

OIP CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FOR SST AND OLAC FACILITATORS

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This section of the OLAC website is intended to be used by State Support Team (SST) personnel and other educators (e.g., OLAC-certified facilitators) working on a full- or part-time basis to support districts in the effective use of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to support higher levels of student, educator, and organizational learning. It is also relevant to SST personnel whose primary work may be other than direct OIP facilitation since the OIP serves as the foundation for district-wide continuous improvement in the majority of Ohio school districts.

SST personnel who are well versed in the use of the OIP understand that it is **not** a program, nor is the term “OIP” synonymous with the plan developed by districts and schools at Stage 2 of the process. Rather than dictating what districts should or must do, the OIP is designed to assist districts in examining their own practice and identifying what they need to do to improve, while providing a mechanism for helping district leadership teams (DLTs), building leadership teams (BLTs), and teacher-based teams (TBTs) gain the collective and strategic focus necessary for district-wide follow through and continuous improvement. As a structured process that relies on the use of a connected set of web-based tools, the OIP can be used and adapted by districts to enact research-based essential leadership practices outlined in the second edition of *Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework* (Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, 2013).



Been There, Done That? Since 2007, the OIP has been used as the **cornerstone** of Ohio’s approach to supporting districts in leveraging sustainable system improvement. As the process was developed and refined over the past several years, a common and consistent vocabulary and aligned set of tools (e.g., protocols, rubrics such as the Ohio 5-step process) was developed for coordinating the foundational work of Ohio’s regional providers in facilitating and supporting the ongoing improvement efforts of districts, schools, and community schools around the state.

As new SST personnel are employed and introduced to the OIP, and as “new” districts are identified as being in need of improvement for the first time (including districts that may have been designated *excellent* or *effective* in the past), it is especially important that members of Ohio’s statewide system of support (SSoS) understand at a deep level the intended outcomes of OIP use, and the relationship between OLAC essential practices (i.e., the *what*) and OIP structures and tools (i.e., the *how*).

<p>cornerstone</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Something that is essential, indispensable, or basic.2. The chief foundation on which something is constructed or developed.3. A stone representing the nominal starting place in the construction of a monumental building, usually carved with the date and laid with appropriate ceremonies. <p>SOURCE: Dictionary.com at http://dictionary.reference.com/</p>

Unlike many states around the country, Ohio intentionally established its SSoS to be statewide in scope and systemic in nature, requiring all regional providers to be grounded in the use of the OIP. Based on the belief that improvement is everyone's responsibility and that all educators should share the responsibility

for the success of all students, the process and its associated tools and products (e.g., professional development) were designed to be universally applicable and relevant to all districts in the state, regardless of improvement status or designation.

BACK TO THE BASICS:

OIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ☑ Improvement is everyone's responsibility – *at all levels of the district and in all districts.*
- ☑ Leadership – *the purpose of which is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role* – is a critical component of the OIP and must be addressed in more meaningful ways to ensure scalability and sustainability of improvement efforts on a district-wide basis.
- ☑ State-developed products and tools, including professional development, must be designed for universal accessibility and applicability to/for every district in the state.
- ☑ A unified state system of support requires the intentional use of a consistent set of tools and protocols by all state-supported regional providers, rather than allowing for multiple approaches across the state, based on preference.

In creating Ohio's SSoS, the state intentionally (1) restructured roles so that everyone's work was designed primarily to improve the capacity and performance of someone else; and (2) systematized and unified the work – away from discrete projects/initiatives to a common approach – around a focus on supporting districts in the full implementation and follow through of district-identified strategies/actions based on district-identified needs.

In addressing the challenges associated with sustainability of effective practices noted by education leadership experts like Michael Fullan and Richard Elmore, Ohio redefined scale in the development and continual refinement of the OIP by: (1) developing strong external normative structures for practice (such as Ohio's Leadership Development Framework and OIP facilitators materials and modules); (2) developing organizational structures that intensified and focused, rather than dissipated and scattered, engagement in challenging practice; (3) created intentional processes for reproduction of successes (e.g., use of a quadrant-lead structure, use of the *Ohio 5-step process*); and (4) created structures that promoted learning of new practices (e.g., aligned leadership team structures such as the DLT, BLTs, and TBTs).

