

Purpose: To assist school improvement teams in prioritizing and winnowing potential causes for addressing an identified student learning problem in order to plan effective solutions (action plans) for achieving student learning goals embedded within the School Improvement Plan

Phase I: Identify a Student Learning Problem or Goal from the School Improvement Plan

1. Use your existing school improvement plan to identify one or two key student learning problems that will have the strongest impact on student achievement if the problem was addressed and acted upon during the school year.
2. Review disaggregated data provided to verify and check that the Student Learning Problems identified are appropriate and evidenced in the data.

If the Student Learning Problems do not align to the school data or are not evidenced in the School Improvement Plan then.....

Begin with **Data Driven Dialogue: Identifying a Student Learning Problem and Setting Goals** Protocol

- i. Complete the entire protocol OR
- ii. Complete page 4 and 5 using the school data provided.

3. Students Learning Problem(s):



Phase II: Generate Possible Causes using the Verify Cause Tree and Cause Cards





1. School teams first identify a Student Learning Problem that has been identified through the School Improvement Planning Process or in Phase I above. Write this in the box at the top of the Verify Cause Tree handout. This graphic tool is predicated on the belief that problems are best solved by addressing the root cause, not just what may seem obvious.
 - Example Student Learning Problem: There is a 25% achievement gap between White students and Hispanic Students in reading as measured by the 2015 SBA ELA test

2. School teams generate and synthesize the Possible Causes for the Student Learning Problem using the Cause Cards
 - The team will review and consider each cause card by discussing if the card could be contributing to the student learning problem(s) identified above.

 - If yes, the school team will place the card on the enlarged Verify Cause Tree graphic in the appropriate category. Place other cards in a no or maybe pile.

3. Review the Verify Cause Tree with Cause Cards.
 - Are there any other causes that should be added?

Phase III: Identify Causes for Further Verification

1. Review disaggregated data and Causes.
 - Place a  next to the causes you think you have control to change
 - Place a  next to the causes that can have the greatest impact on student learning
 - Place a  next to the causes that you are most eager to investigate further through more research into the school data and other local data
 - Place a  next to the causes that you believe you have the time and resources to address

2. Identify the four causes that have the most symbols next to them. **Make sure each possible cause is under your control, will do no harm to any group of students, and has the possibility of being solved by a rigorous action plan.**
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Phase IV: Action Planning to Address Root Causes of Student Learning Problems

1. Review the School Improvement Plan and Reflect on the Following Questions:

- Review the goals of your plan. Do they align with the Root Causes that you identified in Phase III above? Is revision required?

- Do your root causes indicate a commitment to equity and closing the achievement gap? If not, discuss with your team the data that refutes or supports the need to address achievement gaps. What steps need to be taken to openly discuss this issue in your school community?

- Identify new goals and learning problems that need to be addressed in your School Improvement Plan that are currently not being addressed:

2. Complete Action Planning Tool for Student Learning Problem(s). Action Plan should address the Root Causes identified in Phase III.

(A model is also provided)



- How will you set priorities for the work?

- What support will you need to pursue equity goals?

Specific Questions for Central Office

- How will you support capacity building in struggling schools?