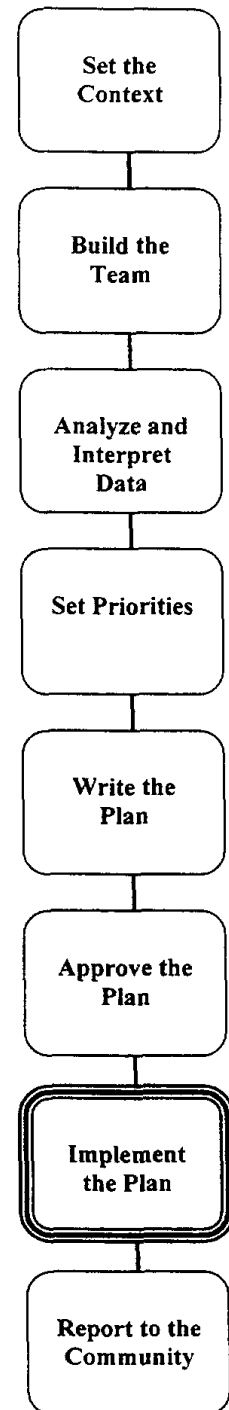


EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Implement the Action Plan

Your action plan should be a living document. Unless you closely monitor the progress of the steps and activities in the plan, they may not get done. Do not wait until the end of the year to find out if you have attained your goals. Many plans fail because people focus most of their attention on writing the plan and not enough energy on monitoring the implementation phase.

Communication is at the heart of the implementation process. People are more supportive of changes when they are involved. Keeping everyone involved in the action planing process will ensure their support. Communication can help maintain the energy and enthusiasm typical of the initial stage of planning throughout the entire process.



Implementing the Plan

What can you expect during implementation?

Just as it was important to involve the entire staff and other constituents in the development of the action plan, it is equally important to involve them in the implementation phase. During implementation, you will begin to carry out the activities outlined in the plan.

Be prepared for the unexpected. Things can go wrong even with well developed plans, so it is important to monitor the progress of the plan along the way for unexpected obstacles and problems. For example, the plan may be too ambitious; it may lack the support of key individuals or groups; key team members may leave; or resources for implementing the plan may no longer be available. There are a number of potential problems that can beset any plan. Some problems can be anticipated and contingencies developed within the overall plan. To help develop contingency plans, engage in some “what if” thinking at the start of the planning process. Be prepared to make minor or major revisions to the plan over time.

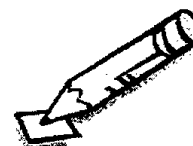
How can you ensure the implementation of the plan?

Only through constant attention to monitoring the plan can the school make the necessary adjustments and revisions to ensure success. To help ensure proper implementation of the plan, it is critical to develop a monitoring process. In this process, be sure to:

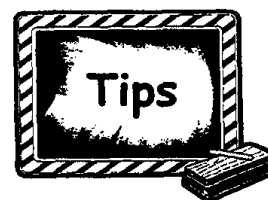
- collect data continuously;
- divide the implementation into manageable steps;
- monitor *indicators of progress*;
- pay persistent attention to carrying out each step of the plan;
- involve everyone who will be affected by the plan in the implementation; and,
- update the plan as necessary.

As you monitor the progress of the plan, it may become necessary to make adjustments. You may need to make anything from minor adjustments to major revisions. Whenever any changes are made to a plan, it

Key Ideas



- ▶ Monitor the progress of the action plan
- ▶ Plan to review progress regularly



- ▶ To keep track of the plan, consider using a tool such as “Analysis of Effort to Raise Student Achievement,” from *Setting Sights*

(See bibliography for complete citation)

Key Ideas



- ▶ Actively involve all stakeholders in the progress of the plan
- ▶ Establish a communication schedule for:
 - ✓ teams or workgroups
 - ✓ the entire staff
 - ✓ the school board
 - ✓ the community
 - ✓ other administrators



Indicators of Progress:
Data or observations, collected in the interim that show progress toward meeting the annual goals

is the responsibility of the action planning team to communicate these changes and the data behind them to all involved groups.

What are indicators of progress?

