Implementation Driven Site Planning: Program Evaluation

by

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Implementation Driven Site Planning: Program Evaluation

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by

Aaron Magnan

This dissertation is dedicated to my brother, Dr. David Magnan, J.D.

To Jean-Paul, my son, my motivation, and inspiration; the most successful family member to have been born.

To my parents, Ken and Cherise Magnan. Who listened to all of my ideas, and valued them no matter how wild.

To my aunt, uncle, and cousin, Barb, Mark, and Sean. Quite literally, without your support in life, this would not have been written.

To MB.

To my warriors NKK and R"B"H.

To my brothers JCD, PRN, and ALM.

And to the brotherhood.

I also dedicate this work to my advisor and initial chair, Dr. Ian Pumpian, for taking the mystical concepts I had in my head, and, through some sort of sorcery, grounding the work in reality.

To the COVID Warrior Cohort, and Doctors Fisher, Frey, and Tessier.

Lastly, and with gratitude and loyalty, to ABC Elementary and the district that houses the community.

ABSTRACT

This program evaluation delves into the hybridization of implementation science and traditional site planning at ABC Elementary. Over an 18-month period, this evaluation utilizes an array of instruments within the principal's professional duties, including reflective notes, internal documents, and developmental materials. These tools are aimed at measuring the effectiveness and impact of the new planning approach on school improvement efforts and the promotion of equitable educational outcomes, focusing on both process and staff engagement.

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Problem

As a building principal, the leader is responsible for facilitating change as part of a site plan implementation. This dissertation will present a program evaluation of a new process designed for that purpose. In California, site planning is expected to be aligned with funding decisions in what is referred to as the Local Control and Accountability Plan. These site plans are structured as a collection of yearly goals using the SMART Goal (California Department of Education [CDE], 2021) format. The critical need for site plans to be effectively designed and implemented seems obvious, especially for schools serving traditionally marginalized and underperforming populations. While the CDE (2021) provides frameworks to base the work off of, it fails to provide an implementation process around achieving successful, well-implemented site planning. The need for the current program evaluation is based on the assumption that a failure to integrate these proven practices compromises our efforts to serve students effectively and thus likely contributes to achievement gaps. In California, for instance, state tests in English Language Arts (ELA) show English Learners to be only achieving a 12% rate of mastery, compared to 58% mastery achievement of recently reclassified English Learners. And these numbers do not diverge greatly from years prior (Hill et al., 2021). The need for equitable and effective implementation of school site plans is crucial to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education. And in support of that claim, identifying effective implementation strategies *in practice* would be a reasonable response to that need. Thus, this evaluation is

designed to examine whether the integration of implementation science practices into the site planning process may lead to more equitable outcomes.

The school under evaluation serves a diverse population inclusive of these subgroups, and as its new site leader, the researcher proposed that the site plan would be more effective by incorporating implementation science (CDE, 2022) into its SMART format design. In implementation science, small, gradual changes are made and analyzed to make both targeted, and systemic school-wide impact on student performance. In other words, the building principal introduced a site goal planning process that integrates the SMART goal format with implementation science. The intention was to implement a process that results in a more effective school plan and change. Thus, the evaluation will examine how the process that was engaged in impacted the development and implementation of the site plan. The research will examine the first year of investment in this process, but the process itself is intended to be part of a dynamic cycle of ongoing longitudinal school improvement. The proposed program evaluation and ongoing commitment to fidelity in implementation align well with conducting action research (Stringer & Aragón, 2021). As such, the research will generate both summative and formative evaluation data to determine the impact value the process might have for other educational leaders. Stringer and Aragón's (2021) look, think, act, and then think again action research schematic will be well suited for the current investigation of a refined goal setting and implementation process. For the purposes of this study, the school under evaluation will be referred to as ABC Elementary.

It is important to state at the onset of this study, the researcher's positionality to the school that is the center of this evaluation. "I" am both the researcher and the principal who created this model based on both my experience in school site leadership and my studies in

implementation science. I am currently engaged with my school community implementing the model at the elementary school at which I serve as school principal. Throughout this study, I will take liberty to use both first person references to my embedded positionality, as well as conventional third person references as that of the study's researcher or author.

In sum, as the school's principal, I become the researcher embedded in a proposed action research program evaluation of his school and school leadership. The evaluation will document our school's adopted proposed process model that combines two well-known approaches to goal-setting, the SMART Goal model, and the implementation cycle. The first approach, the SMART Goal model, is the model traditionally used in public schools in the United States, and more specifically in California, to make a yearly plan for achievement. The second approach, the implementation cycle, is a structure for gradual change that has recently made its way into the educational culture of achievement and traditionally focuses on small, achievable goals that leverage broader institutional change. This first chapter in the study will explore the background of the study, specify the problem of the study, describe its significance, and present an overview of the methodology used.

Background

The growing diversity of schools across the country, and in particular California, presents many opportunities and challenges for promoting student achievement and other learning and developmental outcomes. Attention to this diversity increases attention to subgroups of students who have traditionally been marginalized and who have underperformed. An article in the *American Journal of Law and Equality* equates this to "responsiveness," claiming that equity in organizations of diverse need is "responsive to individual and structural differences in people's circumstances" (Minow, 2021, p. 169). Where these discrepancies have too long characterized school-wide performance, the gaps

may in fact be more prominent in our schools' reopening post-Covid. These circumstances exist at ABC Elementary. ABC is in a middle-class neighborhood seven miles from the U.S. /Mexico border. The school does have a strong record of achievement.

Prior to being transferred to ABC in Summer of 2022, I was the principal of another district school for three years during which the charge for increasing academic outcomes in English and Language Arts included the needs of twenty-five percent of the student population. At ABC, the English Learner proportionality was exactly half that, at twelve and a half percent. Upon my arrival I became aware of the attention that had already been focused on our English Language Learner (EL) students, and the data justified our continual attention as I initiated our new process of strategic site planning. EL's performance has not kept pace with the rest of the school. In accordance with the data of previous school years, the lowest performing subgroup has been the EL subgroup. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2018-19??) ABC had demonstrated steady achievement in both ELA and Math. On the other hand, the school had shown a sharp decline in the achievement of EL students in the ELA portion of the state test. In fact, while SWD ELA achievement at the school increased from previous years, and SED showed a slight decrease, those classified as English learners showed an even sharper decline on the same test. ABC's English learners stood out as the group with the lowest achievement in both ELA and Math. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the scores dropped on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) across all subgroups. Yet again, the English Learners showed the lowest achievement, and drastically lower in ELA with drops of at least 20 percentage points in all subcategories. Additionally, there were no SED English Learners at the school that achieved at standard during the year.

In 2018-19 school year that produced the aforementioned math and English test results before the COVID-19 pandemic, the school had committed focused work on mathematics, understanding concepts of equity, and some work was done to implement more engaging ELA curriculum. While curriculum was not consistent across grade levels, the school had participated in professional learning cycles (PLC); these are a series of planning and execution processes carried out by teachers and administrators during which the educators choose a problem and attempt to improve it through implementation and progress monitoring of applied best practices. The PLC protocol is a type of school-wide strategy implementation process that had been specifically developed by the district as a district-wide protocol for carrying out school change that works at the site level to improve practice at an acute level. What is evident from the state department data on the 2018-19 school year of testing is that the intentional focus around ELA at the school site had an overall effect on student performance, although it had the least impact–and possibly even a null impact–on English learners.

Problem Statement

The proposed program evaluation is designed to look at a school so typical of others, in that there is a subgroup(s) of students that continue to underperform and must be made a focus of its site planning. ABC Elementary has shown the ability to focus on its underperforming ELA student subgroup. However, despite evidence of growth, that growth and performance of these students continues to lag behind that of their school peers. The implementation cycle began with the recognition that more intentional, strategic planning processes must be directed toward its English learners and that this planning process required a more innovative implementation approach. Despite efforts to improve public school site

plans, many schools continue to fall short of their goals, particularly in schools and communities that are historically marginalized and underserved.

Significance of the Study

The study will examine the outcomes of combining the traditional site planning approach with implementation science by way of combining the SMART Goal setting process with key strategies and approaches of implementation science. The product of infusing traditional site planning with implementation science by way of combining the SMART Goal setting process with implementation strategies will be called Implementation Driven Site Planning (IDSP) for the sake of abbreviating the hybridized components herein. The failure to effectively implement best practices in organizational change leadership and implementation science in public schools means that equity is not being achieved in the schools and communities that need it most. This lack of equity can lead to a widening achievement gap and limited opportunities for marginalized students, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. Additionally, this problem can affect school funding and community perceptions of the school system, further exacerbating existing disparities. Therefore, it is imperative to address the barriers and challenges that prevent the use of best practices in organizational change leadership and implementation science, and to identify strategies that can support their effective implementation in public schools, particularly in underserved communities. If proven effective, the process examined in this program evaluation may influence other researchers and school leaders to investigate and implement site planning processes that lead to a more equitable and just educational system for all students.

The professional significance of the study will be explored with the following questions:

1. What have been the significant planned and improvised events that serve as Implementation Driven Site Planning benchmarks over the first half of Cycle I of implementation?

2. What evidence of impact has Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its teachers over the first half of Cycle I model implementation and what impact assumptions are attributed to that impact?

3. What evidence of underperformance has Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its stakeholders while conducting the first half of Cycle I model implementation, and what effect assumptions are attributed to that impact?

4. What value might exist by investing in more cycles of Implementation Driven Site Planning beyond the three-year mark?

5. To what degree are our goals and processes during our first 18 months plausibly sustainable and improvable throughout a whole three-year Cycle I?

6. What adjustments, modifications, expansions, and lessons learned should be considered in both the remaining 18 months of this cycle and future cycles of implementation as well as model study and replication?

Methodology

The research questions will be investigated by conducting a program evaluation of a school engaging in a cycle of site plan development. The evaluation will take place near the midpoint of a three-year implementation cycle. The research is characteristic of action research in that the researcher is embedded in the study and documents both his and the school's actions in designing its annual school plan in order to facilitate school wide change as well as create a focus on the performance of its EL subgroup. The research is also characteristic of action research in that it represents a year and a half of an ongoing implementation cycle and will collect and report both formative and summative findings.

As both researcher and principal embedded in this evaluation, I take liberty to refer to myself in first person. And, as the researcher's actions and responsibilities as school leader,

as the researcher, I attempt to document both my actions and responsibilities as the school principal as well as those taken by the school community. My intentions are to investigate the qualities, successes, and areas of growth resulting from my attempt to initiate an IDSP cycle. This framework that has evolved under my leadership is, as mentioned above, a hybridized version of the traditional site planning process with implementation science. In this hybridized framework, the S–Strategic–aspect of the SMART Goal model is further defined by a needs assessment. The needs assessment is combined with a root cause analysis which allows the school to choose an area of focus and impact. The needs assessment consisted of a review of data and attainability scales, a comparative analysis to produce precise goals, and a review of qualitative data (e.g., empathy interviews, surveys, focus group data, etc.). The root cause analysis links the data and identified needs to a problem of practice. The combination of these implementation components delineates the "MAR" –Measurable, Attainable and Relevant–components of the SMART Goal model. The approach then includes planned PLCs, assuring intervallic monitoring of progress; and still another aspect of the evaluation of the hybridized approach will include identifying one-, three- and five-year goals based on the comparative analysis tool that utilizes pre-COVID achievement data. These final steps will not only serve as an adaptable outline for potential future goals for school site planning; they also represent the final SMART Goal component T: Time-Bound.

The evaluation will also investigate the value of a comparative analysis tool to approach scales of attainability that has been developed for the school under my leadership. The tool is based on growth and achievement statistics produced by similar schools, or schools sharing similar proportions of populations in ELs, SED, and SWD as well as total school population or school size. This tool facilitates the school to set one-, three- and five-

year goals based on similar schools with better results. Reasonable growth would be to achieve the average score in that year using the current site plan model and components of implementation science. This leaves the potential to use the tool for attainability scales of multiple years for the same school; the school would set a goal to be in the top range of similar schools over the next one, three and five years. That is, comparing to those schools of similar populations who are positive outliers among schools sharing two or more demographic proportions would afford the school some longer term goal attainability scaling.

This program evaluation will assess the preparation and outcomes of the first year and a half of implementation of the proposed hybridized planning and implementation process.

Framework for the Model

As an educational leader, I am committed to regularly evaluating the impact of the current site planning process. Most commonly, specific implementation plans are designed because of California requirements for schools in what is considered "targeted improvement" and thus, these plans are saved for only those organizations existing in an achievement deficit (CDE, 2022). While using implementation science is viable in a deficit model, I submit that the energy and/or time necessary to pull a low achieving school out of the respective deficit is inefficient. Rather, as an educational leader, I believe schools must reorient their thinking and planning toward a growth model focused on effective implementation from the initial planning stages of a school's site plan design. Sound implementation should be the common variable in the strategic planning process of an educational organization. The strategic plan should be an implementable plan no matter the achievement levels of the school. To greater depth, this is the only way that a high achieving school can identify the marginalized groups as they shift and sway with organization's focus, and thus implementation science and its various strategies is a tool for achieving equity.

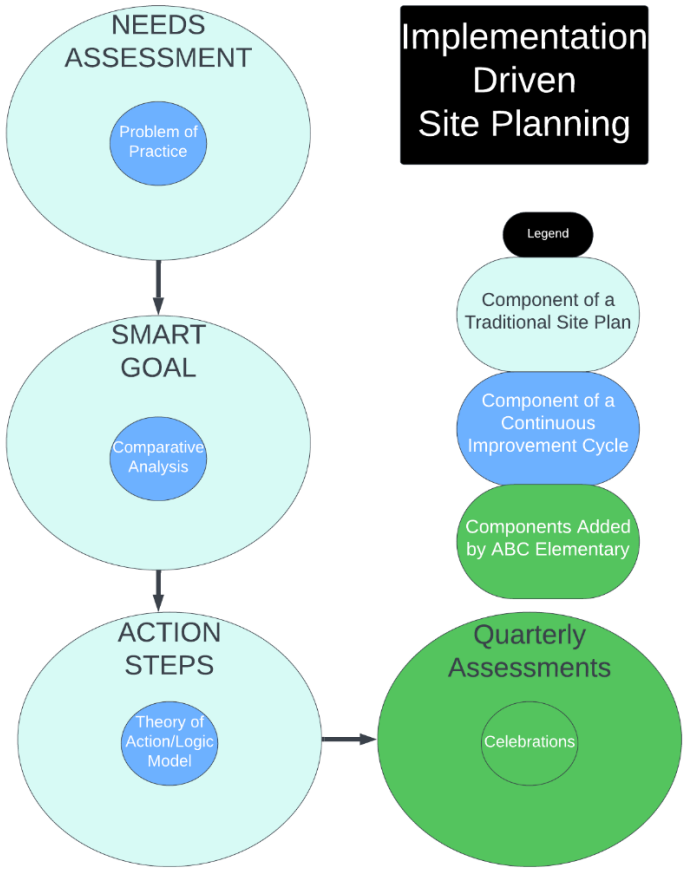
Through IDSP, the site plan itself becomes a vehicle for implementation, and so the transformation and growth proposed by the site plan becomes an implementable reality. IDSP incorporates three traditional site planning steps which will be the focus of the program evaluation:

1. The needs assessment of a traditional site plan is conducted (CDE, 2021), and it engenders a problem of practice, which is common to implementation science.
2. The creation of a SMART Goal (CDE, 2021) in traditional site planning can be expressed as a comparative analysis of similar organizations, to identify those strategies, programs and systems that have proven to be the foundational variables of the positive outliers in the comparison group. This data would lead to developing attainability scaling measures, which would in turn lead to informing the SMART goal details. The attainability scaling allows for a range of adaptable implementation cycles based on one-, three- and five-year goals.
3. Then finally, the action steps (CDE, 2021) that are common to traditional site planning would happen around the theory of action identified and elaborated by the team based on the initial parts of this model.

Figure 1 illustrates the model.

As is apparent in Figure 1, the implementation model that will be studied has two additional components: quarterly planning and annual recognition and celebration. The first additional component, quarterly planning, is common to implementation science. Traditional site planning sets a one-year goal with a collection of strategies that have no designated check-ins on progress. Typical implementation cycles contain identified interval times in order to adjust the course of action regularly during quarterly intervals as a response to the data that is gleaned throughout (CDE, 2022). This adjustment can be seen as a time of progress monitoring in intervals during which data is injected into the system and into communications and collaboration sessions to either adapt the system to unforeseen obstacles, adjust slightly for internal realities, or acknowledge what is working and thus sustain what is working. The second component would be annual summative and formative

Figure 1
Implementation Driven Site Planning Model



reviews which include recognizing and celebrating successes. Celebrating success attends to the need to keep the educational team continuously motivated, especially those that may be afraid of changes in pedagogy or may become exhausted from the work of continuous adaptations (Holcomb, 1999).

