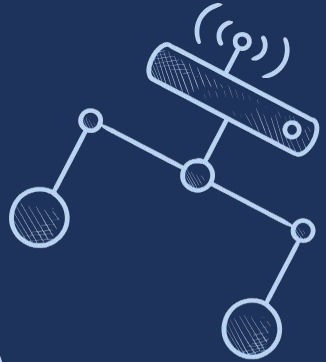


Teaching & Learning Collaborative

Building System Coherence



Introductions



Dr. Kiffany Pride
Assistant Commissioner of
Learning Services



Hope Worsham
Assistant Commissioner of
Public School Accountability



Kisa Morman
Learning Services
Math Public School Program
Manager



Brooke McCain
Public School Accountability
Director of Monitoring and
Accreditation

Materials

1

Agenda and Coherence Handouts

2

Coherence Inventory Toolkit

3

Post-It Notes

4

Writing Utensils



<https://bit.ly/4vqj0t6>

Today's Objectives

1

Build a shared understanding of Arkansas's integrated approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.

2

Examine how multiple sources of evidence can be connected to support coherent planning and instructional decision-making.

3

Recognize and access state tools and resources available to support improvement efforts.

Grounding Exercise

What Creates System Coherence?

Individually

Think about a school, restaurant, or organization that was highly effective and consistently improved outcomes.

- *What made the system function?*
- *What was happening to ensure people were moving in the same direction?*

Table Mates

Introduce yourselves and discuss what common themes you hear emerging?





Opening Message



Stacy Smith

Deputy Commissioner
Division of Elementary & Secondary
Education



A System for Learning



Dr. Kiffany Pride

Assistant Commissioner
DESE Learning Services

Build System Coherence

Developing a Strategic Plan through the AR App



465,421



Our Whole System

Arkansas

Certified Teachers = 32, 341

Certified Staff = 14, 085

Classified Staff = 28, 995

+ Families and Communities

Table Talk

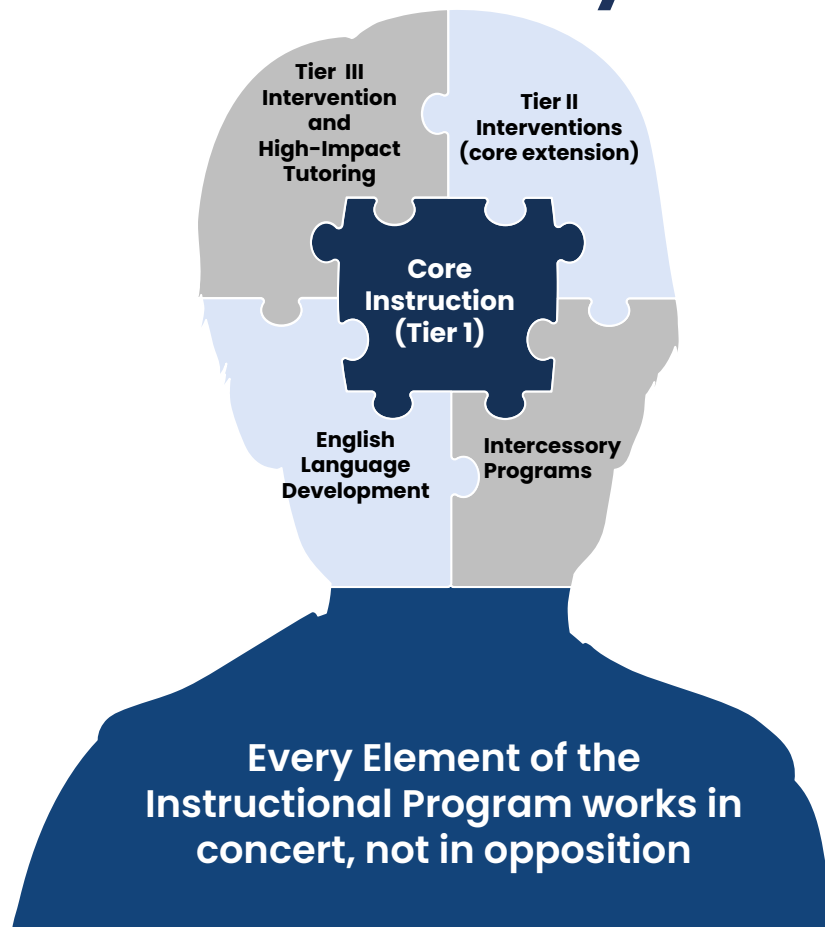
Think about your system, the district and/or school. Jot down the numbers?

How important is it to have a shared understanding of excellent Instruction?

What is Excellent Instruction in a Coherent System?

North Star 
Student Experience 

Each Student.
Excellent Instruction.
Everyday.



BUILD Shared Understanding

Excellent Instruction

Arkansas is committed to ensuring that each student experiences **excellent instruction every day**, so they can grow into independent thinkers and are prepared for life after the K-12 experience, whether by enrolling in college, enlisting in the military, or pursuing a career that provides a family-sustaining wage. Achieving that vision requires more than strong materials or isolated programs; **it requires coherence.** This commitment is predicated on the foundational goals outlined in the Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials Initiative (AIIIM) Implementation Plan.

The purpose of the AIIIM Initiative is to ensure that all stakeholders in the educational system have a shared foundational understanding of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), aligned curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL), and strategies of support for students and teachers. Coherence ensures that elements work together seamlessly, enabling educators and leaders to make decisions that are grounded in a unified vision and purpose.

BUILD Shared Understanding

System Coherence

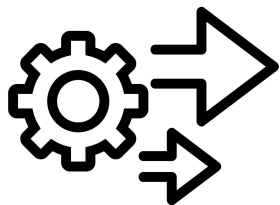
Coherence describes the extent to which components of an instructional system convey a **clear and consistent vision and direction for educators** and students so that teachers have a good sense of what to teach, how to teach in a way that's aligned.

(Wang, 2023)

This means that the ***whole system*** is working together with shared understanding and purpose.

BUILD Shared Understanding

System Coherence



System Coherence is not a one-time achievement but an **ongoing process** that requires **intentional leadership, regular reflection,** and **consistent efforts** to ensure that policies and practices remain **aligned and supportive.**

At its core, **system coherence**, a foundational principle in education, refers to the clarity in which all components within the educational system collectively advance shared goals.

BUILD Shared Understanding

Coherence vs. Incoherence

System Coherence	System Incoherence
When coherence is strong, educators have a shared understanding about the vision for teaching and learning , and students benefit from consistent, high-quality learning experiences.	When coherence breaks down, there are conflicting messages , and students feel the consequences (Wang, 2023).

BUILD Shared Understanding

System Coherence

This sequence—coherence first, followed by alignment and feedback—supports every student's learning journey and empowers teachers to deliver meaningful instruction.

clarity

System Coherence

- *Policy, Written Vision, District SMARTE Goals*
- *Balanced Assessment System*
- *Adopt HQIM and implement HQPL*
- *Strategic Funding and Allocation of Resources*

consistency

Instructional Alignment & Feedback

- *Internalization Protocols and Practices*
- *Instructional & Coaching Cycles*
- *Walkthrough Protocols, Key Levers*
- *Collaborative Team Time*

BUILD Shared Understanding

Summary

Key Term:

- **System Coherence** refers to the *whole* system working together with shared understanding and purpose.

Key Term:

- **Instructional Alignment** refers to the *instructional components* being consistently implemented in student learning environments.

Note: *Instructional Coherence and Instructional Alignment are synonymous.*

Key Term:

- **Feedback** is the essential next step to coherence. It serves as the engine that drives the system by turning assessment results into actional next steps for instruction.

Key Takeaway:

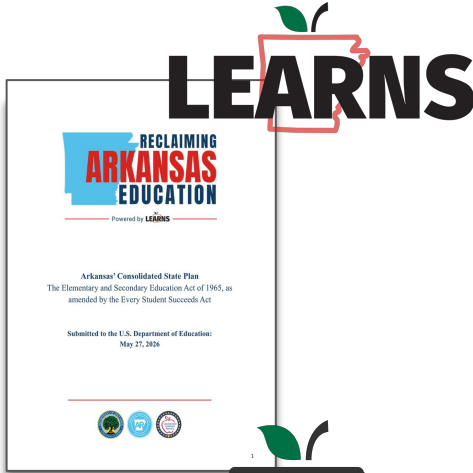
Alignment brings order to the instructional system, while coherence brings shared meaning and collective action. When alignment and coherence operate in tandem, schools create conditions for stronger instruction and better student experiences.

Feedback helps leaders observe whether instructional goals are visible in classrooms, evaluate how students respond to the curriculum, use assessment results to guide teaching practices, make data-driven decisions using multiple data sources, and connect HQPL to classroom practice.

BUILD Shared Understanding State-Level

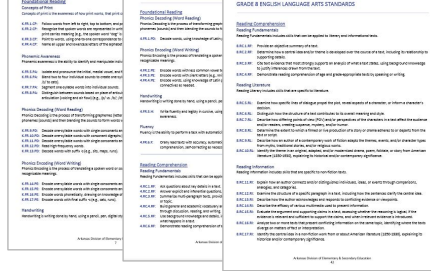
System Coherence first, followed by **Instructional Alignment** and **Feedback Loops**

Vision for Excellence, Law Policy,
Rules/Guidance



ACCESS

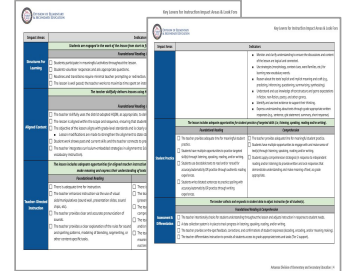
Arkansas Academic Standards



Research-Based Pedagogical Practices



**Arkansas Resources: AIIM (HQIM/HQPL), AR RIVET PLPG, Balanced Assessment
System Key Levers Tools**



Pop Quiz

Pause

- **First:** In your workbook, summarize your understanding of System Coherence and Instructional Alignment. What is sticking? What is still circling in your mind?
- **Then:** Compare notes with two partners

BUILD Shared Understanding

Who Owns It?

- **District leaders** set the vision, expectations, funding structures and policies, and maintain feedback loops that support aligned instruction.
- **School leaders** build implementation systems (including student-centered master schedules), professional learning experiences, and feedback loops that enable instruction to thrive.
- **Educators** deliver aligned instruction that ensures each student actively participates in meaningful, grade-level work within an engaging learning environment
- **Students** demonstrate agency of their learning and academic growth.

Where do we start?

Level	What is Owned	Demonstration of Ownership	Measures of Success
District Leaders	Written and shared Vision, expectations for excellent instruction, funding structures, and policies and procedures.	Adopt HQIM, align CBPL , curriculum internalization and monitoring with standards; ensure coherence between core (Tier 1) and supports (Tiers 2 & 3)	Aligned district systems, content coaching structures, materials use, and instructional data improvements
School Leaders	Implementation systems, professional learning experiences, content coaching and feedback loops	Build collaborative structures, schedule and protect coaching, and monitor unit and lesson internalization	Increased integrity to HQIM, improved walkthrough data, teacher confidence, and effectiveness
Educators	Aligned instruction that ensures each student actively participates in meaningful, grade-level work within an engaging learning environment	Implement HQIM with integrity, use data to respond to students for differentiation, enrichment, and ensure student practice	Aligned grade-level assignments, student work quality, and growth in observation indicators
Students	Agency of their learning and academic growth	Set goals, participate in grade-level work, ask questions, and persist	Evidence of learning, increased ownership, improved achievement & engagement

BUILD Shared Understanding

Activity: Strategies to Achieve Coherence

Strategies to Achieve System Coherence	<u>Your Turn:</u> Activity: I heard, I think, therefore	Strategies to Achieve Instructional Alignment	<u>Your Turn:</u> Activity: I heard, I think, therefore
Develop a clear and shared vision (written)		Ensure Alignment of ALL Arkansas Academic Standards with HQIM	
Align policies and procedures		Implement consistent instructional practices	
Foster Collaborative Leadership		Use a continuum of assessments for instructional goals	
Allocate resources strategically (HQIM & HQPL)		Provide ongoing, through-year professional learning that is curriculum-based; content coaching	

Why does Coherence Matter in Arkansas Schools?

Excellent Instruction Requires Coherence!

“

When coherence is strong, **educators have a shared understanding about the vision for teaching and learning**, and students benefit from consistent, high-quality learning experiences. When coherence breaks down, there are **conflicting messages**, and students feel the consequences

”

Why does Coherence Matter in Arkansas Schools?