SSTs, collectively, form the linchpin of Ohio's SSoS. As such, the state has committed to the continuous development of SST personnel. So, what has been learned over the past six years that can continue to inform the work of SST personnel as they support district-wide continuous improvement?

First, OLAC's work – supported by an increasingly robust body of research in support of distributed leadership models – provides a vehicle for identifying the "right" work, articulating essential practices needed for instructional capacity building and improvement. Another significant learning involves the realization that closing the achievement gap for subgroups of students (e.g., students receiving special education services) is dependent on closing the implementation gap, and closing the implementation gap, in turn, requires shared learning, responsibility, and accountability for all children. Finally, we learned that the best intervention for all children is effective instruction, and that sustaining the kind of change needed to support higher levels of learning







for all students requires districts to think and work differently than they have in the past, committing to improving instructional practice in every classroom in every building in the district.

CONTEXT

A series of questions was used to facilitate regional dialogue and discussion among SST personnel, leading to the identification of issues associated with common challenges encountered by Ohio's OIP facilitators/coaches. An initial list of strategies and resources, delineated below within four major categories, represent a jumping off point for collaborative sharing and learning among SST and OLAC facilitators as they work to support districts and their schools. SSTs are encouraged to add to the list of strategies based on their experience, and to also provide examples of tools or resources that have been used and that may be helpful to other regional personnel as they encounter similar issues or problems of practice.

The major categories are:

-  Fostering Superintendent and Principal Engagement
-  Supporting Deeper Levels of Understanding
-  Overcoming Resistance
-  Extending and Sustaining Improvements in Adult Learning

FOSTERING SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Regional providers play a critical role in providing objective, outside support to district leaders. Districts and their schools often struggle to implement their own reform efforts. Asking probing questions (e.g., *Why do you think you're here? What are your next steps?*) in honest but respectful ways, and helping districts to assess their own progress and explore their *right* next steps, is the primary job of regional providers assigned to support district-wide improvement efforts.

Considering the “3 Ss” – systems, structures, and supports – can provide a guidepost for regional personnel as they work with superintendents, principals, DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs. Keeping the 3 Ss in mind, regional personnel should support districts in becoming learning organizations focused on instructional improvement by:

- Fostering system-wide reform by focusing on the district as a whole and all levels within the district;

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGIONAL PROVIDERS

DO REGIONAL PROVIDERS:

- Focus and align their collective work to effectively support ALL districts, schools, and teachers in improving student learning for all groups of learners?
- Use data to identify and respond to common needs related to adult and student learning across assigned districts?
- Support assigned districts and their schools to identify a limited number of goals for focusing all work, rather than multiple goals related to specific initiatives, programs, or funding sources.
- Use structures for providing high-quality, consistent, and ongoing support to assigned districts?
- Provide tools, products, and/or services that facilitate the development, implementation, and evaluation of coherent district plans focused on student learning, and that support districts in fully implementing identified instructional strategies?
- Support districts in designing and using protocols/procedures for monitoring the degree of implementation of agreed-on actions across the district and in providing feedback and differentiated support to their schools and teacher teams?
- Ensure all PD and TA opportunities are designed to meet district-identified needs and involve everyone?
- Take steps to continually reduce fragmentation across regional offices and/or departments, and provide opportunities for collective reflection and learning among regional personnel?
- Evaluate the degree to which regional actions are affecting district performance?

Source: Telfer, D.M. (2012). *Regional/intermediate unit providers: The critical role of regional providers in facilitating school district capacity to improve learning and achievement for students with disabilities*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

- Identifying and helping superintendents and principals establish aligned leadership team structures for bringing adults together in meaningful ways; and
- Identifying and providing differentiated support to help districts to study the effects of their reform efforts and take action to make and sustain improvements in school, educator, and student learning.