Limitations

The most prominent limitation of this study also contributes to its uniqueness. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a moratorium on state achievement testing, and thus, data from 2020 to the present is not available. Uniquely, this also affords the opportunity to create a baseline for impact. Ideally, with the correct measures in place, we will be able to compare achievement among similar schools before COVID to their relative and respect

achievement during this baseline year. The conclusions that could be drawn from this data would vary depending on whether the school surpassed, sustained, or decreased from their pre-COVID scores. And thus, a second limitation emerges: the program of ABC Elementary has significantly changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. Policies and politics have changed; personnel may have changed; organizational charts may have changed; and we may have also seen curricular and instructional practices change because of the pandemic.

Comparative analysis based on populations may give insights to potential achievement, but it can also be misleading. Without further qualitative data, comparative analysis can lead schools to false conclusions. This is why the root cause analysis is essential; it will dissuade the school from making erroneous conclusions about the schools' strengths and weaknesses. In addition to that, comparative analysis of schools has been performed in prior generations during the No Child Left Behind Era (Wong et al., 2009). Thus, collaboration was not valued, and schools that may have benefitted from the advantages of comparative analysis found themselves stagnant or failing to a greater degree. Thus, it is essential that in this process, the comparative analysis tool is used to create attainability scales, and, if anything else, offer a point of comparison of strategies that worked with similar schools who had greater achievement.

Another limitation of this study is potential bias on the part of the researcher. I am the researcher and the current principal of the school. My own participation in the study and implementation of the methodology gives cause for awareness of the potential for bias toward assumptions of success and assumptions of the problems that arise. To guard against this bias, I will report on the process and the results after this first year and focus only on the parts of the process that fall into the categories shown in the framework. This means that

other influences such as individual contributions by teachers, and other nuances that contributed to the results may be omitted; however, this also ensures that the reporting of the study focuses on the proposed methodology over assumptions of other factors that may influence results.

A fourth limitation is the lack of similar tools and studies available. The comparative analysis tool is a unique tool that I have been developing in my role as a site leader. While it has been validated for accuracy, it does not bear likeness to other existing tools, and thus general applicability or validity of results may or may not be resolved in this study. Nonetheless, this tool has evolved out of my experience as an instructional leader and this study is designed to evaluate its validity as a viable step in honing in on an effective process that promises to more precisely align planning, goal development and goal attainment.

Likewise, the proposed program evaluation is unique in that no roadmap for implementation of site planning strategies exists that combines implementation science and SMART Goal setting for specific marginalized groups. Thus, the proposed study may lead to other researchers and practitioners exploring hybridized models that integrate implementation science, comparative analysis tools, and the impact of those models on various student subgroups.

Definition of Terms

SMART Goals: Acronym for a strategic planning model recommended by state and federal departments of education as the model for creating yearly achievement plans. SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable (or Aggressive), Realistic, and Time-Bound.

Implementation Science: An approach through which an organization creates and implements simple, impactful action plans to improve an area of need; this area of need is

generally assumed to be influencing various other smaller areas of need. Some components of implementation science include: needs assessments, qualitative studies, root cause analysis, logic models, and progress monitoring.

Process: A collection of steps designed to achieve a specific outcome.

Cycle: A collection of repeated processes that achieve a dynamic outcome or outcomes.

Model: A framework used to describe logical structure a process or cycle.

English Learner: A designation made by federal and state education agencies for students who come from homes that primarily speak a language other than English.

Goal Attainability: An approximated quantitative metric based on comparing the results, outcomes, scores and/or growth of like subjects; in this program evaluation, the like subjects are schools with similar demographics in the area of English learner, socio-economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Goal attainability will be determined and delineated by positing a goal that is either the average or highest result in a cohort of like schools, or as a result in the second standard deviation of all low-income schools with high numbers of English learners.

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged: A designation made by federal and state education agencies for students who come from homes that qualify for free and reduced lunch. The metric for qualifying for free and reduced lunch is considered as at or below the poverty level.

Students with Disabilities: A designation made by federal and state education agencies for students who have cognitive, intellectual, emotional or mental impairments that impact their educational progress in a general education setting.

Needs Assessment: A process that combines quantitative and qualitative data to gauge the needs of an organization. This process is typically collaborative and can take on many forms. Through a needs assessment, a key problem of an organization emerges and becomes the subject of the implementation process.

Root Cause Analysis: A process in a needs assessment that looks at the root causes of a problem, using multiple layers of analysis. This process prioritizes identifying causes that are within the control of the organization.

Comparative Analysis: A type of data analysis that looks at comparisons between different subjects in order to identify similarities and differences. Through comparative analysis, we can begin to understand variables that positively or negatively impact a given subject.

Attainability Scaling: The process of identifying quantitative measures of reasonable growth within individuals or a given population. Attainability scales often use patterns of attainment as well as patterns from comparisons based on normative and standardized metrics.

Logic Model: A graphic representation of a theory of action that delineates how current resources, actions and results will move an organization to short- and long-term goals. During implementation cycles, the logic model is revised over time and as resources and results change.

Progress Monitoring: The process of using data at designated intervals of time to gauge progress or lack of progress toward a goal. In an implementation process, progress monitoring also provides insight into whether the data at given points of time in a plan necessitates adjusting the process, the strategies or the goals.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will begin by reviewing literature and research in support of the present program evaluation which aims to examine a process through which implementation science can be combined with strategic site planning to improve outcomes for underperforming students. Firstly, the review describes the broader field of organizational theory and how concepts around goal setting are applicable to public education. Then, the review describes the role of goal setting as it is seen in the field of organizational theory. Next, the review situates educational organizations and their goal setting through strategic site planning. This allows an entry point to the schemata of concepts that will be treated by the present research. Specifically, several studies related to creating goals based on statistically sound data analysis and best goal-setting practices are highlighted. Subsequently, this section on goal setting proposes attainability scaling and its potential application in site planning as a response to some of the literature reviewed. Included in this discussion are references to federal and state frameworks for setting site planning goals as well as common practices in educational site planning and data analysis. The chapter follows with a summary of the concepts and strategies associated with implementation science in order to introduce the tenets of implementation science. The present research will suggest that these tenets of implementation science add value to the current goal setting and attainment practices in education. This context includes reconceptualizing site planning and thus goal setting as part of a cycle of ongoing and continuous attention to implementation rather than an isolated

event. The review concludes with a brief section on organizational research methodology practices with the intention of structuring the present study in alignment with best practices in order to develop repeatable processes that leads to truly achievable goals for schools.

Organizational Theory and Goal Setting

In order to situate the work of the proposed study in the tradition of educational organizations and their goal setting, it is important we review the literature in the larger landscape of organizational theory. Organizational theory gives the present research a background in a broader field. According to Bolman and Deal (2017), organizational theory is the field of research that centers around the structures, resources, politics and symbols that either emerge or are designed in the work toward organizational improvement. The authors articulated that organizations can be characterized through a multi-frame approach, as outlined in their seminal text, *Reframing Organizations* (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Their foundational work outlines the tenets of organizational theory and the most common frames for examining the dimensions of various organizations. According to the authors, we "deepen [our] appreciation and understanding of organizations" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 392) by adopting an approach to organizing that takes into account human resource, political, symbolic and structural aspects of organizations:

- The frame of human resources attempts to impact organizational realities through impacting the people and the expectations for their roles.
- Political approaches take into account the interpersonal and extra personal agendas that drive organizational decision making
- An analysis of the symbolic features of an organization gives us the motivational and ritualistic dimensions that drive the culture of the organization.
- Finally, and in reference to the primary frame used for this body of research, structural concepts in organizational theory refer to those approaches that center around systems, policies, roles and goals in order to inform the operations and success of the organization. (Bolman & Deal, 2017)

The literature bears that it is appropriate for this review to hone in on the structural frame mentioned above as it relates to goal setting within organizational theory. This current study examines goal setting in an educational organization, and how to best achieve the goals set forth in the school site plan. Thus, according to the authors, "The central beliefs of the structural frame reflect the confidence in rationality and faith that a suitable array of roles and responsibilities will minimize distracting personal static and maximize people's performance on the job" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 47). Bolman and Deal (2017) explained the structural approach to framing an organization as an architecture for producing strategic goals.

Also, according to Bolman and Deal (2017), the intention of goal setting in organizational theory is to create a trajectory, a target, a focal point for an individual or organization; this is illuminated in the articulation of an existential assumption inherent in organizations. Organizations, according to the authors, are assumed in their essence to be consistently in the process of achieving "established goals and objectives" and devising "strategies to reach those goals" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 48). And as early as the early 1900s, supporting research by Weber (1922/1978) identifies a key modern development of organizations in the emergence of a primacy—among other developments— of a "set of rules governing performance" (p. 85). The set of rules Weber alludes to includes the concept of achieving organizational success through developing goals. In the seminal text on goal setting in organizational theory, *The Executive Challenge: Managing Change and Ambiguity*, author McCaskey (1982) denotes goal setting as one of the "sources of ambiguity" in many organizations. The idea explains that if not properly articulated, goals can mislead an organization or leave the path of implementation achievement of results unclear or

unattainable. Thus, looking at the relevance of this potential ambiguity in education, we can surmise that the precise articulation of goals is of the utmost importance if we wish to communicate the pathways toward desired outcomes. This is the same schematic postulation that in current times translates to the concept of performance goals in organizational theory, and educational organizations are not an exception.

Goal Setting and Attainment in Public Schools

The current organizational structure of public education in the United States espouses a plan-driven methodology, linked to federal and state resources and delineating goals for various student subgroups. This is embodied in what is known as a strategic plan or a strategic site plan. Structurally, the current practice of public education as it relates to the goals of American educational organizations is outlined in the various frameworks and standards models espoused by the public education system in the United States. For the purposes of this review of literature, I will limit my discussion to the goal setting strategy outlined in the legislative framework of Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA; this legislative work outlines the models and frameworks that are considered valid for carrying out the various goals of public education at all levels. ESSA's suggested format for elaborating and communicating strategic goals at the site level are SMART Goals (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2023). The current study will be situated in a study of schools in the state of California; therefore, we will look at goal setting in California, as each state in the United States adopts its own goal setting models for site planning. As California is accountable to ESSA, The SMART Goal model (Duran, 1981) is the traditional model used and is also recommended by the CDE (2021). Goals are said to be effective when Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (Duran, 1981). When considering school site-planning goals, of the five components of the acronym SMART,

attainability is the vaguest when it comes to the literature. And while the attainability of a SMART goal relates to the potential growth of an organization, there is little research on how attainability is achieved or approximated. At the individual level, the level of the individual subject, the work of identifying potential growth of individual students has been articulated in Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. This work is referred to and further conceptualized by Ash and Levvit (2003). While the various authors' work speaks to the individual student, and the concept applies to the formulation of the next level of growth for a single subject, there is not follow-up related to this theory that applies to organizational growth or goal attainment at the organizational level. In other words, none of the authors expound upon the scalability of the concept of proximal development into an organizational application. So, while the work on proximal development in individuals underpins a great deal of educational practice, there is nothing to show for proximal development in organizations. Essentially, the question is, how far can we generalize the theory of proximal development when considering an organization and its move toward specific outcomes? Or is there another field that offers answers on scaling the attainment of a goal?

As mentioned above, the use of SMART goals in education seems to illuminate at least part of the path toward sound structural organizational practices in education. And SMART goals offer a connection between strategic planning and implementation. SMART goals are formulaic and methodical, and thus they are an attempt at a generalized or grounded theory for organizational goal setting. SMART goals allow the data that exposes "gaps" to be internalized into the strategic work of a school. In fact, according to Bhattacharyya et al. (2009), "Accurately identifying gaps between current gaps and best practices is the key to

implementation research" (p. 496). In that SMART goals offer a more rigorous method than using the gut or intuition, SMART goals offer a progressive attempt at improving school and district outcomes.

However, as schools develop their goals, the question persists as to whether there exists a measure of predictive attainability when setting goals, and this impacts implementation. In simpler terms, we must answer the question: Is there a way to identify a more probable series of goals and outcome measures? SMART goals seem to be the answer to that question, as they provide a system of guidelines for the identification of next steps after gaps have been identified. However, the question still remains as to whether creating insufficient or imprecise goals for gaps in achievement may create the gaps between goals and results. SMART goals and the literature surrounding them—specifically in education—do not necessarily provide a definition, explanation or methodology that helps produce a more precise, and thus more attainable and more rigorous goal setting system.

It is important to note that while the need for precise data analysis in research is a considerably prevalent topic for research, the research surrounding identifying attainable goals for schools is scarce. Attainability is a conceptual descriptor of a quantitative goal. We would gauge a goal attainable if we could consider it reasonable. In education, attainability scaling occurs in classrooms and in the mental health field as well as in the individualized educational plans of students with disabilities (SWD) (Ruble et al., 2010). However, the problem of attainability in organizations as a whole has yet to be approached in the educational field, possibly because of the significant number of variables that lie outside of the locus of control of the researchers. However, given that the SMART goal format requires attainability as a quality of a quantitative goal, I contend that approximating attainability is at

least better than arbitrarily assigning attainability, and it may just be one of the key factors in attaining site goals. And while the subject of this program evaluation is not attainability, I also contend that some attempt to approximate attainability will play a role in the bigger picture of illuminating a framework and a model for hybridizing site planning with site plan implementation.

Cyert and March (1963) proposed a series of relational concepts that should contribute to the success of an organization (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008). Of the four concepts, the second, "uncertainty avoidance" specifically relates to the charge of identifying more precise goals. According to the authors, often "organizations employ a range of simplifying mechanisms…that allow them to act as if an environment is more predictable than it is" (Cyert & March, 1963 as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 137). This is experienced often when organizations trade precision of data analytics for assumptions and constraints created by other organizational demands as depicted in Bolman and Deal (2017). According to these authors, the setting of goals must also contend with political, symbolic and human structures that, if not cohesive, lead to failure of achieving goals. A simple example of this would be the idea of a school setting a goal for English achievement on a state exam, yet ignoring the lack of human expertise. Therefore, as will be explored, goal-setting must be as precise and predictive as possible, yet it must also anticipate the school and district culture and the human efficacy that exists within the organization. Setting a high goal for one year may not take into account the training needed (human resources), the compliance realities that may demand time energy and resources (political), and the symbolic frames of the organization expressed in the culture of achievement and the expectations of the greater community that may impede or accelerate the process of achieving the goals

(Bolman & Deal, 2017, pp. 300-301). This tendency of uncertainty avoidance in organizations and the lack of precise models to produce data and actions that actually reduce uncertainty show a need to develop the field of predictability in organizations. Education, while carrying a spirit of transformation of students and teachers, is far behind the world of business in developing predictive analytics; thus, educators are further behind the new and emerging analytics platforms.

Conceptually similar, the literature of strategic planning organizational research seems to recommend rigor, relevance and an awareness of difficulty in order to create attainable (and aggressive) goals. As mentioned above, SMART goals require attainability and/or aggressiveness (Lane et al., 2005) which correlate to the concepts of rigor, relevance and difficulty. In a similar manner, as is conceptualized above, a scaling-up of the theory of Zones of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) could appropriately add value to an approximation of attainability of goals for organizations. Of course, this is all based on the logical conclusion that if a theory is applicable to individuals, it can be successfully generalized into a theory that could impact organizations.

Attainment scaling or attainability scaling is a process originally developed for behavioral health outcomes but has since been applied in other fields and most recently in education (Ruble et al., 2010). One established coding framework for goal attainment scoring highlights three types of comparison in measurability, equidistance or equal intervals of time between measurement, and level of difficulty (Ruble et al., 2012). In the study "Goal Attainment Scaling as an Outcome Measure in Randomized Controlled Trials of Psychosocial Interventions in Autism" we learn of a methodology that is used in the mental health field but applies clearly to the field of education. The following seminal text allows us

a view into the potential for generalizing the issue of attainability scaling from the behavioral sciences to a broader application in the educational achievement of individuals, and thus, can be generalized or broadened even further to attempt an impact on educational organizational goal setting. In the text, *Goal Attainment Scaling: Applications, Theory and Management* (A. Smith et al., 2014), we find more clarity on a methodological approach:

1. Identify the issue
2. Select three goals
3. Choose a title for every goal
4. Selection of indicators of the goals
5. Specify the expected outcome for each goal
6. Review the outcome of each goal periodically
7. Specify above and below expectations

This research seeks to bind practices in implementation science to the goal setting practices in school site planning, to create a process for gradual yet definite change in the outcomes of underperforming populations. Thus, considering goal attainment, it is appropriate to look at how we norm our goals for achievement. Norming our goals, or comparing our goals to similar organizations, may offer insight into the development of attainable goals. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA, 2009) outlined key considerations for using data to "make smart decisions," including the SMART goal (p. 13). In this text, the organization delineates four methods of assessments. Norm-referenced tests compare similar groups; criterion-referenced tests measure against standards; and performance tests, which measure the demonstration of abilities through distinct tasks (AASA, 2009). The organization also emphasizes the need for assessments to be reliable and valid. The text asserts that "a test is valid if it measures what it aims to measure" (AASA,

2009, p. 17). In examining the role of goals in educational organizations, the research is confronted with the challenge of truly validating what is actually happening at a school to the precision possible. This opens another question as to whether the educational system has developed enough of a precise data science of its own to begin the accurate types of measurement that would most truly illustrate the situation in any given school or district. Thus, later in the AASA (2009) report, the suggestions for best practices include providing examples of data to be analyzed, robust qualitative data," and "aligning student outcomes to performance goals. In providing a wide range of data and a clear path to outcomes, schools would be able to begin to trace a numerical or quantitative way out, while the qualitative insights would guide the appropriateness of practices and the human outcomes reached through the strategic plan. Thus, a clear, data-driven model for goal setting should be seen as particularly essential to the process of any strategic plan implementation, especially for marginalized groups who are underperforming.