Build Shared Understanding of System Coherence

Arkansas Schools continue to invest in **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)**, through-year **Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (CBPL)**, **Content Coaching and Feedback Systems**. Coherence brings these investments together, so the impact reaches students where it matters most: in the classroom.



ATLAS Arkansas Teaching & Learning Assessment System				
K-3 ELA CADECE*	CAN BE USED TO REPORT POSE READING LEVEL	MEETS UNIVERSAL AND INITIAL SCREENING FOR DYSLIXIA	REQUIRED GRADES	NUMBER OF ITEMS**
Screener Given Once 20 Days	✓	✓	K, 1, 2, & 3	21-46
K-3 Interim Mid-Year	✓	✓	K, 1 & 2 2nd Graders will take ATLAS 2-10	21-36
Summative End of Year	✓	✓	K, 1 & 2 2nd Graders will take ATLAS 2-10	21-42
Testlets Given as needed		MEETS LEVEL 1 SCREENING	K, 1, 2, & 3 Only for identified students	

*Each assessment measures grade level standards including those required for screening.
**See blueprint for standards assessed at each administration.

Why does Coherence Matter in Arkansas Schools?

Build Shared Understanding of System Coherence

North Star ::

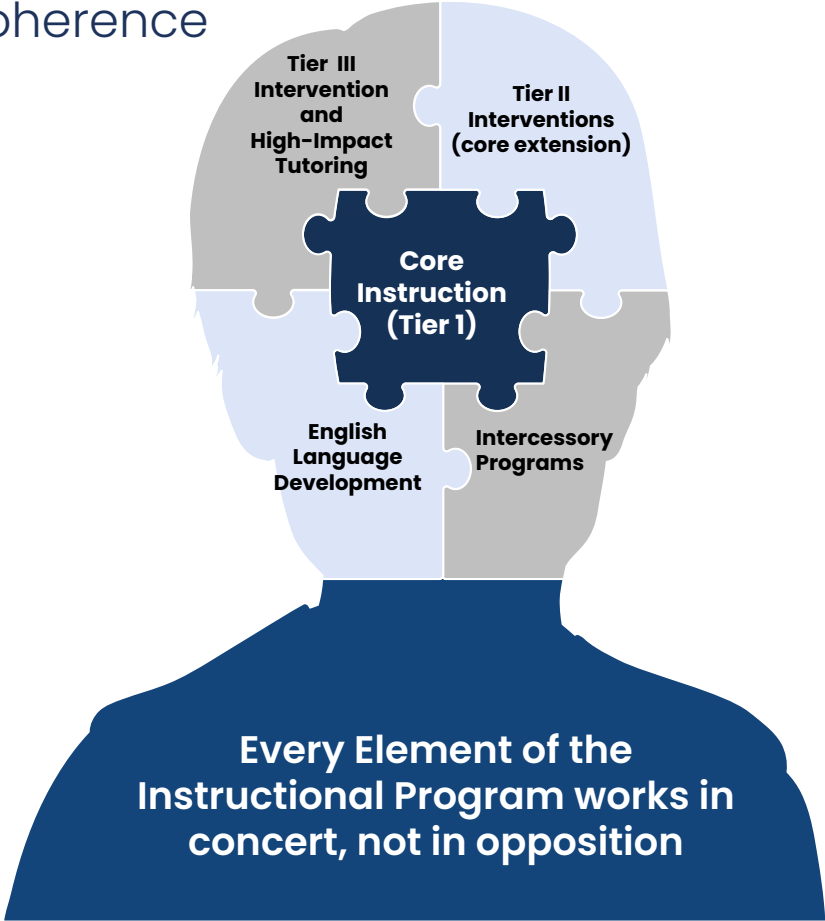
Student Experience --



Each Student.

Excellent Instruction.

Everyday.



BUILD Shared Understanding

System Coherence– District Coherence Readiness Assessment

A. System Coherence

Indicator	Rating
There is a clear, written shared vision of excellent instruction across schools.	1 2 3 4
HQIM are adopted and implemented with defined expectations.	1 2 3 4
Professional learning is through-year and aligns directly to instructional priorities and materials.	1 2 3 4
There are structured systems for observation, feedback, and monitoring alignment.	1 2 3 4
Policies and resources reinforce—not contradict—expectations for instruction.	1 2 3 4

B. Instructional Coherence

Indicator	Rating
Students consistently engage in grade-level content aligned to standards.	1 2 3 4
Classroom structures and instructional routines remain consistent across environments (core, small group, intervention).	1 2 3 4
Aligned data is used routinely to adjust instruction while maintaining grade-level expectations.	1 2 3 4
Interventions are aligned and responsive to core instruction, not separate tracks.	1 2 3 4

BUILD Shared Understanding of Coherence

TEAM TIME

15:00

- Complete the District Coherence Readiness Assessment
 - Discuss what is surfacing for your team?
- Use the chart below to have a discussion about System Coherence, Instructional Alignment and Feedback Loops.

	Current Status (Where We Are?)	Next Steps (Where We are Going?)
System Coherence	Discussion	Discussion
Instructional Alignment	Discussion	Discussion
Feedback Loop	Discussion	Discussion



District System Profile



Hope Worsham

Assistant Commissioner
DESE Public School Accountability

From Ratings to Root Cause

Investigating Accountability Indicators to Drive Action & Effective Tiered Instruction

Individually

School & District Ratings are not the finish line, but the essential diagnostic map for root-cause investigation.

- *What does this statement mean to you?*
- *What mindset shifts might be needed in your district to align with this statement?*

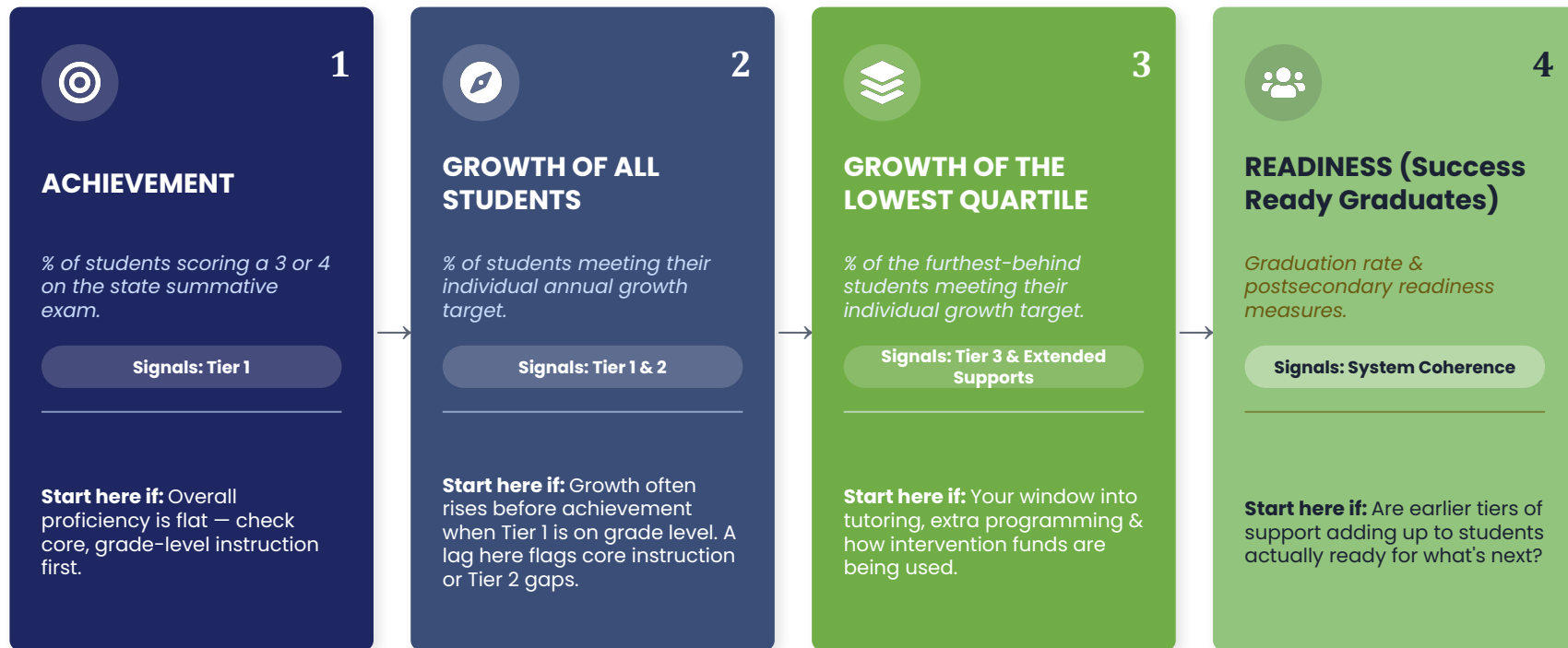
Table Mates

Discuss common themes you hear emerging?



Reading the Rating: A Starting Place, Not the Final Word

Arkansas's four rating indicators point to which tier of support to investigate first — they diagnose, they don't decide.



Note: Readiness (graduation rate & postsecondary measures) applies at the high school level under the current formula.

District/School Profile Based on Rating

**High Achievement,
High Growth**

**Low Achievement,
High Growth**

**High Achievement,
Low Growth**

**Low Achievement,
Low Growth**

Building Profiles

High Achievement, High Growth

Description: This building demonstrates a highly coherent system where standard-aligned, high-rigor Tier 1 instruction is happening daily across all classrooms. Core instruction is strong, and robust tracking systems ensure that any small learning gaps are addressed immediately before they widen.

What District Leaders Should Look For / Next Steps:

- **Verify Sustainability:** Ensure that this high performance is consistent across all student subgroups, including the bottom quartile.
- **Examine Replication Potential:** Audit their collaborative team protocols and data-tracking systems to serve as a blueprint for underperforming schools in the district.
- **Focus on Enrichment:** Check if Tier 1 instruction includes extended learning opportunities or extension activities that continue to push top-performing students.

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Low Achievement, Low Growth

Description: This profile indicates that instruction is likely below grade level or severely misaligned across the board. Tier 1 core instruction lacks rigor, and the intervention systems (Tier 2 and Tier 3) are either disconnected from core standards or failing to track whether students are actually mastering prerequisite skills.

What District Leaders Should Look For / Next Steps:

- **Audit Tier 1 Alignment:** Conduct immediate walkthroughs to check if classroom activities and assessment practices are actually aligned to grade-level standards and Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs).
- **Review Curriculum Fidelity:** Look for major gaps or inconsistent implementation of the curriculum from classroom to classroom.
- **Rebuild Intervention Foundations:** Investigate whether current interventions are scaffolded to help students reach grade-level expectations or if they are simply repeating low-level work.

Building Profiles

High Achievement, Low Growth

Description: While overall proficiency looks positive—often due to strong historical student baseline skills—students are not making meaningful progress over the school year. This typically indicates a lack of instructional urgency, low expectations for continuous growth, or weak Tier 2 intervention systems that fail to track live student progress.

What District Leaders Should Look For / Next Steps:

- **Evaluate Rigor & Differentiated Instruction:** Walk classrooms to determine if teachers are teaching to the ceiling or if instruction stalls once students hit basic "proficiency" targets.
- **Check Live Progress Monitoring:** Examine how the school tracks standard mastery dynamically rather than relying solely on end-of-year results.
- **Review Tier 2 Interventions:** Ensure that intervention systems are tightly aligned to core standards and actively driving growth for students who may be missing specific concepts.

Building Profiles

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- **Review Tier 2 Interventions:** Ensure that intervention systems are tightly aligned to core standards and actively driving growth for students who may be missing specific concepts.

Low Achievement, High Growth

Description: This profile shows that things are moving in the right direction. High growth indicates that effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are likely in place, or that Tier 1 practices are steadily improving. However, historical gaps or lingering inconsistencies in Tier 1 instructional rigor prevent these gains from translating into high overall proficiency yet.

What District Leaders Should Look For / Next Steps:

- **Identify Tier 1 Gaps:** Walk every classroom to pinpoint exactly where inconsistencies in grade-level rigor or instructional practices are occurring.
- **Review Assessment Practices:** Check if classroom assessments match the high expectations of state standards or if they lean toward lower-level tasks.
- **Capitalize on Growth Drivers:** Isolate what is working well in their collaborative teams or intervention blocks (especially within the bottom quartile) and anchor those successes into standard daily core instruction.

Four Levels of Data, Four Different Jobs

Keep each source doing the job it was built for — don't ask one number to tell you everything.



