

Routines to Monitor Plan Implementation

A Guide for District & School Teams



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Oregon's Goals

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has established that districts must install self-monitoring **routines to drive implementation of district and school improvement plans**. The routines embody the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) process of continuous improvement. These district-led performance management meetings are *focused on establishing success at both the district and school level and leveraging effective supports – they are not an accountability mechanism*.

Installation of district and school routines enable effective feedback loops from school to district, district to school, school board, stakeholders and tribal nations, and in some cases, to the state. The routines provide an opportunity for leaders to use formative data to make concrete decisions about how to support implementation of evidence-based practices, help improve student outcomes, identify and manage next steps in real time. In cases where districts provide feedback to the state, the routines enable the district a mechanism to share their progress on district and school improvement toward their goals as an output of a meaningful district process/

The routine is different from a typical meeting. Staff devote significant time and energy to preparing data and an agenda for the routine that will allow leaders to focus on the evidence, discuss, and assign next steps quickly. There is no debate about the purpose of the meeting or about technicalities within the data. Leaders enter the room with a general understanding of current progress, rather than spending precious time receiving updates from their colleagues.

District and school leaders structure regular routines for the purpose of:

- Establishing a consistent and rigorous view of progress toward plan goals;
- Understanding evidence of progress on student outcomes aligned with strategies;
- Engaging in collaborative learning and problem solving;
- Deploying and prioritizing district resources and supports based on that evidence;
- Installing feedback loops and communication protocols, as an outcome of the routine, between school and district, stakeholders, school-boards, tribal nations, and when appropriate, the state.

District and school leaders are charged with answering the following questions during the routines:

- Are the strategies and activities underway at the district and each school having the expected impact on student achievement?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do next?

Many district leaders already engage in some or all of the practices that are critical to making routines successful. This guide lays out *how to establish effective routines in districts and schools to drive implementation* -- a proven approach for using routines to improve performance.

Establishing District and school Routines

What are the characteristics of a strong routine?

We understand that nobody begins this work in a vacuum. Most districts and schools have some kind of process for reviewing performance already, and many of these procedures have some (and sometimes all) of the right characteristics. It helps to begin by reflecting on these current practices and seeing how they measure up to six essential elements of strong routines:

- **Agreeing on a common purpose:** Do all people participating in the routine clearly understand and agree on its purpose – to discuss performance against the district priorities, to identify and solve problems, and to identify and commit to clear next steps? Does the routine have a clear *area of focus* – a part of the aspiration, like a goal, a strategy, or a combination of one or more of the two – that is the consistent subject of every routine on some regular basis? Participants should all know and agree on why they are there, and be committed to participating in a way that fulfills this purpose.
- **Getting the right people around the table:** Is the district leader present and engaged at the district routine? Does he or she drive the routine and put the focus on improving implementation and providing supports to implementation efforts and schools? Are the relevant leader(s) from the district or schools (pertinent to the area of focus) present and engaged? Consistent and authentic participation by the right leaders is essential to success. In some cases, the relevant leaders must be coached to play the right roles – but the investment is worth it.
- **Arriving at a shared view of performance and progress:** Is the routine grounded in evidence that is structured to help participants agree on current progress against the goal, strategy, or other area of focus? Is the discussion structured to help participants reach and use this consensus as a common starting point for problem solving? As noted above, if the participants are looking at data and evidence for the first time, it may be difficult to do this quickly. The best routines curate and present this evidence – often beforehand in the form of a briefing or advanced sending of the data – in a way that allows participants to quickly agree on what it implies for how they should focus their time and energy.
- **Identifying and solving problems:** Does the routine help participants to identify and agree on the most critical barriers to progress? Does it create space for creative problem-solving that empowers participants to address these challenges? Most of the time in a routine should be spent doing this; a well-prepared routine could even propose an agenda that focuses the attention of participants on the biggest issues that seem to arise from the data. In fact, the major payoff of preparation is the ability of participants to move quickly to this stage.
- **Encouraging learning and collaboration:** Does the routine encourage participants to identify challenges that are common amongst their peers and to learn from each other's best and most promising practices? As we will see below, comparison is an important tool for making a routine effective. For this to work, routines must set the expectation that participants be honest and transparent about progress (or lack thereof); otherwise, the routines will become just another forum for people to try to impress each other.
- **Identifying and committing to clear next steps:** Does every routine produce clear and actionable next steps for all relevant participants that can be tracked in future routines? This is really a good characteristic of almost any meeting, but it is particularly important for a routine. Moreover, these next steps should be grounded in the evidence presented and the problem solving that took place during the routine.