The most widespread understanding of how to use data goals in SMART goal planning in an educational organizational context is as collection of goals centered around outcomes and academic results for all students. This begins with a needs assessment, which is a process of collecting and analyzing data in order to find root causes of current realities. From the needs assessment, the goals are set for the current implementation cycle. The USDOE (2020) recognizes a process for using data for setting goals through strategically planning and measuring outcomes:

1. Find gaps between current conditions (what is) and desired conditions (what should be);
2. Place these gaps or needs in priority order;
3. Implement strategies, practices, and evidence-based interventions aligned to needs; and

4. Target resources to address needs.

The "gaps" referred to here can be defined as the differences in quantitative achievement outcomes between underachieving marginalized students and achieving marginalized students as compared to high achieving privileged populations. In fact, the identification of the gaps and the prioritizing of the gaps mentioned above is the first part of the needs assessment process encouraged by the USDOE (2020). In the same report, the USDOE identifies potential risks of insufficient implementation of improvement programs and needs assessments. In an informed process, schools may start by examining summary results from standardized tests and other state accountability measures but may be unsure of what other data and systems to review as part of a needs assessment process and root cause analysis (USDOE, 2016). Following a needs assessment, schools can implement those strategies, practices, and evidence-based interventions aligned to needs (USDOE, 2016). As evidenced in the literature, there is very little work around these types of "data and systems" that would lead to a true analysis and a true path forward for making the most attainable goals possible.

In considering creating a plan, Cohen and March (1974) described the symbolism of plans. They expressed that "plans are symbolic…plans become games…plans become excuses for interaction…plans become advertisements" (Cohen & March, 1974, p. 81). Symbolically, "planning is a signal that all is well, or improvement is just around the corner" (Cohen & March, 1974, p. 81). Thus, the possibility of applying the seven steps mentioned above in M. Smith et al.'s (2014) approach to the application of attainability scaling to educational organizational goal setting will be examined during the research in the potential for a practical process for identifying site goals. Thus, perhaps there is a need for a more precise method of planning, and as such, there is also a need for a more precise

implementation method. The field of implementation science may hold some of the keys necessary to connect the correct dots.

Implementation Science and Its Relevance to Goal Setting and Attainment

While the above research suggests attainability scaling as a potential refinement for the goal setting process, it should be understood that while any one improvement to the systems of needs assessments and data analysis may have a positive impact, the goals of an organization can only be strengthened by combining successful data practices with highly effective practices in implementation. That is, the literature reads that the analysis of causes and effects and the goal to remedy gaps is only as good as the plan created to implement change. In addition to examining approaches to goal setting in public schools, it will also be useful to examine the most effective approaches to implementing a strategic plan. The field of implementation science adds valuable concepts to this conversation. After understanding organizational theory, and how the structural frame through which we can view the goals of organizations, this review has delineated how goal setting happens through site planning in the California public school system. It is then necessary to examine how, once a plan and its goals are established, the correct actions are implemented to achieve these goals. This falls under the field of implementation science.

The field and practice of implementation science offers insights into the benefits of an amalgamation of change theory and identifying attainable goals for schools. The field of implementation science, also termed implementation research, was originally developed in the field of medicine as "the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of clinical research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice" (Naylor, as cited in Bhattacharyya et al., 2009, p. 492). This leads to the confrontation of the conjunction of knowledge and practice; that is, the question of why knowledge of best

practices does not always translate into the successful implementation of best practices. Implementation research offers insight into the optimal processes for creating goals and implementing systems to attain the goals. According to Bhattacharyya et al. (2009), one of the main reasons for the "gap between knowledge and practice" (p. 492) is that not only are guidelines not followed; the guidelines or outline of steps for achieving the outcomes promised by best practices are not always quality guidelines. Quality is defined in this text as scope and purpose, stakeholder involvement, rigor of development...clarity and presentation, applicability and editorial independence (Brouwers et al., 2010).

The work by Brouwers et al. (2010) promotes the notion that in order to improve and thus create a system of sound implementation, rigor of development is a key factor. Considering rigorous development, common practice belies what George et al. (2019) refer to as "intuitive, gut-feeling" approaches (p. 812). These are juxtaposed to a more precise or rigorous analysis of data and information. If educational leaders—specifically site leaders and administrators responsible for identifying goals—cannot connect research on goal setting and planning to their practice, it is no surprise that marginalized populations, who traditionally require more comprehensive support, continue to need effective organizational implementation plans to truly impact student outcomes.

Another factor for consideration in implementing best practices in educational goal setting is the question of the political realities of the organization. That is, implementing strategic action to attain goals should be intentional and planned, and yet that implementation should also be carried out in light of the politics of the organizations. McDonnell and Weatherford (2016) differentiate between two types of politics in relation to implementation theory, enactment and implementation. Essentially and more relationally to this study,

enactment relates to the creation of the goals, and implementation relates to the carrying out of the charge that has been outlined by the enactment of the goals. Enactment and implementation are further delineated into three areas: "time frames…decision venues," and "interest-based coalitions" (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2016, pp. 235-237). Thus, the thoroughness, precision and enactment itself of a set of goals is determined partially by these political areas which carry with them various voices and organizational, cultural and societal realities. As an example of time frames, consider a series of meetings held to conduct a needs assessment. Concerning time frames, we can look at the 2020 Black Lives Matter phenomenon. With the murder of George Floyd, an urgency was created around reforming or reimagining policing practices in America. This was supercharged by the political climate created in the contention between then President Trump and his political adversaries. The enactment of laws began immediately; however, eventually those laws fell prey to the political bureaucracy of the United States and then took a second seat to the storming of the Capitol Building and the election of Joe Biden. This left many Black Lives Matter activists demanding further enactment and deeper implementation. Thus, the area of time frames (McDonnell, & Weatherford, 2016) mattered greatly in the transition from enactment to implementation. McDonnell and Weatherford listed multiple ways in which decision venues influence enactment and implementation of goals. On the one hand, enactment is often carried out by "elites" in "one or two venues" and "limited information" (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2016, p. 235). On the other hand, implementation may occur in multiple venues, and implementers may begin making independent decisions that actually become policy thus revising the initially enacted goal. Another difference is that in implementation, information is shared orally or anecdotally (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2016). Imagine a

small group of stakeholders in a needs assessment enacting a set of goals at a school site. Those goals are implemented by multiple teachers in multiple classrooms that make decisions based on microcosmic realities and thus the gap is created between enactment and implementation. Analogically, the gap between enactment and implementation may tend to mirror the gap between research and practice. The third area that influences enactment and implementation, influence based coalitions, speaks to the human dynamics that shift the reality of goal setting. The positionality of those charged with creating the goals and those carrying them out threatens the execution and success of the process. Stakeholders with "vested interests" in the policies and practices that necessitated change in the first place may cause a tendency to seek "stasis" (McDonnell, & Weatherford, 2016, p. 237). The authors recommend increasing the stakeholders involved in the process to create a diversity of interests that destabilize the tendency toward stasis (McDonnell, & Weatherford, 2016). While this creates a case for a stronger needs assessment, it also allows a path to accept new goals with new data and information. In sum, the work of McDonnell and Weatherford suggests the precisely created goals in an implementation process require more than quantitative precision, but also a consideration of the narratives that surround the culture and systems of the organization. Bolman and Deal (2017) match this notion when describing the political frame of organizations. "Viewed from the political frame, politics is the realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity and divergent interests" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 179). In the goal setting environment, we can suppose the existence of scarcity primarily in that those who are enacting the goals are basing their decisions on a deficit. The implications as to why a deficit or gap exists could be enough to

influence those who feel their roles or livelihood are at stake when performing a causal analysis.

The war between high expectations and reasonable development has yet to be traced into a framework; however, in educational practice in the classroom, this is represented in the rigor/relevance framework of Dagget (2005). The author and creator of the framework measures accessibility of a task or text as a combination of rigor and relevance. This is further elaborated in Fisher et al. (2012) in a text devoted to accessibility of reading as a negotiation between rigor and difficulty. Dagget (2005) promotes the idea of relevance and rigor as the entryway to accessibility of content, while Fisher et al. (2012) specify an application to reading through which difficulty can often get in the way of achieving rigorous understanding of reading.

In a sort of desperate scenario, plans become a "game" in implementing a well-intentioned initiative. The plan may become a series of compliance hoops that impede the spirit of the original creation of the plan or initiative. And depending on the complexity of the bureaucracy of accountability, this forgery of site goals and outcomes will go unnoticed. According to Cohen and March (1974), it is rare that a plan actually creates an "accurate forecast" (p. 81). This possibility warrants that, logically, the more accurate the data and information that guide the creation of the plan, the more predictable and accurate the forecast. As mentioned above, such a forecast depends on much more than quantitative measures and analytics, but the precision in said quantitative views offers a strong foundation for the navigation and adjustments required for the other demands of the organization.

To contextualize this a bit more, we could say that in a perfect scenario, the more precise the data, the more precise the plan, and thus the more positive the outcome. That is,

if a school has more precise data, including reasonably attainable growth goals and realistic achievement goals that bear high expectations (i.e., one standard deviation or higher scaled scores than other positively achieving schools), that school should have a more clear path to actually reaching the goals that are set by the leader.

Yet, as has been reiterated in this review, the data must contend with the true context(s) of the organization; therefore, the data must be as precise as possible to even begin a viable series of steps and benchmarks that would be attainable and sustainable. Precision in growth might consider the key marginalized groups highlighted by the state of California. Thus, to identify achievement goals, we would look at schools with similar populations and similar proportions of marginalized groups. Thus, reasonably, we would be able to outline a path for achievement year after year that is broken into an achievement driven implementation. The yearly work of school site planning would be to include growth measures that would ultimately lead to potential achievement outcomes.

All told, while site goals for a school district may be statistically precise, there is also work and consideration to be made in reference to the other organizational phenomena that drive execution. We are hard pressed to find an educational credentialing program that truly prepares any educator for predictive analytics needed to tackle the demands of the changing yet consistently underserved marginalized populations. In a pure sense, we may agree that a certain population of students is capable of achieving a certain goal, we also must consider that the resources and strategies needed to execute said achievement must incorporate, adapt to and maneuver through the other frames. In the case of this study, however, precision in goal setting is the first step in establishing a more accurate predictability in the achievement of marginalized populations. And while no qualitative mark can truly define the reality of a

school, its needs, and its social, emotional and cultural barriers, a conversation around measuring achievement as a series along a scale within comparable groups may be perfectly appropriate. This research aims to begin that conversation through applying the concept of attainability scaling to the process of school strategic planning.

Organizational Research Methodology

In discussing organizational goals, the question arises as to whether this approach can be scaled or generalized to the degree that it actually drives the organizational trajectory. This falls under the purveyance of theories and methodologies of organizational research. Organizational research is a subcategory of ethnostatistics that takes as a lens the analytical epistemology and predictability of an organization's actions on results (Gephart, 2006, p. 419). While ethnostatistics is a field that takes the purely numerical nature of a field and brings it under the light of the nuances of real life folk or community experiences, organizational research specifies the same nuances as they apply to organizations. For the current student, an ethno-statistical approach would allow for the use of attainment scaling tools to better inform the process and thus the experience of setting goals.

Organizational research has developed since the 1950s, but it primarily concerned itself with the bureaucratic and hierarchical advantages to be gained from the research of behavior (Davis, 2015, p. 185). However, as we see in a scholarly editorial by Davis (2015), in light of the emergence, development, and over-arching presence of modern research in data science and "big data," the field of organizational research has taken shape in its own brand of a science of statistics (p. 186). For this reason, I perceive a clear precedence for both qualitative and quantitative work in the area of educational organizational data science. Not only do we need to identify attainability scales, but we should also observe exactly how

these attainability scales impact and change the perceptions of school leaders charged with creating and achieving the goals they respectively set.

The concept of organizational performance yields insight into the identifiable practices used to execute for outcomes. George et al. (2019) identified organizational performance as "a central concept of public management research and practice" (p. 811); although, they also contend this is up for debate. The authors present the theory of "synoptic planning theory" which "argues that a systematic, rational, and analytical approach to decision making generates positive outcomes" (George et al., 2019, p. 812). They propose a combination of goal-setting theory and synoptic planning in order to achieve a more effective strategic-planning model (George et al., 2019). Noting this, we find more rationale for use of developing a combination of synoptic or highly analytical approaches with ethnostatistical methodologies in the framework of goal setting theory in order to better achieve a procedural yet human approach to educational attainment scaling of academic achievement.

Summary

In order to create implementable plans in public schools that reach attainable goals, we can begin by combining the current goal setting method of SMART goals with key tenets of implementation science. We can triangulate a conceptual framework for truly attainable goals by looking at the key steps of implementation research: exchange of knowledge, synthesis of knowledge, and ethically sound application of knowledge. In order to specifically look at attainability, a body of research exists that aims to ground the work of implementation research: goal attainment scaling. Using implementation science and attainment scaling as the parameters for the work in identifying a process to create attainable school wide goals, we can combine the research in the following manner: comparison data

(knowledge), goal attainment scaling (synthesis), and best practices of strategic planning (application).

Finally, it is crucial to elaborate on the importance of frequent benchmark reviews and progress monitoring in the context of IDSP. While traditional goal setting often relies on yearly benchmarks, this approach can leave significant gaps in progress monitoring and timely adjustments. Frequent benchmarks, however, allow for ongoing assessment and course correction, ensuring that interventions remain effective and aligned with evolving needs. By incorporating regular checkpoints, schools can gather actionable data at shorter intervals, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This aligns with the principles of implementation science, which emphasize the need for iterative processes and real-time feedback to drive successful outcomes. Frequent benchmarks not only provide a clearer picture of progress but also engage educators in reflective practices, enhancing their ability to respond to students' needs dynamically and effectively. Therefore, integrating frequent benchmarks into the goal-setting framework is essential for achieving sustained and meaningful improvements in educational outcomes.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A program evaluation is proposed to assess the process, needs, and impact of a unique school planning model. I qualified my positionality in this study earlier, but it is noted again here. I created this model based on both my experience in school site leadership and my studies in implementation science. I am currently engaged with my school community implementing the model at the elementary school at which I serve as school principal. Throughout this study, I will take liberty to use both first person references to my embedded positionality, as well as conventional third person references as that of the study's researcher or author. The evaluation is designed to provide both formative and summative findings regarding the model's implementation practices and outcomes of the researcher's current elementary school site planning. This qualitative program evaluation will explore the researcher's applied theories on hybridizing the current approaches to California public school site planning, and various strategies of implementation science. The program evaluation is qualitative in that it is based on conclusions drawn from notes and records that developed as a natural way of documenting the implementation process at the school site. And while the research is qualitative in nature, notes and reflections from a quantitative evaluation will also be included. In relation to my research, I will describe the general process used by the school site for site planning and site plan implementation. This will be a practical exploration of the model described in Chapter 1. The model is conceptualized as a dynamic cycle of program planning and implementation. Program implementation began in

July 2022 when I accepted the principalship of ABC Elementary School. The evaluation will examine our work up to the midpoint of our first three-year implementation cycle. The midpoint represents 18 months of implementation. Throughout the implementation process, I both archived artifacts and documented and journaled activities, events and reflections as part of my administrative responsibilities and consistent with the demands of the proposed planning process and model. Journaled entries were made with the intention of addressing program fidelity and leading to formative and summative feedback and decision making. These journaled entries will provide a foundation for much of this evaluation study and act as fodder for my own analyses as well as reflection, critique and validation of various team members and stakeholders. The notes relate to observations, discussions, teacher input, materials from teacher leadership meetings and presentations, input from principal colleagues, and other events of particular importance to the reflective nature of the implementation process. In addition, staff surveys were collected, analyzed and archived as part of the cycle's midpoint data collection. In other words, collecting teacher input and program artifacts have been integrated into my principal journaling and program archiving. The model itself depends on systemic evaluation as part of each implementation cycle which requires my compilation of notes and artifacts. This current case study is designed to meet those evaluation demands. Thus, at the completion of the first 18-month segment of program and model implementation, the present evaluation study will serve a critical role in early program assessment, validation, revision and site-based decision making. Finally, the evaluation study is designed to explore concepts that could improve and further develop the model and consider its value for broader research and implementation. The following

questions will guide the study as they are constructed to produce both formative and summative findings:

1. What have been the significant planned and improvised events that serve as Implementation Driven Site Planning benchmarks over the first half of Cycle I of implementation?

2. What evidence of impact has the Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its teachers over the first half of Cycle I model implementation and what impact assumptions are attributed to that impact?