STATE

System-level check: are we confident schools and districts are on track?

SOURCES

- ATLAS Screener
- ATLAS Interim 1 & 2
- ATLAS Summative / ELPA21

Use it to: Confirm trends & accountability — not tomorrow's lesson. Identify curriculum gaps.



DISTRICT

Pattern spotting across schools: where do we align support & resources?

SOURCES

- Aggregated walkthrough trends
- VAM / growth data
- Common assessment results

Use it to: Set vision, expectations, paicing & professional learning priorities.



BUILDING

School-wide priorities: is our plan working for our students right now?

SOURCES

- SIP progress monitoring
- Weekly walkthroughs
- Attendance & behavior trends

Use it to: Adjust coaching focus & collaborative team priorities weekly.



CLASSROOM

Next student, next lesson: what do I do tomorrow morning?

SOURCES

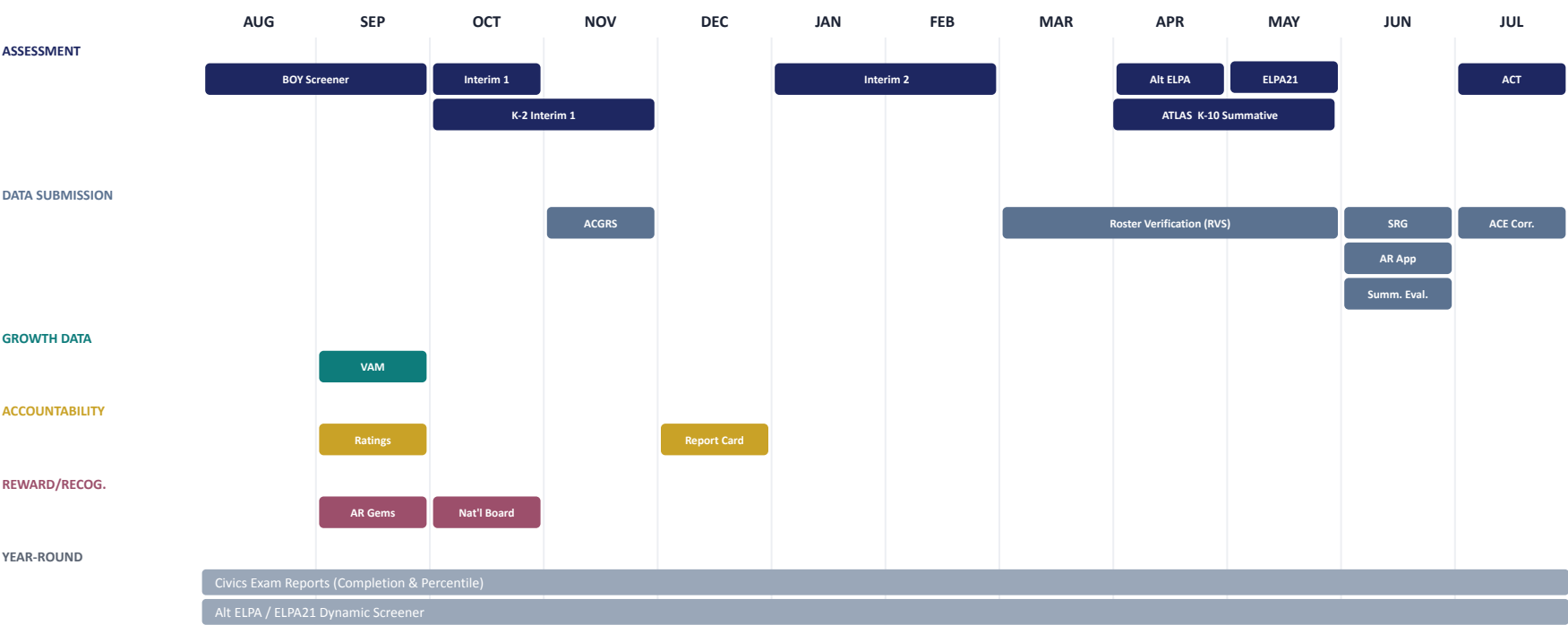
- Formative checks
- Teacher observation & feedback
- Student work in real time

Use it to: Make the next instructional move — today.

The Year at a Glance

■ Assessment ■ Data Submission ■ Accountability ■ Growth Data ■ Reward / Recognition

Every major state release, organized by type — plus what runs year-round and what's still TBD.



Not yet scheduled: Merit Incentive Fund • Teacher Annual Rating (Act 808)

Use the release windows to check the system — the local cycle is what moves it.

The Local Data Cycle: Continuous, Not Periodic

State releases are periodic snapshots. Local data never stops moving.



WEEKLY

Building walkthroughs, collaborative team data, behavior data



MONTHLY

Progress monitoring, attendance & behavior trends



ONGOING

Quality feedback to teachers and leaders, Classroom formative checks & student work

Use the State release data to check the system. Use the weekly cycle to move it.

From Weekly Walkthroughs to System Change

Same evidence, two lenses — building action versus district alignment.



BUILDING: Weekly Action Cycle



LOOK

Conduct brief weekly walkthroughs against 1–2 look-fors from key impact area



NOTE

Capture one clear trend across classrooms



ACT

Adjust coaching, collaborative team focus, or support that week



REPEAT

Revisit the same look-fors the following week



DISTRICT: Systemic Alignment Cycle



AGGREGATE

Roll up walkthrough & implementation data across every building



DIAGNOSE

Look for system-wide patterns, not one building's story



ALIGN

Direct professional learning, resources & expectations district-wide



COMMUNICATE

Reinforce the vision and non-negotiables with every school

The Foundation: A clear district vision and non-negotiable expectations — with room for buildings to differentiate how they get there, just as we differentiate instruction for students.

THE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK CYCLE



Instructional Leadership Loops

Data without action is overhead. True improvement requires **responsive, structured feedback loops** established between instructional leaders, building coaches, and classroom teachers.

We progress-monitor our interventions frequently and collaboratively, ensuring **adjustments happen in real time** rather than at the end of a testing cycle.

UNCOVERING ROOT CAUSES

Look Beyond the Symptom



Avoid quick fixes (e.g., buying new software) before you understand exactly why a metric is lagging.

Focus on Control



Ensure your root causes address variables the school can directly control, like instruction time and curriculum.

The 5 Whys Principle



Iteratively ask "Why?" to peel back layers of symptoms and reveal the structural system failures underneath.

Collaborative Inquiry



Involve coaches, teachers, and interventionists in the inquiry. They hold the ground-level context.

SYMPTOM VS. ROOT CAUSE MAPPING

Indicator Focus	Observed Symptom (The Data)	Probable Root Cause (The System Gap)
Tier 1 Achievement	Summative scores are flat; low percentage of Ready students.	Lack of rigorous, standard-aligned Tier 1 curriculum materials or pacing guides.
Growth of All	Individual growth is declining in middle grades.	Core instruction is scaffolded down permanently rather than using dynamic scaffolding.
Lowest Quarter	High tutoring spend with no corresponding growth index.	Tutoring curriculum is disconnected from daily core instruction.
Other Metric	High rate of chronic student absenteeism.	Absence of proactive, personal outreach and early warning intervention structures.

From Symptom to Root Cause

The 5 Whys Protocol — Data to Action in Under 45 Minutes

Insight lives in the diagnosis, not the fix — the goal is to spend most of your time understanding the problem, not guessing at solutions.



Why This Matters

Schools aren't short on data. They're short on insight.



Surrounded by Data

Schools compile endless columns of numbers — attendance rates, screener drops, summative trends.

Result: Teams see a symptom and react to it, instead of asking what's actually causing it.



Starving for Insight

Real change starts when leaders isolate the true structural or human bottleneck sitting behind the number.

Result: Root cause work turns a metric into an actual pathway forward.



The Cost of Guessing Wrong

Fixing the surface — like sending more reminder emails to boost a portal's use — doesn't solve the real gap underneath, like parents never having a system to onboard them in the first place. Chasing symptoms burns time, resources, and staff goodwill, and it's exactly what fuels initiative fatigue.

What the 5 Whys Buys You

A simple protocol, not a committee project.



Cuts Through Noise

Skips the long meeting and drills straight past the symptom to the real obstacle holding a student group back.



Removes the Guesswork

Forces the team to test the logic instead of pointing fingers or reaching for the easy, familiar explanation.



Moves at the Speed of Action

About 15 minutes to a locally-actionable next step — ready to start this week, not next semester.

The Four-Step Protocol

Define. Ask Why. Verify. Commit. Fifteen minutes, start to finish.



1

DEFINE

Name a specific, measurable symptom, backed by real evidence.



2

ASK WHY

Ask “why does this happen?” five times in a row, capturing each answer.



3

VERIFY

Read the chain backward with “...and therefore...” to make sure the logic holds.



4

COMMIT

Land on the deepest barrier your team actually controls — then act.

Step 1: Define the Symptom

A vague worry can't be diagnosed. A specific, quantifiable symptom can.

MAKE IT SPECIFIC & QUANTIFIABLE

Not “reading is a problem” — a defined metric, population, and timeframe. The state framework and your local data both give you the evidence.

PULL FROM WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

A rating indicator that dipped • A grade-band screener or interim trend • A pattern showing up across weekly walkthroughs



YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT TEMPLATE

*In [subject / grade band / student group],
[metric] moved from [X] to [Y] between
[timeframe].*

Example:

“ELA proficiency in Grades 2–6 dropped 8 points from the 2023–24 baseline to this year's ATLAS summative.”

Step 2: Ask Why — Map the Chain

Write the problem. Ask “why?” Turn that answer into your next problem. Repeat five times.



THE ONE RULE

The final answer can't point to something you don't control — not “society,” “funding,” or “these kids.”

Keep pushing toward a gap in local training, culture, systems, or support — something your team can actually change.

SYMPTOM

ELA proficiency dropped across Grades 2–6.

WHY?

Classroom feedback on reading instruction is inconsistent.

WHY?

Building leaders aren't observing reading instruction regularly.

WHY?

Leaders aren't confident naming what strong reading instruction looks like.

WHY?

Leadership training hasn't focused on instructional feedback.

ROOT CAUSE

No consistent system for developing leaders as instructional coaches.

Step 3: Verify — the ‘And Therefore’ Test

Read the chain backward. If a link doesn't hold, go back and dig again.



Zone of Control: Where the Root Cause Has to Land

You can't solve what you don't control.

IN YOUR CONTROL



Local Training



Master Scheduling



Building Culture



Instructional Support



Resource Allocation

THE RULE

If your final “why” points outside this zone, you haven't found the real root cause yet — keep digging.

OUT OF BOUNDS

“Society” • Student demographics • Family income • State funding levels

Step 4: Commit — the Action Horizon

Same root cause, three time horizons — from this week's task to the system-level goal.



NEXT WEEK

Immediate, low-barrier task

Finalize a walkthrough tool, feedback expectations, and weekly schedule. Conduct 2 joint walkthroughs with a peer administrator to model the process.



NEXT MONTH

Sustained structural shift

Analyze trends across administrators to identify gaps in feedback quality. Begin monthly calibration sessions to strengthen consistency across the leadership team.



THIS YEAR

Overarching systemic goal

A self-sustaining, districtwide system for developing and supporting instructional leaders — not a one-time fix.

Your Turn: Table Practice

15–20 minutes at your table. Bring a real trend from today's data conversation.

1

Pick a Real Trend

A rating indicator that dipped, a screener or interim trend, or a pattern from your weekly walkthroughs.

2

Map the Chain (10 min)

Write your problem statement. Ask “why?” five times, turning each answer into the next problem.

3

Verify It

Read the chain backward with “...and therefore...” Make sure it stays inside your zone of control.

4

Commit to Action

Name one Next Week task and one Next Month shift that move the root cause, not just the symptom.



Before you leave: How will you build this 15-minute protocol into your regular rhythm — PLC, leadership team, or cabinet meeting?

