

Creating Readiness for Change

Introducing a new state initiative and asking educators, administrators, and/or state leaders to develop and implement new policies and procedures, make behavioral changes, and/or scale-up an innovation, requires “readiness.” Readiness, or the capacity and willingness to engage in specific activities, is key to an initiative’s success. The Implementation Team needs to develop and nurture readiness at the state, regional, and local level. Having an appropriate level of readiness is critical to getting a new initiative off the ground and ensuring durability. Those contemplating change should consider an assessment of their readiness (see indicators below).

Readiness Indicators

- **Leadership and major stakeholders are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs.** The need for comprehensive change must be apparent and must merit the time commitment and use of resources required for successful implementation. This need must be validated with data and broad consensus.
- **Information about issues, innovations, implementation methods, risks, and benefits are contemplated.** Major stakeholders are engaged in discussions to gain a more complete view of the problem and develop better decisions about the solutions. Consideration is given to the feasibility of the change and what alternatives may work better. Important lessons can be learned from piloting the innovation with sites, teams, or other groups of individuals. It is critical to determine if the innovation can be implemented with fidelity and result in good outcomes prior to scaling-up an initiative.
- **A plan to initiate and manage the change process is in place.** Any plan should assume that some practices in the status quo are valued and should continue. Change should supplement what already works. The Implementation Team should anticipate risks and resistance and have a plan for how they will be managed.
- **A communication plan is in place to ensure frequent and accurate communication between the Implementation Team, leadership, and stakeholders.** Rapid feedback cycles are present to allow for quick adjustments to be made as needed. Stakeholders are convened at regular intervals to discuss the plan, identify issues and concerns, and talk about implementation and evaluation of the initiative.
- **An implementation plan is in place to bring about the desired changes.** The necessary infrastructure is in place to support implementation. This includes leadership support, ongoing professional development and coaching, and accountability measures for implementation and results.
- **A plan for collecting and reporting data is in place.** Indicators of progress are identified. These include measures for the development of an infrastructure (e.g., leadership support, training and coaching) as well as indicators related to implementation and anticipated results. Data collection processes have been determined, including the measurement tools that will be utilized. Information and data are regularly reviewed by the Implementation Team so they can adjust roles and functions to support the implementation of innovations most effectively.