We have summarized these five elements in the brief rubric in **Appendix 1**. A good first step is to identify existing meetings that could conceivably be remade into routines – staff or team meetings, review meetings, and so on – and evaluate them against this rubric. What are you already doing well? How do you know? How could you improve one or more of these routines for the work you are trying to do? With so many meetings already taking place in most districts and schools, it is good to begin with the assumption that you will not be starting from scratch, but repurposing existing work. You may eventually discover that you need to create new routines, but this should not be where you begin.

What is the purpose of the routine?

The purpose of a routine should be clear at its inception. We have already mentioned the general purpose of these routines – to discuss performance on your goals, identify and solve problems, and commit to clear next steps to further implementation of your improvement plan.

There are a number of questions that should be addressed to design an effective routine:

- What district or school goals or strategies will the routine address?
- Will participants discuss each goal or strategy at each meeting or address only those that the data show are in most need of assistance?
- Will they focus on problems in district or school implementation, on individual school or grade or content progress or some combination of all?
- What mechanisms are available to deliver on next steps?

While some of these questions may seem difficult to answer immediately, considering the context can be helpful in narrowing the available options.

District Example: For example, districts with a high-priority goal, initiative or strategy may want to focus on the implementation of that key endeavor. In another example, for districts that choose to focus on school progress (with many schools) will likely want to develop a procedure for focusing the conversation on particularly successful schools (how can we replicate this?) or challenge schools (what can we do to help?), whereas districts with few schools may be able to spend some time on each one. The existing work and relationship between the district office and individual schools or principals will often determine the type of support that the district can realistically offer.

School Example: School teams will likely want to focus on key aspects of their plan progress as well as student outcomes at all routines.

ODE installs similar routines and uses the information to determine what trends emerge in districts based on size or region, what areas of support are needed and where strengths are emerging that can be offered as exemplars. To fulfill this purpose, the district and school effectiveness team reflects on bright spots and challenges across regions, discusses opportunities and proposes next steps, then reviews and coordinates next steps based on those conversations.

As you begin to envision what a routine would look like at your district or school, consider running a “test” routine addressing just a subset of schools, goals, strategies or student groups first to try out your process. The practice is useful both for those preparing for the routine and those participating.

How does a district or school team define the goals or strategies for focus?

The overall goals and subsequent strategies need to be identified prior to structuring a routine around progress. Typically, districts or schools have identified a number of specific goals. Strategies are then developed to support those goals. A well-developed district or school improvement plan calls out interim measures that the team will monitor to ascertain whether strategies are being implemented well and having the desired impact on both implementation efforts and student outcomes. If your district or school improvement plan does not have a focused number of written goals, clear evidence-based strategies to achieve those goals over time, and interim measures to assist the team in determining plan progress, it is time to make one and ensure that it is shared by all!

The following two questions can be helpful in identifying those goals:

1. What would success look like in one, two or three years?
2. How would you know or measure that you had been successful along the way?

Once a goal is established and the implications are well understood, the strategies need to be identified – answering the question “how are we planning to achieve our goals?” More specifically, we recommend identifying strategies at two levels:

- **District-level supports:** What programs, initiatives, or other strategies are in place through which the district can further implementation and direct support to schools? These are the channels that leaders will take advantage of when generating next steps during the routine.
- **School-level strategies:** What are the key pieces of work that each school is relying upon to improve student outcomes? These should be programs or initiatives of which most (if not all) educational staff at the school are aware, and they will probably influence the day-to-day work of most educators at the school.

At either level, there are four questions leaders at the district or school will need to answer in order to define these goals or strategies:

- What are the 1-3 strategies for this year to achieve our goals?
- For each strategy,
 - What does success look like for this year?
 - What are the major milestones this year?

With answers to these questions in hand for the relevant work at the district and at schools, the routine can focus on determining what the district can do to make sure the work is successful.

Who should be involved in the routine? How often should it take place?

Once you have an idea of what the routine’s purpose will be, the next step is to consider who should participate, their roles during the routine, and the format frequency with which the routine to occur.