3. What evidence of underperformance has Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its stakeholders while conducting the first half of Cycle I model implementation, and what effect assumptions are attributed to that impact?

4. What value might exist by investing in more cycles of Implementation Driven Site Planning beyond the three-year mark?

5. To what degree are our goals and processes during our first 18 months plausibly sustainable and improvable throughout a whole three-year Cycle I?

6. What adjustments, modifications, expansions, and lessons learned should be considered in both the remaining 18 months of this cycle and future cycles of implementation as well as model study and replication?

Participants

Description of Participants

The IDSP process at ABC Elementary involves the principals, teachers from the site, and principal colleagues who will be referred to as cohort principals. Since this is a program evaluation of a school-wide program implementation, every stakeholder and stakeholder group has presumably been involved in some capacity; however, only teachers and cohort principals were directly involved in the events and decision-making surrounding implementation of the model. The sources being used to conduct this evaluation study are journaled notes and implementation artifacts that were directly involved in activities.

Our community of teachers serves as a formidable participant group, and their lived experience will be reported in both the survey results as well as discussions and comments

that occur in the course of school meetings, interactions and classroom visits. While notes from walk through feedback will contribute to the program evaluation, the notes themselves are general and do not refer to specific teachers. The notes and commentary to be used in this study will be based on school-wide programmatic observations.

Table 1 depicts the participants and participant groups whose input produced the data that this evaluation will be conducted. In my role as school principal, I assumed the responsibility to lead the implementation process. I formed a site leadership team that consisted of grade level teacher leaders. As a group we discussed, planned, facilitated implementation and formatively reviewed the process. I journaled our activities and those records are a primary source for this evaluation study. The model that will be reviewed was designed to actively engage the entire teaching staff in site planning and implementation. Two primary sources of data for this evaluation will be the principal's classroom observation notes and the anonymous survey all teachers will soon be invited to complete in January 2024. Finally, our school district supports collegial principal development through a structured program that includes one collegial walkthrough per year. During these walkthroughs, principals visit each other's schools to observe and share best practices, fostering a collaborative environment for professional growth. This initiative not only enhances principals' instructional leadership skills but also promotes a culture of continuous improvement across the district. On two occasions, six different principals conducted walkthroughs at ABC Elementary and provided feedback in the form of an open discussion after each session. Their feedback became another source of data that I journaled and will be used as a primary data source for this evaluation.

Table 1
Participants and Participant Groups

Participants/Groups	Role in Study	Data Provided
School Principal	Led the Implementation Cycle	Journaled and Collected Reflections, Observations, Surveys
Grade Level Teacher Leaders	Served as Implementation Leadership Team	Participated in formative evaluations and planning
Classroom Teachers	Program Implementors	All Hosted classroom observations, Offered Survey Participation
Cohort Principals	Collegial School-wide Professional Development Walkthroughs	Provided School Principal Verbal Observation Feedback

Each individual/group will be further explained below.

School Principal

As stated, I participated in this study as a result of my responsibilities as ABC Elementary School principal. In this role, I am responsible for school site planning and program implementation. In this role and based on my experience as a site leader, I conceptualized an innovative site planning and implementation model that will be evaluated by the current research. I proposed and introduced the model to the teachers at the school shortly after my hire in July of 2022. Evaluation was built into the model as a major component and requires me to both journal and collect implementation artifacts. Concomitantly, I am a doctoral student in an Educational Leadership program. Given my interests in advancing research and practice in implementation sciences, I propose to formalize the school's program evaluation as part of my dissertation studies. Thus, my participation in this study embeds me as model designer and researcher into my role as site principal. I am both positioned and qualified to participate in the evaluation study:

1. Currently enrolled in the San Diego State University Educational Leadership Dissertation program.
2. Currently serving as the principal and instructional leader of ABC Elementary.

3. Successfully completed coursework in research methodology, program evaluation, and data analysis.

4. Extensive prior experience acquired in data collection, analysis, and report writing through coursework and internship opportunities.

5. Have ready access to necessary resources, including institutional data, records, notes, presentations, and program documentation.

Grade Level Teacher Leaders

ABC Elementary's teacher leadership team contributes greatly to the implementation of site goals. The district model that directs ABC Elementary School's site leadership work requires one teacher per grade level. The teacher leadership team members are, as a group, considered a major participant group that informs the data that will be used to evaluate the program. The evaluation sources for this study are primarily journal notes and artifacts that chronicle major implementation and feedback activities. The teacher leadership team has been responsible for implementing, collecting, reporting and providing much of the fodder of these notes and artifacts. The teachers that compose this leadership team contribute to multiple reflection and action-oriented meetings every year, and they are responsible for acting as a nexus to district instructional and improvement initiatives. They also serve as primary communicators between the principal and the teachers they represent.

The teacher leadership team was organized by a previous principal, and participation is voluntary. Over the 18-month cycle the school has naturally dealt with attrition as well as onboarding new teachers. The current team has had new members added that also volunteered to participate as leaders. During the course of implementation, due to various circumstances, a total of three teachers changed schools, thus a total of ten teacher leadership team members participated throughout this eighteen-month process (Table 2).

Table 2
Description of Participants

Grade Level	Gender	Ethnicity	Other Roles
K	F	White	MTSS Tier I Team
1st	F	Latina	MTSS Tier I Team
2nd	F	White	None
3rd	F	White	None
4th	F	White	Student Council
5th	F	Latina	Safety Committee
5th	F	Pacific Islander	None
6th	F	Latina	Safety Committee
6th	F	White	School Site Council

The implementation schedule that was drafted at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year includes a mid-year (January 2024) leadership team retreat for the purpose of collecting formative evaluation in order to consider any mid-course program modifications. During the retreat, the teacher leaders will participate in individual formative interviews as well as a focus group discussion. The notes from the interviews and focus group discussions will be used to inform the current program evaluation research.

Classroom Teachers

All 23 teachers at ABC Elementary School were subject to participating in the school's implementation cycles. Information from walkthrough classroom observations conducted between July 2022 and January 2024, and a teacher survey that will be given in January 2024 will be referred to throughout the research. The resulting reflection notes from both walkthrough observations and the teacher survey will include information contributed by teachers and observed practices from teachers at ABC Elementary School; this data may include information from leadership team members as well.

Teacher Survey Participants

All 23 teachers at ABC School in January of 2024 will have the opportunity to take a survey as the program under review includes the use of multiple tools in order to inform fidelity in implementation, and in order to pivot and/or adapt the course as the need arises. The teacher survey will solicit anonymous, formative input from all teachers at the school site. The results of the survey will be a critical data source impacting both formative decisions for the remainder of Cycle I as well as in completing this study.

Teachers Featured in Walkthrough Observations

All teachers are subject to at least three informal and unplanned walkthrough visits per quarter. They receive feedback through a form that was designed to prioritize school-wide focus areas. As part of the district leadership initiative, about half of the teachers are also subject to planned walkthrough visits by cohort principals. Teachers that are observed are selected on a rotating basis each year.

Cohort Principals

ABC Elementary is part of a district-organized cohort of schools dedicated to sharing best practices and guiding the execution of district initiatives. This collaborative network facilitates the exchange of successful strategies and insights, creating a supportive community committed to continuous improvement. By participating in this cohort, schools help ensure that district-wide initiatives are effectively implemented and adapted to meet their unique needs. The principals from those schools visit ABC Elementary once during each school year and provide feedback after conducting classroom walkthrough visits. In March of 2023, principals conducted walkthroughs of 14 classrooms. In November 2023 principals engaged in walkthroughs of 12 classrooms. Four of the six visiting principals remained the same during both visits. The notes from those walkthroughs are summarized,

and feedback is prioritized by me and then shared with teachers at ABC Elementary school to inform practice and motivate implementation of site goals with fidelity. The cohort principals are chosen by the district based on varying criteria that is primarily arbitrary. The insights of these participants allow for calibration of the school site implementation cycles with the initiatives of the district, and thus help to form some of the fluid adaptation that happens during the implementation cycles.

Rationale for the Selection of Participants

The decision to have the researcher and the voices of the participating teachers, teacher leadership team, and cohort principals as the participants in this program evaluation is purposive, grounded in the need for an intimate reflective documentation of the strategies and processes that impacted the program being assessed. The IDSP model itself is designed to generate and engage teachers in an on-going collaborative process that impacts instruction and the betterment of classroom and school systems of implementation. Furthermore, the decision to include the notes from the regular program review processes allows for the incorporation of the first-hand experiences of the teachers who were involved in the implementation. This approach ensures that the voices of the participants are heard in an authentic manner, which better minimizes potential biases. No identifying information is used in the documentation of the data from the implementation tools.

Instruments

Using my notes and observations, the selection and development of instruments for data collection in this program evaluation were carefully crafted to align with the unique characteristics of the evaluation context. The instruments utilized to continue adapting and adjusting schoolwide practices for the IDSP process can be categorized into the following types:

- Journaled and Collected Reflections: Throughout the 18-month cycle, I reflect on my practice through notes, sketches, plans, and drafted proposed adaptations to the planned site plan implementation. These journals and reflections are used to refine the lens through which I observe the school. They also serve to inform the content of teacher leadership meetings and teacher professional development. These reflections comprise a sort of meta-observation on the process of implementation and improvement.

- Reflections and feedback from Classroom Walk-Through Visit Observations: As a principal I conduct classroom walkthrough visit observations regularly. Generally speaking, I visit every classroom teacher at least three times in a nine-week quarter. The notes from these observations are shared with teachers in order to inform practice and motivate implementation of the site goals with fidelity. In addition to these, during the course of this 18-month cycle, six principals whose schools comprise a cohort with mine share information from two classroom walkthrough visits conducted at my site. My notes from the conversation subsequent to the principal walkthrough visits are synthesized into communicable points of information that I share with teachers to inform practice and motivate implementation of the site goals with fidelity.

- Survey Evaluation: To gather quantitative data on participant perceptions and experiences during the implementation process, a structured survey questionnaire was designed. This survey will be given in January of 2024. The survey is organized as a Likert survey, which allows for both quantitative considerations of experience of the teachers. It is intended to be given after a review of the timeline in Appendix A. The survey questions are listed in Appendix C. The content of this questionnaire was informed by notes taken during initial site visits and observations, ensuring that it encompassed key elements of the program being evaluated. It included closed-ended questions to capture demographic information, Likert-scale items to assess satisfaction and effectiveness, and multiple-choice questions to gauge specific aspects of program utilization. The survey results will be used by the Leadership Team at its planned mid-year retreat as one of the major data sources for their formative and summative program review, as will be used in this present study the same way.

- Notes from Individual Teacher Leader Discussions: Recognizing the importance of capturing in-depth, qualitative insights, conversations were conducted throughout the school year in order to continue monitoring progress. As a group we discussed, planned, facilitated implementation and formatively reviewed the process. These discussions will be continued through the 18-month mark of the cycle, culminating in a leadership retreat in January of 2024 during which I will conduct individual formative interviews and focus group discussion with the teacher leaders.

The development of these instruments is guided by my continuous immersion in the evaluation context, considering the specific nuances and subtleties observed during the

fieldwork. Each instrument is designed to address a particular aspect of the program's performance.

Procedures

In this program evaluation, the procedures for data collection and analysis were uniquely structured to revolve around the normal course of the school year, including those events that are both regularly planned such as site meetings, back-to-school meetings, and leadership team meetings. Also included are observational classroom visits that happen throughout the school year and are listed in Appendix A as Walkthroughs. The following steps outline how this self-reflexive evaluation was conducted:

1. Journaled and Collected Reflections:
    a. Initial Journaled Observations: I began by immersing myself in the program environment and taking detailed notes on my initial impressions, experiences, and interactions. These observations were unstructured and open to capture a wide range of phenomena.
    b. Systematic Journaling: Over the course of the evaluation, I continued to make detailed notes on my observations, both planned and spontaneous. These notes encompassed my thoughts, feelings, and any insights gained during the research process.
    c. Discussion Reflections from Teacher Leadership: Discussion notes from the leadership retreat in January will be used to add perspective from individual and group open ended discussions. The guides for these discussions can be found in Appendix B.
2. Observations
    a. Interpreting Observations: I engaged in a process of self-reflection throughout the cycle to provide meaning and interpretation to the observations. I considered how my personal biases, assumptions, and perspectives may have influenced my observations.
    b. Synthesizing Findings: Every quarter, findings from the self-observations and reflections were synthesized into a coherent narrative, highlighting significant findings and drawing connections between different aspects of the program.

c. Personal Notes: During the course of classroom walkthrough visit observations, I took notes and sent follow-up emails and feedback. This information will contribute to the program evaluation.

d. Notes from Observation Discussions from Cohort Principals: Cohort principals collected notes and observations during the cohort principal classroom walkthrough observation visits. As a principal, I summarized these in feedback notes and emails. This information will be used in the program evaluation.

3. Mid-Cycle Survey

a. Teacher Input: Teachers will have the opportunity to participate in a Likert survey, included in Appendix C.

b. Interview Responses: Notes and information from interview responses given by individual teacher leadership members will be used to guide perspective specifically surrounding aspects of the implementation process. These questions are listed in Appendix C.

This self-reflexive approach to data collection and analysis will allow for a deep and introspective exploration of the program under evaluation. By drawing solely from my own experiences and observations, I aim to offer a unique perspective on the program, while also addressing potential limitations inherent in this solitary methodology.

Limitations

This research study will have limitations that may impact the results. Firstly, I, the researcher, was present during the events being studied, and I had a direct hand in leading the processes that will be researched. Secondly, there is a limit of my notes, journaling and data gathering being the primary source of information. Thirdly, as the site implementation process was organic in nature, it does not always precisely follow previously prescribed implementation models, rather it is a collection of organically selected strategies for site planning and implementation. Fourthly, because this is a review of past experiences, there is a potential for forgetfulness or misperception. Finally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and

my limited time as principal of the school site, we are only able to review 1.5 years' worth of practices.

Positionality

I am a principal of five years who attended schools of both high and low socio-economic status. I worked in education in the capacity of English Teacher, English Language Development (ELD) Teacher, English Resource Teacher, and English Department Chair for a combined total of eight years. I worked in high-English Learner, low-Socio-Economic schools as a site administrator for a total of seven years and have been at my current school site for two additional years. I have been involved in implementing strategies that impact target student outcomes in English Learner achievement. I have also used implementation strategies in effecting the reduction of suspension rates for high-risk students. In addition to this, I have worked with committees that increased attendance for low socio-economic populations. In order to limit potential bias, I will need to be cognizant of my own culture, beliefs, and personal and professional experiences; I will also be required to consistently make an intentional effort to remain unbiased during the study.

CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents data collected in order to inform the evaluation of a program designed to explore the effectiveness of IDSP at ABC Elementary. Drawing upon the insights from journaling, collective reflections, observations, and mid-cycle survey self-reflections, the evaluation orbits around six guiding questions aimed at dissecting the facets of implementation over the first cycle. These questions scrutinize the events, impacts, underperformances, value propositions, sustainability, and necessary adjustments within the implementation process. The methodology hinges on examining the recorded reflections, systematic journaling, and surveys, positioning this chapter as a critical assessment of how the site planning goals, articulated in the school site plan, translate into tangible outcomes. The following questions guided the evaluation:

1. What have been the significant planned and improvised events that serve as Implementation Driven Site Planning benchmarks over the first half of Cycle I of implementation?
2. What evidence of impact has the Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its teachers over the first half of Cycle I model implementation and what impact assumptions are attributed to that impact?
3. What evidence of underperformance has Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its stakeholders while conducting the first half of Cycle I model implementation, and what effect assumptions are attributed to that impact?
4. What value might exist by investing in more cycles of Implementation Driven Site Planning beyond the three-year mark?
5. To what degree are our goals and processes during our first 18 months plausibly sustainable and improvable throughout a whole three-year Cycle I?

6. What adjustments, modifications, expansions, and lessons learned should be considered in both the remaining 18 months of this cycle and future cycles of implementation as well as model study and replication?

Participants and Roles in the Evaluation Process

The program evaluation engaged a diverse set of participants, each playing a crucial role in the implementation cycle. This inclusivity ensured a broad perspective on the process and outcomes of site planning implementation.

- School Principal: As the leader of the implementation cycle, I led the implementation cycle, coordinating the efforts of all participants, and synthesizing data from various sources to evaluate the effectiveness of the site planning process.

- Grade-Level Teacher Leaders: Part of an implementation leadership team, these individuals contributed to formative evaluations and strategic planning, acting as a bridge between the school's leadership and classroom teachers.

- Classroom Teachers: Including teacher leaders and non-leader teachers, they were the primary implementers of the program. Their classrooms served as observation sites, and they participated in surveys to offer insights into the practical aspects of implementation.

- Cohort Principals: Principals from schools within the same cohort participated in school-wide professional development and walkthroughs. They provided valuable external feedback on the school's implementation process through verbal feedback, input forms, and observation notes.

Artifacts from the Implementation Cycle

Multiple artifacts highlight the events of the program evaluation, each offering unique insights into different aspects of the implementation process:

- Journaled and Collected Reflections: These included initial journaled observations by the school planning principal, systematic journaling by teacher leaders, and discussion reflections that captured the evolving insights and adjustments made throughout the implementation cycle.

