

# SPECIAL MEMO

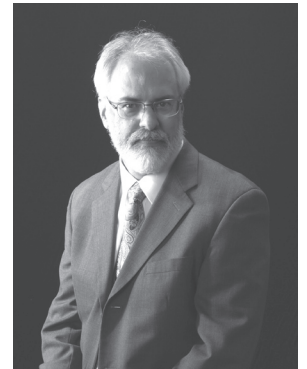
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## The OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (OIP)

About 300 of the state's 600+ school districts have started a school improvement process called the Ohio Improvement Process or OIP. The first steps are meetings with a representative District Leadership Team (DLT) during Year 1. You may be involved, or heard of it, or maybe this is your first information. So what is this OIP?

This came from work by the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC), a group formed in 2007 and made up of superintendents, principals, teachers, organization officials (OASSA and OAESA, for example), university faculty, ODE officials, and policy makers to identify the essential skills or practices that superintendents and leadership teams must demonstrate to improve instructional practices and student performance. A partnership between ODE and BASA (Buckeye Association of School Administrators) formed the beginnings of the OLAC.



OIP is the implementation process for the OLAC work on school district and building leadership. The OIP is a clearly defined process with sophisticated tools that support this improvement process. What is needed for implementation is improvement plans at the district level that supports building level improvement, acting as one seamless system. This is where the rubber meets the road. So what are the advantages?

- 1) The OIP is the beginning for creating a comprehensive, coherent system for school improvement on a statewide basis. It offers all districts one single system of school improvement with state support through numerous data tools and processes. The idea that Ohio is moving to one single system of school improvement is really intriguing. It means that I can ask the principal in the next district for information and help, because we are using the same process. It means that I can take a job as principal in a neighboring district and already understand the improvement process, because it is the same statewide. Ohio has trained "experts" at the ESCs and State Support Teams (SST) to facilitate this process and help building and district leaders. There have been data instruments developed to support your work. A system of support has been developed to help you.
- 2) The OIP calls for numerous *discussions among leadership teams* at the District level and at the Building level. The process itself is a key part of school improvement. It brings together key leaders within your school district/building to discuss, debate, argue, and define the real issues and the real solutions for district improvement. The time spent is important to the process. The amount of time spent allows districts to get this right. A trained facilitator, from outside the district, guides the process so everyone at the table has a voice. It is important to "make the time---take the time."
- 3) The state has developed different *supports at each stage* of this process. No longer will districts or building principals be going through such a process alone. Principals and teachers are awash in data. OIP offers a Decision Framework (DF) instrument to help leaders work through the appropriate data for school improvement. A district improvement process with appropriate goals is developed that can help all schools within that district. No longer is the principal of a building in "school improvement" working alone and feeling isolated. The SSTs and ESCs have experts ready to help. Data tools have been developed to specifically help at crucial crossroads in the process. The District plan means the district is gathering supports for each and every school.

The OIP, and the work of the OLAC, are creating a single, coherent comprehensive system of school improvement for Ohio. That is exciting. A viewpoint from a much larger scale would align with Friedman's book *The World is Flat*, making the point that we are no longer competing with the district next door, or even the state next door. Our competition, as a nation, is with other nations such as China, India, among others. It is time for districts in Ohio to work as one system to raise the achievement and learning of all schools for the good of our children. The Ohio Improvement Process is a very positive start for district and building leaders!