Lunch



School Profile



Brooke McCain

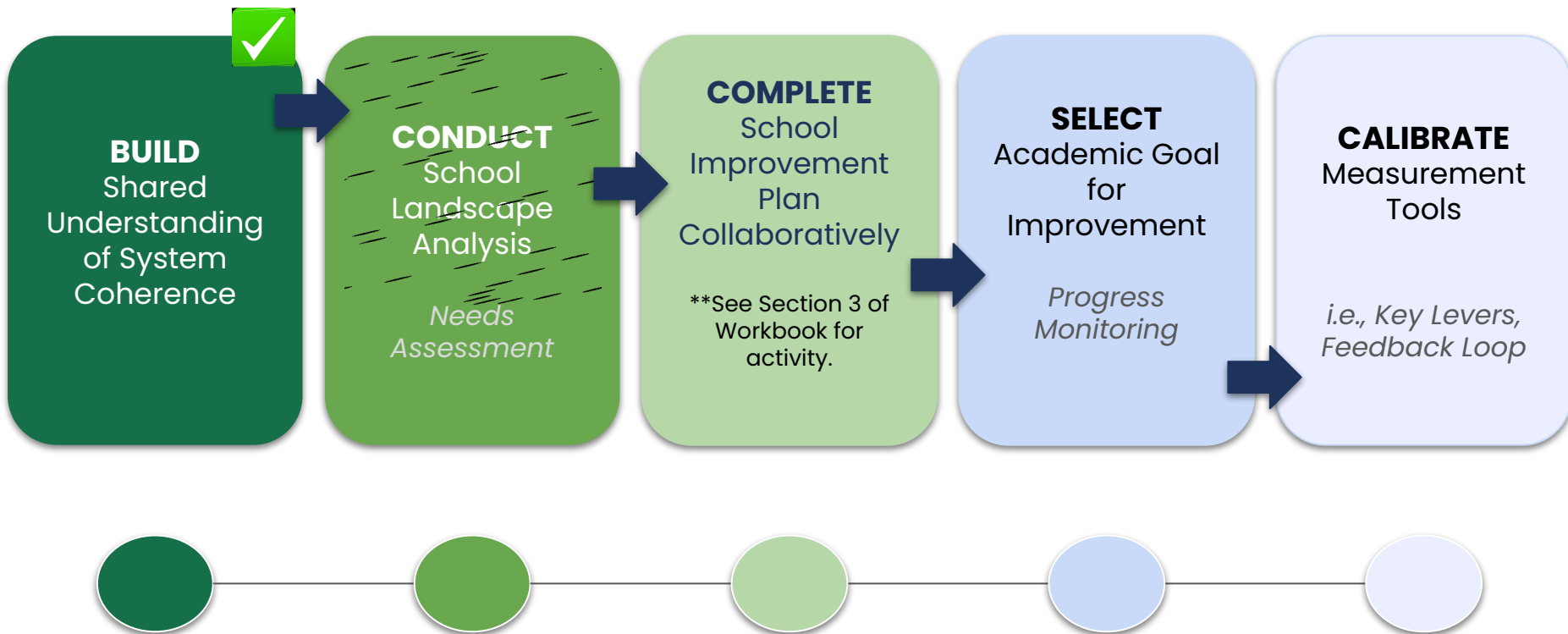
Director of Monitoring & Accreditation
DESE Public School Accountability

What's
Required
vs.
Best Practice?



What's Required: School Improvement Plan

Developing a Strategic Plan through the SIP



“If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”

– Albert Einstein (adapted)

Step 1: A School Profile – Define Your Reality

**High Achievement,
High Growth**

**Low Achievement,
High Growth**

**High Achievement,
Low Growth**

**Low Achievement,
Low Growth**

The Four-Step Protocol

1. Define

Draft a specific quantifiable symptom statement backed by school evidence.

2. Ask Why

Iterate “Why does this happen?” 5 times sequentially, noting each response

3. Verify

Work backward through your responses using cohesive “And therefore” logic.

4. Commit

Isolate the deepest actionable barrier that rests within school control and set a goal.

Step 2: Asky Why – Modeling the Dive

Symptom: ELA performance dipped in Grades 2-6, lack of instructional leadership

Why?

Administrators are not giving consistent instructional feedback

Why?

Walkthroughs and coaching cycles are not happening regularly.

Why?

Leaders do not feel confident identifying rigor and alignment.

Why?

Administrator training hasn't focused on instructional leadership.

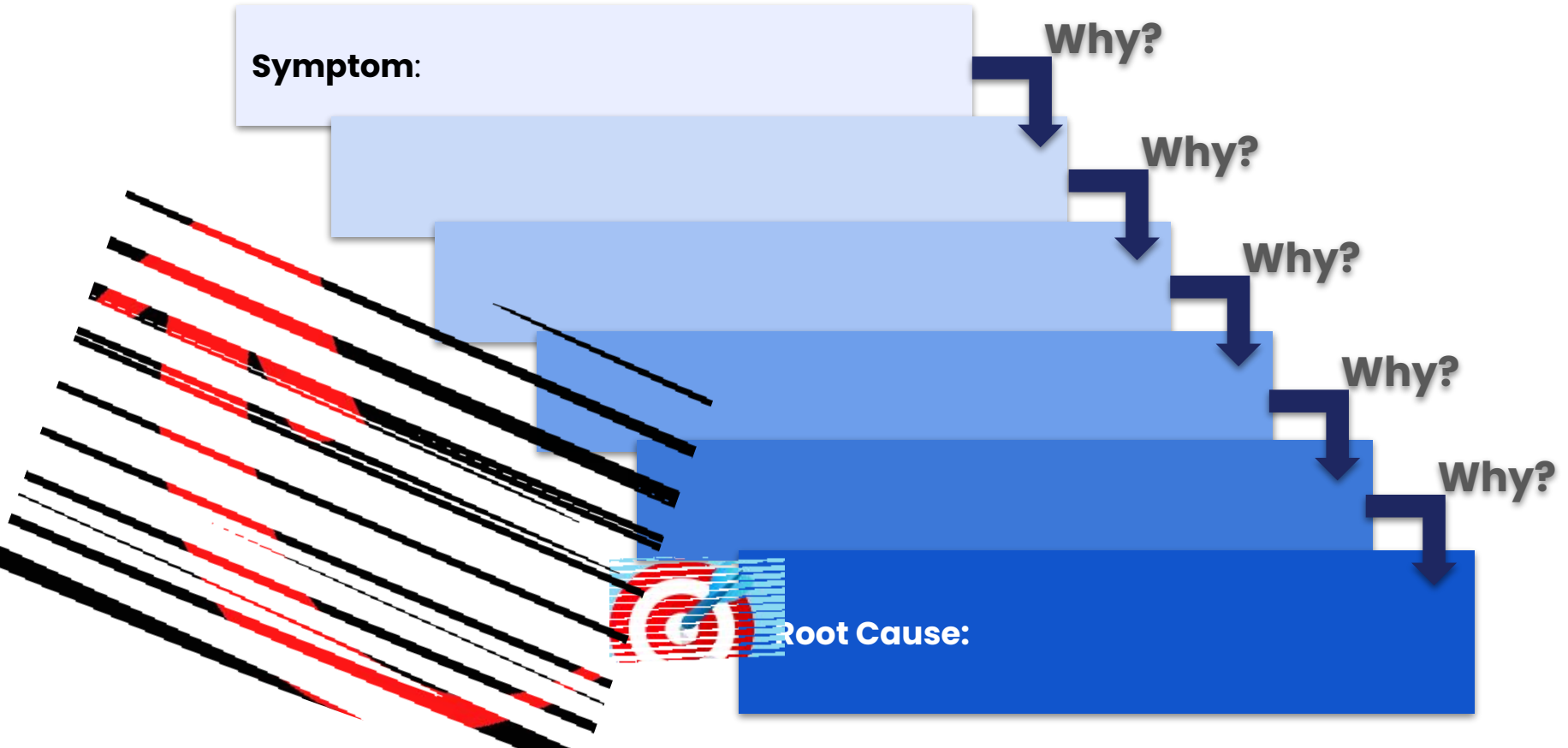
Why?

Root Cause: Inconsistent systems for developing and supporting administrators as instructional leaders

And
therefore...

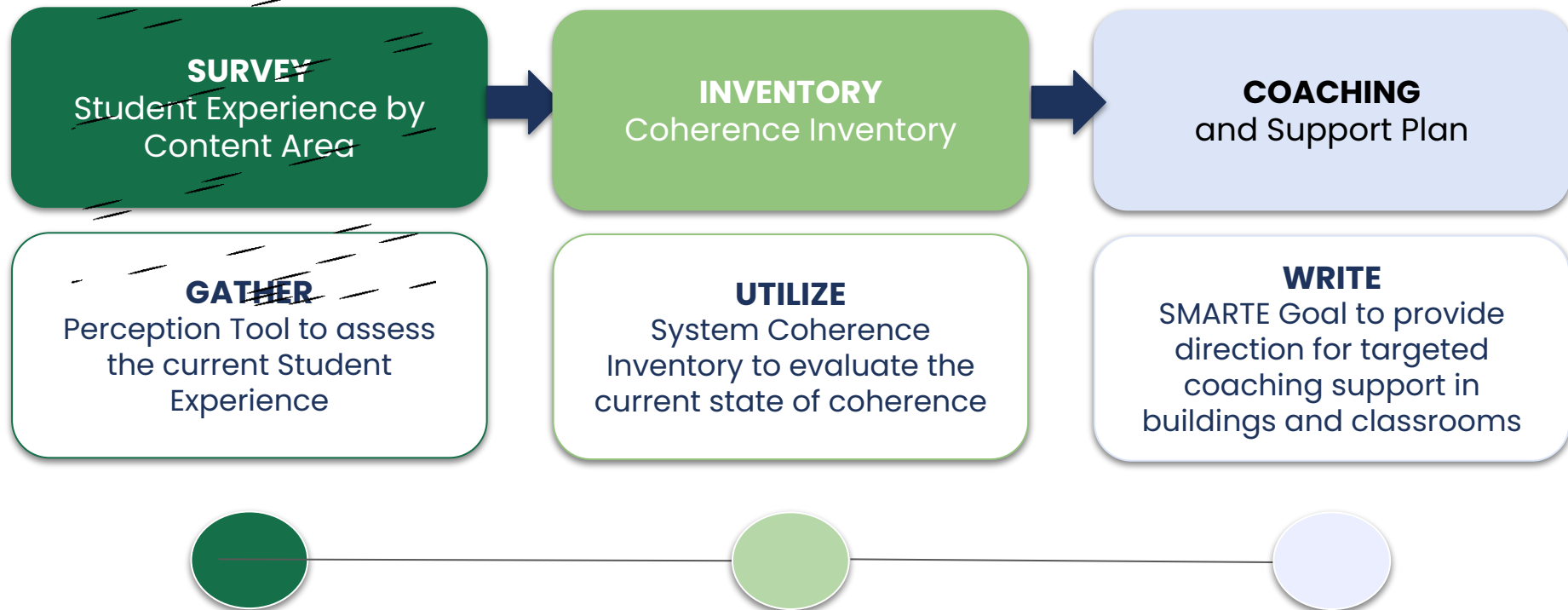


Your Turn: Find blank space in your workbook to practice.



Building-Level Alignment

Putting the SIP into Action through School-Based Experiences



Student Experience Survey

Grounding in the Student Experience Survey

Set Your Focus

Identify the content area, grade-band, and student group that will be the focus on the coherence inventory.

Working with a partner or table group, identify **one focus area** for the coherence inventory.

Which content area?

☐

Math

Which grade band?

☐

K-2

☐

3-5

☐

6-8

☐

9-12

Which group of students?

☐

Students performing below grade-level

☐

English Learners

☐

Students ready for acceleration

☐

Students with disabilities

Student Experience

Is it coherent?

What do students directly experience or encounter in the building?



The **student experience** ensures every learner receives clear, consistent support and meaningful instruction that integrates all learning experiences.

Activity: Student Experience Inventory

Let's Practice

10:00

Student Math Experience Perception Survey (Tier 1 and Tier 2)

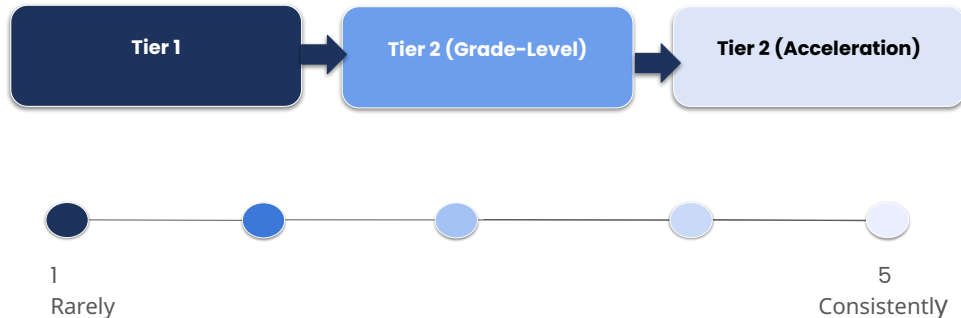
Based on your Focus Area, read the statement individually and rate on a scale of 1 to 5, how well students engage with the content.

