

Step 2. Select Strategies and Plan for Implementation

Purpose

The resources in Step 2: Select Strategies and Plan for Implementation will support district teams as they use the results of the data review and root cause analysis (Step 1) process to identify strategies that address disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. This tool guides districts through the process of developing and prioritizing strategies and activities most likely to address the root causes identified in Step 1.

In *Step 1: Review Current Data and Conduct Root Cause Analysis (RCA)*, your district team worked with stakeholders to define the root causes of your district's disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers and organized them into categories and focus areas. As a next step, districts need to think about strategies that may reduce these disparities by identifying actions that directly link to each category. Then, districts will begin to plan for the implementation of their selected strategies.

These strategies and supporting activities must:

- Address root causes.
- Build institutional knowledge and leadership capacity to support strategies.
- Be based on best practices or research.
- Align to the District Commitments in the Effective Schools Framework (Levers 1, 2, 5).
- Be measurable (defined by data or metrics that can be analyzed).
- Be viable in your district's specific context; and
- Have a single owner who is a district leader and who is ultimately responsible for implementation of the strategies.

Step 2 organizes the process of selecting strategies into three tasks:

- Task 1: Inventory Current Practice: Perform a high-level inventory of current programs and policies
- Task 2: Review the Research: Scan recommended strategies related to each category of the root causes.
- Task 3: Build Consensus: Select strategies that are aligned to root causes and are evidence-based, measurable, and viable.

Task 1: Inventory Current Practice: What are you doing currently that impacts (or doesn't impact) the root causes of the disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers?

Policy Coherence and Alignment The process of reviewing existing strategies may prompt some districts to consider a more comprehensive review of the alignment and coherence of their district's policies and practices.

When reviewing the findings from the root cause analysis (see the end of Step 1 for the list), consider: Is this the full list? If there is something missing, what would our district team need to add?

After the team reaches consensus that the list is complete, the team should now shift focus to what the district is currently doing in relation to each category of the root causes it has identified (leverage, not layer). This step is important because some of your final strategies may be to continue with a current approach or to expand or improve an existing program.

Using the Blank Strategy Inventory Table in Step 2 resources, inventory what strategies, programs, and policies your district already has in place to support categories of root causes of the disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. Consider the root causes in each area of the talent management continuum—attracting, assigning, supporting, or retaining excellent teachers. Use the blank planning template in the Step 2 resource documents to record your district's thinking in the "Current Programs or Policies" row to inform your strategies selection in Task 3.

Task 2: Review the Research: Scan recommended strategies related to each category of the root causes.

Conducting an RCA and selecting strategies are circular processes. The process of inventorying current practices may prompt you to consider other root causes. These practices (RCA and district practices inventories) can be cycled through several times to fully determine all your root causes.

As a team, review the resources listed in this tool as suggested evidence-based strategies for addressing your district's disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. Think about and discuss which strategies and activities may remediate the root causes. Then, prioritize the strategies and supporting activities most likely to impact these factors. Highlight approaches that directly align to what you are already doing and those that are not part of district practice. Use the Effective Schools Framework's District Commitments from Levers 1, 2, and 5 to guide your selection of strategies.

Connect and Reflect: As a team, review the results of your strategy inventory before you begin your final round of strategy selection. Remember—some of your strategies may include continuing with an existing program. In the next part of this process, you'll be further examining these strategies to prioritize a set of strategies for inclusion in your district's talent plan.

Task 3: Build Consensus: Select Strategies That Are Aligned to Your Root Causes and Are Evidence-Based, Measurable, and Viable

Discussion Tips: When determining which strategies to include in your district’s talent plan, consider the following criteria and guiding questions. Are the selected strategies:

- Aligned to root causes? Is this strategy aligned to a root cause identified in Step 3? How do you know?
- Evidence-based? Is there evidence or research supporting this strategy? What makes us think this strategy will be effective?
- Measurable (defined by data or metrics that can be analyzed)? How will we measure the impact of this strategy?
- Viable? Can our district successfully implement this strategy? What are the barriers to implementation? This is a key step that will require significant discussion. See the next section.
- Aligned to the Effective Schools Framework District Commitments? Lever 1: Strong School Leadership and Planning; Lever 2: Effective, Well Supported Teachers; and Lever 5: Effective Instruction.

Consider Barriers to Implementation

During the strategy selection process, district leaders also must consider and identify barriers to implementing or sustaining selected strategies. Use the following prompts as a team while considering strategies, and note your responses here as you discuss each possible strategy:

- What are the barriers to implementing this strategy?
- Are there “work-around” solutions to the barriers?
- Are there other reasons that prevent the district from implementing a particular strategy?
- How would the district approach short-term barriers?
- How would the district approach long-term barriers?

Use the Proposed Strategy Planning Template to think about how each of your proposed strategies meets the guidance for selecting an talent plan strategy. Based on your answers, in the right-hand column, determine whether the strategy should be included in your talent plan.

After using the strategy planning template to consider which strategies will be most appropriate to prioritize for implementation through your district’s talent plan, work with your planning team to select three to four strategies. There should be consensus among district leaders that the strategies are highly viable and, based on the research evidence, will have a high impact on eliminating disparities that result in low-income students and minority students being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. The results of your “identifying barriers” discussion may prompt you to remove some strategies from your list.

After your team has agreed to the selected strategies, you’ll move forward in your district talent plan, recording the strategies in the reporting template at the end of this tool in the Putting It All Together section.

Next Steps for District Talent Planning Group

Now that your team has completed a data review and conducted the RCA process (Step 1) and identified strategies aligned to the root causes (Step 2), you're ready to move forward to Step 3-- *Monitor Progress & Fidelity of Implementation* to begin thinking about how you will design and implement your selected strategies in your district.

First, take a moment to record your key findings from Step 2 into the planning template.

Putting It All Together: Incorporating Your Selecting Strategies Efforts into Your Talent Plan

After completing the processes suggested in this toolkit, consider the results of your Selecting Strategies work, which will be recorded in Step 2 of the Talent Plan Template. You will be able to directly transfer your findings into the centralized reporting template. In the first column, document the root causes discovered during your RCA in Step 1. Then add your selected strategy aligned to the root cause as well as the ESF lever and district commitment. You will then begin thinking through biannual milestones that you would like to see because of implementing the selected strategy. Further development of implementation planning will occur in the final step, Step 3: *Monitor Progress and Fidelity of Implementation*.