# The District Planning Process

# *Create—Align—Implement*

*From Data Analysis to Outcome-Driven Planning to System Alignment*

*From Action Planning to Progress Monitoring to Potential Redesign*

*Create—Align—Implement* represent the three phases of *Planning for Success*, a planning process that is designed to strengthen coherence and support district and school success. This planning process centers on the creation of a multi-year District Plan that is grounded in analysis of a wide array of district data; sets specific, measurable outcomes and identifies the objectives and initiatives to accomplish them; and serves as the foundation and guide for all other district systems.

This planning process also centers on the creation of an annual action plan that supports success of the District Plan by identifying benchmarks districts can use to monitor progress and measure impact while implementation is underway. The activities and resulting plans for each phase are depicted in the graphic below.

This graphic shows the three phases of PfS for District Plans and the major activities for each:  Create plan includes: Analyze district performance, educator evaluation, and community feedback data for trends and patterns, Envision the future, and Backward design the improvement strategy from desired student outcomes, researching effective practices.  Align systems includes:  Connect Educator Evaluation goals and School Improvement Plans to the District Plan; leverage budget, grants, and resources in support of the District Plan; and build community commitment to the District Plan.   Implement includes:  Create an annual action plan with progress and impact benchmarks, monitor and publicly report on progress, and redesign the District Plan if necessary.




# *The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework*

# *Multi-Year Plan Components*

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| --- | --- |
| **Element** | **Definition** |
| **Mission** | Your purpose: why the organization exists. |
| **Core Values** | What you believe in: the principles that guide decision making and action. |
| **Vision** | Your aspirations for students: what you value and why, and what future success will look like. |
| *Are the foundation of the…* | |
| **Theory of Action** | The beliefs and assumptions you hold about why certain actions will lead to the vision you seek. Framed as an “if…then” statement. |
| *Which leads to the development of the…* | |
| **Strategic Objectives** | The coherent group of overarching goals and key levers for improvement that will achieve the vision (the “what” and “why”). |
| *Which will be achieved by the…* | |
| **Strategic Initiatives** | The projects and programs that support and will achieve the strategic objectives (the “how”). |
| *The success of the plan as a whole will be measured by the...* | |
| **Outcomes** | The expected results: what they will be, how they will be measured, when they will occur. Outcomes are SMART goals: specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, results-focused; timed and tracked.  **Final outcomes** set targets for improvement achievedat the end of plan implementation. For example: By 2021, decrease chronic absenteeism by 2.8 percentage points to 12%. **Interim outcomes** set targets for improvement during plan implementation. |

# *Annual Action Plan Components*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Element** | **Definition** |
| **Implementation Benchmarks** | The planned action steps and their desired impact.  **Process benchmarks** specify what will happen, who will do it, and when. For example, 20 teachers will complete an ESL course by June.  **Early evidence of change benchmarks** identify changes you should begin to see if the plan is having its desired impact while being implemented. Early evidence benchmarks are indicators of effective implementation rather than measurements of interim results. Early evidence benchmarks might include changes in practice or attitude from sources such as classroom observation or surveys. For example, an increase in student use of oral language was observed in 80% of these ESL teachers’ classrooms between October and May. |
| *Which you regularly monitor to assess whether the plan is on track to achieve desired change or requires adjustment.* | |

# *Create—Align—Implement*

# *District Plan and Action Plan Components*

**The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework**

*The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework*, displayed on the previous page, was developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to support plan creation. The framework provides a common planning language and supports the shared understanding critical to successful planning and execution. The framework defines all multi-year and action plan components.

**District Plan**

An effective District Plan is developed with input from staff, families, students, and community partners. The outline below identifies a proposed structure for the multi-year District Plan. These components reflect legislative requirements, educator evaluation expectations, and best practices in planning.

1. District Mission, Vision, Core Values
   1. The district’s **core values**
   2. The district’s **mission**
   3. The district’s **vision**
2. Data analysis and theory of action for improvement
   1. **Data analysis** of student achievement and gaps between student groups in core subjects
   2. The district’s **theory of action** for improvement
3. Strategic Objectives and Initiatives
   1. **Strategic objectives** for improvement (3-5 recommended, to support focus)
   2. The **strategic initiatives** that will achieve these objectives
   3. The **professional development** that will support each initiative
   4. **Teacher induction** and **mentoring activities** that support successful implementation
4. Outcomes
   1. Performance benchmarks—**interim and final outcomes—**and processes for evaluating initiative effectiveness

**District Action Plan**

The annual Action Plan supports the implementation of the multi-year District Plan. The outline below identifies action plan components.

1. Implementation Benchmarks
   1. **Implementation benchmarks** for the year, defining specific activities, persons responsible, and timelines for action to be taken to accomplish the initiatives in the District Plan
2. Resources Supporting Implementation
   1. The staff and financial resources allocated to support these initiatives

*The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework* identifies two types of implementation benchmarks: process and early evidence of change. Process benchmarks help monitor progress, specifying what will be done when and by whom. Early evidence of change benchmarks help monitor impact during implementation, specifying changes in practice, attitude, or behavior one should begin to see if the plan is having its desired impact.

# *Create—Align—Implement*

# *Connecting Existing District Systems to Create Coherence*

The graphic below depicts the data sources that inform District and School Improvement Plans; the contents of multi-year and annual action plans and the relationships between these plans; and the connections between these plans and district systems. District and School Improvement Plans are living documents that should guide district systems and respond to changes in the district context, including data about plan implementation and impact gathered through action plan monitoring.

**Educator Evaluation Data**

**School Performance Data**

**Community Feedback**

**District Plan**

Vision, Mission, Core Values

Data Analysis

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Initiatives

Professional Development

Teacher Induction & Mentoring

Outcomes (SMART Goals)

**District Action Plan**

Implementation Benchmarks

Resources

**School Improvement Plan**

Vision, Mission, Core Values

Data Analysis

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Initiatives

Professional Development

Teacher Induction & Mentoring

Outcomes (SMART Goals)

**Budget**

**Grants**

**Technology**

**Resource Allocation**

**Educator Evaluation**

**System**

**School Action Plan**

Implementation Benchmarks

Resources

**District Performance Data**

**Educator Evaluation Data**

**Community Feedback**