Needs Assessment Using InformTN
Objective

- Be able to conduct a thorough needs assessment using the InformTN planning tool
“The reason things stay the same is because we stay the same. For things to change, we must change.”

–Eric Jensen
**Six Improvement Principles**

1. **Make the work problem-specific and user-centered:** Engage all relevant stakeholders in answering a single question: “What specifically is the problem we are trying to solve?”

2. **Focus on variation in performance:** Rather than considering “what works” for the average student, aim to learn “what works, for whom, under what conditions?”

3. **See the system that produces the current outcomes:** Analyze how components of the district (the system) work to create the current outcomes, and generate a specific and focused plan for improvement.

4. **Measure progress incrementally along the way:** Constantly ask: “Are the intended changes actually occurring? Do they link to changes in the system and to changes in desired student outcomes? How do we know?”

5. **Make changes to your plan as needed:** Accumulate the practical knowledge that grows out of failure and build on it, enhancing your plan continuously.

6. **Accelerate learning through networked communities:** Share and learn from others with similar issues who are trying similar change ideas.

Adapted from Bryk et al., 2016
The Cycle of School Planning

- **Explore Data**
- **Analyze Needs**
- **Prepare to Plan**
- **Develop Plan**
- **Upload Documents**
- **Reflect on Plan**
- **Review and Submit**
## Explore Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate and Access</strong></td>
<td>• Chronically Out of School, Discipline, English Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educators</strong></td>
<td>• Staffing Characteristics, Retention and Climate, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Achievement and Growth</strong></td>
<td>• Success Rate Grades 3-5, Success Rate Grades 6-8, Success Rate Grades 9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College and Career Readiness</strong></td>
<td>• ACT, Early Postsecondary Opportunities, CTE, Graduation Rate, Postsecondary Enrollment</td>
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</table>
Explore Data Tips

- Start with data that is connected to current school improvement efforts. What are you noticing?
- Consider data related to the state’s four major goals:
  - Rank in top half on NAEP
  - 75 percent of third graders reading proficiently
  - Average ACT composite of 21
  - Majority of graduates earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree
- Use the dashboard to consider where your school is underperforming (i.e. underperforming the previous year, your comparable schools, your region, etc.).
Analyze Needs
The Cycle of School Planning

1. Explore Data
2. Analyze Needs
3. Prepare to Plan
4. Develop Plan
5. Upload Documents
6. Reflect on Plan
7. Review and Submit
The highest-priority need is the biggest barrier to improvement.

There are two kinds of needs:
- needs related to student performance outcomes and
- needs related to school practices.
## Planning Rubric Connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Component</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Meets Expectations for Submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore Data and Analyze Needs</td>
<td>The school <strong>did not analyze and capture insights across all of the major applicable data sections</strong> (i.e. Academic Achievement and Growth, Educator, Climate and Access, College and Career Readiness) or <strong>identified prioritized needs/groups of needs not well connected to areas of greatest challenge.</strong></td>
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**Characteristics of High Quality Planning**

The school analyzed and captured a **sufficient number insights for each of the four major applicable data sections** (i.e. Academic Achievement and Growth, Educator, Climate and Access, College and Career Readiness) that generates a comprehensive analysis of the school's data and identifies highest priority needs.

**AND**

The school grouped together multiple related needs, and **prioritized groups of needs directly connected to areas of greatest challenge.**

**AND**

The school incorporated **local data** connected to the needs in relevant and meaningful ways.
What connections did you see between the principles for improvement and the planning rubric?

Which principles are influenced by your mindset in planning more than a step in the process?

How might you use these six principles in your upcoming planning process?
The Cycle of School Planning

1. Explore Data
2. Analyze Needs
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Why Conduct a Root Cause Analysis
A root-cause analysis attempts to identify the underlying factors that explain why a performance gap exists. It:

- Identifies factors that are within the school’s control to act on, and if addressed, would result in improved performance
- Helps target strategies to address the root causes behind gaps and school/student needs

A strong root cause analysis should:
- Be based on data
- Involve the team of leaders developing the school’s plan
- Keep asking *why* until getting to the source of the problem
Overview: The 5 Whys

- There are many protocols and frameworks for conducting a root cause analysis, all of which ultimately boil down to asking why?
- “5 Whys” is process an iterative process developed by Toyota founder in 1930s whereby teams ask “why” at least five times to identify why something is happening
- 5 is a rule of thumb. Key point is to stop asking “why?” when the useful responses stop coming or the solution falls outside of school control.
A root-cause analysis is intended to explain why a performance gap exists, or the underlying factors or causes.

