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Innovation, Implementation Science, and Data-Based Decision Making: Components of Successful Reform

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Action Principles

States or Districts

- a. Engage all agents. Involve all who will be responsible for an innovation in the planning for implementation. Build partnerships across all levels of the educational system to facilitate implementation of an innovation.
- b. Systematize decision making. Systematically introduce or support a comprehensive, data-based, decision-making system, including measurement of the quality of implementation, into a school or district.
- c. Start small. Initially introduce new interventions or innovations on a small scale (such as a pilot study) before more broadly disseminating (as early successes are a cornerstone of scaling-up practices within districts and states).
- d. Assess the fit. Before introducing an innovation, assess the culture of the setting to assure the “goodness of fit” between the innovation and the setting.
- e. Plan support. Establish comprehensive support plans across all levels for those who are responsible for implementation prior to initiating an innovation.
- f. Instill a mindset. Foster a culture of innovation and the implementation practices that support it.

Schools and Classrooms

- a. Assess the fit. Select innovations that fit into the culture of the school or classroom and shape the culture to support the innovation.
- b. Set school-specific priorities. Leverage the school leadership team, working with the school faculty, to establish priorities and adopt innovations for the school.
- c. Verify capacity. Ensure that there are adequate time and resources to implement the innovation.
- d. Institute new structures and operating procedures. Build in teacher- and administrator-level data-based decision making and foster development of the internal capacity of the school to use data to solve problems.

States, Districts, Schools, and Classrooms

- a. Align problems with appropriate solutions. Ensure that any innovation introduced into the system solves a problem or has a perceived advantage over current practice.
- b. Make data easily useable. Present data on implementation and the effects of an innovation in a format that decision makers will understand and use.
- c. Monitor implementation. Regularly and routinely monitor the quality of implementation of an innovation across all levels, so that corrective actions can be taken early in the process.
- d. Look again. Establish recursive feedback systems across all levels.
- e. Model decision making. Routinely model data-based decision making as the way of doing business.
- f. Provide proactive support. Learning a new skill is difficult and takes time. Support for those learning to implement an innovation should be proactive

rather than being reactive and waiting for the learners to identify that there is some difficulty.

- g. Be principled. Follow the principles of implementation to maximize the benefits of the innovation. Use implementation principles to provide guidance and improve outcomes for future innovations.