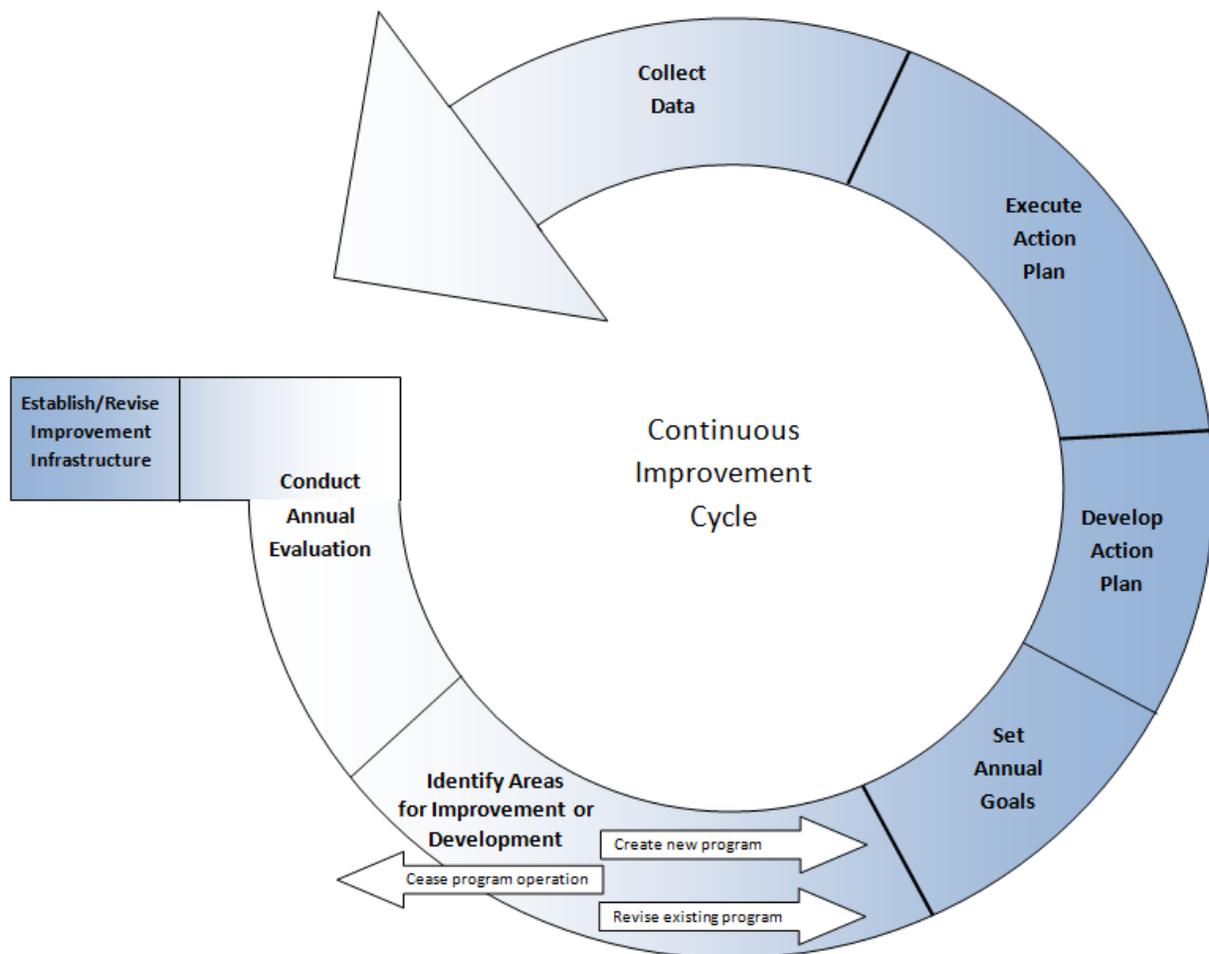**Appendix D: Continuous Improvement Cycle**

Federal and state policies continue to focus on improving how educators are prepared to teach effectively in 21st-century classrooms. This increased scrutiny of educators and educator preparation has led to both greater accountability and expanded opportunities for educator preparation organizations. It has also created a need to re-assess how these organizations are reviewed.

