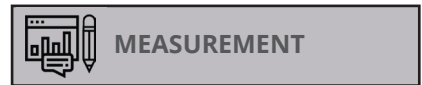# Effective Implementation Cohort

Recommendations for Addressing Readiness Impacted During and After COVID-19

September 2022

Prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation by

Rebekah Hornak, Sophia Farmer, Yolanda Perkins, Ellen Nacik, & Caryn Ward

The Effective Implementation Cohort (EIC) Readiness Constructs are implementation best practices shown to facilitate the uptake of evidence-based practices within high-quality math curricula. Readiness is defined as a developmental point at which a person, organization, or system has the capacity and willingness to engage in a particular activity. The recommendations listed within this document are a guide for districts, support providers, and funders to support building readiness conditions in the wake of ongoing implications from the Covid-19 pandemic. While the lens in this document is focused on impacts from COVID-19, the guidance provided may also support readiness challenges that districts, support providers, and funders may face during other long-term disruptions to teaching and learning.

LEARNING QUESTION 2 OF 4:

	APPLICATION OF ESTABLISHED PRACTICE
	ENABLING CONTEXTS
	VARIABILITY IN IMPLEMENTATION
	MEASUREMENT

NIRN NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH NETWORK
FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

EIC READINESS CONSTRUCTS

For a full description of each construct with indicators visit eic.fpg.unc.edu and review the document, EIC Readiness Constructs, Definitions, and Indicators.

District Teaming (DT)

A representative team has been formed at the district level and is working to lead implementation and create the enabling conditions in selected schools so that educators can make full use of high-quality middle-years math curriculum.
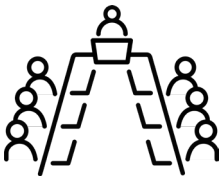
LEA Executive Sponsor Engagement (ES)

The executive sponsor(s) champions and supports district and school staff as they engage in implementation of a high-quality middle-years math curriculum. An executive sponsor is an individual with the ability to influence others, authority to make decisions regarding resource allocation, institutional knowledge, time, and has positive relationships with staff and others identified as critical perspectives.

Communication (C)

Frequent and accurate information regarding implementation planning and progress is exchanged between critical perspectives and acted upon by the identified persons. Goals of communication often include sharing information, gathering feedback and input, clarifying expectations, and celebrating successes.

Assessing Fit & Feasibility (FF)

An assessment conducted by districts to better understand how a new or existing high-quality middle-years mathematics curriculum works within their existing context.
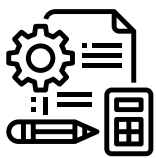
Implementation Planning

Comprehensive implementation strategies are specified within a plan to ensure capacity is developed to support successful use and sustainability of a high-quality middle-years mathematics curriculum.

Measurement Planning

Utilize multiple methods to collect and review data to: (1) inform decision making for continuous improvement, (2) examine effectiveness, and (3) communicate with critical perspectives.

*Throughout this document, the term "critical perspectives" is used to refer to individuals and groups including, but not limited to, school staff, students, families, and community partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS
DISTRICT

DISTRICT TEAMING

- Continue to recognize teaming structures as a priority by mitigating the effects of staffing shortages and needs by offering multiple ways to participate in team discussions and decisions, incentivizing alternative team times, and developing flexible teaching schedules or calendars to allow for planning.
- Ensure an environment conducive to active engagement (executive decision-making authority, access to current data) with the activities expected of an implementation team (differentiated from a leadership or advisory team) including accommodations for a variety of virtual participation methods and documentation within job descriptions and/or professional growth plans.
- Develop materials (e.g., project description, meeting agreements, video overviews of materials) for onboarding new team members.
- Assign a mentor for support of new team members.
- Support the development of school-based teams to support implementation of the math initiative with direct communication linkages to the district team for timely planning and problem solving.

LEA EXECUTIVE SPONSOR ENGAGEMENT

- Address turnover of the executive sponsor and leaders by reviewing or developing selection and support processes that prioritize leadership skills that address adaptive issues such as team stress, trauma, flexibility, etc.
- Consider identifying a point and backup executive sponsor on a team with decision making authority to mediate the impact of schedule conflicts and turnover.
- Ensure needed FTE (time, regular schedule, executive decision-making authority, access to current data) for activities expected of an executive sponsor and documentation within job description and/or professional growth plan.
- Consider including the implementation champion role within the executive's performance plan and assessment.

COMMUNICATION

- Expand the reach of communication efforts beyond the immediate community. Consider who could be impacted by the information or have unique perspectives. Identify those (stakeholders) that could recognize bias in the information and be a critical thought partner.
- Provide clarity on how communication flows between teaming structures (school/campus, district to purveyor or other external support teams) along with developing a communication protocol that can be frequently reviewed and modified with changing contexts and priorities.
- Ensure communication is clear, concise, elicits desired emotion, relevant to the specific target audience, and addresses concerns.

DISTRICT

ASSESSING FIT & FEASIBILITY

- When assessing fit and feasibility, take into consideration the need to address essential instruction that was interrupted and the impact on the scope and sequence as well as vertical articulation among grade levels.
- Instructional best practices and implementing the curriculum as intended should be communicated and messaged as a priority by leadership.
- Revisit capacity, fit, and supports available for new and selected curriculum (i.e., Hexagon Tool) to ensure needs continue to be met in changing contexts and to identify what to build upon to ensure effective implementation.
- Be willing to pause or take actions needed to de-implement existing programs not in alignment with current needs or priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

- Continue creative ways to address staffing and substitute shortages as well as delays in professional learning through alternative days/times with incentives.
- Work with providers to ensure coaching supports are in place for all staff including new and temporary staff (e.g., long term substitutes, alternative licensure candidates) to compensate for shortages and limited staff selection.
- Continue to prioritize key levers such as professional learning and coaching and use data to target action planning.
- Use data and criteria to determine expansion of implementation (e.g., additional teachers and/or schools).