- Classroom Observations: Observations conducted in classrooms and other school processes provided a lens into the practical implementation of the site plan. These observations were interpreted and synthesized by the evaluator to create a narrative of the program's impact on the classroom environment and teaching practices.

- Feedback from Cohort Principals: Notes from discussions with cohort principals, alongside their observations and feedback forms, offered an external viewpoint on the school's implementation efforts, enriching the evaluation with broader educational perspectives.

- Mid-Cycle Survey: This survey incorporated teacher feedback through a Likert scale, group interviews with a focus group, and individual teacher interviews. It aimed to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the perceptions and effectiveness of the implementation halfway through the cycle.

Artifact Analysis Process

The analysis process involved synthesizing findings from the artifacts to construct a coherent narrative of the implementation process's effectiveness, challenges, and successes. Reflections, observations, survey results, and external feedback were all interwoven to provide a multi-faceted understanding of the IDSP at ABC Elementary. This comprehensive approach enabled a deep dive into the nuances of implementation, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of change management within the school setting.

The evaluation spans a critical period in the school's progress towards achieving the goals set out in its site plan, detailed over six quarters across the initial three years. This structured approach allows for an analysis of the program's evolution and effectiveness at various stages:

- First Quarter (July - September 2022): Marking the commencement of the program, this quarter laid the foundational efforts for implementation.

- Second Quarter (October - December 2022): Continued development and initial reflections on the implementation process were key focuses during this period.

- Third Quarter (January - March 2023): Midway through the first year, adjustments based on reflections and initial findings began to take shape.

- Fourth Quarter (April - June 2023): Culminating the first year's efforts, this quarter aimed at solidifying the progress and preparing for the subsequent year.

- Fifth Quarter (July - September 2023): Starting the second year, this period involved revisiting and refining the implementation strategies based on prior experiences.

- Sixth Quarter (October - December 2023): Leading into the mid-cycle point, this quarter focused on intensifying the implementation and preparing for the mid-cycle evaluation.
- The leadership retreat in January 2024, marked by the administration of mid-cycle surveys, represents a pivotal moment for collective reflection and strategic planning, based on the insights gained from the first one and a half years of implementation.

Chapter Organization

This chapter will delineate the program evaluation results through a quarter-based structure, ensuring a clear, chronological presentation of findings. Each subsection, dedicated to a specific quarter, will detail the significant events and corresponding artifacts that shaped the implementation process during that period. This organization provides a logical flow that facilitates understanding of how implementation efforts evolved, highlighting key milestones, adjustments, and outcomes associated with each phase. Table 3 demonstrates the structure.

Quarter 1 Findings

The initial quarter of the program evaluation (July to September 2022) marked a pivotal period of acclimation and initial engagement for me as the new principal at ABC Elementary. It was a time dedicated to familiarizing myself with the staff, understanding the school's existing data, and delving into the underlying processes, procedures, and assumptions that shaped the school's operational dynamics.

Key Events and Reflections

The foundational event of this quarter was a post-summer teacher meeting. As the principal, I presented various data to the staff and initiated activities aimed at eliciting their

Table 3

Organizational Table of the Chapter

Quarter and Events	Artifacts
Quarter 1: July-September 2022 ● Post-Summer Teacher Meeting ● Principal Disaggregation of Unofficial CAASPP Scores ● First Leadership Meeting ● Teacher Meeting ● Committee for Perceptual Problem ● Principal investigates best practices of like schools ● Principal design of micro-audit ● Second Teacher Leader Meeting	● Journaled notes ● Professional development documents ● Statewide and local achievement data ● Informal observations ● Reflections ● Tools created by principal
Quarter 2: October - December 2022 ● Post-Intersession Teacher Meeting ● Create Target Group data sheets for each teacher ● Create a principal walkthrough file with pictures of target group students ● Individual Classroom Walkthroughs ● Progress Monitoring Sessions ● Third Teacher Leader Meeting ● Teacher Meeting	● Classroom observation notes ● Local data ● Perceptual data gathering ● Progress monitoring notes ● Reflections ● Notes from leadership team meeting ● Individual classroom walkthrough data ● Individual classroom walkthrough notes and feedback ● Reflections
Quarter 3: January - March 2023 ● Post-Winter Teacher Meeting ● Progress Monitoring Sessions ● Organize Testing	● Notes from observations and individual teacher meetings ● Progress Monitoring Notes
Quarter 4: April - June 2023 ● Cohort Principal Walkthrough ● Teacher Meeting ● Testing ● Continue Walkthroughs of non-testing classrooms ● End of School Year ● Principal Preparation for Following Year	● Principal cohort walkthrough feedback from form ● Principal cohort walkthrough feedback notes from group discussion ● Observation notes during principal cohort walkthrough ● Individual classroom walkthrough data ● Professional development documents ● Local data ● Unofficial statewide data ● Reflections
Quarter 5: July - September 2023 ● Post-Summer Teacher Meeting ● Shadow-Audit ● First Teacher Leader Meeting ● Create tools/PD to demonstrate expectations post-shadow audit ● Teacher Meeting ● Individual Classroom Walkthroughs ● Cohort Principal Walkthrough	● Unofficial statewide data disaggregated by district ● Teacher leader meeting notes ● Shadow-audit tool created by principal ● Professional development documents ● Local data ● Teacher meeting perceptual discussion notes ● Individual classroom walk through form input ● Principal cohort walkthrough feedback from form ● Principal cohort walkthrough feedback notes from group discussion ● Observation notes during principal cohort walkthrough
Quarter 6: October - December 2023 ● Post-Intersession Meeting ● Second Teacher Leader Meeting ● Progress Monitoring Sessions	● Local data ● Official statewide data ● Teacher leadership meeting notes ● Progress monitoring notes ● Professional development documents
Mid-Cycle Review: January 2024 ● Teacher Leader Likert Survey ● Individual Teacher Leader Interviews ● Teacher Leader Focus Group	● Teacher leader Likert survey results ● Individual teacher leader interview notes ● Teacher leader focus group notes ● Reflections

perceptions on strengths, struggles, and potential solutions to identified problems. Two significant activities during this meeting were:

1. Listing Strengths and Challenges: Teachers were asked to articulate their perceived strengths and challenges and then brainstorm how we could leverage our strengths to address these problems (Table 4).

Table 4
Illustration of Graphic Organizer to Record Strengths and Challenges of a Teaching Staff

Challenge	Strength

2. Build, Bash, and Beautify (Table 5): This activity encouraged teachers to identify what needed to be invented or started anew (Build), what needed to be eliminated (Bash), and what needed improvement (Beautify).

Table 5
Illustration and Record of the "Build, Bash, and Beautify" Strategy

Build	Bash	Beautify

• Upper/lower buddies
• Relationships across grade level
• Student "ownership"
• Reconnecting parents INTO school
• Water bottle filling station
• PTA/Family Events
• School events
• Student community group projects
• Science
• Naturalist club
• Garden ed.
• Cultural celebrations
• Cell phone policy for students
• Love of reading
• Restorative practices
• NGSS
• Community understanding of ed. code
• SPRINT
• Compliment charts
• Cheetah awards
• Schoolwide assemblies/rallies
• Student-led broadcasts
• Morning announcements (clarity/volume)
	• Running records x4
	• Combos
	• Old playground equipment
	• SPRINT prizes
	• Office prize box
	• Pinks and blues
	• Recess used as a consequence
	• SPRINT (re-imagine?)
	• Mindset of typical/normal
		• Water the field
		• Clean up playground/track
		• Lunch arbor...more tables/shade
		• TLC for garden
		• Small awards assemblies
		• Designated space for PE
		• Little libraries
		• Auditorium art
		• New recess activities
		• Revisit cell phone and social media
		• All children are OURs
		• Growth mindset
		• Current digital placement practices
		• School-wide culture
		• Thinking routines
		• Grade level teams
		• Auditorium as a showplace for schoolwide thinking
		• Cross grade level buddies
		• School-wide events
		• RTI/SST Process
		  ○ Who leads?
		  ○ What forms are used?
		  ○ What are the timelines?

The outcomes of these discussions highlighted a perceptual problem concerning behavior at the school, specifically non-major playground behaviors that demonstrated a lack of adherence to established rules. Interestingly, this concern was not reflected in quantitative data, such as low suspension rates and almost nonexistent referrals, indicating it was more of a perception than a documented issue.

Committee Formation and Findings

A committee was formed to delve deeper into this perceptual problem. Discussions revealed a divide among teachers: half viewed playground behaviors as problematic, desiring more structured rules, while the other half advocated for fewer restrictions to allow children more freedom in play. This dichotomy highlighted differing expectations between lower and upper grade teachers regarding playground management.

Despite the lack of quantitative data supporting the behavioral concerns, addressing this perceptual issue was crucial for building trust with the staff and setting a foundation for collaborative problem-solving. The committee reviewed a previously created document on playground rules, opting to revise it for clarity and ease of use. The teachers collectively decided to actively teach these rules through demonstration, underscoring a communal approach to resolving the perceptual problem.

Exploration of Quantitative Data

Parallel to addressing the perceptual issue, I began an in-depth examination of the previous year's statewide data and trends. By comparing ABC Elementary to demographically similar schools, I identified areas where our school was underperforming, notably among English learners, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, in both math and ELA.

This discovery was brought to a teacher leadership meeting, where the focus shifted to addressing the inconsistency in the implementation of designated ELD. This initiative was critical for improving language instruction for English learners.

Micro Audit and Focus Areas

To avoid relying solely on perceptual data, I introduced a "micro audit" (Table 6), a concise list of indicators derived from best practices observed in similar schools, focusing on EL improvement. The decision was made to concentrate on the regular, ideally daily, implementation of designated ELD (Figure 2). Additionally, teacher data sheets highlighting English learners and their achievement data were created to facilitate targeted support.

Table 6
Micro-Audit Indicators

Indicator
EL Awareness All teachers *and* administration know their ELs. • The administration knows who the ELs are in each class • The administration provides a roster with names and data for ELs for each teacher
EL Priority Your school has scheduled time for designated ELD. • All teachers know when they teach it. • The teaching of designated ELD is consistently at a specific time throughout the year
EL Intervention Specific interventions exist outside of the regular classroom for ELs. • The school has identified the Tier II and III needs of ELs • Resources have been allocated to create an intervention process for the needs of ELs
EL Planning Master scheduling prioritizes English Learner placement. • A purposeful decision is made on whether class placement for ELs is homogeneous or heterogeneous. • Grade level teams have an agreed-upon grouping process for ELs during designated ELD.
EL Instruction Designated ELD is infused into content instruction. • Designated ELD occurs immediately before or immediately after direct instruction. • Students are strategically placed in ELD groups based on purposeful decision-making about individual students

Figure 2
Features of Designated ELD – Strategy Description

Conclusion

Quarter one set the groundwork for the year ahead, emphasizing the importance of addressing both perceptual and quantitative challenges. The identification of playground behavior as a perceptual issue and the inconsistency in designated ELD implementation as a quantitative problem guided the strategic focus moving forward. These initial steps underscored the necessity of building trust and ensuring a data-informed approach to tackling the challenges at ABC Elementary, setting the stage for quarter two's efforts.

Quarter 2 Findings

The second quarter at ABC Elementary was characterized by the deliberate implementation of strategies aimed at addressing two primary areas of concern identified in the initial quarter: the perceptual issue of playground behavior and the academic challenges faced by English learners. The return from the intersession break marked a pivotal point, with a comprehensive teacher meeting that laid the groundwork for this quarter's initiatives. This session introduced the micro audit results alongside updated playground rules and pivoted

discussions towards refining the designated ELD approach in classrooms, underpinned by a clear presentation of best practices and data analysis (Table 7).

Table 7
Perceptual Problem Initial Findings

Area of Concern	Themes

Snack Area	• Location
	• Rules
	  ○ Clean up
	  ○ Eat only in snack area

Activity Table	• Location
	• Rules
	  ○ Not just sitting
	  ○ No eating
	• Preferred Activities
	  ○ Drawing
	  ○ Reading

Fields and Open Spaces	• Boundaries
	  ○ Stay in sight
	  ○ Stay away from fence
	• Preferred Activities
	  ○ PE Activities
	  ○ Teacher-led activities

Game Areas	• Rules • Number of Students
Hall Passes	• Rules • Number of Students

Equipment	• Location
	• Rules
	  ○ Care
	  ○ Return at bell
	• Proper Use

While it is clear that these areas of concern are not related to state indicators for behavior and suspensions, the perception of the problematic nature of boundaries or lack thereof in the above listed table worked to create opportunities for attentiveness toward the culture and climate that was specific to the site.

Empathy Interviews and Progress Monitoring

A significant innovation this quarter was the introduction of empathy interviews, aimed at integrating student feedback more directly into our evaluative processes. This method provided a platform for English learners to voice their learning experiences,

preferences, and needs, with their insights directly informing teacher feedback. The questions centered around the following:

1. What are your strengths?
2. What are your challenges?
3. How do you learn best (e.g., alone, in groups, hearing, seeing)?
4. What do you wish your teacher knew about you?
5. How do you feel about your English learning in small group?

The first question allows to give feedback to the teacher about where to leverage student strengths, while the second should enlighten teachers about areas of growth that the teacher may or may not have already discovered. The third and fourth questions center around student learning conditions, and nuances of the student experience. The final question gives student-driven feedback around designated ELD.

The traditional approach to progress monitoring underwent a transformation. Previously, progress monitoring was characterized by a somewhat isolative practice, where teachers were asked to leave their classrooms for individual discussions about target students, often necessitating the hiring of substitute teachers. This practice was re-envisioned during the quarter to leverage existing teacher collaboration time, facilitating a more inclusive and comprehensive dialogue about the needs of our English learners within the entire grade-level team setting.

Addressing Literacy Challenges in Lower Grades

Amid our targeted strategies, the quarter illuminated a critical literacy challenge among lower grade students, revealing that approximately 75% of first and second graders were reading two grade levels behind. This stark data point highlighted the urgent need for intensive literacy support, leading to the strategic decision to hire two instructional assistants

dedicated to this purpose. This move was informed by the belief that targeted assistance would significantly elevate these students' reading abilities and academic trajectories.

Quantitative Progress and Instructional Practices

The quarter was marked by measurable improvements in the reading abilities of English learners, with significant gains observed in Lexile reading levels. This positive trend was a testament to the efficacy of the targeted interventions implemented.

Observations of designated ELD practices across classrooms revealed a diversity in implementation strategies (Table 8). Efforts were intensified to ensure consistency and share effective ELD practices, including the widespread dissemination of observed best practices and instructional techniques among the staff.

Table 8
Sample Data from Observations of ELD Practices

ELD Strategy	% of Observed Teachers Using Strategy
Cloze Reading	40%
Vocabulary – Freyer Model	100%
Sentence Frames	100%
Annotating	30%
Discussions/Retell	60%

Refinement of Progress Monitoring

I revised our progress monitoring approach. The revision of the progress monitoring approach represented a shift towards a more collective and supportive framework, moving away from the previous model that often placed teachers in a solitary evaluative situation. This change aimed to foster a climate of shared responsibility and collective efficacy, with the entire grade-level team engaging in discussions about best practices and identifying areas requiring additional support.

Collaborative Achievements and Future Directions

The quarter concluded with a reinforced sense of collaboration and a clear direction for addressing the identified educational challenges. The introduction of instructional assistants for lower grades, in response to the urgent literacy needs, underscored a comprehensive strategy to support all students' academic growth and well-being.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the achievements of Quarter Two, the strides made in addressing both the perceptual and academic challenges were evident. The initiatives undertaken, particularly the innovative approach to progress monitoring and the targeted support for lower grade literacy challenges, highlighted an objective and adaptive approach to educational excellence at ABC Elementary. The quarter not only addressed immediate concerns but also laid a foundational strategy for continued progress and success.

Quarter 3 Findings

Quarter three at ABC Elementary was a pivotal period for assessing the effectiveness of our strategic educational initiatives, with a particular focus on student literacy enhancement and the execution of designated ELD. Starting with the post-winter break period, this quarter was critical for reviewing the progress toward our set educational objectives.

Post-Winter Break Teacher Meeting

The quarter commenced with a significant teacher meeting aimed at updating staff on recent developments and analyzing progress through data. A key topic was the literacy program, highlighted by the introduction of two instructional assistants aimed at supporting lower grade literacy. The data presented showed remarkable outcomes: students were now achieving 20 to 30% improvements on their Lexile levels, exceeding initial projections. This

improvement provided a clear quantitative measure of the success of our literacy interventions.

Discussions around designated ELD revealed positive teacher feedback, with observations of increased classroom engagement among English learners. This boost in engagement was attributed to the recently structured improvements in ELD instruction, indicating a direct link between our interventions and student participation.

Celebrating Comprehensive Academic Success

The teacher meeting also served as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate academic achievements across the board, including significant successes in mathematics. By spotlighting positive data in both literacy and math, we emphasized the holistic academic growth being realized across subject areas.

