



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

RESOURCE

Measurement Planning: Using Data to Improve Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems

Purpose

A measurement plan helps teams to answer the question, “how will we know if the change is an improvement?” Every change made to a system will not lead to improvement; teams must continuously use data to check whether changes are making the intended impact and inform the improvement journey. Improvement measurement plans rely on practical data sources that are embedded in everyday work, collected frequently, and framed in language that is natural and makes sense to those collecting the data (Byrk 2015).

Teams can use the [Driver Diagram](#) to articulate their theory of improvement toward prioritized change targets in their school system. The measurement plan helps teams test their theory of improvement along the way and provides data-informed signals of when and how the theory of improvement and improvement efforts might need to be adjusted. Table 1 explores measure types used in a comprehensive measurement plan, the corresponding part of the driver diagram it can be used to measure, and examples of ways to collect each type of data.

Connections

DPI’s [Roadmap for School Mental Health Improvement](#) outlines five stages in increasing the quality of a CSMHS. Measurement plans are an important tool for several stages in the Roadmap. In the assessment stage, teams collect baseline data on the needs and current functioning of the system. These measures support development of the driver diagram and may become part of the measurement plan to assess progress towards outcomes and drivers over time. During the Implementation stage, teams use the measurement plan to assess the impact of changes made during PDSA cycles. During the reflection stage, teams use data collected throughout the improvement process to evaluate the impact, celebrate successes, and plan for future improvement work.



Table 1. Types of Measures in a Measurement Plan

Measure Type	Corresponding Driver Diagram Component	Data Collection Examples
<p>Outcome Measures: Assess progress towards the overall improvement goal or aim (Bennett et al. 2022). These measures are not collected until well after the change process has started. They provide information on where the system needs to improve, but not how to improve it.</p>	<p>AIM Statement</p>	<p>Annual or Biannual Survey</p> <p>(e.g., Youth Risk Behaviors Survey, School Climate Survey, Social Emotional Learning Competency Assessment, attendance, grades, etc.)</p>
<p>Driver Measures: Predict progress towards the aim before the team has collected outcome measures (Hinnant-Crawford 2020).</p> <p>Driver measures are collected more frequently than outcome measures but less frequently than process measures.</p>	<p>Primary and Secondary Drivers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups or empathy interviews. • Listening campaigns. • Fishbowls or panel discussions. • Structured observations. • Home/classroom/community visits. • Shadow a student, teacher, or other implementer. • Student-led community walks.
<p>Process Measures: Assess how a change is being implemented (Bennett et al. 2022). Process measures are collected frequently, so teams can detect variations from what is intended and make adjustments in future Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles.</p>	<p>Change Ideas and Tests of Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short reflection survey. • Exit ticket. • Plus/Delta reflection. • Conversation with staff during recess/lunch duty. • Color-coded implementation calendar. • End of meeting accomplishment checklist.
<p>Balancing Measures: Ensure that introducing a change to one part of a system does not disrupt or create an unintended impact on other parts of the system (Hinnant-Crawford 2020).</p> <p>For example, introducing a new program or practice could lead to staff compassion fatigue or an increase of unnecessary mental health referrals.</p>	<p>Entire Driver Diagram</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective compassion resilience activity during staff meeting. • Student or parent engagement survey. • Office discipline referral tracking. • Log of referrals to mental health team that are unnecessary or are mismatched to student needs.

Getting Started

Teams may wish to reference the data collection examples in Table 1 and the measurement plan example in Table 2 for ideas of how to get started. Teams can record their plan in the plan template, Table 3.

Table 2. Measurement Plan Example

Type of Measurement	What is Measured	Tool or Measure	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible	Equity Check
Outcome Measures	Aim Statement By June 2025, the number of LGBTQ+ students who indicate that they feel like they belong at school will increase by 20%.	Youth Risk Behaviors Survey	Every Two Years	Director of Student Services	*Need to survey a representative sample.
Driver Measures	Primary Driver Staff Support of Students	School Climate Survey	Annually	Mental Health Team	*Need to communicate the purpose of the data collection to students and staff.
	Secondary Driver of Focus Increased Student Voice	Spreadsheet with lists of students participating in feedback opportunities.	Monthly	Mental Health Team	*Need to consider the diversity of voice included.
Process Measures	Change Idea: Implement a process for gaining student feedback about increasing belonging. Test: Implement a new belonging activity in class and test a feedback method in one classroom.	Student Exit Tickets	Weekly	Mental Health Team, Classroom Teachers	*Need to measure unintended impacts of the change on teacher time, fatigue related to implementing the new strategy.
Balancing Measures	The team hypothesized that adding this strategy might contribute to staff fatigue.	Short conversation with implementing teachers during lunch or recess duty about how the strategy is going.	After new activity is implemented.	Mental Health Team	*Check that this data collection strategy doesn't add to teacher fatigue.

Table 3. Measurement Plan Template

Type of Measurement	What is Measured	Tool or Measure	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible	Equity Check
Outcome Measures	Aim Statement				
Driver Measures	Primary Driver				
	Secondary Driver of Focus				
Process Measures	Change Idea: Test:				
Balancing Measures					

EQUITY CHECK ✓

- How can data collection burden on staff be minimized, shared, or incentivized by reducing or reallocating other duties?
- How have we communicated the goals and outcomes of these measurements?
- Whose voices are included in the measurement plan?
- What is the plan to measure and monitor any unintended impacts of our improvement efforts? (Hinnant-Crawford 2020)

References

Bennet, Brandon, Gunrow, Alicia, Park, Sandra. 2022. Improvement Science at Your Fingertips. San Francisco, CA: Improvement Collective and ISC LLC.

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. 2015. Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Hinnant-Crawford, B. N. 2020. Improvement Science in Education. Myers Education Press.



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