Both the 2012 *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* and the updated program approval process focus on the need for Sponsoring Organizations to establish a continuous improvement system that examines program effectiveness through the compilation and analysis of data, both quantitative and qualitative. The system enables each Sponsoring Organization to reflect upon and assess the design, development, and delivery of its educator preparation programs and ensure that they reflect the mission, vision, and goals of the Sponsoring Organization and that they are aligned with state requirements.

Ongoing collection and analysis of program data drives the continuous improvement process. This continuous improvement cycle results in more effective programs.

What Continuous Improvement Looks Like

Step in Cycle	Description	Potential Actions
Establish Improvement Infrastructure	Collect, align, allocate, acquire or create the resources necessary to support the continuous improvement cycle. It is advisable that organizations consider internal capacity for sustaining improvement initiatives and design structures that support these efforts.	• Create an improvement committee • Schedule in advance standing meetings to support each step in the cycle • Enlist external partners and stakeholders in supporting the infrastructure • Employ the Datawise protocol, a cycle of data inquiry used in the PK-12 system and adapted for post-secondary use. Several SO's have taken part in ESE's Datawise pilot
Conduct Annual Evaluation	The annual evaluation should assess program compliance, effectiveness, and impact using an evidence-based system (CMR 7.03(2)(a)). State-supported data that should serve as sources of evidence include: • state administered surveys; • district employment data; • candidate persistence and completion rates; and • aggregate program completer evaluation ratings. Data collected and reported as required by the State Annual Report (SAR) will likely also contribute to this evaluation.	• Gather data from Edwin, the database of MA education information • Evaluate trends in data, such as evaluation ratings specific to program design • Compare impact data to organization vision and mission • Determine progress towards prior year goals
Identify Areas of Improvement	Based on the analysis above, target areas for focused attention and work to identify those with	• Revise an existing program using the continuous improvement cycle

Step in Cycle	Description	Potential Actions
	potential for addressing the greatest need.	• Cease program operation: Often occurs in program areas with low enrollment or completion rates. With new data, program effectiveness may become a more significant factor. • Restructure or implement new systems at the organizational level • Create a new program either due to need demonstrated in an employing district, state/national trend, or candidate interest

Step in Cycle	Description	Potential Actions
Set Annual Goals	These annual goals will be reported in the SAR and on public Profiles. Goals can address formal review criteria by yielding improvements to programs and by guiding the organization's Strategic Plan. Additionally, they should have a measurable impact on educator-preparation outcomes and/or PK-12 students. Existing evaluation and improvement cycles in use in MA commonly adopt the SMART[4] goal approach; organizations may consider this alignment valuable.	• Draft SMART goals in collaboration with stakeholders such as PK-12 partners, faculty, staff, and others • Connect to larger vision/ mission. • Establish ongoing measurements of progress toward goals. • Regularly report out progress to faculty and staff, and adjust plans where necessary.
Develop Action Plan	Outline in detail the steps/strategies the organization will employ to achieve goals. Assign responsibilities and set	• Look for potential best-practices nationally or in the state • Enlist stakeholder support

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[4] SMART Goals are: Smart & Specific; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, Results-Focused; Timed & Tracked. For more information, see Educator Evaluation Resources.

	clear timelines. Depending on the structure of annual goals set, it may be necessary to create more than one action plan.	• Build check points into action plan in order to assess progress towards goals • Identify data sources to evaluate action plan outcomes
Execute Action Plan	Implement the plan created above.	
Collect Data	Collect the data elements identified in the action plan. This data should contribute to the annual evaluation.	