- Helps target strategies to address the root causes behind gaps
- Should be based on data
- Should involve the team of leaders developing your plan
- Benefits from using a visual tool and technique
Origins of 5 Whys

- Developed by Sakichi Toyoda, founder of Toyota Industries, in the 1930s and has been widely adapted and used across sectors.

**A Toyota Example: A welding robot stopped in the middle of its operation – 5 Whys**

1. "Why did the robot stop?“ The circuit has overloaded, causing a fuse to blow.

2. "Why is the circuit overloaded?" There was insufficient lubrication on the bearings, so they locked up.

3. "Why was there insufficient lubrication on the bearings?" The oil pump on the robot is not circulating sufficient oil.

4. "Why is the pump not circulating sufficient oil?" The pump intake is clogged with metal shavings.

5. "Why is the intake clogged with metal shavings?" Because there is no filter on the pump.

Trouble at the Jefferson Memorial

Five Whys Jefferson Memorial Example

Source: https://youtu.be/BEQvg99PZwo
How to Use 5 Whys (or any protocol!) Effectively

- **Schools ≠ Assembly lines**: Don’t expect the problem to boil down to a single root cause!
- **Start with hypotheses**: Complex problems likely have multiple root causes; start by identifying 2-4 distinct “why” responses and work through each separately.
- **Trust the process**: It may feel messy and you may struggle, but the inquiry process invariably leads to new insights.
- **Focus on systemic causes**: Root causes should make it clear how the system can improve, not the individuals in the system.
- **Check your final responses**: Is it within the school district’s control or influence? If it was dissolved, would it result in improvement of performance?
## 5 Whys Example: Chronic Absenteeism Among Students who are Economical Disadvantage

**Area of Greatest Need:**
Lower chronic absenteeism

**Framing Question:**
Why is chronic absenteeism among our ED students so high?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 1</th>
<th>Hypothesis 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many ED students are not engaged in or excited about coming to school.</td>
<td>Something happening at home is preventing ED students from coming to school more regularly.</td>
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</table>
## 5 Whys Example: Chronic Absenteeism Among Students who are Economical Disadvantage, Hypothesis 1

**Area of Greatest Need:**
Lower chronic absenteeism among ED students

**Framing Question:**
Why is chronic absenteeism among our ED students so high?

**Hypothesis:**
Many ED students are not engaged in or excited about school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Many of our ED parents struggle to support student at home and reinforce our vision and goals.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Families don’t know how to get involved at school and do not feel welcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Our schools have struggled to engage many ED families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Outreach only occurs during school hours when many families are working.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why?**
Our school has not prioritized outreach and created opportunities for all families to participate in student learning.
### 5 Whys Example: Chronic Absenteeism Among Students who are Economical Disadvantage, Hypothesis 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Greatest Need:</th>
<th>Lower chronic absenteeism among ED students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing Question:</td>
<td>Why is chronic absenteeism among our ED students so high?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis:</td>
<td>Something happening at home is preventing ED students from coming to school more regularly.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>ED students are more likely to miss school for seemingly small issues.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Some parents have said they have a particularly hard time getting their kids out the door to the bus stop in the winter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Students complain about waiting at bus stops in the cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Many of our ED students don’t have warm winter coats, hats, and gloves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Why? | Some ED students may lack the resources necessary to attend school, especially in the winter. |
## Different Root Causes, Different Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can we curb chronic absenteeism among students who are ED?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem 1:</strong> Many ED students are not engaged in or excited about coming to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Root Cause:</strong> Many of their families are also not engaged – in part because outreach only occurs during school hours when many families are working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solution:</strong> Develop a plan that recruits families into our school and creates meaningful opportunities to engage and collaborate.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Problem 2:</strong> Something happening at home is preventing ED students from coming to school more regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Root Cause:</strong> Without access to appropriate winter gear, our ED students are more likely to stay home on cold days, resulting in higher rates of absenteeism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solution:</strong> Search for opportunities to partner with local organizations to provide students winter gear.</td>
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3, 2, 1

- List three ways that you believe InformTN and/or today’s training will support your school planning process.
- Ask two questions that you still have about the process.
- Provide one suggestion for additional resources or training you think might be helpful.