Share with a partner or school group, identify **one celebration and challenge area** for school(s) or district.

Student Level: What should every student experience?

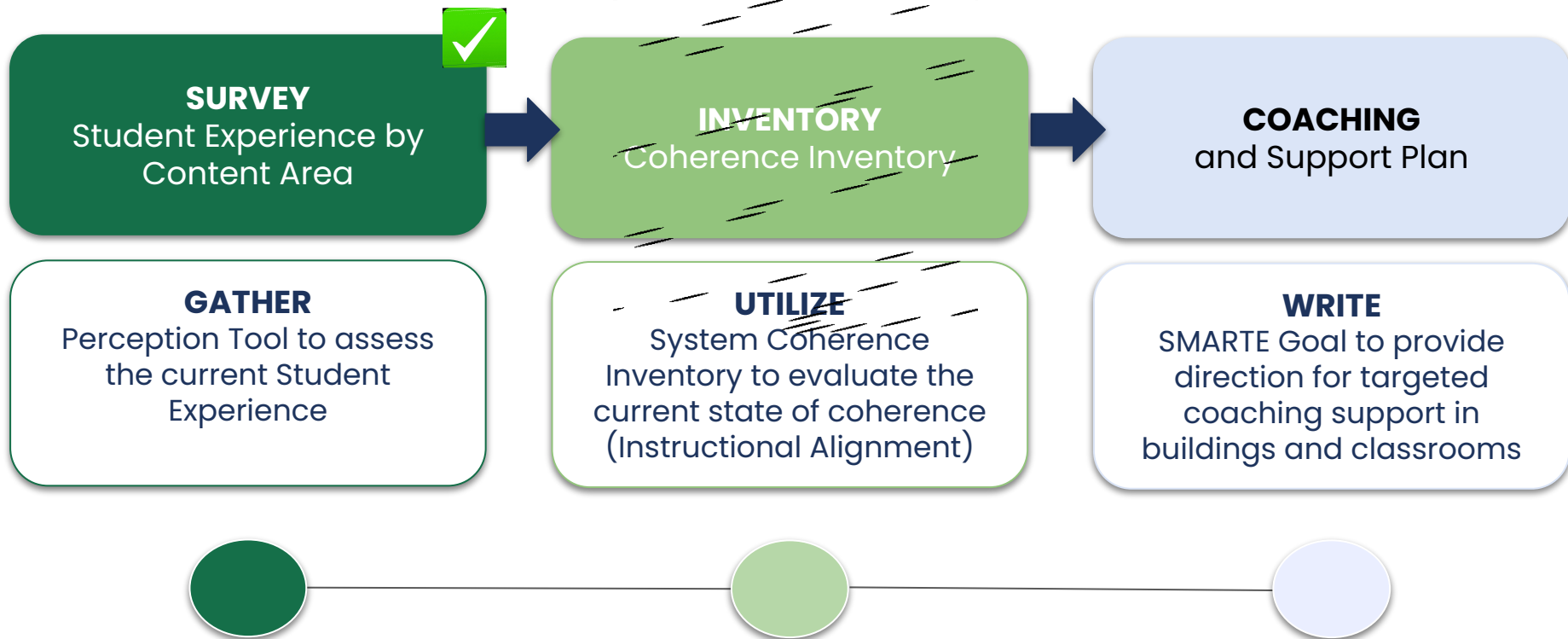
Classroom Level: What should every classroom provide?

School Level: What should leaders do to ensure it happens?



Building-Level Alignment

Putting the SIP into Action through School-Based Experiences



Instructional Alignment

Is it coherent?



What does your instructional program say should happen or allow to happen?

Instructional alignment builds on this foundation of system coherence and is evident by how well school and district leaders coordinate grade-level curriculum and influence teaching practices, and use of assessment continuums in learning environments within the classroom.

Instructional Alignment Key Components

High-Leverage Actions that Move the Needle

What does Tier 1 Instruction look like in a coherent school system?

- Written definition with consistent communication, application, and understanding across school(s) and team(s)
- Clear and consistent understanding and usage of strategies and routines from HQIM across grade-level teacher(s) and teams
- Thorough analysis with clear alignment with Arkansas standards, best practices, and student needs.
- Regular planning producing clear and shared instructional decisions with consistent implementation across grade level and teams.



Activity: Instructional Alignment Inventory

Let's Practice: Overall Rating

10:00

Instructional Alignment Inventory (Tier 1 and Tier 2)

Based on the selected grade band and student group, review each question and choose the rating that best reflects the current level of implementation for each practice, citing evidence to justify your selection. Complete all questions before assessing the overall status for this category.

Working with a partner, table group, or independently, identify **overall rating** and **SMART goal** for instructional alignment.

Instructional Alignment Inventory (Tier 1 and 2)

- *Focus: What does your instructional program (or approach) say should happen or allow to happen?*
- *Who owns Instructional Alignment? School Leaders and Teachers*

Instructions: Based on the selected grade band and student group, review each question and choose the rating that best reflects the current level of implementation for each practice, citing evidence to justify your selection. Complete all questions before assessing the overall status for this category.

Tier 1		
1. Is there a clear written definition for implementing Tier 1 instruction? (e.g., vision, principles, non-negotiables)		
☐ Clear and Consistent <i>Clear Expectations;</i> written definition with consistent communication, application, and understanding across school(s) and team(s)	☐ Exist But Inconsistent <i>Fragmented Expectations;</i> definition exists with inconsistent communication, application, or understanding across school(s) and team(s)	☐ Missing or Unclear <i>Missing or Incomplete Expectations;</i> no definition exists, or multiple conflicting definitions with unclear understanding across school(s) and teams
2. Do teachers understand the core pedagogical strategies , routines, or instructional moves expected at Tier 1 from HQIM?		
☐ Clear and Consistent <i>Strong Implementation;</i> clear and consistent understanding and usage of strategies and routines from HQIM across grade-level teacher(s) & teams	☐ Exist But Inconsistent <i>Developing Implementation;</i> limited understanding and inconsistent usage of strategies and routines from HQIM across grade level teacher(s) & teams	☐ Missing or Unclear <i>Limited Implementation;</i> little or no shared understanding of strategies and routines from HQIM across grade-level teacher(s) & team(s)

Clear and Consistent

Exist But Inconsistent

Missing or Unclear

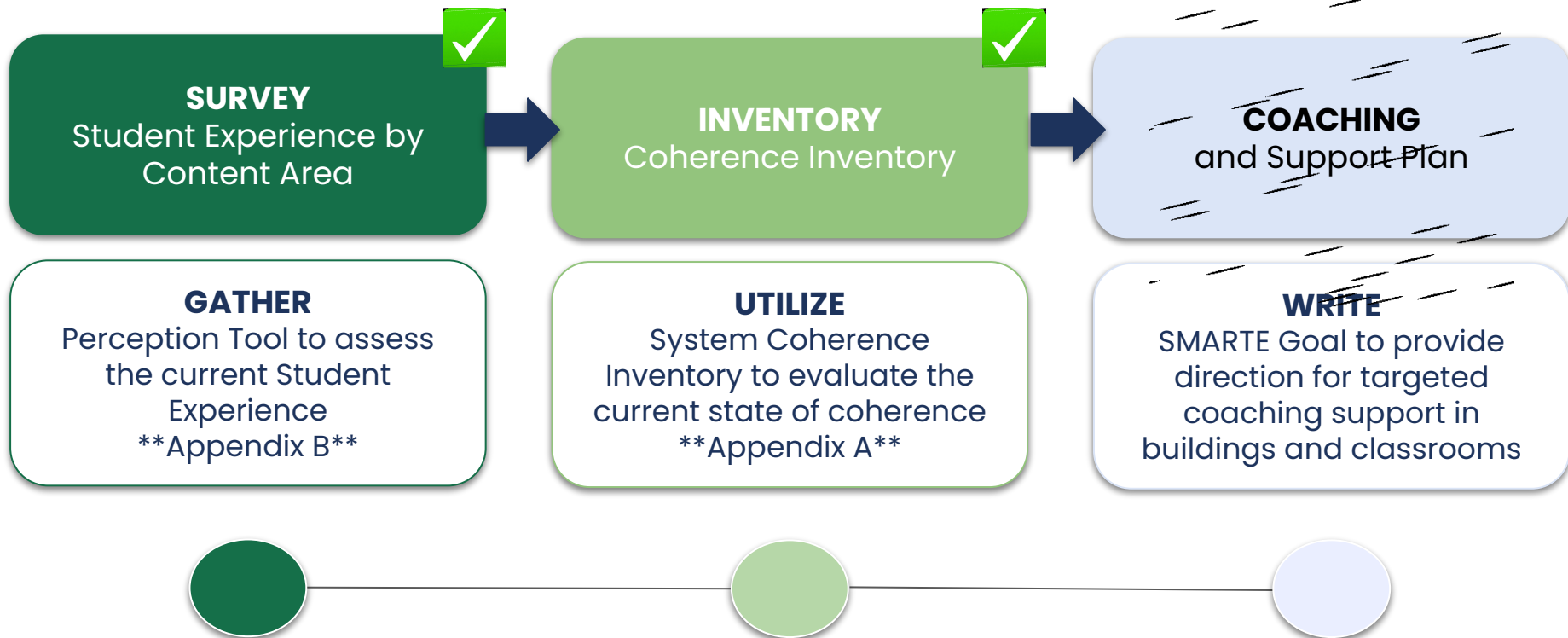
Clear and Consistent – The practice is clearly evident and consistently implemented across schools and classrooms.

Exist But Not Consistent – The practice is present in some places, but implementation varies and is not yet consistent.

Missing or Unclear – The practice is not evident, lacks sufficient evidence, or expectations are unclear.

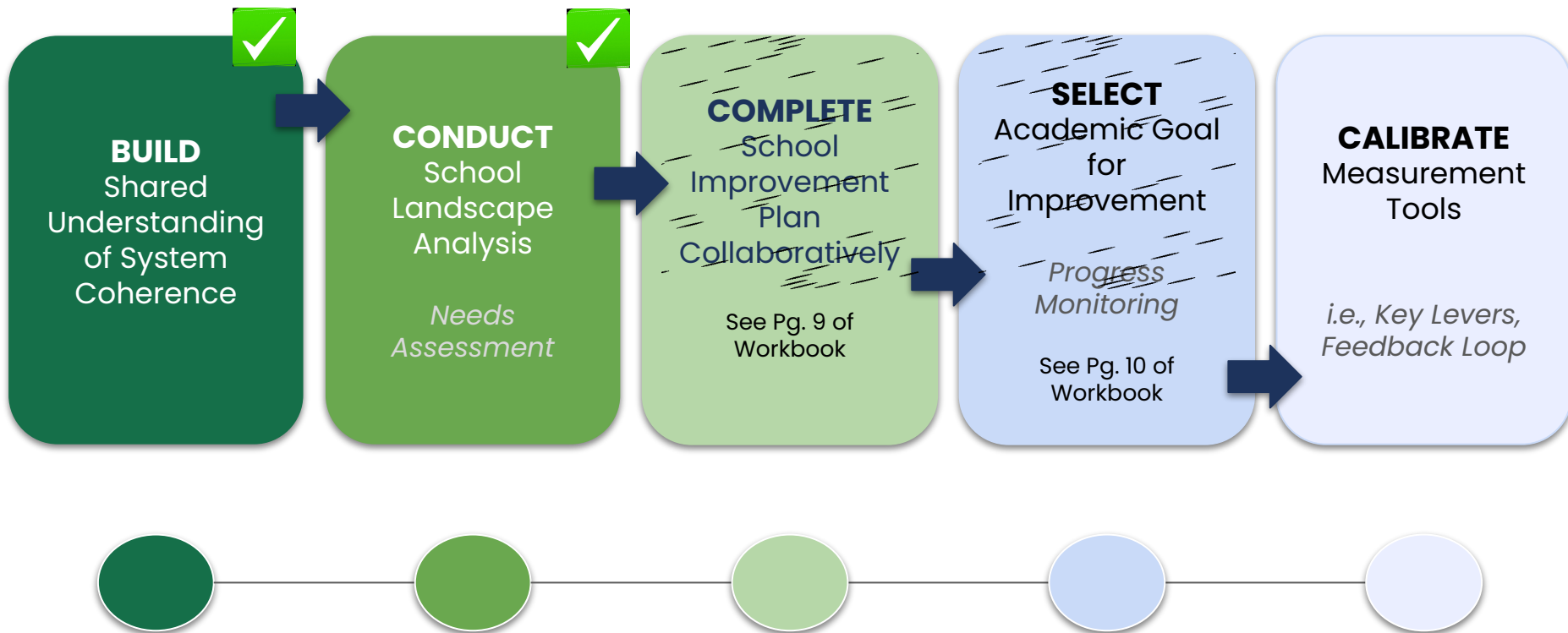
Building-Level Alignment

Putting the SIP into Action through School-Based Experiences



What's Required: School Improvement Plan

Developing a Strategic Plan through the SIP



Step 4: Setting a SMARTER GOAL

Putting the SIP into Action through School-Based Experiences

SPECIFIC

What outcomes might you envision for these goals?