Regional personnel supporting new superintendents and principals, or superintendents and principals new to the OIP, should make every effort to engage them – and keep them engaged – in the ongoing work of the DLT, BLTs, and TBTs. For many superintendents and principals, using the OIP to foster shared responsibility and collective learning will be a very different way of working and one that will require regular support from SST and OLAC facilitators.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL PROVIDER IN FACILITATING DISTRICT-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

- Serves as a critical friend who is a trusted partner
- Advocates for the success of the district's improvement work
- Asks thought-provoking questions, responds in an honest and open way, and provides constructive feedback
- Manages and directs meeting processes using a range of facilitation strategies
- Keeps the group focused on outcomes

Regional personnel should meet with each district superintendent on a monthly basis. Establishing regular meetings that focus on the superintendent's role in leading district-wide improvement and fostering higher performance outcomes for all children and subgroups of children helps to set expectations for superintendents and provides an opportunity to provide feedback and guidance. The relationship that the SST or OLAC facilitator develops with the superintendent can go far in increasing district support for the use of the OIP, as well as in establishing a necessary foundation for working together to assess the district's progress and intervene accordingly when sufficient progress is not being made.

Suggested Strategies

- Meet with the superintendent and find out what is currently being done to build the capacity across the district for improving instructional practice. The time spent in discussion will help you build on the good things already in place in the district and will also serve as a way to establish a relationship with the superintendent.
- Share trend data from districts involved in using the OIP and making good progress as a result of this involvement. Inform the superintendent of the district whose data you're sharing and ask if you can share contact information with his/her colleagues who may be beginning the process.
- Share information with networks of superintendents. For example, sharing information at local superintendents' meetings, which are often scheduled monthly and hosted by ESCs. Locate a superintendent that has experienced success in using the OIP and ask him/her to co-present the information with you, thereby increasing the credibility and authenticity of the message shared with superintendents.

- Establish informal mentorships where superintendents who are well versed in using the OIP can act as resources for superintendents who are new to the process.
- Create a communication plan for the year and include specific actions and time lines with regard to superintendent communication in the plan.
- Develop a monthly meeting schedule with the superintendent that involves short, focused meetings with a set agenda. Such meetings will serve to keep the superintendent informed, even if he/she is not directly involved in the work, and help to build trust.
- In working with community schools, don't hesitate to involve the SST director and an ODE representative, including someone from ODE's Office of Community Schools as needed to ensure a common understanding of how the OIP can be used in fostering sustainable improvement. Be prepared with talking points.

OIP-OLAC resources offer numerous protocols for regional personnel to use in supporting superintendents and principals as they monitor their own learning and the progress of their district and school. In particular, using protocols or rubrics can help districts establish a limited number of focused goals and strategies, put monitoring systems in place to assess progress, consider the effectiveness of their implementation of those agreed-on strategies, and make decisions about next steps needed for continued learning and improvement.

Most Helpful Resources

OLAC Webinar: *New to the OIP Superintendent Role*.

ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Being an Instructional Leader at All Stages of the OIP: Superintendents and Principals [Stage 0 Documents-Roles and Responsibilities in Stage 0; Roles and Responsibilities in OIP]

ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Ohio's Leadership Development Framework, 2nd Edition. (2013). Columbus, OH: Buckeye Association of School Administrators.

ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Wooster City School District: Achievement Profile. In Telfer, D.M. (2011). *Moving Your Numbers: Five districts share how they use assessment and accountability to increase performance for students with disabilities as part of district-wide improvement*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota. National Center on Educational Outcomes.

ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.MOVINGYOURNUMBERS.ORG AND WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Ohio Doing What Works: Constructing a focused foundation for Improvement. A superintendent pathfinder for improving district-wide instructional practice & student learning. (2014). Dublin, Ohio: University of Dayton School of Education and Health Sciences Grant Center.

ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.O-DWWWPATHFINDER.ORG AND WWW.OHIOLEADERSHIP.ORG

SUPPORTING DEEPER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

OLAC's creation of *Ohio's Leadership Development Framework* began in 2007 with a fundamental belief. This belief, borrowed from Richard Elmore (2006), asserted that the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance regardless of role. Helping district and school personnel fully understand the purpose or "big ideas" of the OIP should begin with the understanding that OLAC and OIP are two interrelated parts of Ohio's statewide system of support – a system designed to



support all districts and their schools in making and sustaining improvements in teaching and learning.

The OIP, then, is a strategy that districts and their schools can use to foster continuous improvements in the quality, coherence, and consistency of instructional practice across the district, as well as build the capacity for collective leadership and shared responsibility for the learning and progress of every student.