Refining Progress Monitoring Approaches

This quarter also continued the practice of enhanced progress monitoring, utilizing teacher collaboration times for collective discussions on the progress of English learners. This shift from individual to group discussions aimed to foster shared responsibility for educational practices. Notably, the number of English learners requiring intervention decreased significantly. At the start of the year, concerns were raised for all English learners in a class, but by this quarter, teachers reported concerns for only about one English learner per class on average, from a total of 58 English learners across the school. This quantitative data highlighted a substantial reduction in students identified as in need of intervention, underscoring the effectiveness of our collective instructional strategies.

Observations and Quantitative Feedback

Observations throughout the quarter confirmed the sustained implementation of English learner support strategies. Feedback from these observations, particularly from

interactions with upper-grade English learners, included that 10 out of 15 noted their teachers' intentional efforts in designated ELD or small group activities tailored for English learners. This feedback, shared anonymously, was aimed at reinforcing the instructional practices observed.

Preparation for External Evaluation

As the quarter drew to a close, anticipation built for the scheduled visit from our school cohort's principal group in the following quarter. In preparation, teachers were encouraged to identify and refine specific, evidence-based strategies for designated ELD, aiming to demonstrate the effective systems and strategies developed to our peers. This preparation was rooted in the desire to highlight the research-backed approaches that have become integral to our ELD instruction. Table 9 depicts the strategies chosen by each grade level.

Table 9
Selected High Impact Language Strategies

Grade Level	Strategy
Transitional Kindergarten	Collaborative Retell
Kindergarten	See, Think, Wonder
1st Grade	Collaborative Retell
2nd Grade	Collaborative Retell
3rd Grade	Academic Conversations
4th Grade	Frayer Model/Vocabulary
5th Grade	Collaborative Retell
6th Grade	Academic Conversations

Conclusion

Quarter three served as a reflective and preparatory phase at ABC Elementary, marked by significant quantitative and qualitative assessments of our strategic educational initiatives. The literacy program's success, evidenced by substantial Lexile level

improvements, and the reduction in English learners identified as needing intervention, provided clear metrics of our progress. As we prepared for external evaluation, the focus on evidence-based instructional practices and the anticipation of showcasing our achievements underscored our commitment to continuous improvement and educational excellence.

Quarter 4 Findings

Quarter four at ABC Elementary marked a critical phase of evaluation and reflection, highlighted by the execution of statewide and local assessments, and a strategic walkthrough by a cohort of principals. This quarter was dedicated to scrutinizing the effectiveness of the year's initiatives, with a special focus on supports for English learners and the optimization of designated ELD sessions.

Principal Cohort Walkthrough and Observations

A significant event of this quarter was the walkthrough conducted by the principal cohort from our district, designed to assess classroom environments, instructional practices, and student engagement through the specific prism of English learner support. Observations revealed that out of 20 classrooms visited, 17 successfully implemented the evidence-based strategies they had committed to, while 3 classrooms adhered to the more foundational strategies introduced at the beginning of our implementation journey. This feedback, highlighting the engagement of teachers and the positive involvement of English learners, provided an objective measure of the progress in embedding effective ELD practices school-wide. Table 10 shows observations that were shared with the teachers after the walkthrough.

Table 10
Observations Shared with Teachers After Walk-Throughs

Process	Content
Norms	• Trust • Honesty & Productive Input • Share the Floor • Consensus-Can you live with the decision • Listen to Understand • Be Fully Present
Protocol	• Establish Roles and determine what to look for • Timekeeper needed • 10 minutes in each room • 3 minute debrief outside room • Yes, you can speak to students
Areas of Observation - Site	• Designated ELD • High Impact Language Strategies
Areas of Observation – Cohort Foci	• Making Students Feel Valued and Capable • Focus On Understanding and Mastery • Promoting Clarity • Ensuring Culturally, Socially, and Personally Responsive Teaching • Checking For Understanding, Providing Feedback, and Adapting • Building Fluency With Gatekeeper Vocabulary • Promoting Successful Practice • Leading Students To Love Learning

Behavioral Focus and Interventions

Subsequent professional development sessions addressed behavioral observations, particularly among upper-grade students, leading to the decision to conduct targeted presentations aimed at reinforcing behavioral expectations (Figure 3). This initiative aimed at addressing specific behavioral trends observed, demonstrating a proactive stance toward maintaining a positive school culture and climate.

Figure 3
PBIS Expectations

Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
Walk on the walkways	Stop, look, and listen when spoken to by adults	Take bathroom breaks with a pass
Stay in supervised area	Use kind words with friends when you disagree	Freeze when you hear the bell/siren then listen for directions
Report problems to an adult	Use equipment correctly	Stand quietly in line and wait for your teacher

Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
WALK at all times	Stay quiet—Learning in Progress	When not with your class…have a pass
Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself	Stop, look, and listen when spoken to by adults	Go directly to your destination
Stay with your class	Keep walkways clear and clean	Use Cell phones off-campus only

Quantitative Insights from Statewide Testing

The period was also marked by the administration of statewide assessments, offering valuable quantitative data on academic performance. The unofficial results indicated an

overall increase in student achievements in both ELA and mathematics. Notably, English learners exhibited a significant increase in mathematics performance, aligning with prior research that suggested early improvements in math could presage gains in ELA for this demographic. Specifically, the data showed that students, on average, demonstrated 20 to 30% better progress on their Lexile levels than initially projected at the start of the year.

Moreover, while the English learner progress indicator showed minimal increase, it represented the most negligible decrease in recent years, signaling a shift in momentum for this student group. In mathematics, English learners not only showed significant progress but also contributed to the school-wide increase in math scores. This improvement was particularly pronounced in three out of the four grade levels subjected to statewide testing, showcasing a tangible impact of the designated ELD and related strategies on student outcomes.

Strategic Reflections and Future Directions

Reflecting on the year's initiatives, the quarter facilitated a thorough analysis of the strategies' effectiveness, particularly those aimed at supporting English learners. The positive feedback from the principal cohort walkthrough, combined with the quantitative data from statewide assessments, underscored the achievements in enhancing ELD practices and overall student performance. As the academic year concluded, the focus shifted toward sustaining and refining these successful practices for the upcoming year, based on the solid foundation established and the momentum gained across academic and behavioral domains.

Conclusion

The final quarter at ABC Elementary served as a testament to the concerted efforts made throughout the year to support English learners and improve educational practices. The quantitative improvements observed in statewide testing, alongside the positive outcomes of

the principal cohort walkthrough, provided objective benchmarks for assessing the school's progress. Moving forward, the emphasis on building upon the successful strategies implemented, guided by quantitative data and reflective planning, sets a clear trajectory for continuous improvement and educational excellence at ABC Elementary.

Quarter 5 Findings

Quarter five marked the onset of my second year as principal at ABC Elementary, ushering in a period of strategic reflection and planning. This quarter was instrumental in assessing whether to build upon our established educational strategies or to pivot in response to the introduction of new curricula in mathematics and science.

Post-Summer Teacher Meeting

The year commenced with the post-summer teacher meeting, a crucial session dedicated to evaluating our progress. During this meeting, I presented the unofficial statewide data, highlighting our school's performance relative to others in the district. This presentation covered a range of success indicators, including a notable reduction in suspensions from five two years prior to just two in the previous year, and a halving of chronic absenteeism from 31% post-COVID to 15%. Despite a modest decline in the English learner progress indicator—marking only a 2.2% decrease compared to more significant drops in previous years—this was viewed as a positive shift, signaling improvement in a traditionally challenging area.

Strategic Discussions Amid New Curricular Pressures

The introduction of new district curricula prompted a focused discussion on the future direction of our initiatives. The consensus leaned towards sustaining our existing practices, recognizing the need to manage stress levels associated with the adoption of new educational content.

Enhancing Behavioral Management

Our discussion also revisited strategies to manage playground behavior, leading to the decision to re-circulate the playground rules document created in the previous year. This move aimed to reinforce known behavioral expectations among students, ensuring a cohesive understanding across the school community.

Implementing a Shadow Audit for Insight

A significant initiative I introduced was the "shadow audit," a method designed to discreetly assess the implementation of certain district-recommended instructional strategies—namely, teacher clarity, gatekeeper vocabulary, and checking for understanding—without the pressure of formal evaluation. This audit involved creating a form for my use during classroom walkthroughs, allowing me to gather data and gain insights into the prevalence and effectiveness of these strategies across the school. This approach provided a nuanced understanding of where our instructional practices stood, particularly highlighting that while teacher clarity and vocabulary instruction were consistently observed, checking for understanding varied greatly in its application.

I chose the three instruction-focused areas of focus provided by our principal cohort consultants, and I rated the implementation in each classroom of each area on a scale of 1-4. One equaled not implemented, or implemented in a rudimentary manner, and four equaled proficient, effective implementation as evidenced by student engagement and student learning. From those three areas, I shared the data, without room numbers, with the teacher leaders, and we chose an area of instructional focus as a school (Table 11).

Table 11
Instructional Focus Needs Assessment Data

Room Number	Focus On Mastery	Promoting Clarity	Checking for Understanding
1	4	4	2
2	4	3	3
3	4	4	4
4	4	4	3
5	3	4	4
6	3	4	3
7	3	3	2
8	4	4	4
9	3	3	2
10	4	3	2
11	4	2	1
12	3	3	2
13	4	4	3
14	4	4	3
15	2	3	1
16	3	4	2
17	4	4	2
18	3	4	2
19	3	3	3
20	4	3	2
21	2	2	1

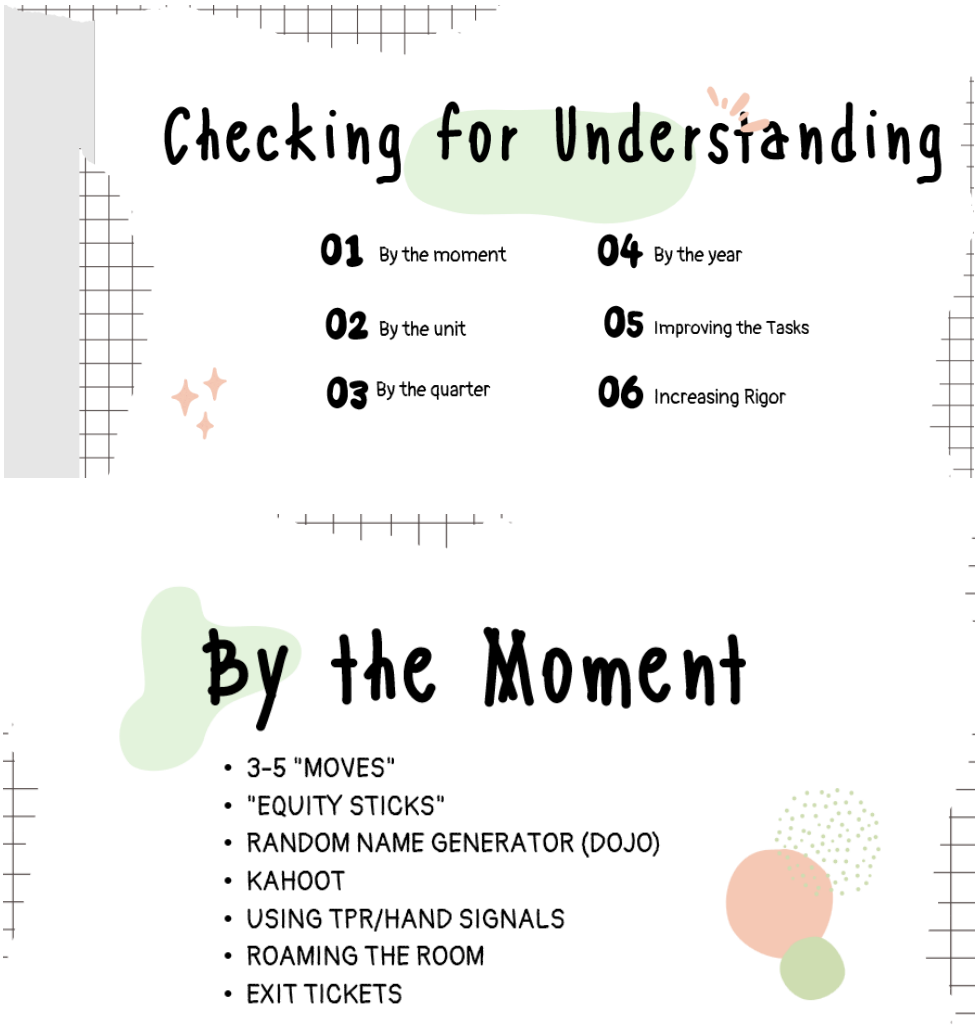
Professional Development and Addressing Gaps

The findings from the shadow audit informed our first professional development session of the year, which focused on enhancing the practice of checking for understanding. This session not only highlighted research-backed impacts of this strategy but also demonstrated its practical applications in the classroom. Subsequent walkthroughs aimed to reinforce this initiative, with feedback indicating a progressive adoption of these strategies among the staff.

During the professional development, the staff was presented with multiple types of checking for understanding used during different stages of the learning and teaching process (Figure 4). After reviewing examples of each, we selected, as a staff, a stage and set of strategies that would be used moving forward. The staff chose checking for understanding "by the moment," which includes strategies that can be used in the course of delivering a lesson and can be spontaneous or planned in their implementation.

Figure 4

Illustration of Instructional Strategy Professional Develop Slides



Coinciding with this cycle of professional development, we were visited again by our cohort principals. The following is the text from the email sent to ABC Elementary staff after feedback from our second principal cohort walkthrough:

> We had an amazing walkthrough yesterday, and I wanted to share some of the feedback with you to validate your hard work and to emphasize some of our awesome practices in checking for understanding:
>
> - "Throughout the school we saw more than 8 types of checking for understanding."
> - "Teachers really internalized the need to constantly check and adjust instruction."
> - "With each series of new questions, more hands raised showing understanding."
> - "The teacher not only roamed the room, but very clearly was studying what each student wrote."
> - "We saw random name calling, turn and talk, and other effective strategies."
> - "The teacher asked questions that were *very* intentional; each one asked students to demonstrate a more rigorous depth of knowledge."
> - "Students identified their own level of understanding and chose to work with the teacher, in pairs, or alone."
> - "Hand signals! Those students were really in tune."
> - "Hands down, in every class, we saw an attempt to adjust instruction as a response to the check for understanding."
>
> I also thought it worthy of mention that:
>
> "Unique to your school, something we don't see really anywhere else, is this high level of joy matched with authentic engagement in learning!"
>
> Proud to work with all you!

Behavioral Interventions and Academic Progress

A critical part of our reflection this quarter centered on addressing the significant behavioral needs of a small group of students. Out of 464 students, four required intensive behavioral interventions—significantly below the expected norm. This pointed to a broader success in managing student behavior across the school but also highlighted the need for targeted support for these individuals.

Academic Highlights and Forward Planning

The quarter was marked by encouraging academic achievements, particularly the improvement in lower-grade literacy, with 60% of students who previously failed to reach grade level, achieving grade level reading expectations. Additionally, upper-grade classes exhibited Lexile scores 50% higher than anticipated, showcasing significant academic strides.

Conclusion

As we embarked on the new academic year, quarter five was characterized by thoughtful analysis, strategic planning, and the implementation of targeted interventions. The decision to continue refining and building upon our established practices, coupled with the nuanced insights gained through the shadow audit, set a strong foundation for the year ahead. The quarter underscored our commitment to enhancing both academic outcomes and behavioral management, ensuring a supportive and effective learning environment for all students at ABC Elementary.

Quarter 6 Findings

Quarter six signified the conclusion of the comprehensive evaluation cycle at ABC Elementary, delineating a period crucial for reviewing the school's strategic accomplishments and determining future educational trajectories. Initiated after the fall intersession, this quarter was marked by detailed assessments aimed at scrutinizing the school’s performance in various domains.

Post-Intersession Meeting: Data Presentation and Discussion

The quarter commenced with the post-intersession staff meeting, pivotal for presenting and dissecting the school's achievements. Highlighted during this session were improvements in student reading capabilities, underscored by local data, and strategies for

supporting students with significant behavioral needs. The unveiling of the official statewide data provided a nuanced perspective on our standing within the district. ABC Elementary was revealed to have ascended to the top tier in critical areas: achieving exceptional results in mathematics for English learners, excelling in overall mathematics and ELA performance, and making notable advancements in behavioral metrics and suspension rates.

Statewide Data Insights

The official statewide data presented a granular view of our achievements:

- Mathematics for English Learners: Our school demonstrated standout performance, indicating the effectiveness of our targeted instructional strategies tailored to English learners.
- Overall Mathematics: We observed significant advancements, evidencing the comprehensive impact of our math curriculum and teaching methodologies.
- English Language Arts: The school's performance in this area was commendable, with students achieving high marks, showcasing our balanced focus on literacy alongside numeracy.
- Behavior and Suspensions: A dramatic improvement was noted in the domain of student behavior, with suspension rates dropping from five instances two years prior to only two in the last year. This improvement was indicative of our successful behavioral interventions and a positive school culture.