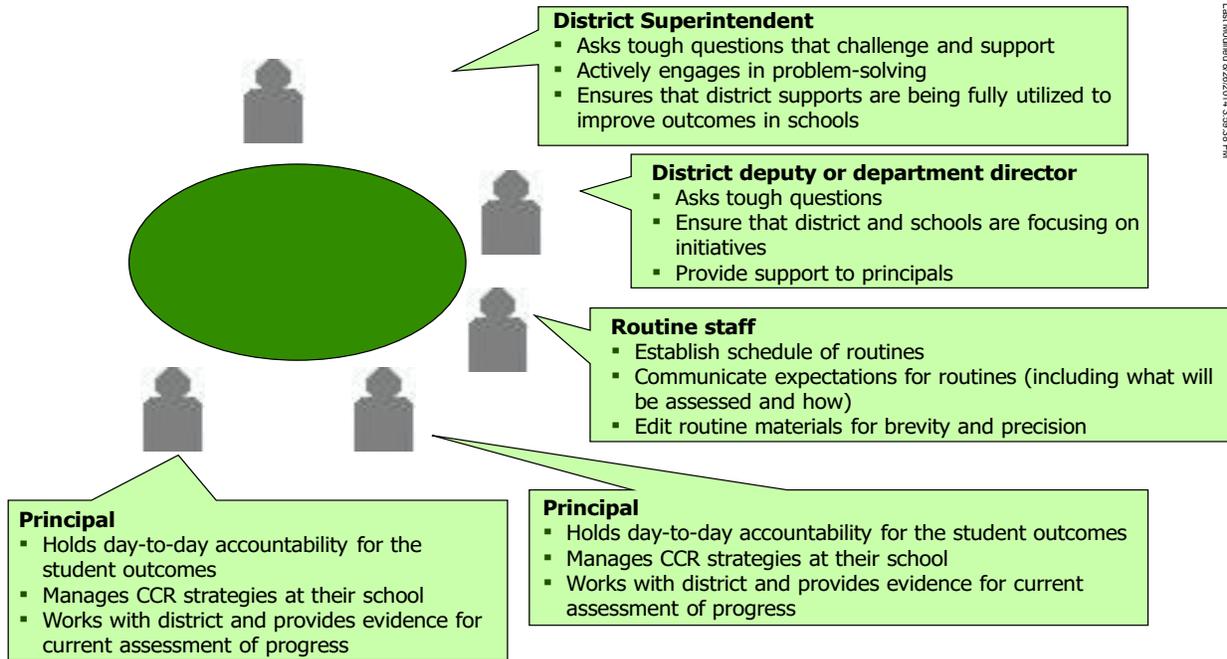
- **Who should plan the routine and prepare materials?** The district or school leadership team should designate a person or people to act as routine staff. Routine staff have a significant role and often shape the path of the discussion during the routine itself. Routine staff will often propose initial areas

of focus and critical questions to the district or school leader during preparation. Therefore, the routine staff should be people who the district or school leader and other participants trust. He, she, or they should also possess intermediate to advanced data analysis skills (or support) and be able to structure an agenda from key questions or objectives. The routine's success is indeed dependent in part on the skill of the routine staff who prepare for it.

- **Who should participate in the routine?** At a minimum, the routine should include the lead support individuals, the routine staff, and the district or school leader. However, it could also involve others with knowledge of the situation like colleagues who are related to the work and projects at hand.
- **What is each participant's role during the routine?** It is critical that each person in attendance have a clear role during the routine. The roles played by each individual are not necessarily the same as their title or district role. Depending on the routine's focus, director-level staff and individual project leads could have an equally important part to play in targeting district support to schools or school supports to students. Routine staff keep group memory and ensure that the routine addresses the important questions, focuses on next steps, and that the correct individuals are included in follow-up. The diagram below shows roles during a hypothetical routine.
- **Should we include school principals in our district routine?** To answer this question, we recommend going back to the overall purpose of the routine – to ensure that the district is providing effective support to schools. As such, the Principal's role in the routine must be as a feedback mechanism to the district. *The routine staff will need to pay regular attention to the role of the school principal, so that the session remains about improving and targeting district support and does not turn into an accountability mechanism for the school.*
- **How often should the routine occur?** Depending on the urgency and pace of the work, decide how often routines should occur. ODE encourages routines at least quarterly. If you are setting up multiple routines, consider how the schedules should build upon one another. That is, should one routine occur before another because it will help you prepare for the latter? In some cases, the routine could be run in a way that focuses on plan implementation and school or student progress alternately. In other examples, both plan progress and school or student progress might be attainable at the each meeting. In yet another example, some routines may not attend to key data points that may not be available except at certain points in the year.

See **Appendix 2** for a template that will help in planning a routine.

See **Appendix 3** for a template to assist in identifying the major strategies at the district and school level to monitor during the routine.



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Measuring Progress, decision making and problem solving resources

How does a team measure progress?

No routine will get far without sufficient and relevant data. Discussions and next steps should be grounded in the evidence. Before the routine begins, participants should have a chance to review the data that will be available. This serves two purposes. First, previewing the data ensures that there are no surprises during the meeting. Second, participants can begin to develop conclusions and recommendations ahead of time. Both of these allow for a higher level of buy-in and acceptance of the data and of the routine itself.

We recommend both qualitative and quantitative data. Remember to consider what questions you are counting on these data to answer as you reflect on what is available, and note that all data are more useful when priorities and a measureable definition of success are clearly defined using the questions above.

