



Indicator Explanation



CORE FUNCTION	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Leadership	Monitor short- and long-term goals	1B.3 School leaders manage an established evaluation process to monitor fidelity and effectiveness of programs and services and use evaluation data to make program/ service decisions.

Preparing for improvement requires schools to determine what is already working, discern strengths and weaknesses, and developing a plan. When a school has vested time, money, and effort into learning a new program, process, or curriculum, it is often difficult to give up those efforts even if they seem to be producing no effects. It is important, however, to not invest more time and energy into programs and services that are not bearing the fruit of improved student achievement—no matter what the initial investment might have been, continuing to invest time and energy into something that is not working will not suddenly become fruitful, it will simply drain more time and energy and money from already limited stores.

Schools have invested heavily in curriculum alignment, mapping their curricula to standards, benchmarks, and specific items of standards-based assessment. The resulting alignment is a set of data, a body of information carefully organized, that helps answer the question “What do we expect a student to know?” The challenge that lies ahead for most schools is to draw further connections between the aligned curriculum, the taught curriculum, the most efficacious instructional strategies, and the mastery evidenced by the individual student. This must be done in a way that assures that all students achieve the expected level of mastery while allowing each student ample opportunity to soar beyond that minimum expectation. The linkage from curriculum to instruction is tenuous in many schools, and insufficient systems are in place for capturing information about what is taught, how it is taught, and how it might best be learned by an individual student. The research literature provides a wealth of information on instructional practices, but the usefulness of this information cannot be assumed from its abundance. Matching particular practices to the subject area, grade level, and students’ prior learning can be a massive undertaking, leaving too much unproductive chaff in the bushel of productive grain. In the end, the teacher must hit the target where content, instructional mode, and learner requisites optimally meet. A DBDM (Data-based decision-making) system can help a teacher hit the target. Monitoring the application of targeted learning strategies by teachers can help a school refine its professional development processes and improve its teachers’ effectiveness.

What data needs to be collected in order to measure the effectiveness of a program or service? How will the data be collected? Who will analyze the data? All these questions can be formulated and answered by school leadership. Adding any new program, curriculum, service, or professional development to an already full basket, will only result in an overflow and conflicting priorities. Doing more is not necessarily doing “better.” Often, taking something out of the basket before trying something new is essential in order to ensure that there is not conflicting priorities and overlap between programs and services. Deciding which to throw overboard, however, should be based on a careful examination of the data over time.



Monitoring and Evaluation systems are available, but schools can also create their own systems for collecting data and systematically and objectively reviewing the data. School leaders should analyze not just the results, but how the program or service is being implemented. The monitoring should include an understanding of what the program/service objectives are and translate the objectives into performance indicators and targets. Then, routinely collect data on these indicators and compare the actual results with the targets. When the data is collected, evaluate the data to answer questions. How was the school trained to use the program or service? Was it adequate? Is it being implemented with fidelity? What were the intended results? What are the actual results? Examine the implementation process. Explore the results to see how and why those results occurred. Then, make a plan to improve either by professional development to correct usage of the program/service, ensure fidelity to the process, or, if it is just not working, replace it.

References

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