State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices

GUIDING IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS
EXPLORATION STAGE

Formalize Structures

An early activity in the Exploration Stage is the development of the Leadership and Implementation Team. This involves formalizing the team structure or linked team structures needed to do the work during the Exploration Stage. A workgroup, or leadership and implementation team, is formed so that there is an identified entity responsible for the work of exploration and for final decision making, or for making recommendations.

1. Who will be accountable on a day-to-day basis for ensuring this work is done?
   - Identify the individuals who will be responsible for installing the practices or processes, and the frameworks to support them.
2. How will State leadership be a part of this process to ensure that successes are operationalized and barriers are removed?
   - Practice-Policy Feedback. Identify how and on what schedule the new work and process will be communicated to SEA leadership.

Determine Need and Options

Another activity in the Exploration Stage is the assessment of student, LEA and State performance and needs. Such assessments require that the team use recent, relevant, and reliable data. Given the identified needs, the Leadership and Implementation Team should then explore the available evidence-based options to meet those needs.

1. What do your current data suggest is the most critical or pivotal need?
   - Identify the recent, relevant and reliable data available to support this determination.
2. What is the supporting research or evidence of the strategies you are considering?
   - When conducting such reviews, the strength of the evidence, or effect size, the replication history, and social significance and sustainability of the results over time should be taken into account.

Assess Fit and Feasibility

The next set of activities involves assessing the fit of the selected Evidence Based Practice, process or program with the needs of students, the resources of LEAs and the State, and the implementation requirements. When assessing a program's fit, particular attention should be paid to costs, including time, funding, and materials, as well as training, coaching, and data infrastructure requirements.

Next, you'll need to identify the structural or organizational changes that will be needed to successfully implement the evidence-based practice at the State and LEA levels. Clarifying the costs associated with the process or program, as well as initial and ongoing training and consultation costs, is extremely important. By identifying the resources needed, you will have a clearer picture of what it will take to initiate and to sustain the practice at the State and local levels.

1. What are the priorities of your State?
   - Try to align the initiative with existing State priorities. For example, if a State priority is increasing graduation rates, choosing to work on Indicator 1 and/or 2 allows you to make use of existing expertise and resources.
   - Consider whether the strategies being considered fit your current political and social context.
2. What is your theory of change (i.e., logic model, blueprint, outcome map, etc.)?
   - Start with the end in mind. To achieve the desired outcome, many kinds of changes need to occur along the way. Consider how you will communicate to others what you are trying to accomplish, and how you will know you are making progress.
3. How will you measure progress toward that goal at the SEA? At the LEA?
   - Generally, it will take 2-4 years to achieve broad outcomes. Identify the short-term goals that can be used as road markers to achieving the final outcome. Identify what type of evidence will indicate progress toward that outcome.
4. Who will do what differently at the SEA to impact that outcome? At the LEA?
   - Consider how the SEA and LEA can make use of the Implementation Stages and Implementation Drivers to change the status quo. For example, consider how the SEA team can make use of scheduling changes, data systems and distance technology to provide the necessary training, coaching and assessment to carry out the identified processes.

Promote "Buy In"

A key role of the Leadership and Implementation Team is to develop the collaboration and co-ownership of the work among the stakeholders in the LEA, SEA and community, as well as to prepare decision makers and educators for the implementation of the new practice of process. The benefits and risks related to implementing the evidence-based program should be described so that educators, administrators and community members can gain confidence in managing the identified risks. This also provides an opportunity for identifying early adopters at the LEA and SEA levels, who are capable of and interested in being among the first implementers. Early adopters are often those leaders and districts that are comfortable managing risk, and have a track record of successful and sustainable implementation and innovation.

1. How will readiness be created at the SEA? At the LEA?
   - Identify the information that will be shared with stakeholders in the LEA, SEA and community.
   - Identify processes for sharing this information, and for continuous communication to ensure ongoing buy in.

Re-Assess and Decide

The final set of activities in the Exploration Stage involves gathering all of the information collected during this stage to re-assess and decide on adoption and implementation. It's necessary to thoughtfully review the facilitators and barriers with respect to need, strength and type of evidence, fit with current priorities and values, resource availability, intervention readiness for replication, and LEA and SEA capacity to implement.

1. What has emerged during Exploration that impacts your decision?