- **Quantitative data:** These will most likely be data that directly address goal outcomes or are leading indicators for those metrics. For example, if a district has a third grade reading goal, a routine may look at summative test scores once per year but in the interim could use benchmark assessment results from each school. Also, consider process-related metrics such as project milestones (e.g. number of planned tasks completed or number of stakeholders reach with a particular initiative). Other examples of leading indicator data to consider are:
 - Average daily attendance rate
 - % of students who are classified as truant
 - % of students moving in and out of school during the year
 - Students' report card grades
 - Special education referral rate or special education placement rates
 - % of teachers present daily
 - % of teachers utilizing specific strategies based on walk-through summaries
 - % of students reaching important benchmarks each quarter based on internal assessment systems
 - Classroom walkthrough or observation data trends
- **Qualitative data:** The value of qualitative data during a routine should not be underestimated. Specifically, if district and school leaders understand the strategies or goals underway to improve outcomes, it is useful to collect qualitative data that help determine the extent to which that work is proceeding and making a difference for students. We recommend capturing a picture of how work is proceeding by using either new or existing feedback loop mechanisms. For example:
 - How well is work proceeding on the two or three big priority strategies or initiatives within the district or at each school?
 - Does the principal or the person directly in charge of the work at the school think that the district or schools are making progress?
 - What are staff or stakeholders indicating through survey data?

The fundamental challenge of assessing progress is its lack of a consistent and rigorous definition. Measuring progress against a particular target or strategy is tricky because it is difficult to agree on what success should look like at various stages of implementation. Moreover, it is difficult to understand relative progress between targets and strategies because each will have different measures of success that are sometimes impossible to compare.

For this reason, we have developed a **District and School Qualitative Assessment Framework** that standardizes the definition of success with one question: as of this moment in time, what is the **likelihood** that we will be successful? Once we have determined this for each school or each strategy, we can add up the evidence from these “ratings” to determine the likelihood that we will hit the district-level goal.

The Qualitative Assessment Framework thus creates a simple, apples-to-apples way to measure progress across strategies and schools. It does this by using a set of consistent and balanced criteria for assessing the quality of implementation. These criteria rely on a combination of retrospective, prospective, quantitative, and qualitative evidence:

■ **Quality of planning:**

- Is there a key person and team responsible for ensuring success?
- Do we have a plan that articulates clear strategies for achieving our targets and sets out milestones for implementation and measures of progress?

■ **Capacity:**

- Have roles been specified in order to be successful?
- How engaged are these? How willing and able are they to play their roles right now?

■ **Evidence of progress:**

- What evidence is there that shows whether the strategies are working as intended?
- What do the latest data say about progress (e.g. leading indicators or process metrics)?

To arrive at ratings in each of these categories for each strategy, school or district participants can use the Qualitative Assessment Framework rubric shown in **Appendix 4**.

Once there is a clear idea of what data we need and have available, it is important to think deliberately about how that data is collected, analyzed, distributed, and maintained. Some key questions to consider are:

- Who will collect and analyze the data?
- What questions do we need the data to answer?
- What analyses will be useful?
- How will the data be distributed before the routine? What data products will be available during the routine?
- In between routines, what can be done to ensure that the data remains up to date and accessible?

How might a team use proven models to measure progress, make decisions and solve problems?

