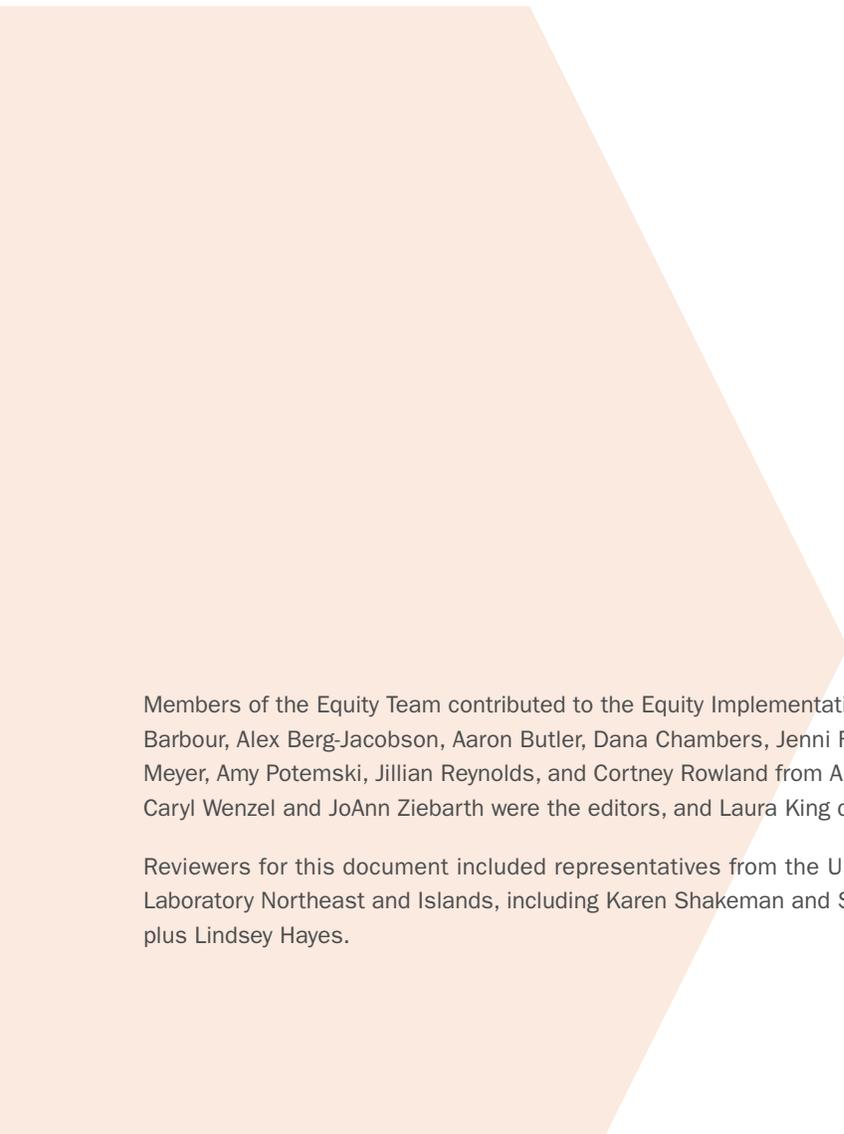


Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

at American Institutes for Research ■

The Equitable Access Implementation Playbook
MONITORING TOOL

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Overview of Tool

This tool outlines the processes involved in monitoring the implementation of state plans to ensure equitable access to excellent educators (Equitable Access Plans), including engaging in the following for each strategy:

- **STEP 1.** Establish a monitoring plan for each long-term goal identified in the Equitable Access Plan.
- **STEP 2.** Monitor progress toward each long-term goal identified in the Equitable Access Plan, using evidence to support your stated progress.
- **STEP 3.** Reflect on successes and course-correct for continuous improvement as needed.

The tool also provides guidance for determining why some strategies worked and others did not and how to develop action steps to improve outcomes. This tool is part of the Equitable Access Implementation Playbook prepared by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) to support state implementation of Equitable Access Plans.

Introduction

How will states know one, two, five, or 10 years from now whether the implementation of their Equitable Access Plans has positively impacted equitable access for students from poor and minority backgrounds as it relates to inexperienced, unqualified, and out-of-field teachers? The U.S. Department of Education requires the following:

An SEA must include in its State Plan a description of the method and timeline the SEA will use to measure progress in eliminating equity gaps for both: (1) students from low-income families; and (2) students of color. The Department encourages each SEA to set a long-term goal to eliminate equity gaps and annual targets for progress toward that goal....

In order to effectively evaluate and track progress toward equitable access, an SEA should also evaluate and track the State's progress on addressing root causes. For example, if a lack of effective leadership in high-poverty schools is identified as a root cause of a particular equity gap, an SEA should evaluate if, in fact, leadership in high-poverty schools has improved in order to meaningfully evaluate progress in eliminating that equity gap. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 21)

In this tool, states will find information to assist them in determining whether strategies implemented at the state and local levels have been effective in meeting these requirements.