The identification of OLAC essential practices was based on a review of the most relevant and recent research. Two big ideas are integral to the use of the OIP as an improvement framework: (1) efforts to improve must be focused and focused efforts allow for deeper implementation of agreed-on strategies, monitoring, and the provision of feedback and supports aligned with the priorities established by the district; and (2) aligned leadership teams (i.e., DLTs, BLTs, TBTs) provide a mechanism for the development of the kind of broad-based instructional leadership capacity that is needed at every level to implement core work across the district.

Highly functional teams are typically comprised of between six and 12 people. Teams that include more members often need to break into workgroups at each meeting. The superintendent and assistant superintendent, key central office personnel (e.g., director of special education), and school-level opinion leaders should form the DLT. Opinion leaders are those people others go to because they're viewed as competent, highly professional, respectful, and confidential. They're also natural disseminators of information because people go to them for answers. In forming or re-forming the DLT, regional providers should support superintendents in identifying two highly regarded principals and two highly regarded teachers who are opinion leaders to serve on the DLT. At the school level, principals should follow a similar pattern in identifying teachers who are opinion leaders to serve on the BLT. Having opinion leaders as members of DLTs and BLTs is more important than having equal representation from every department or grade level on the team.

TWO WAYS TO STRENGTHEN INSTRUCTION

1. *Specific effective teaching practices*

The school or district has agreed on everyone learning some specific effective practices that are learned, implemented, monitored, and provided feedback on.

2. *Continuous learning of effective practices*

Teacher-based teams use data to determine needs; develop shared lessons and units; develop, administer, and score shared assessments; and develop interventions.

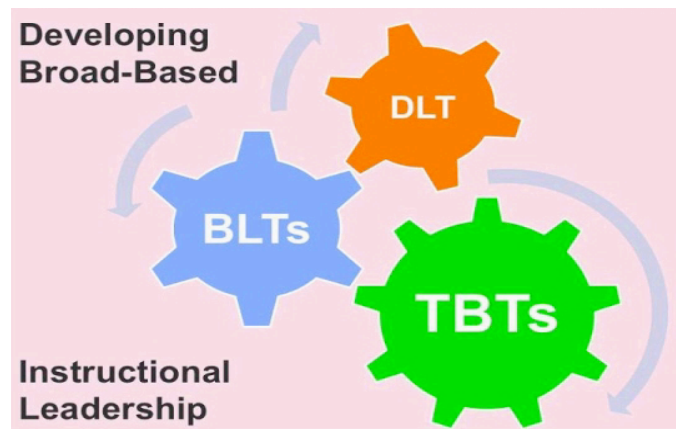
Brian McNulty, 2014
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Districts' improvement efforts must start with the (1) identification of a limited number of focused goals and strategies that allow for more powerful instructional practices (e.g., nonfiction writing, understanding similarities and differences) to be used effectively, and the (2) development of collaborative learning teams (e.g., TBTs) that support teachers individually and collectively to improve their capacity to teach all children well.

Regional facilitators must also understand the intent and interrelatedness of OIP and OLAC to be able to provide differentiated support to districts and their schools. It is as important for regional providers to be learners, owning their own professional development, as it is for them to help district and school personnel be learners. To provide effective facilitation and coaching services, regional providers must understand the OIP at a deep level, must understand the connections among statewide initiatives and how districts can use those initiatives to support district-wide improvement, and must be willing to engage in continuous learning by working as part of their own learning teams within SSTs and with other regional providers to continually improve their capacity to provide effective support to districts.

Consider the 3 S's in helping districts to establish a continuous learning and improvement system through the establishment and support of aligned team structures that (1) provide and maintain a focus; (2) monitor and provide feedback; (3) assure the provision of differentiated professional development and supports; and (4) learn from the data and take actions to implement the work deeply. The primary responsibilities of the DLT and BLTs are to implement deeply shared work, which is centered on instructional practices and the work of teacher teams, as opposed to everything teachers do.

For TBTs to function at a high level (i.e., function in ways that will result in the improvement of instructional practice), they need direction and support from principals and BLTs. SST and OLAC facilitators play a



a critical role in helping districts understand the connections across DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs and the role of principals and BLTs in supporting TBTs to focus on effective teaching actions and strategies. It's important to keep in mind that, no matter how experienced teachers are in the classroom, most are novices when it comes to working as members of TBTs.