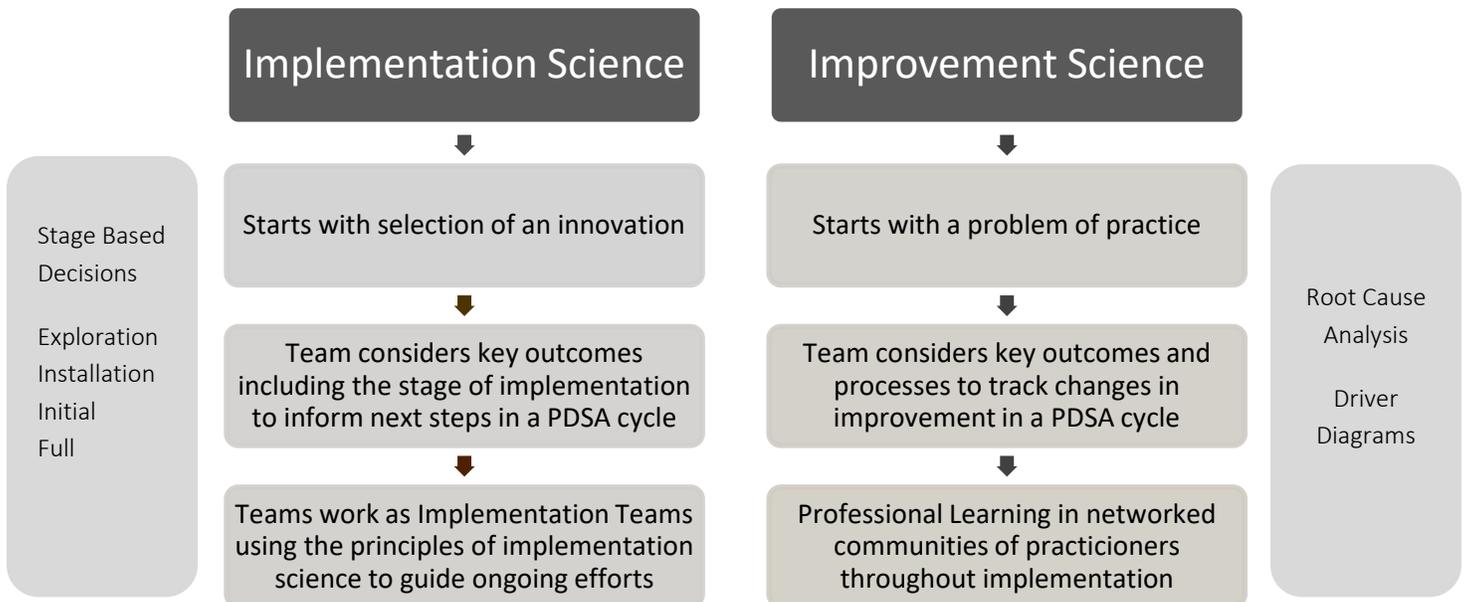
Implementation Science and **Improvement Science** support continuous improvement efforts aligned to the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. Both models elevate specific, yet different constructs that are helpful as teams engage in routines to monitor progress, determine stage-based decisions and solve problems together, but both models enter into the process at different points.

For example:

Implementation Science is considered when an innovation (examples might include MTSS, PBIS, AVID or a new literacy adoption) is being considered or has already been selected. Stages of implementation are considered to guide decision-making and to plan timely stage-based actions until the innovation reaches full implementation. Stages of implementation can be a form of data the team considers when measuring growth over time. In this example, a team may celebrate moving from installation of the innovation to initial implementation by reaching certain indicators. For more information on using Implementation Science as a potential source of data for routines as well as to support stage based decision-making visit the [National Implementation Research Network](#). Here you will find stages of implementation information and tools to use to analyze your current implementation progress. **Appendix 5**, summarizes general stages of implementation and the types of actions and decisions that typically take place at each stage.

Similarly to implementation science, **Improvement Science** offers a process by which teams can dive deeply into the specific nature of a problem of practice during plan implementation, consider potential actions and metrics to move implementation forward, with intermittent routines to reflect upon progress. For more information on Improvement Science visit: [Carnegie Foundation](#) to learn more.

The graphic below outlines the general tenets and starting points of improvement and implementation science:



Preparation and Steps to Run the Routine

Preparing to run a high quality routine takes planning and persistence, but it gets much easier as the routine staff and participants become used to the process. These five steps will help you to prepare thoroughly for each routine. Done well, they will make your routines a distinctive experience for participants, one that produces concrete and productive action, empowers participants, and lends additional credibility to your work.

Steps to Being Prepared for the Routine

1. Gathering evidence and arriving at an initial view of progress
2. Arrive at your own view of progress
3. Develop objectives for the routine
4. Develop supporting materials for the routine
5. Brief the relevant leaders

Step 1: Gathering evidence and arriving at your own view of progress

The first step in preparing for the routine is to gather the necessary data and come to an initial view of progress.

Step 2: Arrive at preliminary view of overall progress

Once each strategy or school has been rated on its likelihood of being successful, the routine staff will have an opportunity to come to an initial judgment of the team's overall likelihood of success. This step could at first seem duplicative; why would we want to come to a judgment before the routine even begins? In practice, it is often helpful to have a "starting point" or a conclusion that the team can consider, probe, and react to rather than starting from scratch. Perhaps more importantly, this step is important for the routine staff to begin to structure the meeting around the correct focus areas. Arriving at a preliminary view of overall progress can occur in at least two ways:

- The routine staff can reach an initial judgment with the district leader using ratings from the individual participants or schools. This would be the most feasible option in large districts.
- The routine staff can "calibrate" ratings during a session with the other routine participants, then everyone can arrive at an overall rating together. This would be the most feasible option in small districts.

Whichever approach is used, having an initial judgment allows the routine to be planned structured around the areas that likely need to most attention during Step 3.

Step 3: Develop objectives for the routine

As with any effective meeting, an effective routine begins with a clearly structured agenda, to guide the conversation through the most important, focused topics and questions.

The agenda will use the evidence to prioritize certain conversations over others. It will also note the key facts for each conversation, as well as the most important questions to emphasize during the routine.