MEASURABLE

What might you notice when success emerges?

ATTAINABLE

What steps seem most likely to support progress?

RELEVANT

How might these goals connect to your priorities?

TIME-BOUND

What time frames might keep momentum moving?

EVIDENCE-BASED

What data could help shape your next steps?

District Goal Stem

District Level Goal Structure

By [date], the district will increase [specific student outcome] as measured by [named assessment], from [use 2026 Atlas Summative as baseline data] to [target], resulting in approximately [number] additional students meeting expectations. Progress will be monitored using [interim assessments, CBMs, and HQIM-aligned measures] aligned to grade-level standards.

Example: By May 2027, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced (Levels 3 and 4) in ELA on the ATLAS Summative Assessment will increase from 42% (420 of 1,000 students) to 50% (500 of 1,000 students), resulting in approximately 80 additional students demonstrating proficiency. Progress toward this goal will be monitored through weekly standards, curriculum, and ALD reviews; strategic instructional walkthroughs; timely feedback to teachers; and the use of walkthrough and student performance data to inform next instructional steps aligned to grade-level standards.

School Goal Stem

School Goal Structure

By [date], [school name] will increase [specific student outcome] as measured by [named assessment], from [use 2026 Atlas Summative as baseline data] to [target], resulting in approximately [number] additional students meeting expectations. Progress will be monitored using [interim assessments, CBMs, and HQIM-aligned measures] aligned to grade-level standards.

Example

By May 2027, Arkansas School will increase the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced (Levels 3 and 4) in ELA on the ATLAS Summative Assessment from 38% (114 of 300 students) to 50% (150 of 300 students), resulting in approximately 36 additional students demonstrating proficiency. Progress toward this goal will be monitored through PLC data reviews, quarterly interim assessments, curriculum-based measures, student work analysis, instructional walkthroughs, and targeted instructional adjustments aligned to grade-level standards.

Teacher/Student Goal Stem

Teacher/Student Goal Structure

By [date], [teacher/classroom/grade level] will increase the number and percentage of students demonstrating [specific skill or outcome] from [baseline] to [target], resulting in approximately [number] additional students meeting grade-level expectations. Progress will be monitored through [CBMs, student work analysis, benchmark assessments, and/or HQIM-embedded measures] aligned to grade-level standards.

Example

By May 2027, Mrs. Smith's Grade 2 classroom will increase the number of students meeting grade-level expectations in foundational literacy skills from 12 of 20 students (60%) to 18 of 20 students (90%), resulting in approximately 6 additional students demonstrating proficiency in decoding and encoding grade-level words. Progress will be monitored through curriculum-based measures (CBMs), student work analysis, benchmark assessments, and ongoing review of standards-aligned instructional data.

Committing to the Goal



Next Week

Immediate, low-barrier tasks



Next Month

Sustained structural shifts



This Year

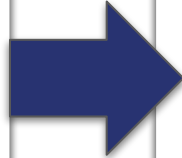
Overarching systemic goal achieved

Continued...Committing to the Goal

Context: Solving for “Inconsistent systems for developing administrators.”

This Week

- ❑ Finalize a walkthrough tool, feedback expectations, and weekly schedule
- ❑ Conduct 2 joint walkthroughs with a peer administrator to model the exact process.

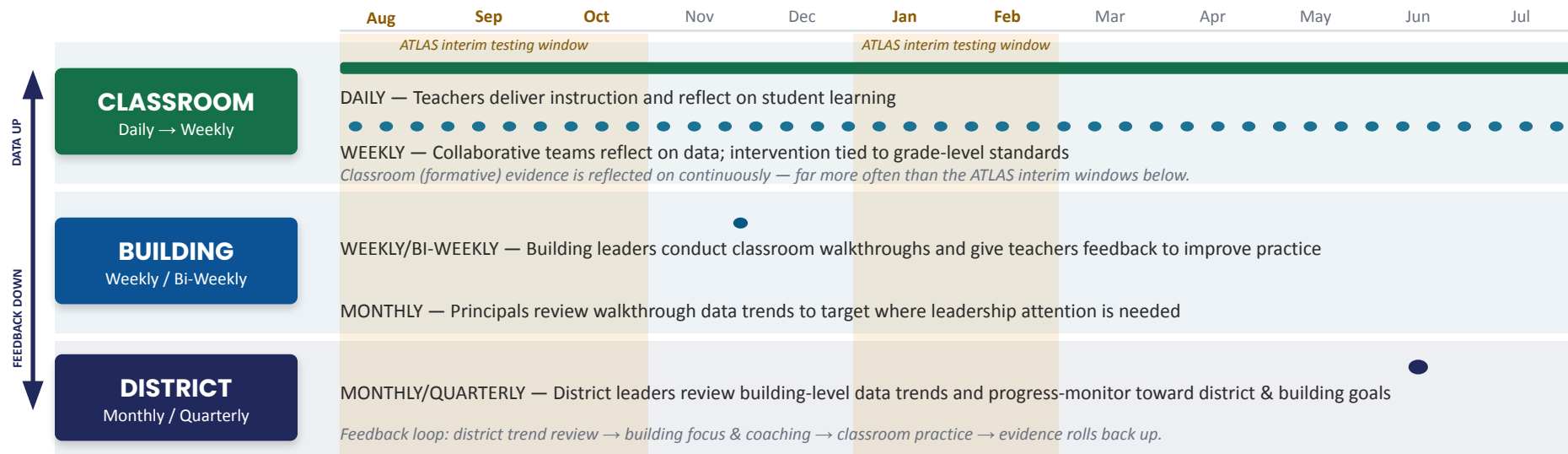


Next Month

- ❑ Analyze trends across administrators to identify gaps in feedback quality.
- ❑ Begin monthly calibration sessions to strengthen consistency across the leadership team.

For Example: What's Required?

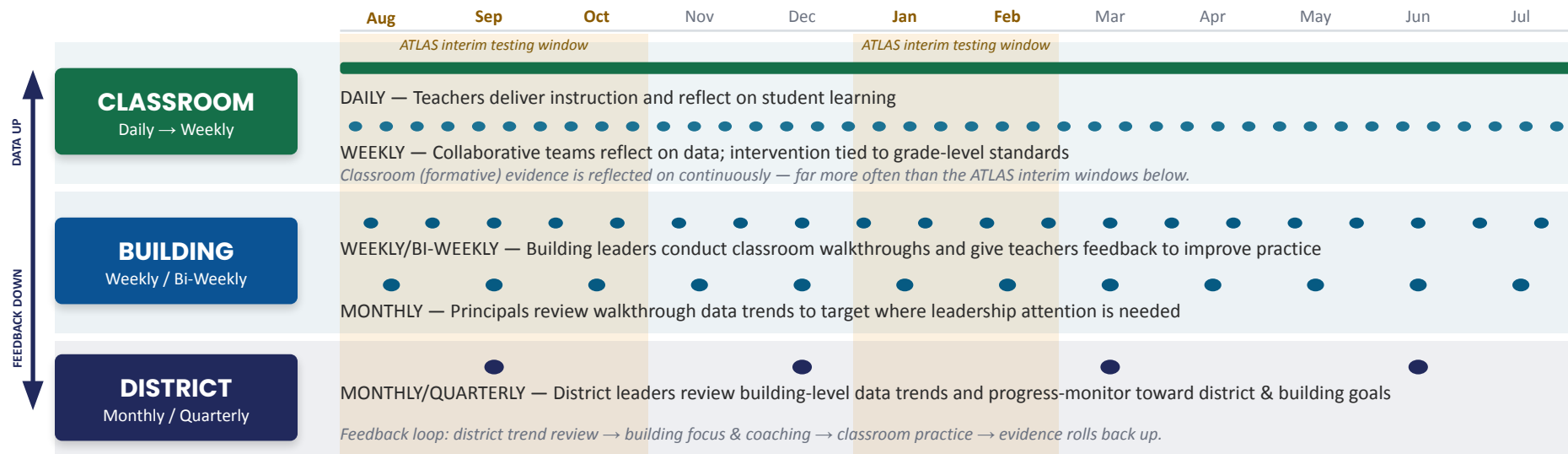
Classroom → Building → District cycles across the school year



- ATLAS interim window
- recurring cycle check-in

Best Practice: A Coherent System Built Around a Goal Cycle

Classroom → Building → District cycles across the school year



- ATLAS interim window
- recurring cycle check-in

Activity: From Goal to Action

Let's Practice

SMARTER Goal

By May 2027, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced (Levels 3 and 4) in Math on the ATLAS Summative Assessment will increase from 42% (420 of 1,000 students) to 50% (500 of 1,000 students), resulting in approximately 80 additional students demonstrating proficiency. Progress toward this goal will be monitored through weekly standards, curriculum, and ALD reviews; strategic instructional walkthroughs; timely feedback to teachers; and the use of walkthrough and student performance data to inform next instructional steps aligned to grade-level standards.

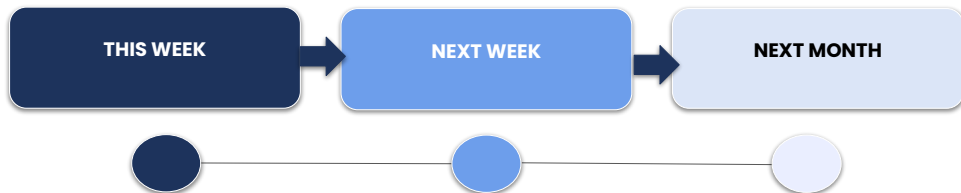
Working with a partner or table group, **develop a goal** and identify **one leadership action** for each timeframe. (Pg. 10 of Workbook)

This Week: What should leaders do to launch the work?

Next Week: What should leaders do to support implementation?

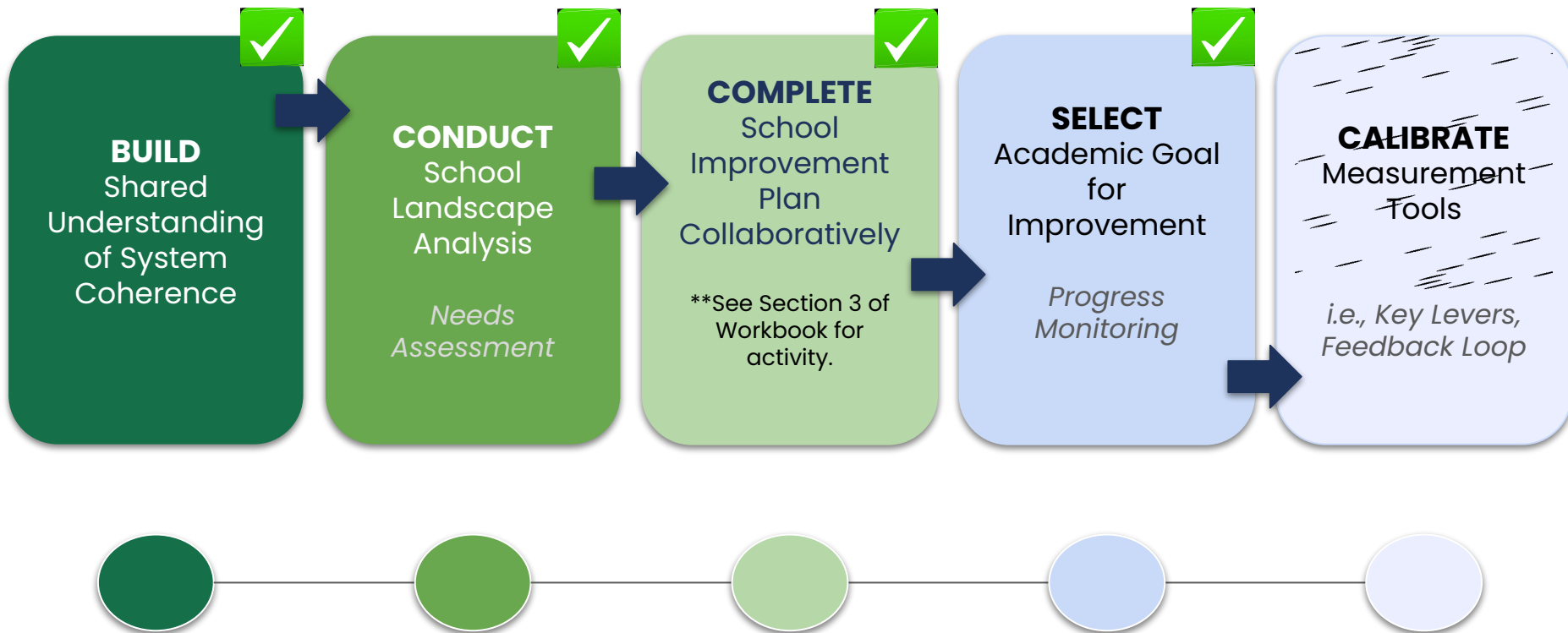
Next Month: What should leaders do to monitor and adjust?