Regional providers should consider the degree to which their districts' teams are clear about their own purpose, on the strategies they're

using, and on the data they're collecting. SST and OLAC facilitators should also be aware of the professional development teams have received and may need to receive, how teams are communicating with each other and across levels (i.e., TBTs to BLTs to DLT, and DLT to BLTs to TBTs). The DLT and BLTs should monitor their own efforts through the collection of formative and summative data, which may be collected through rubrics for effective practices, and position themselves to provide targeted feedback to each other and to TBTs. For example, it is reasonable for SST and OLAC facilitators to assume that most BLTs monitor TBTs with a rubric. If they're not, SSTs should consider the level and type of tools, strategies, and feedback systems their districts have in place to monitor and provide feedback, and support them accordingly.

Supporting districts to develop learning systems – systems that allow them to learn from their own work – is a primary function of regional providers. SST and OLAC facilitators should consider the following: (1) what systems of support do your districts' DLTs and BLTs have and/or need to develop this kind of continuous learning? (2) What steps can you take to help districts develop this kind of a learning cycle? (3) Do your districts' DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs all use the same 5-step inquiry process to support their own inquiry and learning? (4) How do you need to help them follow the same process at each level, using different strategies and data as applicable, to examine their work and the effectiveness of their work?

Ohio's Leadership Development Framework (2nd edition) offers a pathway for SST and OLAC facilitators, outlining a course of action around key areas of practice across superintendents, DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs. Several key features and questions for SST and OLAC facilitators to consider are outlined below.

Data and the decision-making process. The OIP is a structured, data-driven process that supports districts in identifying priorities based on needs and setting performance targets for all schools in the district. It also supports the district in setting expectations for continuous data use, ensuring that only data necessary for taking informed action are collected.

1. *Are your DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs clear and intentional in their data use?*
2. *Are your DLTs using data to set school-level performance targets (i.e., expectations) and provide differentiated professional development and support aligned with those targets?*

Focused goal setting process. As noted above, this OLAC area of essential practice referred to the need to limit the number of focused goals used to guide the work of the district, and the need to ensure the stability of those goals over time so that strategies and actions needed to achieve these goals could be implemented fully and associated improvements in instructional practice and student, adult, and organizational learning sustained.

1. *Do the DLTs and BLTs you work with limit the number of goals and strategies to no more than two or three?*
2. *How do you know, and how do your DLTs and BLTs know if they're implement deeply their focused strategies and actions?*
3. *Do your districts' superintendents and principals engage in what Viviane Robinson (Student-Centered Leadership, 2011) calls strategic resourcing (i.e., finding ways to help limit number of initiatives to help staff go deeper)?*
4. *How and how often do your DLTs and BLTs monitor and provide feedback and support to schools and TBTs, respectively?*
5. *To what degree are your districts' board of education committed to maintaining high expectations for all children and subgroups of children, and to limiting the number of district goals and keeping them stable for five to 10 years?*

Instruction and the learning process. At the heart of the OIP-OLAC is the overriding focus on instructional practice. However, improving instructional practice cannot occur without the effective use of data and the district's ability and commitment to focus its core work.

1. *Do your districts believe that there are only two ways to improve instruction (i.e., through the use of specific effective teaching practices, and through the use of collaborative learning teams that support teachers in examining their own practice and continuously learning to use effective practices)?*
2. *To what degree do principals in your districts focus on the use of specific classroom practices, and the development of more shared leadership through BLTs and TBTs?*
3. *In what ways can regional providers work with their districts to strengthen instructional practices, strengthen the capacity of DLTs and BLTs to develop and support stronger TBTs, and support districts in developing principal instructional leadership?*
4. *To what degree are your districts' board of education BoE actively involved in reviewing the performance of the district in supporting the learning of all students, and in participating in and supporting professional development opportunities for DLTs, BLTs, and teachers and principals over time?*

McNulty (2014) notes, “almost everyone agrees that district leaders should have as their number one priority the improvement of instruction as a focus for improving student leaders; however, the concrete actions needed to support this priority are not clearly defined.” Supporting the use of **Ohio’s 5-Step Process**, while providing differentiated supports related to that use, is the fundamental role of SST and OLAC facilitators whose mission is to build regional and statewide capacity for district-wide continuous learning and improvement.