To create the routine's agenda, start with the meeting objectives. Consider what you hope to accomplish in the meeting. Objectives fall into four categories:

- Knowledge (understanding of new information)
- Skills (learning to do something new – this is rare in these kinds of routines)
- Attitudes (a changed perspective)
- Decisions (e.g. next steps, agreement on a strategy for addressing problem X, etc.)

When thinking through the objectives, consider that most good discussions of performance are “T-Shaped:” they give at least some broad (but shallower) overview of progress on all items being reviewed, and they dive deep on a limited number of areas that need special attention.

Consider these questions based on the evidence assessment:

- What schools or strategies should the routine spend time focusing on?
- What are the key questions that need to be answered or addressed?
- What are the “killer facts” that should motivate the team to find a solution?

See *Appendix 6* for a routine note-taking template that elevates potential focal points for discussion.

Step 4: Develop supporting materials for the routine.

Once you know your objectives, the rest of the preparation for the routine follows. How will the routine achieve each objective? Moreover, what supporting materials and/or information will be needed in order to do this? The agenda needs to set up the right decision points or discussions for each objective and provides the right supporting material (information, graphs, charts, and so on).

Materials for the routine should provide a clear path for the conversation to follow and make the most important sources of evidence readily accessible. It is a good idea to develop a slide deck that gives participants an opportunity to respond to the key questions and relevant data that apply to each objective. There is no better way to ensure that a question is answered than featuring it on a slide or handout alongside relevant data. Below are other suggested materials for your routine:

- Meeting agenda with objectives, times, key questions
- Qualitative Assessment Framework ratings and rationales or templates (either in the slides or elsewhere)
- Prepared data analysis or visualizations. It is important that this not be a large packet of information, rather a clear and straightforward analysis that draws conclusions and areas for further discussion/exploration.
- District or school plans that will be addressed during the routine

Step 5: Brief the relevant leaders

With the agenda and materials in hand, there is just one final step to take: briefing the participants to prepare them for the routine. There are two kinds of briefings to give: to the district leader (generally District Superintendent, a deputy, or the director of school turnaround) and to the relevant district support staff and/or principals.

The district and school leader briefing is especially crucial. A good routine helps to amplify a leader's ability to drive the work by giving them access to the right facts, information, and questions to ask before each conversation about current progress. The briefing is where we create this effect.

What does this look like? The format is straightforward: a 30-minute check-in between the routine staff and the district leader within a day or two before the routine itself.

In general, every briefing should accomplish two things:

- **Affirm the objectives and agenda of the routine:** It will help immensely if the district or school leader is on the same page with the routine staff and trying to accomplish the same things in the time the team has together. This is the space for them to understand the agenda the routine staff has prepared, to give feedback on it if necessary, and to commit to it.
- **Affirm the role the district leader will be playing:** Depending on the way the agenda is structured the district or school leader may have specific things they need to do. There may be introductory remarks, for example, or key things to emphasize during certain parts of the routine. There are at least 3 questions to answer firmly for each part of the agenda:
 - What messages should the leader send? He or she might want to frame the importance of the issues at hand, for example.
 - What are the key facts that he or she should to emphasize? Think back to the killer facts that came up during preparation. There may be some of these that should anchor the discussion. Perhaps there is a particular insight in the evidence that needs to be processed – for example, survey data that say that school leaders support district efforts far more than previously thought. Routine staff might say in the briefing, “Don’t let us leave the room without really digging into the implications of this new survey data. There must be something we can do with this to strengthen implementation, and we need to find out what it is.”
 - What are the questions that the leader should press? These were the key questions from the routine preparation. Some of them – or perhaps all of them – are “must-answer” questions. For example, if you are trying to turn around a downward trend in your attendance data, you might say in the briefing, “Don’t let us leave the room without answering this question to your satisfaction: What actions will we take in the next month to turn these data around by the month after?”

The other kind of briefing to hold is for other participants in the routine. This briefing is more flexible: sometimes it might include just the relevant leader or leaders (district project leads only, for example), and sometimes it will include every participant (in a small district, maybe the principal from each school). The routine staff will likely have already spent some time with these people during preparation. The purpose of this final briefing is to give them a heads-up about what to expect during the routine and to make sure the routine will address the issues that all participants want to have on the table.

Whatever the approach, there should be “no surprises” for district leaders or participants in the routine based on the briefings by the routine staff.

Running the Meeting

With preparation for the routine complete, you are ready to implement. We will spend less time discussing this than we did on preparation; if a routine is well prepared, much of the actual execution should follow easily from the agenda and materials.