Record your best idea in each box.



What's Required: School Improvement Plan

Developing a Strategic Plan through the SIP





Classroom Profile

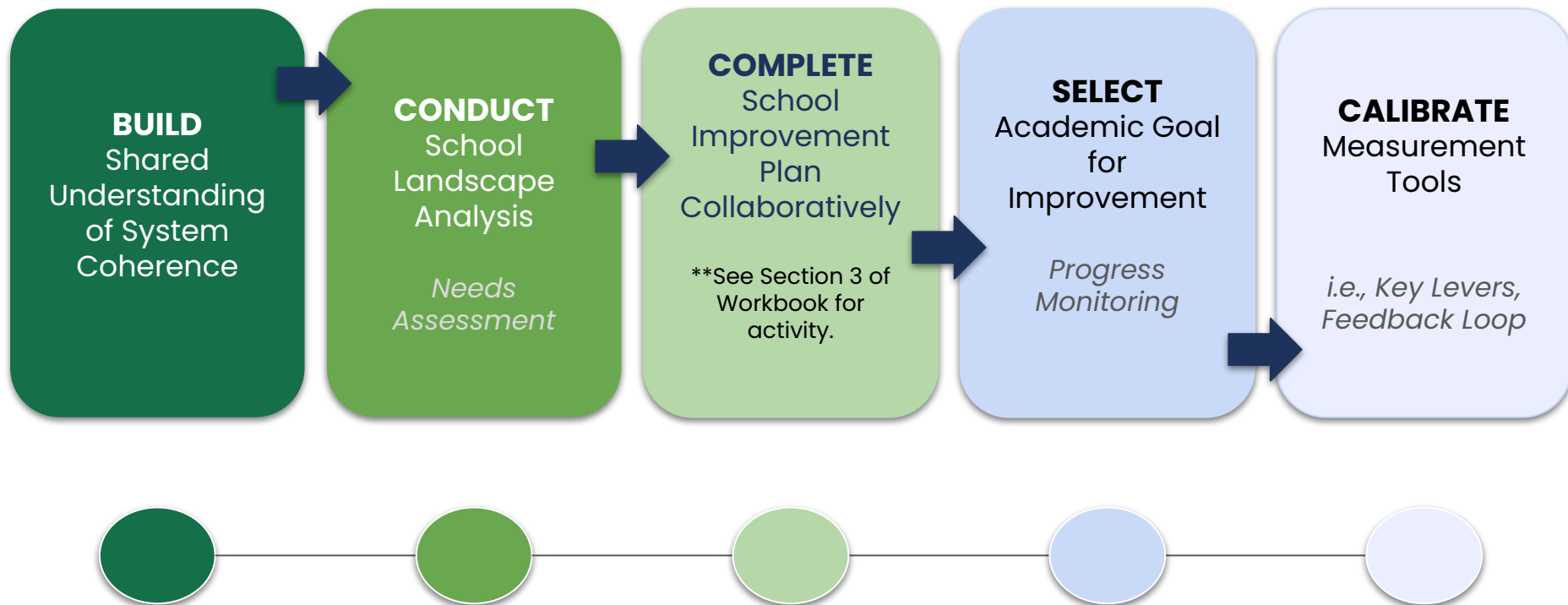


Kisa Morman

Math Public School Program Manager
DESE Learning Services

School Improvement Plan

Implementing a Strategic Plan through the SIP



Instructional Cycles

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

What's required vs. what's high-quality?

- Having a School Improvement Plan is required for accreditation; however, the quality of the inputs of the plan is what impacts the classroom outcomes.
- The **student experience** is affected by the quality of input.

Instructional Cycles

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

When the student experience is **inconsistent**, the following happens:

- **Compliance without coherence:** The paperwork checks all the boxes, but it doesn't translate into consistent classroom practice.
- **Coherence without evidence:** Teachers are doing great work, but there's no clear way to show, sustain, or scale what's working.
- **Initiative overload:** Educators are asked to take on initiative after initiative without understanding how the pieces fit together.
- **Student Impact:** When systems aren't aligned, students who need the most support are often the ones most affected.

Instructional Cycles

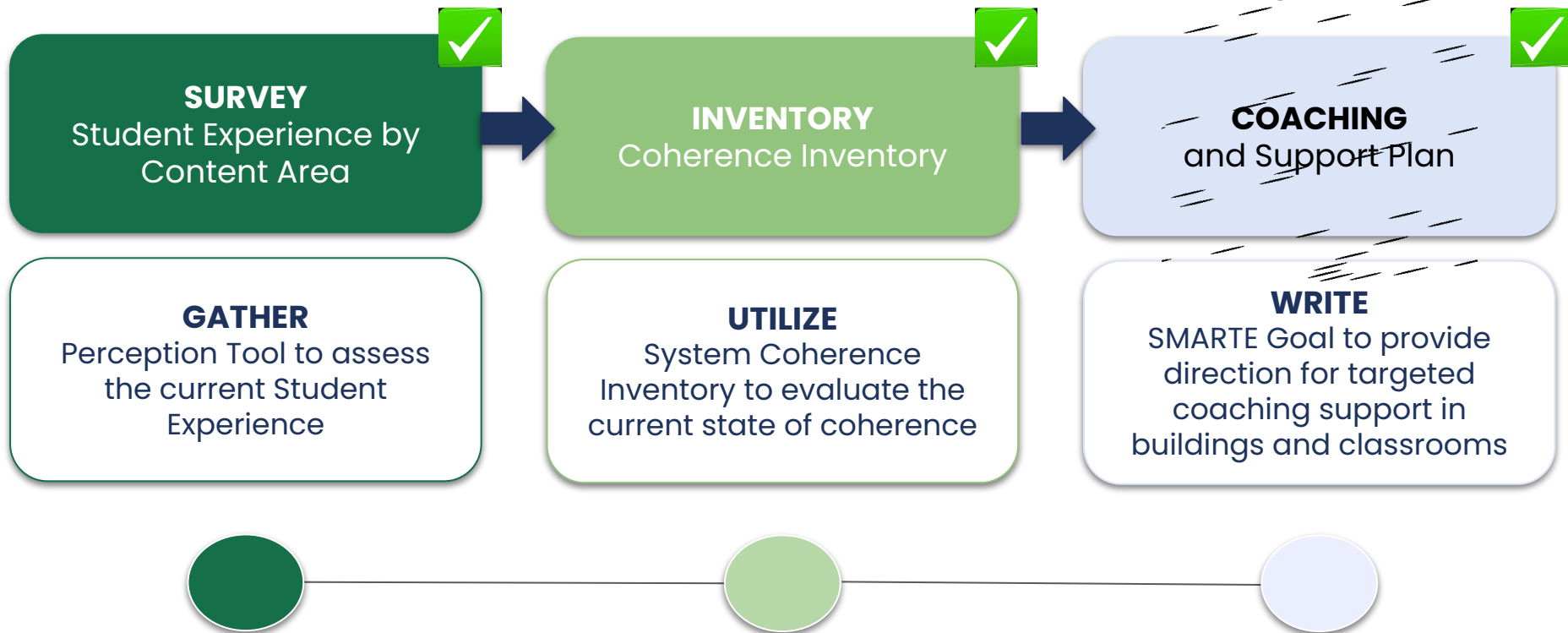
Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

When the student experience is **consistent**, the following happens:

- A **shared language** spanning boardroom, leadership team, and classroom.
- **Coherence with evidence:** Teachers are providing consistent high quality instruction, and there's is a clear way to show, sustain, or scale what's working.
- **Clear Vision:** A unified vision that streamlining multiple initiatives into a singular, predictable roadmap so everyone is moving in the same direction.
- **Student Impact:** One coherent story aligning standards → curriculum → instruction → assessment → evidence and feedback.

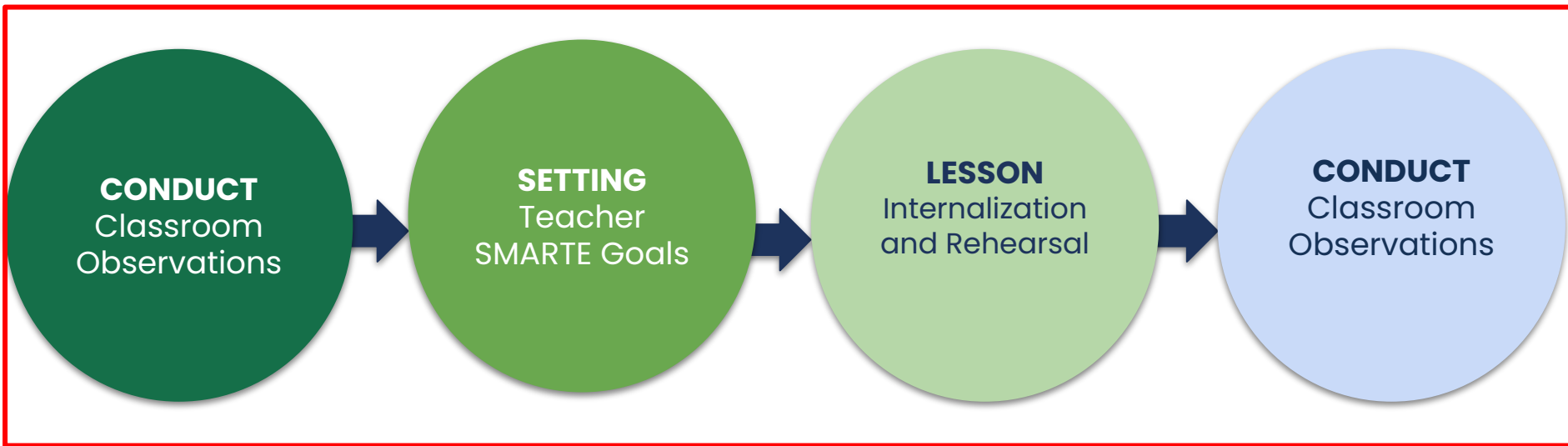
School & Classroom Levels: Instructional Alignment

Putting the SIP into Action through School-Based Experiences



Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms



Coaching cycles serve as the operational mechanism to establish and scale instructional alignment across classrooms.

Workbook Activity: Reflection

Building Toward Instructional Alignment

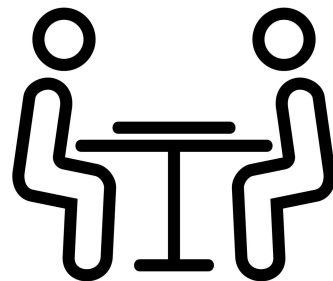
07:00

Working with a partner or table group, identify **current** coaching support across the school and classroom. (Pg. 11 of Workbook)

Instructional Alignment & Key Focus Elements

Three ways to support instructional alignment through coaching:

- Content Coaching Cycles
- Mentoring Teacher Support
- Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS)



What specific practices are directly driving coaching and support in your school and classrooms?

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

School SMARTE Goal: 100% of the teachers will use the HQIM daily and focus on using visual models to solve problems, evident by teacher modeling and student practice.

Instructional Alignment Inventory:

Content: Math

Grades: 3–5

Group: Students scoring below grade level

Coaching Cycle Onboarding:

HQIM implementation: 3 years

Class and Subject: 4th Math

Teacher: Mr. Jay

Years of Teaching Experience: 2nd

Support: Coaching Cycles/Mentoring

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

What is high quality **Tier 1** Math Instruction?