A variety of resources and tools (e.g., OIP resources 16; 24; 25 A, B, and C; 5-step process agenda) –all available from the OLAC website at www.OhioLeadership.org – can be used to support DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs in using the 5-Step Process to improve instructional practice and student learning. Strategies suggested by SST personnel, as well as additional resources found to be most helpful to regional providers, follow.

Suggested Strategies

- Look within the district for pockets of success related to the use of OIP. Find examples where teams within the district understand the purpose of the OIP and share the results of the work when these teams understand the purpose and engage in the correct work. Once we identify instances where the big ideas are being followed in the district, discuss how this can be expanded across the district in a systematic fashion.
- Increase DLT capacity to work as a team by first practicing with the DLT as if it was a TBT, and then developing protocols. Teach collaboration and cooperative learning strategies to team members before training on TBT work, and create a timeframe or scope and sequence for building these skills.
- Debrief after each meeting; give instant feedback and make plans for improvement. Use a web utility like Google Docs, Wikispaces, or WordPress to host and share notes.
- Let all teams know that the TBTs will serve as the primary vehicle for identifying professional development needs in the district.
- Evaluate existing collaborative structures and build upon them.

- ❑ Help TBTs and BLTs identify additional areas of need for professional development.
- ❑ Support districts in making time for collaborative learning teams (i.e., DLT, BLT, TBT) to meet and learn together on a frequent basis. Canton City Schools and Warren City Schools provide examples that may be useful to other districts/regions.
- ❑ Look at the district’s strategic plan and relate the purpose of the OIP to that plan; use district data and resources to show the outcome of the work, and make connections, where applicable, to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES).
- ❑ Support district personnel in effectively considering internal feedback and reviewing their own progress; print the IMM and remove what’s already been completed; showing the IMM in print can help district personnel see progress.
- ❑ Use the “Lego” demonstration activity to help districts better understand how the process works absent of local data.
- ❑ Work with the DLT to task analyze activities; helping teams identify all that goes into an activity helps them decide if the activity is/should remain a priority; use the “Weeding the Garden” activity to engage DLT members in identifying all the initiatives in place and those activities that do not contribute directly to the district’s focused goals.
- ❑ Train internal facilitators and opinion leaders on what the Ohio 5-Step Process looks like at the BLT and DLT level; conduct a simulation (e.g., fishbowl) of how a meeting flows using the 5-step process; support DLTs in conducting a self-assessment of their use of the 5-step process to determine what is being done well and what needs to improve.

Most Helpful Resources

OLAC Webinar: *Regrounding – The Big Picture of the OIP*.
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Webinar: *Development of a Focused Plan* (see also the resource titled *OIP District and School Plan Criteria*, which is included in the documents section of this module).
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Learning Teams - The Next Challenge by Dr. Brian McNulty, The Leadership and Learning Center. Presentation made during the 2013 December Forum.
ACCESSIBLE UNDER THE “EVENTS” TAB AT WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG

The TBT Five-Step Process in Action: Wooster City Schools. Presentation made during the 2013 December Forum. ACCESSIBLE UNDER THE “EVENTS” TAB AT WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG

OLAC Module: *The Collaborative Process [Collaborative Teams and Organizational Structure; OIP Stage 0, Preparing for the OIP Process, Collaborative Structures, pp. 13-17* (see also *OIP Resource 13 – Teacher-Based Teams and Next Steps Inventory*).
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Module: *OIP Stage 3: The BLT in Stage 3: The 5-Step Agenda*.
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Module: *Teacher-based Teams: What Districts Need to Know* (see, in particular the video of a team using the 5-Step Process on page 7 of *Structures and Processes to Support Effective TBTs*). ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Higher Education Workshop: *Working in Teacher-Based Teams*.
ACCESSIBLE UNDER THE BANNER “HIGHER ED: NEW WORKSHOPS FOR COLLEGE CREDIT” AT WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Webinar: *The Ohio Improvement Process: Opportunities and Supports for New Teachers*.
ACCESSIBLE UNDER THE BANNER “TWO NEW WEBINARS” AT WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG

Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework, 2nd Edition. (2013). Columbus, OH: Buckeye Association of School Administrators (see, in particular, the center insert).
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Ohio Doing What Works: Constructing a focused foundation for improvement. A superintendent pathfinder for improving district-wide instructional practice & student learning. (2014). Dublin, Ohio: University of Dayton School of Education and Health Sciences Grant Center.
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.O-DWWWPATHFINDER.ORG AND WWW.OHIOLEADERSHIP.ORG

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

We know that changing classroom practice requires broad-based instructional leadership through teams at all levels. This shared or distributed leadership model is at the core of the OIP-OLAC model. For some district and school administrators, however, the notion of collective leadership is counter to their traditional mode of operation. Placing new expectations on superintendents and principals to change their practices may be difficult for them and the result may be resistance to change in the form of minimal or no involvement in the work, or active blocking of the use of the OIP-OLAC as an improvement strategy.



What districts do matters. And what principals do at the school level matters. Principals must actively lead the work of BLTs and TBTs for them to function effectively. In other words, the effective performance of teams – that is, teams learning from their own work – has everything to do with higher performing districts and schools.

No single person is strong enough to change a district or school. It is only by developing capacity across the system that improvements in instructional practice and student learning can be made and sustained.

Similarly, there is no single strategy for overcoming resistance on the part of a superintendent or principal. It is important for regional providers to understand the district context so that faulty assumptions about understanding or buy-in are not made. For example, some districts, particularly large urban districts, employ an assistant superintendent who acts as the chief academic officer and whose job it is to brief the superintendent on progress using OIP-OLAC. In situations like this, it will be important for the SST or OLAC facilitator to meet and work directly with the assistant superintendent to ensure that district leadership (i.e., superintendent and assistant superintendent) is leading the work. Irrespective of the context in which the regional facilitator works, it is imperative that district leadership is actively involved in moving the work of the district forward.



SST and OLAC facilitators are encouraged to use the assessments and evaluation crosswalks available through the OLAC site for engaging superintendents and principals in thinking about how they can use OIP-OLAC to support the effective implementation of priority work, while managing multiple demands associated with statewide initiatives and requirements (e.g., Ohio Teacher Evaluation System). Additionally, strategies and resources found to be useful by SST personnel are listed below.

Suggested Strategies

- Meet frequently with the superintendent to share the required work and convey how important his/her involvement is to the process; make connections to work already ongoing in the district.
- Work on developing a trusting relationship with the superintendent, which is essential to supporting improvement efforts using OIP-OLAC.

- Involve the SST director in meeting with the superintendent.
- Ask the superintendent for his/her help in the process (e.g., “We need your help; can you help us accomplish these tasks?”).
- Create a partnership with the superintendent by framing the issue as a problem or challenge that can be solved together, while supporting the superintendent to maintain his/her leadership position.
- When superintendents understand that board members and union representatives are expected to be a part of the DLT, they (the superintendents) will want to be involved.
- Develop a “quick hook” or “elevator” speech on why the involvement of the superintendent is crucial.
- Provide a summary report to the superintendent after each DLT meeting.
- Ask the superintendent to open the OIP meeting and make a public commitment to the work.
- Support the collaborative structure in the district so that DLTs, BLTs and TBTs meet regularly; set an annual calendar for these important meetings.
- Promote expectations for principals to serve as instructional leaders and provide resources to support them in this role.
- Encourage the principal to take the self-assessment on the OLAC site.
- If a principal is still blocking the work of the teams after you’ve engaged in conversation with the principal, consult with the ESC superintendent before talking to the district superintendent.

Most Helpful Resources

OLAC Webinar: *New to the OIP – Superintendent’s Role*
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OLAC Webinar: *New to the OIP – Principal’s Role*
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OLAC Webinar: *Shared Leadership for Superintendents*
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OLAC Webinar: *Shared Leadership for Principals*
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OLAC Webinar: *Being an Instructional Leader at All Stages of the OIP: Superintendents and*
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Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework, 2nd Edition. (2013). Columbus, OH: Buckeye Association of School Administrators (*see, in particular, the center insert*).
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Ohio Doing What Works: Constructing a focused foundation for Improvement. A superintendent pathfinder for improving district-wide instructional practice & student learning. (2014). Dublin, Ohio: University of Dayton School of Education and Health Sciences Grant Center.
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.O-DWWPATHFINDER.ORG AND WWW.OHIOLEADERSHIP.ORG

EXTENDING AND SUSTAINING IMPROVEMENTS IN ADULT LEARNING

Supporting DLTs, BLTs, and TBTs to monitor and evaluate their own learning and progress is a primary role of the regional provider. If the purpose of DLTs and BLTs is to improve instructional practice and performance, then they must monitor and measure two components: (1) student learning progress, and (2) staff learning progress.

