

Program Evaluation as a Continuous Improvement Process

Purpose

Use end-of-year special education program evaluation as a continuous improvement process (CIP).

Goal

To determine what the district learned, what needs to improve and what needs to be installed before the start of the next academic year.

Iowa's Continuous Improvement Process	Iowa's General Supervision Duties	Reflection Questions	What Does Our Data Tell Us? (Systems/Practices)
<p>1. Access: Help teams understand the problem before jumping to solutions.</p>	<p>Detect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify patterns Determine root causes Where is deeper analysis needed? 	<p>What does our current data tell us about learner outcomes?</p> <p>Is there a gap between current outcomes and our shared expectations for all learners?</p>	<p>Concerns revealed through data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average LRE for students with IEPs is less than 80% as reflected in SE-Activity Roster report in ACHIEVE (Column T). <p>Root Causes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of students receiving special education services get SDI in a pull-out setting. Preschool students' LRE is not accurately documented.
<p>2. Prioritize: What patterns, risks, gaps, strengths, and emerging needs are becoming visible?</p>	<p>Prevent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine which barriers will have the greatest impact System in place to consistently review data 	<p>What evidence-based strategies or system-wide interventions, services and supports will address the identified areas?</p> <p>What do we need to do to support/remove barriers for this work?</p>	<p>Prioritize concern(s) to address root cause(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district will focus on increasing the amount of time students are in the general education setting and with their grade level peers. <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of students receive SDI in pull out settings. General education teachers' understanding of accommodations and modifications.

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3. Plan: Prioritize needs with evidence- based interventions and SDI	Inform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure understanding of requirements and procedures • Share effective practices and data use guidance 	What is our plan to address the priority area(s) of need? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, when, how, where? How will we know that we are making progress on our plan?	Action steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear communication around the district's DDSDP with all staff. • Professional learning for all general education and special education teachers on the SDI framework.
4. Implement: Ongoing monitoring ensuring consistency	Correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues or noncompliance • Implement corrective actions and evidence-based practices 	Are we implementing strategies, services, interventions - with fidelity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not, why not? 	Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations communicated around professional learning and clearly defined responsibilities. • New learning implemented with fidelity. • Ongoing coaching and feedback around the SDI Framework and teacher SDI action planning.
5. Evaluate: Review outcomes & adjust strategies	Inspect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data, practices and outcomes • Determine compliance and effectiveness of supports. 	Did our plan work to help address the identified priority areas?	Evaluate effectiveness of plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare current and prior data from SE-Activity Roster report in ACHIEVE (Column T) • Walk-throughs - observe where students are receiving their SDI. • Reflect upon the completion of action steps within the teacher SDI action plan. What growth can be observed?

Program evaluation should be framed as part of Iowa's Continuous Improvement Process. Rather than ending the year by simply collecting reports, district and building-leaders should use end-of-year evidence to move through the five CIP steps: Assess, Prioritize, Plan, Implement and Evaluate. The evaluation process begins by asking where the system is now and where it needs to be. Leaders then identify why the most important gaps are occurring, develop a plan of action, install the system for fall and evaluate whether the plan improved implementation outcomes.

For special education leaders, this means end-of-year program evaluation is not separate from continuous improvement. It is the special education application of continuous improvement. ACHIEVE reports, IEP goal progress, LRE data, discipline and removal data, shortened school day data, seclusion/restraint data, manifestation determination review data, staffing/ licensure/ caseload review, service delivery plans, parent/ student surveys and district SIS data should all be used to understand current reality and prepare the system for the next school year.