Progress in Literacy and Behavioral Support

In literacy, local data revealed that 80% of our lower-grade students were on track for achieving a full grade-level improvement within the year, with about 10% closely approaching this milestone. For upper-grade students, 60% exceeded their expected grade level based on Lexile scores, with another 30% meeting or nearing the expected benchmarks.

For students requiring behavioral interventions, a structured support system was highlighted, showing that four students received personalized assistance through a district assessment process. This initiative illustrated our school's capacity for a responsive, data-driven approach to support diverse student needs effectively.

Design Thinking for School Improvement

A "design thinking sprint," led by the district's innovation team, prompted teachers to identify areas for enhancement and propose actionable, small-scale changes (Table 12). The teacher leadership meeting later centered on these innovative proposals, assigning leadership to spearhead these projects, reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement and teacher-driven change.

Table 12
Design Sprint Idea Session

Project Idea	Outcome
Schoolwide Literacy Activity	Purchase of a set of books for each class to be read in class then engaged in at a literacy event later in the year
Schoolwide Culture Building	Scheduling of various dance parties at recess
Schoolwide PBIS Awareness	Creation of vinyl signs for PBIS expectations
Grade-level Collaboration Opportunities	Re-directing excess funds to pay for substitutes for teacher collaboration days
Improvement of Collaboration Strategies	Schoolwide Focus on PLC Conversations and Data for next school year
SEL Tier I Improvements	SEL Calendar Design

Monitoring and Strategic Planning

Monitoring revealed about 10% of English learners required additional focus, suggesting the general success of our language development efforts. However, a need for more effective use of data during collaborative planning was identified as an area for improvement; this coincided with the above-mentioned “Design Thinking” projects that were ideated by the staff.

Behavioral Developments and Academic Excellence

Significant behavioral improvements were noted among students previously identified for intensive interventions, positively impacting the overall teaching environment.

Official statewide data corroborated our academic excellence, especially highlighting our achievements in math and ELA across the student body, underscoring the efficacy of our educational strategies.

Conclusion

The end of the evaluation cycle provided a moment for reflection on ABC Elementary's strategic successes, illuminated by detailed assessments and official data. These achievements across academic disciplines and behavioral management underscore the effectiveness of our approaches, setting the stage for ongoing development and sustaining academic excellence. Insights from this quarter will guide our future planning, ensuring a continued focus on fostering a supportive and enriching learning environment for all students.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the program evaluation of the IDSP process at ABC Elementary during the first half of a three-year implementation cycle. The evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness, challenges, and outcomes of a hybridized approach to school site planning that integrates SMART Goals with implementation science to enhance educational equity and performance for both the general student population and traditionally underperforming students. The eval...

Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is guided by the following questions:

1. What have been the significant planned and improvised events that serve as Implementation Driven Site Planning benchmarks over the first half of Cycle I of implementation?

2. What evidence of impact has IDSP had on the school and its teachers over the first half of Cycle I model implementation, and what impact assumptions are attributed to that impact?

3. What evidence of underperformance has Implementation Driven Site Planning had on the school and its stakeholders while conducting the first half of Cycle I model implementation, and what effect assumptions are attributed to that impact?

4. What value might exist by investing in more cycles of IDSP beyond the three-year mark?

5. To what degree are our goals and processes during our first 18 months plausibly sustainable and improvable throughout a whole three-year Cycle I?

6. What adjustments, modifications, expansions, and lessons learned should be considered in both the remaining 18 months of this cycle and future cycles of implementation as well as model study and replication?

Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a holistic view of the implementation process. Data sources included:

- Journaled Reflections: Regular observations and systematic journaling by the principal and instructional leader based on discussions with teacher leaders and artifacts from professional development meetings.
- Classroom Observations: Observations conducted in classrooms and other school processes to collect generalized information and data.
- Surveys: Mid-cycle surveys incorporating anonymous teacher feedback through Likert scales, focus group notes, and individual teacher feedback.
- External Feedback: Notes and reflections on data collected from interactions with cohort principals through verbal feedback, input forms, and observation notes.

Participants

The participants in the evaluation process included:

- School Principal: Led the implementation cycle, coordinated efforts, synthesized data, provided feedback to teachers and staff, and proposed adaptations to the course of implementation.
- Grade-Level Teacher Leaders: Served as communicators of implementation details to classroom teachers, contributed to formative evaluations and strategic planning.
- Classroom Teachers: Implemented the program at the classroom level and provided practical insights.
- Cohort Principals: Provided external feedback through collaborative discussions, professional development, and planned walkthroughs.

Findings Discussed by Research Question

Question 1: Significant Planned and Improvised Events

Post-Break Meetings

The most significant events that can serve as benchmarks over the first half of cycle one of implementation are primarily the post-vacation teacher meetings, which occur quarterly.

At these meetings, staff have a chance to connect, and the principal can share celebrations and data, which are essential components of IDSP. The length of these meetings allows for a more comprehensive approach to sharing information. This information includes data from recent successes, the most recent assessments, and any necessary adaptations to the systems.

Given the two to three hours allocated for these meetings, the staff can also discuss any issues with the principal, adding a qualitative perspective to the quantitative data. These meetings, happening quarterly, are the perfect time to share, celebrate, review, and adapt based on the quarterly data. This aligns with the idea that interval data is essential to IDSP and implementation science in general. These quarterly intervals serve the purpose of reviewing current needs in light of the goals set for the three-year improvement plan.

It may be beneficial to structure the second half of the three-year cycle more purposefully, based on best practices in design thinking or design theory. This suggestion arises from the improvised "Design Thinking sprint" that occurred during the mid-cycle period of cycle one in January 2024. The design sprint, executed to create new activities and culturally based activities, is now planned to improve the school's writing approach.

Design thinking offers a solid model for structuring future iterations of IDSP. These quarterly interval meetings, lasting two to three hours, are essential and likely serve as key benchmarks, at least from a big-picture perspective.

Shadow Audits and Micro-Audits

Another event that served as a benchmark was the principal shadow audit, which led to the creation of the micro audit.

The shadow audit involves the principal walking through classrooms to collect specific indicators, primarily for the principal's use, to gauge real-time needs in the classroom or at the site. During the first half of the implementation cycle, I conducted shadow audits focused on checking for understanding strategies and earlier on, the implementation of designated ELD and the needs of English learners.

By combining the results of these audits with best practices from data on successful schools and subsequent research into those schools' practices, as well as other research-based best practices, a micro audit was created. The micro audit allows staff to understand what is being observed during short walkthroughs, both informal and formal, to gauge implementation and improvement from the focus goals.

This process begins at the start of the school year and may take an entire quarter to fully implement due to other school needs. Conducting the shadow audit was essential for me as principal to understand the real-life implementation and actions surrounding the data.

For example, when data indicated needs for English learners, the shadow audit walkthrough helped me see what that looked like in practice. Additionally, for the checking for understanding strategy shadow audit, I initially examined three different strategies. It became apparent that checking for understanding was the strategy we needed to focus on as a staff. This focus was crucial for cohesion and drilling down on real-life applications.

The shadow audit and subsequent micro audit became communication tools for staff about expectations and immediately useful benchmarks of IDSP.

Leadership Team Meetings

The leadership team meetings, which consisted of meeting with a lead from each grade level once a quarter, allowed for important conversations and calibration among school teachers, administrators, and the site during this 18-month cycle. These meetings occurred in the following manner: the first one before the beginning of the school year, the second in the middle of quarter one, the third in the middle of quarter two, the fourth before the start of the second semester, the fifth in the middle of quarter three, and the final one in the middle or end of quarter four to review and plan for the following year's focus.

These meetings culminated in a leadership retreat at the 18-month point. The same team members attended the retreat, where they discussed the school's perceptual problems and the effectiveness of instructional efforts. Adaptations were suggested, and data was reviewed to keep the goals in mind while making necessary adjustments.

The leadership team would benefit from further training in leadership strategies and instructional leadership. It is recommended to improve this process by consistently training the leadership team, given that school leaders are often chosen in diverse and semi-arbitrary ways. At ABC Elementary School, the leadership team was chosen before I became principal and was sustained as such, with volunteers joining or leaving the team. Allowing this flow of volunteers seems effective, as it provides autonomy among the adults on campus. However, due to the variation in leadership skills, regular leadership training would be beneficial.

Additionally, keeping the conversations focused is crucial. This means not avoiding intellectual and theoretical discussions but concentrating on the necessary improvements to the implementation system. A seemingly effective approach was dedicating a quarter of the

meeting time to "nuts and bolts" or facilities and operations-oriented conversations, while the remaining three-quarters focused on IDSP.

These meetings lasted about an hour to an hour and a half and were funded by site collaboration funding, specifically Title I funding. The instructional leadership team meetings ensured a link between the administration and the general teacher population, allowing for deeper conversations around adaptations and adjustments needed during IDSP. This constitutes a major benchmark event in the course of IDSP.

Walkthroughs and Feedback Cycles

Feedback occurred in three different ways, through three different types of events.

First, feedback to the general staff came as data became available through various staff meetings. This data served as quantitative feedback from the beginning-of-the-year staff meetings to the weekly Friday staff meetings, which lasted an hour. The main impact of this feedback was to not only continue effective practices but also to adjust and adapt ineffective ones on a school-wide level. The quantitative data feedback indicated the level of achievement toward established metrics.

Second, more personal feedback for teachers came from the principal during informal walkthroughs. In many schools, informal walkthroughs are common, but at ABC Elementary, these walkthroughs were crucial for feedback related to the execution of the implementation focus. Feedback on designated ELD and checking for understanding strategies was particularly effective in advancing the initiative. This feedback was strengths-based, focusing on correct implementation moves. It was delivered directly to individuals and then shared with the entire staff to highlight best implementation practices. This approach helped calibrate teachers in a non-intrusive way and ensured that best practices from theory, research, and evidence-based studies were effectively applied at our unique school site.

Finally, feedback came from the principal's colleagues through yearly walkthroughs of cohort principals. Input from other experts working on similar strategies in a district-wide approach helped calibrate the district and influenced the principal through collective efficacy. This feedback was essential for me as a principal, as it allowed me to gauge our relative success compared to other local schools and their principals. The feedback was shared with the staff via email and served to celebrate implementation, as celebration is a key part of IDSP.

Thus, the three types of feedback—from quantitative data review to informal walkthroughs to principal feedback—allowed for multi-layer calibration and adjustment in IDSP.

Question 2: Evidence of Impact on School and Teachers

IDSP at ABC Elementary seems to have had various levels of impact on the school and its teachers during the first half of cycle one. This section will outline the different levels of impact and the assumptions attributed to that impact.

Statewide Indicators for Success

Starting from a general perspective and moving to more specific details, the school and its teachers are confident that their work impacted not only their teaching but also student outcomes. IDSP often aims for outcomes that many schools find elusive. In fact, the outcomes achieved at ABC Elementary had never been reached in previous years. These include increases in ELA and mathematics performance for the whole school population, as well as reductions in suspensions and chronic absenteeism.

These achievements were celebrated, and such celebrations in IDSP highlight the impact of the teachers' work. In a survey given to teachers, these outcomes were termed "positive changes" rather than "impact of effectiveness." Out of the 18 teachers who

responded, 15 recognized these positive changes. The survey was anonymous, but it clearly shows that the changes made to the implementation system had a significant impact on a substantial majority of the teachers.

Teacher Discussions Around Data and Collaboration

The second impact was the emergence of reflective conversations around data and outcomes among the teachers. The focus on targeted data outcomes and the simplified, clear processes for achieving those outcomes, as well as the collaboration among educators, likely led to these conversations becoming a regular part of the general dialogue.

One activity that contributed to this was the progress monitoring process implemented, as mentioned in Chapter 4. In previous years, progress monitoring of target students happened one-on-one between the teacher and the principal. Over the last 18 months, this process was innovated by using teacher collaboration time for group discussions around target students, creating collective commitment and efficacy as teachers shared ideas and solved problems together. This had a secondary, but significant, impact on teachers' ability and willingness to discuss data as a priority during collaboration time.

Additionally, the continued impact of collaboration seemed to motivate the leadership team to demand more accountability around collaboration time, data outcomes, and collaborative processes among the teachers for the next 18 months.

To improve this process in future iterations, creating simple data protocols and clearly identifying beforehand the data that teachers will use for collaboration is recommended. In the next 18 months, the school will focus on identifying evidence in the writing process taught at the school, lending itself to such improvements in the second half of the three-year cycle.

While all teachers were given time to collaborate regularly as part of the normal school schedule, having conversations around data and target students increased collaboration. This naturally impacted the focus goals and enhanced teachers' abilities to engage deeply and contribute fully to the IDSP.

Teacher Motivation and Engagement

Because of the continued collaborative and success-oriented processes implemented during the first 18 months of IDSP at ABC Elementary, teachers became more motivated and engaged.

When teachers saw their results through small interval data and larger summative data, they immediately noticed the impact of their work. While it was my job to remind them that our efforts were part of a bigger system, the engagement and motivation of teachers increased, as evidenced by a combination of observations.

Firstly, teachers began participating more in school events and the design process for enhancing school culture. They also contributed more to conversations during principal discussions, meeting discussions, and collaboration time. This was a marked change from previous qualitative observations where teachers often refrained from commenting if they felt they had little to contribute. Noticing that they could share best practices they had developed, teachers became more engaged in collaborative conversations.

Additionally, the 18-month mid-cycle followed the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused significant stress during reintegration into the classroom. During the same period, the school district introduced a new supplemental math curriculum and a core science curriculum, adding pressure on teachers. Moreover, student behaviors nationwide were more atypical, adding stress to teachers at every school site. However, the ability to celebrate the

impact evidenced in data and conversations seemed to reduce this stress, giving teachers more bandwidth to engage in activities they wanted to participate in.

As a result, there was increased engagement in after-school programs and activities, such as after-school STEAM activities, the after-school garden club, participation in PTA events, and the creation of activities to improve school culture, such as lunchtime dance parties and a school-wide reading event.

This increased mental space and fulfillment among teachers were likely influenced by structured opportunities to share positive data and receive feedback about their impact. In education, positive feedback is often sporadic, but regular opportunities to share and celebrate positive data significantly increased teacher engagement and motivation.

Schoolwide Accolades

Yet another impact of IDSP on the school was the increased accolades the school received during this 18-month mid-cycle.

During this half of the cycle, the school received awards for PBIS, eventually earning a higher-level award for the same recognition after the evaluation. Additionally, the school won recognition from the State Senate and Legislature, being ranked in the top 17% of California schools.

Parents also contributed feedback through an anonymous survey conducted by the Parent Teacher Association after the evaluation, which indicated that parents were generally very pleased with the school. This positive feedback matched state data on student and parent satisfaction, which showed high marks for positive experiences for children.

Furthermore, the school boasted the achievement of having students with perfect attendance, including post-COVID, making it the only school among more than 40 schools to accomplish this.

These accolades and parent approval complement the data, highlighting the significant impact of IDSP on the school.

Question 3: Evidence of Underperformance

Question three centers around evidence of underperformance in IDSP and the assumptions attributed to that underperformance. Three areas will be examined here as general evidence of underperformance.

Leadership Protocols

One area that showed evidence of underperformance in the execution of IDSP was the articulation and direction of leadership protocols during the 18-month cycle.

Firstly, the approach to site planning was regularly modified by myself due to the need to adjust a new model that was largely in prototype form. Following this evaluation, it is evident that three types of leadership protocols would be very effective in executing IDSP to a higher degree of impact.

The first protocol is leadership training and leadership thinking methods, which involve studying research around leadership strategies and skills. As mentioned earlier, not all teacher leaders have experience in leadership. Therefore, creating a leadership training scope and sequence would ensure a general understanding of the leadership team's mode of operation.

Secondly, leadership protocols should include data protocols or a collection of data protocols. While these already exist in different forms under various frameworks and models of improvement and implementation science, the improvised nature of the first implementations limited the diversity of these activities. Having better protocols for leadership data conversations that could also model teacher collaboration discussions would have been a more effective way of discussing results.

The third protocol is understanding frameworks in implementation science to map out an implementation plan that could be scheduled. While it may be impossible to predict every professional development need along the implementation timeline, certain moves occur at intervals that could have been better anticipated, better prepared for, and possibly executed at more optimal times. Thus, implementation would have been more effective if there had been more focused conversations around implementation timelines and processes with the leadership team.

Teacher Understanding of the Model

Similar to improving the leadership protocols, there are certain areas that could have been improved for teachers, as there was underperformance in providing clarity about IDSP. Part of this underperformance can be attributed to the improvised nature of the prototype of IDSP that I was evaluating. However, another part can be attributed to the lack of simplified or teacher-friendly protocols and templates in the education world in general.

While implementation science should not occupy a major part of the teacher bandwidth, it would be beneficial at the beginning of the year and through the interval process to create protocols to check the data, celebrate the wins, and improve the approach with more clarity. This aligns with the concept of professional learning communities and protocols for PLCs. The lack of clarity in creating a unique process at the school contributed to underperformance.