Most districts and schools have some form of benchmark assessment that allows teams to gauge student progress, identifying which children or subgroups of children are and are not making sufficient progress and why. SST and OLAC facilitators should support teams in looking at and interpreting the data correctly so that sound decisions can be made by the teams with regard to the actions they should take to facilitate progress. If students and/or student groups are not making progress, what supports will teams provide and what interventions will be implemented?

Using the same 5-step process, teams collect and analyze data, identify strategies for moving the progress of students forward, make sure children get the supports they need, and continually and regularly review the effectiveness of their efforts by analyzing the next round of benchmark assessment. It's critical that teams don't wait until the end



of a school year to assess the effects of their efforts on student progress. Instead, teams should be reviewing relevant data at least every six weeks, and also using formative assessment data to monitor student learning progress within and across those six-week intervals.

The OIP-OLAC model also supports teams in reviewing their own learning using adult implementation data aligned with indicators incorporated into the district focused improvement plan. Critical questions for districts to answer include: Which teams are/are not making progress? What actions will we take to facilitate progress and to support teams/individual staff members to make progress? What's the frequency of our data collections? Do we need to collect additional data? Districts committed to operating as learning organizations continually seek examples of effective team functioning and practice to share with other teams in the district, thereby improving the collective learning and capacity of all adults across the system. At the same time, they take action (e.g., facilitate a TBT, provide feedback using common rubrics) to improve the ability of students and staff to learn and apply new practices.

SST staff should also meet in teams to learn from each other and develop the collective capacity of the region to effectively support assigned districts, as well as other districts with which they may interact. Meeting as a team and using the 5-step process provides a structured approach for SST and OLAC facilitators to bring forward the challenges they're experiencing in the districts with which they work; problem solve alternative strategies for working with districts and schools; and implement, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies in supporting district-wide continuous improvement. Strategies and resources identified by SST personnel as being most useful are listed below.

Suggested Strategies

- Support teams in effectively using student assessment data (e.g., use data walls, conduct/teach item-by-item analysis).
- Have DLTs and BLTs set annual roadmaps for data collection to support both staff and student learning.
- Model data collection by leading walkthroughs with principals to collect both staff and student data for use by principals and members of BLTs and DLTs (*see available walkthrough checklists*).
- Help districts understand how to determine the relative effectiveness of various instructional practices (*see the Olmsted Falls City Schools district website for examples of specific instructional strategies*).
- Help district personnel see how they can make a difference in student outcomes by changing their own behavior; it is not about what the students do, it is about what the adults do.
- Support teams in using a monitoring calendar that identifies targeted data, person(s) to be gathering data, and when the data collection is to occur; use one column each for staff and student data, and sync this calendar to an Outlook (or similar) calendar so teams receive due date reminders.
- Encourage superintendents to invite their board of education members complete the OLAC *Board Governance* module and list characteristics of effective boards versus characteristics of ineffective boards.

Most Helpful Resources

OLAC Module: *Development of a Focused Plan*
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OLAC Module: *Teacher-based Teams: What Districts Need to Know (see 2nd video – The What and Whys of TBTs)*
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

OIP Module: *OIP Stage 4 – Evaluate the Plan*
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Implementation Management/Monitoring (IM/M) Tool
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

SST Internal Facilitator Survey (locally developed)
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.

Telfer, D.M., & Glasgow, A. (2012). *District self-assessment guide for moving our numbers: Using assessment and accountability to increase performance for students with disabilities as part of district-wide improvement*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.
ACCESSIBLE THROUGH WWW.MOVINGYOURNUMBERS.ORG AND WWW.OHIOLEADERHIP.ORG.