MEASUREMENT PLANNING

- Ensure data collection continues and systems are in place to address barriers or gaps in access to data by team members and staff.
- Establish a co-constructed and aligned prioritized data calendar (to inform agendas as to when teams can expect certain data sources to use, as well as data that is expected for the purposes of any grant related research). Often the same data can be used for different purposes.
- Integrate implementation data (e.g., training effectiveness, coaching data, fidelity data) into existing or plans for data visualizations/dashboards of student outcome data. Data visualizations should include data on the system and support for teacher outcomes (knowledge, mindset, beliefs, practice) and student outcomes (beliefs, engagement, experience, and academic performance).

nirn.fpg.unc.edu

INTERMEDIARIES & PROVIDERS

DISTRICT TEAMING

- Support the team in structures and processes that may be interrupted with the transition of members.
- Prioritize a regular meeting schedule (virtual as needed) with clear roles and responsibilities as well as expected data sources (calendar) the team may expect to have at each meeting to engage in improvement cycles.
- Support the district team to build capacity within school teams to address differentiated needs among schools.
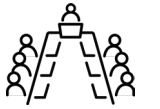
LEA EXECUTIVE SPONSOR ENGAGEMENT

- Establish a frequent brief check-in to ensure visible support, ask-answer questions, spot potential issues early, respond efficiently and provide accurate positive feedback.
- Connect with new district leaders to provide information during times of transition.

COMMUNICATION

- Assist in keeping communication protocols in place and develop feedback loops to ensure all voices are heard.
- Embed "communication" as a regular standing agenda item.
- Identify key point/backup contacts with the district team and a common place to document important updates, notes, and decisions to review regularly.

ASSESSING FIT & FEASIBILITY

- Address the potential need for adaptations to the curriculum based on interruptions to instruction and subsequent changes in data collection and analysis.
- Leverage internal capacity or partnerships with researchers/higher education to provide information related to any updated evidence of programs used in similar educational disruptions (e.g., post natural disasters) as well as usability and supports available for curriculum.
- Update or provide recommendations or guidance as to conditions for need, fit, and capacity of districts to implement in changing contexts.
- Explicitly define and provide criteria as to what is meant by integrity or fidelity for delivery of math practices and use of curriculum.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

- Adjust and be flexible with timelines for professional learning and meeting schedules.
- Ensure plans are in place to address new and temporary staff training on the selected curriculum.
- Consider how coaching services will be provided and transferred to local ownership over time for sustainability purposes.

MEASUREMENT PLANNING

- Adjust and be flexible with timelines for data collection and analysis.
- Keep data-driven decision making a priority.
- Support co-created data collection and use calendars with LEAs aligned to stage-based measurement expectations outlined in RFP.
- Model value of different sources of data (e.g., qualitative data, voices of implementers) to inform implementation practice as well as research.
- Support development of accessible and user-friendly data dashboards/visualizations of data to support monitoring of implementation.
- Ensure data is a standing agenda item.

FUNDERS

DISTRICT TEAMING

- Reinforce in RFPs specific budget lines and expectations around regular district team meetings and use of formative data to mark progress and barriers for expected implementation activities.
- Support the district by recognizing that transitions in team membership may delay certain aspects of the project.
- Reinforce in RFPs the development of action items for anticipated or "predictable" barriers as well as sufficient funding for evidence-based practices for learning essential skills.

LEA EXECUTIVE SPONSOR ENGAGEMENT

- Connect with intermediaries and executive sponsors to support problem solving and prioritization.
- Provide clarity in RFPs about the roles, functions, and expectations of executive sponsors; ensure time is allocated in RFP for those responsibilities to be covered.

COMMUNICATION

- Ensure that regularly reporting methods are still in place, but flexibility is granted to the content based on available information.
- Engage the community and continue to provide positive messaging on the support being provided.
- Include expectations and rationales for including a concrete communication plan within RFPs (e.g., provide suggested templates).

ASSESSING FIT & FEASIBILITY

- If not within provider/intermediary scope of expertise, ensure RFP includes expectation of measuring implementation fidelity at district level with an operationalized definition.
- Incentivize RFPs to encourage program developers or intermediaries to develop fidelity checklists/measures (or to partner with applied researchers) to develop ways to measure emerging implementation fidelity progress.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

- Ask about potential barriers in the implementation plan and how assistance can be provided.
- Recognize that timelines and schedules may need to be adjusted.
- Develop RFPs with a stage-based framework indicating differentiating key implementation activities emerging at different times of implementation.
- Consider budget lines specifically geared towards providing/supporting development of coaching and coaching systems anytime training is identified.
- Consider funding research on new teacher development (post-grad or alternative licensure) through mentoring and coaching (i.e., development of evidence-based models for interning or 'residency') for mathematics instruction specifically with priority populations.

MEASUREMENT PLANNING

- Be patient and flexible while awaiting data and results.
- Illustrate a stage-based approach within RFP to create the space and expectation for different types of work and data to come "on-line" at different points within the project on the way to impacting distal outcome measures.