- **High Quality Content**

- Consistent access to grade-level, standards-aligned content with different scaffolding supports
 - ◉ *Action: Adopt and use HQIM*

- **High Quality Instruction**

- Use research and evidence-based pedagogical approach
 - ◉ *Action: Implement curriculum based strategies including concrete, representation, and abstract (CRA) model*

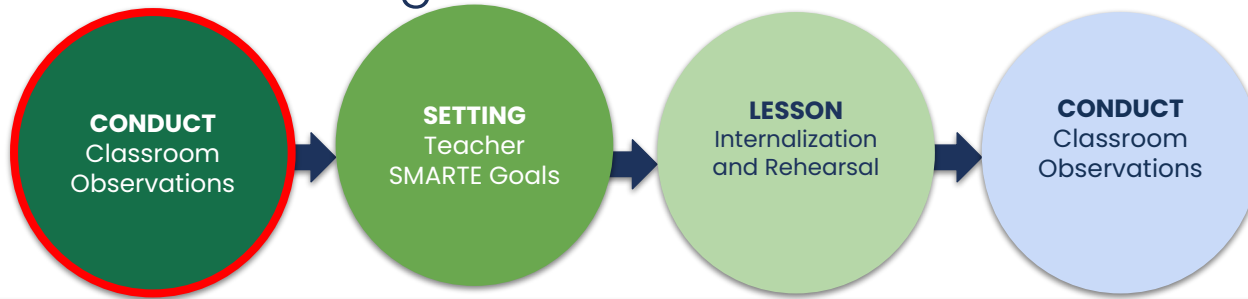
- **Student Ownership**

- Students are responsible for the thinking and explaining
 - ◉ *Action: Students do majority of the work in the lesson*

Recommendation: Ensure math block aligns with curriculum time. (etc. 60 minutes)

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms



Conduct: The leadership team uses the Key Levers walkthrough tool focused on High Quality-Quality Instructional Materials(HQIM)usage during 4th grade math block.

The Baseline Data: The data reveal that Mr. Jay is using the HQIM. During the walkthrough, he modified two tasks by omitting using visual fraction models to solve problems. During student practice, 75% of students were unable to independently solve the fraction problems.

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

Impact Areas	Indicators
Structure For Learning	1. Students are engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish; there is a sense of urgency about how time is used. Look Fors: - Students participate in meaningful activities throughout the lesson. - Students volunteer responses and ask appropriate questions. - Routines and transitions require minimal teacher prompting or redirection. - The lesson is well-paced; the teacher works to maximize time spent on instructional activities aligned with the learning targets. Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Math Aligned Content	2. The teacher skillfully delivers grade-level appropriate lessons using district-adopted HQIM; lessons reflect grade-level standards. Look Fors: - The teacher skillfully uses the district-adopted curriculum, as appropriate, to teach the lesson. - The lesson is aligned within the scope and sequence, ensuring that students will engage with the full curriculum during the school year. - The objective of the lesson aligns with grade-level standards. - Lesson modifications are made to strengthen the alignment to the state standards, as appropriate. - Students' work shows past and current foundational skills and connections made by the teacher and/or students to previously taught skills. - Teachers integrate curriculum-embedded strategies in alignment with the aspects of mathematical rigor (conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application). Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Teacher Instructional Practices	3. The lesson includes adequate opportunities for the teacher to employ instructional practices that allow students to take ownership of the content. Look Fors: - There is a clear articulation of the objective to students (stated verbally, written on student work, displayed visually, etc.). - The teacher uses purposeful questions and/or academic mathematical vocabulary during instruction. - The teacher prompts student ownership by allowing student discourse that connects models, representations, and equations. - Teachers provide opportunities for students to select and use relationship strategies, properties of operations, and algorithms to compute, which leads to understanding and accuracy. - The teacher enhances instruction by using visual aids and/or manipulatives (anchor charts, number lines, area models, etc.). Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Student Practice	4. The lesson includes adequate time for students to practice targeted skill(s) through reasoning, reflection, representation, and/or pattern relationships. Look Fors: - The teacher provides adequate time for meaningful student practice. - There are multiple opportunities for students to practice targeted skill(s) through reasoning, reflection, representation, and/or pattern relationships. - Students use concrete models, drawings, and equations to describe their thinking (facts, multi-digit operations, fractions, etc.). - Students use mental fluency and known fact strategies for basic facts OR practice through productive fluency experiences (routines, games, centers, individually, etc.) Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Assessment & Differentiation	5. The teacher collects and responds to student data to adjust instruction for all student(s). Look Fors: - The teacher checks for understanding throughout the lesson and applies strategies in response to student need(s). - A data collection system is in place to track progress (checklist, exit tickets, student interviews, and monitoring of student work, etc.). - The teacher provides on-the-spot feedback, corrections, and confirmations of student responses. - There is small group instruction and/or differentiated tasks to provide students access to grade-level standards. Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence

Source: Adapted from the TMTD Mathematics Foundational Skills Look-for Tool

Key Levers Impact Areas:

- Structures For Learning
- **Math Aligned Content**
- Teacher Instructional Practices
- Student Practice
- Assessment and Differentiation

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms



Setting: Aligning the teacher SMARTER goal directly to math aligned content.

The Teacher SMARTER Goal: By the end of next week, Mr. Jay's 4th-grade students will correctly solve multi-step fraction word problems using *visual models*, as evidenced by a 20% increase in observed active modeling during classroom walkthroughs.

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

What is high quality **Tier 2** Math Instruction?

- **Setting**
 - Target, small group instruction
 - Action: Provide extended time (e.g., at least three times per week)
- **High Quality Content**
 - Supports access to grade-level content
 - Action: Use same material and curriculum in Tier 1 and 2
- **High Quality Intervention Instruction**
 - Connects Tier 2 instruction with Tier 1 grade level content
 - Action: start with the prerequisites for the skill that will be taught in the core class.
 - Action: review past content, preview math concepts coming up in class, work through misconceptions, and practice
 - Action: reteach Tier 1 content using differentiation supports

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms



Lesson: Teachers collaborate in CTMs to deeply understand upcoming lessons before teaching them.

The Action: During planning, teachers explicitly work out the math problems themselves using the *curriculum's visual models*. They script out the exact scaffolded questions they will ask students when they get stuck, and they briefly role-play (rehearse). In addition, teachers identify the task for Tier 2 interventions.

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms



Conduct: The principal and coach conduct short walkthroughs during Mr. Jay's 4th grade math block.

The Action: They look specifically for student-led actions from planning and internalization: *Are students drawing models to represent fractions? Can they explaining their thinking?*

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

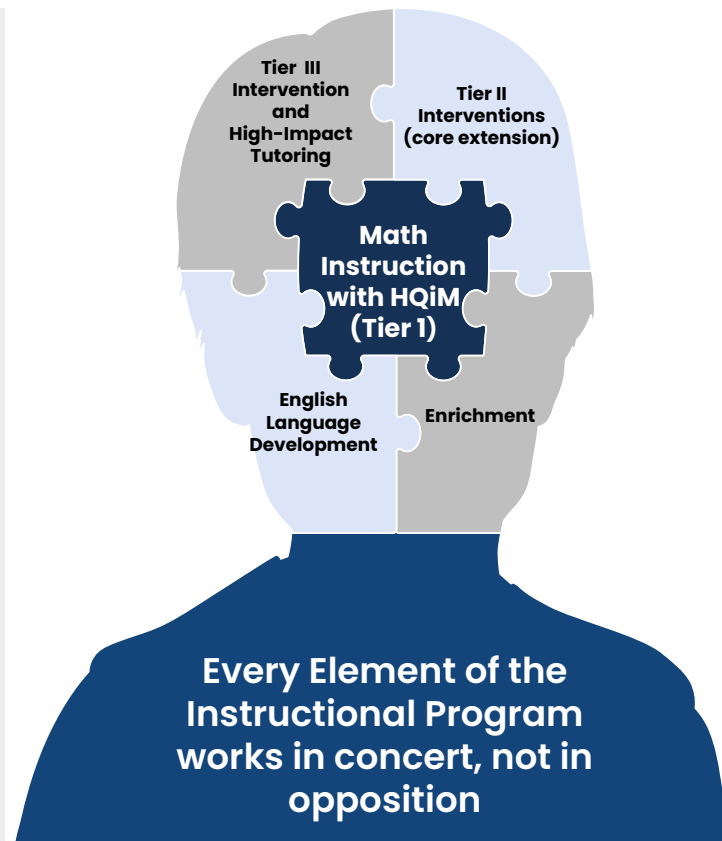
Connecting all the “pieces”-

Tier 1 – Every student engages with **HQIM** to solve multi-step problems, teacher and student uses **visual models**.

Tier 2 – Teacher uses a parallel task from the **HQIM intervention** resources, specifically reteaching how to break down the first step of the problem using the **exact same visual models** from Tier 1.

Tier 3 – Tutor **reinforces** gaps using a curriculum tightly mapped to the current Tier 1 pacing guide.

Enrichment – Teacher **deepens** student understanding by requiring students solve modeling the solution using two different **visual models** to justify their work.



Workbook Activity: Reflection

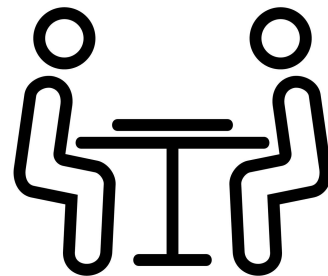
Building Instructional Alignment: Coaching Cycles

07:00

Working with a partner or table group, answer the question below. (Pg. 12 of Workbook)

Instructional Alignment: Coaching Cycles

How does the coaching cycle actions support instructional alignment and build a more confident learner?



When leaders intentionally align what they look for during walkthroughs with what teachers rehearse, it removes conflicting messages and supports consistent, high-quality core instruction.

**Feedback is provided to
Mr. Jay within 24 hours!**

BUILD Shared Understanding

Summary

Key Term:

- **System Coherence** refers to the *whole* system working together with shared understanding and purpose.

Key Term:

- **Instructional Alignment** refers to the *instructional components* being consistently implemented in student learning environments.

Note: *Instructional Coherence and Instructional Alignment are synonymous.*

Key Term:

- **Feedback** is the essential next step to coherence. It serves as the engine that drives the system by turning assessment results into actional next steps for instruction.

Key Takeaway:

Alignment brings order to the instructional system, while coherence brings shared meaning and collective action. When alignment and coherence operate in tandem, schools create conditions for stronger instruction and better student experiences.

Feedback helps leaders observe whether instructional goals are visible in classrooms, evaluate how students respond to the curriculum, use assessment results to guide teaching practices, make data-driven decisions using multiple data sources, and connect HQPL to classroom practice.

Coaching Cycles in Action

Building The Feedback Loop

05:00

The Feedback to the teacher:

"During my walkthrough yesterday, I loved seeing you execute the curriculum models we mapped out in the CTM planning session. When students hit a wall with the multi-step word problem, you didn't just give them the calculation steps. Instead, you asked your scripted scaffold question: 'What does the model tell us about the whole vs. the part?' It was excellent seeing them pivot back to their visual models. 75% of the students independently use models to complete problem 1. During CTM, we will review the exit tickets to determine misconceptions and identify Tier 2 groups."

Workbook Activity: Reflection

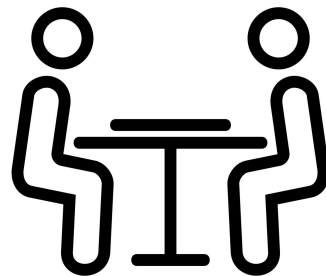
Building The Feedback Loop

07:00

Working with a partner or table group, answer the question below. (Pg. 12 of Workbook)

Feedback Loop

Think about a teacher or team. What are the three primary ways teachers in your building consistently receive instructional feedback?



How does the feedback impact instructional alignment?

School & Classroom Profiles

Building Instructional Alignment Across the School & Classrooms

Use the chart below to have a discussion about Instructional Alignment and Feedback Loops.

10:00

	Current Status (Where We Are?)	Next Steps (Where We are Going?)
Instructional Cycles: Type of Coaching Support	Discussion	Discussion
Content Coaching Cycles connect to SMARTE goal	Discussion	Discussion
Feedback connect to SMARTE goal	Discussion	Discussion

UnConference with ADE Staff

3:30 – 4:00 pm

TEAM TIME

4:00 – 4:30 pm

Teaching & Learning Collaborative

Thank You For Attending!