Nonetheless, there are a few key things to remember when you conduct a routine. In particular, the routine staff should facilitate the meeting whenever possible. This does not necessarily mean that routine staff dominates the discussion, but it does mean that he, she, or they are in control of it, watching the time and moving things along in order to meet the objectives laid out in the agenda. The meeting facilitator can also occasionally raise key questions or make suggestions to help focus the discussion.

There is a simple division of labor here: the routine staff manages the process towards the meeting's objectives and worries about achieving those objectives, freeing everyone else in the meeting to participate fully and engage with the content under discussion. The district leader should focus on the killer facts and key questions, pushing participants to understand, learn, problem solve, and agree on an actionable next step. However, they should not run the meeting, as it will impose a burden of preparation on them beyond that of the basic briefing discussed above. Likewise, the participants should not run the meeting, as they may face an incentive to avoid topics that are less comfortable for them.

See *Appendix 6* for a routine note-taking template

Follow-up

During the meeting, someone should be taking public notes about the decisions made and next steps identified. At the end of the routine, review these. Next steps should have a clear owner and due date before the routine ends. The next steps become the starting point for the next routine and an opportunity to check-in during the interim.

Debrief with District Leader (and Participants)

Immediately after the routine, it is recommended that routine staff debrief for a few minutes with the district leader on what worked and what needs to change for next time. This is a unique opportunity to document adjustments to make. It is also recommended that the routine staff get feedback from all participants on the routine.

Conclusion

We hope that this guide is useful in starting to plan what a routine at your district might look like. In Oregon and elsewhere, experience has taught us that performance management routines are a crucial fixture in how effective teams implement reforms and serve schools and students.

APPENDIX 1: Characteristics of a Good Routine Rubric

Category	What weak performance (1) looks like	What strong performance (4) looks like
<p>Agreeing on a common purpose: Do all people participating in the routine clearly understand and agree on its purpose – to discuss performance against priorities, to identify and solve problems, and to identify and commit to clear next steps?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Routines are check-ins during which participants give updates on their work, with little or no connection to priorities ■ Preparation for routines is minimal; mostly conducted on-the-fly as a way of touching base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priorities are well understood and agreed on by all participants as the anchor for discussion ■ Agenda, key messages and discussion questions, and relevant data are clear, concise, and well-prepared in advance of the meeting
<p>Arriving at a shared view of performance and progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is the discussion structured to help participants discuss and agree on current progress against priority goals? ■ What range of evidence is used to support this discussion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quantitative evidence is sporadic and inconsistent ■ Data are presented in raw format with little or no attempt to discern patterns or implications ■ Discussion is grounded more in opinion and anecdote than it is in evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A wide range of evidence is presented in a way that is clear, sharp, and consistent, including outcome data, leading indicator data, and evidence on quality of implementation ■ Debate is vigorous but usually results in consensus about overall performance/progress, areas of strength, and areas of weakness
<p>Identifying and solving problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the routine help participants to identify and agree on the most critical barriers to achieving priority goals? ■ Does the routine create a space for creative problem solving that empowers participants to address these challenges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problems may be identified but are too vague to be actionable; their root causes are poorly understood, if at all ■ Discussion tends to dwell on the problems, with little or no attempt made to actively seek creative solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discussion allows participants to identify specific barriers to success, with a focus on root causes that are actionable ■ Discussion encourages all participants to reflect on what it will take to overcome these barriers and to identify realistic solutions
<p>Encouraging learning and collaboration: Does the routine encourage participants to identify challenges that are common amongst their peers and to learn from each other’s best and most promising practices?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When routines bring peers together, they are reluctant to engage in open dialogue about their own performance and how it compares to others ■ Reluctance may make it difficult to even present data in a way that compares performance projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When routines bring peers together, part of the discussion is structured to encourage learning and sharing across peers, including common challenge and best/promising practices ■ Cross-project comparisons create a spirit of friendly competition and professional learning about how to improve performance across all projects
<p>Identifying and committing to clear next steps: Does every routine produce a clear and actionable list of next steps for all relevant participants that can be tracked at future routines?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Next steps are not identified in the routine, or they are listed with little refinement to ensure that they can be carried out ■ Next steps may be too vague to be actionable, or they may be one-sided lists of requests ■ There is little or no tracking of next steps between routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Routine ends with the identification of clear next steps for all participants – both junior and senior – that are specific, actionable, and time-bound ■ Follow-through on next steps is tracked and becomes evidence for reaching consensus on progress and performance in future routines, so that next steps tend to be accomplished as agreed

APPENDIX 2: Worksheet- Establishing a routine Team & Focus

Goal:
Routine purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the district is meeting its goals through the coordination of effective resources and supports to schools • To monitor implementation efforts periodically and make adjustments in a timely fashion • To ensure a shared understanding of progress and next steps • To provide intermittent sources of information for feedback loops w/ staff, parents, school board, community and (when applicable, the state)