Because every state's context is unique and states' Equitable Access Plans included varying levels of detail for monitoring progress, this document is intended to be used as a resource for states to identify those sections that are relevant given their state's existing plans for monitoring progress.

With your team, go through each step of the monitoring tool for each Equitable Access Plan strategy and related long-term equity goals. The planning tables throughout are replicated in full in Appendix A.

STEP 1. Establish a Monitoring Plan

To ensure that (1) progress toward each short- and long-term goal for each strategy defined in your Equitable Access Plan is monitored across time and (2) your team engages in continuous reflection and improvement based on ongoing progress toward these goals, states should first agree to a process and timeline for monitoring progress. Consider the following planning questions to establish your monitoring plan.

- How often will our team monitor progress toward each leading indicator?
- What evidence will we collect of our progress toward each leading indicator?
- How will we know we are on track toward meeting our long-term goal?
- What are our interim benchmarks?
- What might we do to course-correct if we are not in track to meet our long-term goal according to the benchmarks established?

Draw on your thinking and planning from Step 4 of the GTL Center's *Implementation Planning Tool* (clarify leading indicators). In this step, your team used a waterfall graphic to identify long-term planning goals for each Equitable Access Plan strategy. Use your waterfall planning graphic to populate the first three rows of the Step 1 planning table—the strategy, the long-term goals, and the leading indicators. Then work with your team to determine a monitoring plan for each indicator, using the guiding questions in each row of the table. You will need to complete a separate table for each long-term goal of each strategy in your Equitable Access Plan.

To ensure that your team keeps on track with monitoring timelines, add the established monitoring intervals to your project management tool in Step 5 of the GTL Center's *Implementation Planning Tool*. Be sure that you mark off the monitoring dates across each quarter for each goal.

STEP 1 Planning Table: Establish a Monitoring Plan for Each Long-Term Goal

Strategy, Goal, and Leading Indicator(s) <i>(From Waterfall Chart)</i>	Name of Strategy
	Long-Term Goal of Strategy
	Leading Indicator(s)
STEP 1. Establish a Monitoring Plan	How often will our team monitor progress toward each leading indicator?
	What evidence will we collect of our progress toward each leading indicator?
	How will we know we are on track toward meeting our long-term goal?
	What are our interim benchmarks? <i>(Adjust time intervals as needed to match your monitoring intervals.)</i>
	<i>Three-month benchmark</i>
	<i>Six-month benchmark</i>
	<i>One-year benchmark</i>
	<i>Two-year benchmark</i>
	What might we do to course-correct if we are not on track to meet our long-term goal according to the benchmarks established?
	Who will be responsible for monitoring progress for this indicator?

STEP 2: Monitor Progress Toward Each Long-Term Goal in the Equitable Access Plan and Identify Evidence to Support Stated Progress

Now that your team has established a monitoring plan for each long-term goal and included the monitoring timeline in your project management tool, you will need to establish a time and place to collect and review evidence of your progress toward each goal. The person responsible for monitoring each goal should establish a meeting time and space on the specified timeline and is responsible for collecting and presenting evidence or documentation of progress toward the goal.

Using the information you filled in from Step 1, complete the Step 2 planning table for each leading indicator. Each row includes the following guiding questions to help monitor your progress for each leading indicator.

- What is the monitoring interval?
- Did your team do what was planned in your strategy?
- How do you know (i.e., What is the evidence?)?
- How much progress have you made toward your goal?
- Do you need to make any adjustments at this time?

STEP 2 Planning Table: Monitor Progress Toward Each Long-Term Goal in the Equitable Access Plan and Identify Evidence to Support Stated Progress

Strategy, Goal, and Leading Indicator(s) <i>(From Waterfall Chart)</i>	Name of Strategy	
	Long-Term Goal of Strategy	
	Leading Indicator(s)	
STEP 2. Monitor Progress and Identify Evidence	What is the monitoring interval (e.g., three months, six months)?	
	Did your team do what was planned in your strategy?	
	How do you know (i.e., What is the evidence—meeting agendas, data collection, other artifacts or evidence?)?	
	How much progress have you made toward your goal?	
	Do you need to make any adjustments at this time? (Indicate YES or NO. If NO, planning will take place in Step 3.)	

STEP 3. Reflect on Successes and Course-Correct for Continuous Improvement as Needed

In Step 2, your team monitored progress for each long-term goal compared with the benchmarks established in your monitoring plan. In some instances, you may be on track toward meeting your long-term goals. If so, this is a great time to reflect on what you think has contributed to these successes and consider how your approach may be relevant or useful in supporting the success of other strategies in your Equitable Access Plan. You also may find that you have not met your benchmark at the designated monitoring interval and feel that you are not on track to meet your long-term goal. If this is the case, it is time to engage in deeper self-reflection and revisit your implementation plans to make some course corrections to get back on track. Complete the Step 3 planning table.