This clarity was somewhat supported by data feedback and continuous reiteration with the leadership team about the process, but it could have been better articulated to teachers. The lack of clear communication and articulation to teachers was a significant area of underperformance.

Event Scheduling

The scheduling of events that comprise the process of IDSP was also an area of underperformance. Specifically, the ability to know when certain events would happen was not as accessible as I would have liked it to be.

While the logic behind not planning everything out in a specific manner was reasonable—I did not yet know how many professional development opportunities we could offer teachers based on contractual language, nor what we would need at different times of the year—it nevertheless made it difficult to provide clarity. We could not schedule things ahead of time and show a timeline to teachers and teacher leaders.

This lack of a clear timeline increased anxiety around what was next in the process. While this approach was necessary at the time, it is now evident that not planning specific events made it difficult to create a fluid event timeline and communicate that timeline to the staff. Better planning and communication of the event timeline would have been very helpful in providing clarity and reducing anxiety among teachers and teacher leaders.

Question 4: Investment in Further Cycles

Based on the evaluation, I believe there is value in investing in more cycles of IDSP beyond the three-year mark. This conclusion is evident even after only 18 months, as the impact of the process has been clearly delineated.

Replicability

During the mid-cycle review, the first area of value identified is that IDSP is a repeatable process that gets results. It achieves results because the process is directed toward adjusting until results are achieved based on data and collaboration. The value in repeating this after three years lies in our experience in education that there is always an area to improve, no matter which school one is serving. After three years, another cycle could focus

on improving another aspect of the school, whether it be academics, culture, or a subgroup needing support. This systems-driven, implementation driven approach is not only simple but also replicable, with clearly demonstrable results and impact.

Customizability

The second area of value is the customizability of IDSP for any school. Designed as a prototype, it was evaluated and fine-tuned to the school's needs. Teacher collaboration and discussions around perceptions tuned into the school's pathos and created an ethos for leadership to get the work done. The customizability of this process can further refine and improve any system within a school.

Staff Motivation and Engagement

Thirdly, there is value in motivating staff and reducing stress. This is achieved by focusing on small, manageable areas of improvement rather than attempting to address multiple issues simultaneously, which often leads to exhaustion and a cycle of putting out fires. A collaborative, yet systematized approach is valuable for further implementation in different areas because it is motivating. This motivation, in turn, reduces stress and provides the fuel necessary for achieving sustainable results.

In summary, the IDSP process has demonstrated its value through its repeatability, customizability, and ability to motivate staff, all of which contribute to significant improvements in school performance and culture.

Question 5: Sustainability and Improvability of Goals and Processes

As discussed in the previous question, the goals and processes from the first 18 months of IDSP are sustainable and improvable throughout the entire three-year cycle. The 18-month cycle was crucial because it allowed for more than just a year of review, enabling us to see improvements in the first half and changes in the second half of the cycle. The last

semester of the second year should be dedicated to review and reflection, allowing the final year to be as impactful as possible.

The last two quarters of year two showed multiple accolades being given to the school and clear sustainability of results. Now that this mid-cycle has been completed, the final year can be planned by the principal to adjust and revise the process for impact based on the program evaluation results. While there are clear areas for improvement, none of the steps need to be removed, allowing the process to be repeated.

With further clarity and articulation of the IDSP process, we can increase understanding and effectiveness. This clarity should become very marked and impactful into year three. It is essential to share the process and results of the program evaluation with the staff, ensuring they understand our direction and goals. This can be achieved by explicitly and intentionally modifying the structure based on the evaluation recommendations, even if not all evaluation results are shared in detail.

Given the simplicity and clarity of the process, which began at the start of the school year, the last year of the three-year cycle would not be an ideal time to start another round. Instead, the last semester of the second year should be a period of review and reflection, allowing the final year to be as impactful as possible.

In summary, the necessary steps include having an 18-month cycle with the last semester of the first two years dedicated to reflection. This ensures that the final year can focus on maximizing the impact of the IDSP process.

Question 6: Adjustments, Modifications, and Lessons Learned

The adjustments, modifications, expansions, and lessons learned from the first 18 months of the three-year cycle can contribute to improvements during the final 18 months of the cycle.

Adjustments

Regarding adjustments, it will be possible to plan events, review data, and set intervals ahead of time, including smaller interval meetings. At ABC Elementary, we know that staff meetings occur at the end of every vacation and have been identified as crucial events in IDSP. Therefore, thematically titling these events, putting them on calendars, and ensuring they are part of a scope and sequence promoted ahead of time would be a significant adjustment. Although we do not always know how many one-hour staff meetings we will have for our Friday professional development time, we can schedule one or two per quarter. Labeling these meetings thematically as part of the interval review based on the data available at the time would be a considerable improvement.

Modifications

For modifications, as mentioned earlier, clarity would be a key modification, along with a system of training to enhance understanding of the IDSP process. Each site should explore how much implementation science should be taught to the staff, but at the very least, clarity on the events and the process would be significant modifications. Additionally, the data collection process could be improved by using the first quarter as a data collection period, where the staff collects data and evidence through an articulated process. This would involve gathering artifacts during the first quarter and using the design thinking model in the second quarter to design the implementation steps for the remainder of the year. This hybrid approach would increase commitment and clarity, helping the staff focus on evidence for the need to improve and creating an organic system for change.

Expansions

In terms of expansions, I believe expanding the process to the district level would be useful. However, to avoid micromanaging, the district should not select a single area of focus

for each site based on its opinion. Instead, sites should have the autonomy to develop their IDSP goals based on their needs. The district's goals should emerge after the sites have conducted their needs assessments and decided on their plans. The district could then support these efforts and create a reflective system to increase the effectiveness of each site's process. The district could set up cycles of improvement for various departments and leadership areas, distinct from the metrics used for site planning goals, thus avoiding micromanagement and fostering autonomy.

Lessons Learned

Finally, the lessons learned that should be considered include the importance of honoring and attending to teacher perceptions when addressing data. Acknowledging teacher perceptions creates more commitment and helps address potential vulnerabilities. Another critical lesson is the need to increase opportunities for clarity in processes at schools. While adding clarity might have been difficult given the improvised nature of this process, future iterations with a more defined trajectory and timeline would make clarity not only possible but essential. Additionally, we should focus on the types of data relevant to our areas of focus, avoiding an overburden of data while ensuring access to essential information. Analytical tools should be created to serve each site's needs based on a thorough understanding of the problems at hand.

These adjustments, modifications, and lessons learned will ensure the IDSP process continues to evolve and improve, maximizing its impact on the school and its stakeholders.

Conclusion

The program evaluation of the IDSP process at ABC Elementary demonstrates its effectiveness in enhancing educational outcomes and equity for marginalized student groups. The integration of SMART Goals with implementation science has provided a structured yet

flexible approach to school improvement. The findings underscore the importance of continuous evaluation, professional development, and data-driven decision-making in sustaining and scaling the positive impacts of the IDSP process. The 18-month mid-cycle review revealed significant achievements, such as improved ELA and mathematics performance, reduced suspensions, and decreased chronic absenteeism.

Moreover, the process fostered a collaborative culture among teachers, increased parent approval, and garnered accolades from various educational bodies. Key lessons learned include the necessity of clear communication, the importance of honoring teacher perceptions, and the need for a simplified yet comprehensive data collection and analysis approach. Adjustments, such as planning events and intervals ahead of time and thematically titling meetings, alongside modifications like enhancing clarity and training in implementation science, will further refine the process. Expanding the process to the district level, while maintaining site autonomy, offers a promising avenue for broader application. Ultimately, the evaluation highlights the critical role of structured, data-informed, and collaborative approaches in driving sustained school improvement and achieving educational equity.

This study held value in two very specific ways: understanding the process of implementation and realizing the results. At the beginning of the 18-month cycle, the work was conducted as a prototype. Throughout this evaluation, the prototypical nature of the study, especially in the first 18 months, was essential to customizing the work for the school. This open, exploratory process in the beginning became more refined as replicable processes emerged. These processes showed value and were subsequently refined. Formatively, this

evaluation allowed for a process of exploration, selection of best practices, and adaptation and refinement to fit the school culture.

In a summative manner, as mentioned in the evaluation, the school achieved results not only in the areas of focus but also in multiple other areas, indicating that these processes have become ingrained as part of the school culture. The school saw improvements in ELA and mathematics, reductions in suspensions, and decreased chronic absenteeism. These results are likely correlated, if not directly, then indirectly, to the work done during the implementation cycle and the IDSP.

As it stands now, the school is ready to embark on using the same process in a more refined and structured way to explore an instructional area in writing. For the second half of the three-year cycle, the school will be intentionally repeating the process, not as a prototypical exploration, but with an established structure. Best practices have been identified and refined, and they will be systematically ordered and structured to achieve the same or better results, sustaining the momentum of the plan. This study underscores the critical importance of a structured yet flexible approach to implementation, highlighting the value of continuous evaluation and adaptation in achieving and sustaining educational improvements.

Future researchers and educators could benefit significantly from this study and its model. Specifically, it provides insights into introducing gradual yet impactful change efficiently within a school site setting. With critical and intentional adaptation, this model could also be generalized to the district level, offering a robust framework for improvement and implementation.

Additionally, this model is valuable for implementing pilots of new programs or ideas, such as technology accelerators in the classroom or other innovative processes and products in schools. For practitioners, particularly principals and school leaders, this model ensures that their school site planning and accountability models are designed to achieve and demonstrate meaningful impact. Thus, this model offers key components of effective implementation at the school site level, contributing to both research and practical applications in educational settings.

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APPENDIX A

Implementation Timeline

1) July 2022
    a) Post-Summer Teacher Meeting
        i) Teacher collaboration articulating strengths, problems
        ii) Build/Bash/Beautify
        iii) Perceptual Problem Identification: Discipline
        iv) Shared process for Academic Needs
    b) Principal Disaggregation of Unofficial CAASPP Scores
        i) Identify lowest performing group
        ii) Create charts in PowerPoint presentation

2) August 2022
    a) First ILT Meeting
        i) Share PowerPoint Presentation
        ii) Articulate problem of practice
    b) Teacher Meeting
        i) Share initial data on perceptual problem (Discipline)
        ii) Share problem of practice and accompany data
        iii) Agree to theory of action
    c) Committee for Perceptual Problem
        i) Review expectations and identify/create tools/guides
        ii) Share expectations and tools with teachers

3) September 2022
    a) Principal research on best practices to improve outcomes for lowest performing group (target students)
    b) Principal design of micro-audit
    c) Second ILT Meeting
        i) Identify micro-audit indicators to implement
        ii) Illustrate changes needed for new system
        iii) Begin implementing

4) October 2022
    a) Post-Intersession Teacher Meeting
        i) Share data on perceptual problem (discipline)
        ii) Share academic baseline data of target students

iii) Agree to micro-audit indicators
iv) Train on best practices for micro-audit indicators
v) Inform teachers that walkthrough feedback will be highlighting successful practices from micro-audit

b) Create Target Group data sheets for each teacher
c) Create a principal walkthrough file with pictures of target group students
d) Walkthroughs
i) Walk through 10 classrooms weekly
ii) Conduct short empathy interviews with students of lowest performing group in each class
iii) Give immediate feedback on micro-audit practices
(1) Highlight strengths/compliance
(2) Use quotes from student empathy interviews
iv) Deliver weekly general feedback with no names via email to whole teacher team
e) Progress Monitoring Sessions
i) Meet with Grade Level Teams (as opposed to individuals)
ii) Ask for review of data (progress) and supports for target groups
iii) Ask for review of data for all other students perceived to be "struggling"
iv) Identify resources for each student
v) Follow up on resource allocation within the week

5) November 2022

a) Third ILT Meeting
i) Focus group on implementation progress
ii) Identify communication plan
(1) Content:
(a) Strengths
(b) Next steps
(c) Special Considerations
(2) Communication modes
(a) Email to teachers
(b) ILT to teams
(c) Highlight in weekly bulleting (Focus Section)
(d) Bi-weekly check-ins with grade level teams as necessary

6) December 2022

a) Teacher Meeting
i) Share best practices
ii) Teachers share successes
iii) Identify "what worked"

7) January 2023

a) Post-Winter Teacher Meeting
i) Share positive data for target groups
ii) Share data from perceptual problem (discipline)
iii) Share improvements to practices

iv) Share “next level” of practices/new micro-audit indicator

8) February 2023
    a) Progress Monitoring Sessions
        i) Meet with Grade Level Teams (as opposed to individuals)
        ii) Ask for review of data (progress) and supports for target groups
        iii) Ask for review of data for all other students perceived to be “struggling”
        iv) Identify resources for each student
        v) Follow up on resource allocation within the week
    b) Parent Meeting on Progress

9) March 2023
    a) Organize Testing
    b) Cohort Principal Walkthrough
    c) Teacher Meeting:
        i) Overview of Testing
        ii) Overview of Strengths from Principal Walkthrough

10) April 2023
    a) Testing
    b) Continue Walkthroughs of non-testing classrooms

11) May 2023
    a) Testing
    b) Continue Walkthroughs of non-testing classrooms

12) June 2023
    a) End of School Year
    b) While teachers are out, prepare for next year:
        i) Post-Summer Meeting
        ii) Data Tools for shadow-audit (described below)

13) July 2023
    a) Post-Summer Teacher Meeting
        i) Share unofficial highlights of previous year data
        ii) Share data on perceptual problem (discipline)
        iii) Share other indicator data successes
    b) Shadow-Audit
        i) Categorize district initiative domains/indicators
        ii) Conduct walkthrough data gathering using tool
        iii) Disaggregate data

14) August 2023
    a) First ILT Meeting
        i) Share shadow-audit data
        ii) Articulate problem of practice
    b) Create tools/PD to demonstrate expectations post-shadow-audit
        i) Identify compliance measures
        ii) Identify "how-to"
    c) Teacher Meeting
        i) Train on compliance measures
        ii) Train on "how-to"
    d) Walkthrough
        i) Walk through 10 classrooms weekly
        ii) Conduct short empathy interviews with students of lowest performing group in each class
        iii) Give immediate feedback on micro-audit practices
            (1) Highlight strengths/compliance
            (2) Use quotes from student empathy interviews
        iv) Deliver weekly general feedback with no names via email to all teachers

15) September 2023
    a) Walkthroughs
    b) Cohort Principal Walkthrough
        i) Identify Strengths
        ii) Identify Next Steps
        iii) Share Strengths without names via email to teachers

16) October 2023
    a) Post-Intersession Meeting
    b) Second ILT Meeting
        i) Share Initial Walkthrough Feedback
        ii) Focus Group on Practices
        iii) Discuss "What We Have Done" over the past year
            (1) Discuss timeline
            (2) Agree to plan retreat
        iv) Inform on next steps/communications around "next level" practice
    c) Progress Monitoring Sessions
        i) Meet with Grade Level Teams (as opposed to individuals)
        ii) Ask for review of data (progress) and supports for target groups
        iii) Ask for review of data for all other students perceived to be "struggling"
        iv) Identify resources for each student
        v) Follow up on resource allocation within the week

APPENDIX B

Teacher Leadership Discussions Guide

1) Introduction to the Implementation Timeline
    a. Can you briefly introduce yourself, your role at the school, and your experience with the implementation timeline we reviewed.
    b. How familiar are you with the changes that have been made as part of this process?
2) Viewpoints of the Process
    a. What are your initial thoughts on the effectiveness of the implementation and improvement process at our school?
    b. Can you share any specific examples of how this process has impacted your teaching or the school as a whole?
    c. How do you believe this process has influenced student outcomes and learning experiences?
3) Critical Incidents:
    a. Could you provide more details about a situation or moment where you felt the process was particularly effective or ineffective?
    b. What factors, in your opinion, have contributed to the success or challenges of the process?
    c. How have you adapted your teaching methods or strategies as a result of this process?
4) Future Application and Improvements:
    a. If we were to make further improvements to this process, what changes or adjustments would you suggest?
    b. How do you envision the future impact of this process on our school and students?
    c. What additional support or resources do you believe would enhance the process's effectiveness in the long term?
5) Wrap-up and Closing Questions:
    a. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences with the implementation and improvement process?
    b. What key takeaways or insights have you gained from our discussion today?
    c. Do you have any recommendations for the elementary school leadership team as we continue with this process?

APPENDIX C

Likert Scale Teacher Survey

1) Please rate your familiarity with the implementation and improvement process at our school.
    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

2) Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: "The implementation and improvement process at our school is effective."
    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

3) Please rate the extent to which you have seen positive changes in your teaching practices and student outcomes because of this process.
    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

4) Please rate your level of agreement with the statement: "I have witnessed specific instances where the implementation and improvement process was successful."
    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

5) To what extent do you believe internal and external factors have influenced the success or challenges of the process?

   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

6) Please rate the extent to which you have adjusted your teaching methods or strategies due to this process.

   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

7) How much do you agree with the idea that further improvements to this process would be beneficial?

   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

8) Please rate your expectations for the future impact of this process on our school and students.

   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly Agree

9) Please rate the importance of additional support or resources to enhance the process's long-term effectiveness.

   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Neutral
   d. Agree
   e. Strongly Agree