WHO NEEDS TO ATTEND THE ROUTINE

Staff person/people	Purpose/Role

APPENDIX 3: Worksheet- District or School Strategy Profile (Determining what to monitor during routines)

What would success look like in three years? This is the long-term overarching goal the district or school is aiming for.	How would you know or measure that you had been successful in one year, two years, three years?
■	■

		Fall Leading indicators	Winter Leading indicators	Spring Leading indicators	Summer May utilize state assessment results
What is a key strategy to support progress toward this goal?	Implementation Data				
	Student Outcome Data				
For each strategy, what are the 3-5 major milestones this year that will monitor and celebrate?		■	■	■	■

APPENDIX 4: District and School qualitative Assessment Framework (for efforts you wish to measure qualitatively)

Element of framework	Key questions	Ratings	
		Very Low (Red)	Very High (Green)
Quality of planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the plan articulate clear strategies and include actions aligned to the goal? ■ Is there a clear lead, team and/or individual identified having responsibility for implementing the strategies and actions in this plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No plan, or have a plan that falls short in several ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — No clear strategies to achieve goals — No milestones or measures — Plan does not reflect current reality of work ■ No assigned clear accountability for strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The plan is clear and makes a plausible case for how the strategy or strategies will help achieve goals ■ Strategies and actions are prioritized considering impact on students ■ Plan’s milestones and measures provide a clear basis for monitoring and accountability ■ Plan is “owned” by a team that uses it to drive its ongoing work and monitor progress
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The roles that everyone will need to play have been specified – at the state, district, school, and classroom levels – in order to implement each strategy. ■ How willing and able are people to play their roles right now? How are we building capacity for others to play their roles? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff do not have a clear sense of who will need to do what in order for strategies to be successful ■ Staff do not have a clear sense of what it will take to reach every classroom ■ Engagement with teachers is sporadic and based on the hope that they will somehow reach a critical mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific individuals at every level critical to each strategy’s success have been identified and the role each will have to play to implement the strategy at scale ■ Most of these critical individuals are aligned with the work and have sufficient capacity
Evidence of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What evidence do we have that shows whether the strategies are working as intended to have an impact on the goals? ■ What do the latest data say about the progress on strategies (e.g. leading indicators or process metrics)? ■ What do the latest data say about the progress on their goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We do not consistently monitor progress on this target or its underlying strategies ■ We do not use evidence of progress, or our evidence is limited only to the data on the target ■ To the extent we have any kind of evidence, the data are stagnant or moving in the wrong direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We collect and review relevant evidence as soon as it is available, ranging from outcome metrics to leading indicators and process measures ■ Feedback loops result in mid-course corrections ■ Process and leading indicator data are improving

APPENDIX 5: Stages of Implementation – Stage-based Decisions and Actions

Goal: An opportunity to achieve the vision Strategy: A purposefully selected evidence-based innovation to help achieve the goal				
Stage of Implementation	Exploration <i>Why/What?</i>	Installation <i>Where/How?</i>	Initial Implementation <i>How are we learning?</i>	Full Implementation <i>How are we sustaining?</i>
What is happening at this stage?	Learning Options and Choosing Strategies	Preparing People & Systems	Installing the Strategy, Reflecting & Making Improvements	The Strategy is Working, Sustaining Progress & Outcomes
Specific Stage-Based Activities	Assess Needs Examine Innovations Consider Implementation Drivers Assess Fit	Acquire Resources Prepare Organization Prepare Implementation Drivers Prepare Staff	Adjust implementation drivers Manage change Deploy Data Systems	Monitor and Manage Implementation Drivers to Further Improvement Fidelity & Outcomes
We know we're moving to the next stage (or at full implementation) when	We know what options (strategies) exist for this goal. We agree on which strategy we want to implement.	We have people and systems prepared to implement this strategy. We have well-trained people who will be trying out this practice.	We have tried out this strategy. We have reflected on initial implementation efforts and recommended improvements in the practice and systems that support it.	We have student and system outcomes that show this practice is working. We have a competent, organized, well-led system for this practice.

Implementation Drivers (for more information visit the [National Implementation Research Network](#))

- Competency (Selection, Coaching, Training)
- Organization (Systems Intervention, Facilitative Administration, Decision Support Data System)
- Leadership

Developed and based on the SWIFT Center Priorities Overview at swiftschools.org

APPENDIX 6: Worksheet- Routine Agenda – Goal & Strategy Note Taking Template

Goal	Date	Killer facts/data		Key questions	Recommendations/ decisions
		Bright spots	Areas of challenge		
Strategy 1					
Strategy 2					
Strategy 3					
Next steps					