Self-Reflection Questions

Consider the following self-reflection questions to think about why you did not meet your benchmarks:

- Were the planned action steps in the strategy actually implemented?
- What evidence supports the determination that the strategy or planned actions were implemented or not implemented?
- Was the implementation partial or complete (i.e., Were key aspects of the strategy omitted or were all aspects of the strategy implemented as planned?)?
- What factors either supported or hindered implementation of the strategy or planned action steps, and how did these factors affect the outcomes?
- Were resources (funds, personnel, time, knowledge, willingness, other resources) sufficient to ensure successful implementation of the strategy or planned action steps?
- Was it possible (i.e., realistic) to obtain and evaluate outcomes from implementation of the strategy or planned action steps during the designated monitoring interval (such as recruitment and retention of experienced, qualified, effective educators)?

If the Strategy Implementation Was Not Successful...

If it can be determined that the strategy was implemented but outcomes were not achieved, it will be important to investigate the possible explanations. The following are some possibilities to consider:

- **Communication.** The strategy was implemented but because of poor communication, people whose buy-in was essential to success were not aware or only partially aware of their roles.
- **Strategy Drift.** The strategy was implemented with fidelity up to a point but then drifted off course, perhaps because of competing priorities, changes in staff (no one to champion the strategy), lack of oversight, and so on.
- **Lack of Training and Support.** When implementation of a strategy is dependent on particular people, it is essential that the key people receive training and support to maximize the impact of the strategy. Without training and support, it may be possible to meet some of the outcomes but at lower levels than would have occurred with more training and support.

- **Unintended Consequences.** When a state targets districts (or a district targets schools) for a particular strategy such as recruitment, it is possible that excellent educators may be attracted away from other districts (or schools) that did not previously have an equity gap. This may result in the shifting of equity gaps from one district (or school) to another rather than an overall narrowing of equity gaps. Thus, some outcomes may be achieved in some districts (or schools) at the expense of other districts (or schools).
- **Wrong Strategy.** A final possibility is that the strategy was not well suited to address the root causes behind the equity gaps. In many states, insufficient data were available on the root causes behind equity gaps or little research was available or consulted on the viability of strategies responding to those root causes. As a result, states relied exclusively on stakeholder input to inform the root causes and strategies. It is possible that the root causes or strategies suggested by stakeholders in fact were not the correct ones, and monitoring progress is the best way to begin the discussion about whether this was the case.

STEP 3 Planning Table: Reflect on Successes and Course-Correct for Continuous Improvement as Needed

Strategy, Goal, and Leading Indicator(s) <i>(From Waterfall Chart)</i>	Name of Strategy
	Long-Term Goal of Strategy
	Leading Indicator(s)
STEP 3. Self-Correct and Course-Correct as Needed	What went wrong? (Use the self-reflection questions in this section to guide your answer.)
	Revisit your possible course corrections from your monitoring plan (Step 1). Would they help get you back on track?
	What will you do to course-correct?
	Establish new benchmarks for monitoring progress as needed.
	<i>Three-month benchmark</i>
	<i>Six-month benchmark</i>
	<i>One-year benchmark</i>
	<i>Two-year benchmark</i>

Appendix A. Complete Progress Monitoring Planning Table, STEPS 1–3

Strategy, Goal, and Leading Indicator(s) <i>(From Waterfall Chart)</i>	Name of Strategy
	Long-Term Goal of Strategy
	Leading Indicator(s)
STEP 1. Establish a Monitoring Plan	How often will our team monitor progress toward each leading indicator?
	What evidence will we collect of our progress toward each leading indicator?
	How will we know we are on track toward meeting our long-term goal?
	What are our interim benchmarks? <i>(Adjust time intervals as needed to match your monitoring intervals.)</i>
	<i>Three-month benchmark</i>
	<i>Six-month benchmark</i>
	<i>One-year benchmark</i>
	<i>Two-year benchmark</i>
	What might we do to course-correct if we are not on track to meet our long-term goal according to the benchmarks established?
	Who will be responsible for monitoring progress for this indicator?

STEP 2.
Monitor Progress
and Identify Evidence

What is the monitoring interval (e.g., three months, six months)?

Did your team do what was planned in your strategy?

How do you know? (i.e., What is the evidence—meeting agendas, data collection, other artifacts or evidence?)?

How much progress have you made toward your goal?

Do you need to make any adjustments at this time? (Indicate YES or NO. If NO, planning will take place in Step 3.)



STEP 3.
Self-Correct and
Course-Correct
as Needed

What went wrong? (Use the self-reflection questions in this section to guide your answer.)	
Revisit your possible course corrections from your monitoring plan (Step 1). Would they help get you back on track?	
What will you do to course-correct?	
Establish new benchmarks for monitoring progress as needed.	
<i>Three-month benchmark</i>	
<i>Six-month benchmark</i>	
<i>One-year benchmark</i>	
<i>Two-year benchmark</i>	

Appendix B. Resources

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
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