addresses identified practice and culture needs
  + Supports our improvement process
  + Supports our community’s understanding of and commitment to that process

**Slide 6: Affinity Mapping Protocol**

* Each participant takes 5 to 10 stickies
* Working silently, write one idea/sticky note
* One by one, each participant adds their stickies to the chart
* As participants add, they should regroup stickies to create categories
* Once all stickies are posted, talk with one another and label the categories
* Identify a spokesperson to share your work

Adapted by Ross Peterson-Veatch, <http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/affinity_mapping.pdf>

**Slide 7: Reference**

* Barber, M., Rodriguez, N., & Artis, E. (2016). *Deliverology in practice: How education leaders are improving student outcomes.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

***Planning for Success*: Designing the Action Plan Monitoring Process**

**Instructions:** *A critical part of the action plan process is the development of a monitoring routine—the regular practices and procedures—that the school or district will use to effectively implement, assess, and report on the progress of the action plan. This worksheet supports the design of such routines.*

| **Routine Elements** | **Recommendations** |
| --- | --- |
| **Routine Description**  *How will monitoring occur? (Consider existing meeting structures, etc.)* |  |
| **Timeframe/Frequency**  *In what timeframe(s) and frequency should monitoring occur?* |  |
| **Leader Responsible**  *Who will be responsible for leading the routine?* |  |
| **Participants**  *Who should participate in the routine?* |  |
| **Reporting**  *How—and with whom—should monitoring updates be shared?* |  |

***Planning for Success:* Gathering Action Plan Progress Information**

**Instructions:** *For monitoring routines to be effective, they must be focused on up-to-date information about action plan implementation. This worksheet helps schools or districts prepare for monitoring routines by identifying the progress update information that needs to be collected for each strategic initiative’s action plan and those responsible for this collection.*

| **Strategic Initiative:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **Information Required to Monitor Progress**  *What information will be required to monitor action plan progress and impact?* |  |
| **Person(s) Responsible for Data Collection**  *Who should be tasked with collecting this data for the routine?* |  |
| **Other Information** |  |