It is important to develop a set of *progress indicators* that can guide work during the implementation phase. Indicators of progress could be activities that need to occur, such as specific curriculum development work or a staff training workshop. Other progress indicators might be more directly related to changes in instructional practice or student performance as a result of professional development activities or the application of best practices. If, for example, one action plan goal is to see a measurable increase in the number of students meeting the standard for mathematical computation, a possible progress indicator might be cast in terms of increasing the accuracy and the amount of math homework that students do throughout the year.

How do you communicate the progress of the plan?

The most important factor to consider during the implementation of an action plan is sharing information with one another so that the plan can be revised and adjusted throughout the year. If people do not know what is expected of them or how the plan may have been updated, the plan will likely fail. A communication schedule, which describes and monitors when, how, and with whom information is shared, should be developed.

Regularly scheduled updates and reports are good accountability tools that can help gather information about how changes are working, whether timelines are being met, and what corrective actions may be required. Establish a communication schedule that keeps everyone focused on making the plan succeed!

Some suggestions for communicating with different audiences:

- Action Planning Team** (or any workgroups created to address parts of the plan):
- Schedule regular “working sessions” to chart progress and to plan activities.
 - Keep “action minutes” and distribute to the group.
 - Report to the entire staff on a regular basis.
 - Meet with administrators as needed.

Entire Staff

- Schedule regular action plan updates at staff meetings, at least monthly.
- Discuss progress and make recommendations for revision or fine-tuning of activities.
- Clarify expectations and responsibilities.
- Publish “action minutes” along with regular minutes.

School Board/Regional Advisory Board

- Make the action plan update a monthly agenda item.
- Have workgroups meet with the board as appropriate.
- Provide professional development to the board around data and assessment.
- Present annual evaluation of the action plan.
- Establish action planning as an integral component of policy and budget development.
- Prepare an annual community report on the action plan.

Community

- Publish the action plan goals in school newsletters and in the local newspaper.
- Report the results to the public in the Town Report or at a School Report Night.
- Discuss the action plan at PTO meetings.
- Solicit community input and feedback.

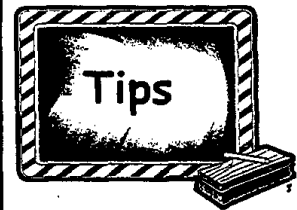
Communication is at the heart of the implementation process. People are more supportive of changes when they are involved. Keeping everyone involved in the action planning process will ensure their support. Good communication can help maintain the energy and enthusiasm typical of the initial stage of planning throughout the entire process.

What happens at the end of the year?

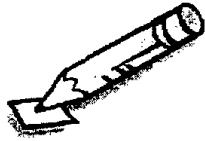
At a minimum, an action plan needs to be evaluated annually for its effectiveness toward meeting stated student performance targets and revised in light of updated student performance data. Collect the most recent student performance data and compare the results to the performance targets. If the goal is met, set new performance targets. Don't forget to celebrate success! If goals have not been met, revise the plan using the new data and keep going.



- ▶ Communication Schedule
See Appendix G.1
- ▶ “Action Minutes” template
See Appendix G.2



- ▶ Focus on positive action, rather than negative feedback
- ▶ Expect glitches, problems, and unanticipated events
- ▶ Be prepared to adjust and revise the action plan



Key Idea

- ▶ Annually review and revise the plan



Resource

**The New Meaning
of Educational
Change*

By Fullan & Stiegelbauer

(See bibliography for
complete citation)

How do you keep the implementation moving forward?

Change is difficult for individuals and organizations. Change implies that something is broken and no one wants to be considered part of a problem. It is important to help people see change as a commitment to success. Talk with the faculty, school board, and community members about student performance goals and what possible changes may be necessary to reach the targets. *Keep the focus of discussions on the goal.*

Once changes are agreed upon, it is important to talk about them.

- Acknowledge with everyone that problems will arise and that there might be a variety of reasons for the problems or resistance.
- Remember, all efforts, no matter how well they are implemented, may experience an “implementation dip” in the early stages.
- Every person in the school has responsibility for contributing to the overall success of the action plan as well as their own individual responsibilities.
- Successful actions can reinforce the belief that change can lead to improvement. Starting small may increase the likelihood of success and increase motivation.
- You can’t mandate what matters. Skill, commitment, and motivation make the implementation successful.*