

Common Principles of Effective Practice (CPEP) and Implementation:
A Framework for Integrating Initiatives and Sustaining Evidence-based Practices

Coherent Alignment of Policies and Procedures to Support Implementation

What do we mean by coherent alignment of policies and procedures?

Systems change is often required to support and sustain the implementation of innovative educational practices. Policy, linked implementation teams, shared vision, collaboration, data systems and supports, and professional development are key elements that must be aligned in order to best support and sustain effective and efficient work in our schools. When innovative educational practices are introduced, this frequently means change must occur at many levels (from the classroom to the superintendent’s office).

Why is coherent alignment important?

Current systems and supports can trump or overshadow effective and well-intended implementation of new curricula, programs and practices. Since the current system is designed to produce the current results, it stands to reason that the current system will need to change to support new and more effective ways of work. Oftentimes, the innovative evidence-based programs that are being introduced and their implementation are modified to fit the existing system of supports that are in place. Such modifications may better “fit” with the current system but when this occurs, effectiveness can be seriously compromised. Instead, the system must be aligned (from the practice to the policy level) to support the effective and efficient implementation of new educational practices or programs that are being introduced. Key elements that must be in place for coherent alignment to occur and support implementation along with associated indicators of success are listed below.

| Key Elements | Indicators of Successful Alignment |
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| Shared vision, values, and outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based practices are selected that are aligned with the core vision, values and outcomes. • Vision, values and outcomes are aligned from classroom to the Capitol. |
| Collaboration and efficient use of resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For every new requirement there is reduction in current requirements. • Every new requirement for implementation (e.g., training, coaching, data systems) is supported fiscally and through policy and/or regulations. |
| Leadership and implementation teams at multiple levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and implementation teams exist at school, district and state levels. • These teams are designed to integrate initiatives at each level and to view their decisions through the lens of effective implementation and scale-up strategies. |

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| Ongoing feedback and communication loops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies at each level enable effective programs and practices and feedback from the practice level informs the development and modification of policy. |
| Data systems and supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data are reliable, valid, practical and cost-efficient to collect, and are summarized at actionable units (e.g., classroom, school, district level) in a timely manner (e.g., weekly, quarterly). |
| Professional development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports learning the basics of the evidence-based practice or innovation. • Encompasses the Core Implementation components that support developing confidence and competence (e.g., selection, training, coaching, fidelity and performance evaluation). • Is accessible, timely, and accountable for achieving results (e.g., improvements in competence and fidelity). |
| Community Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are active and full participants in improving the education system as well as active participants in their child's education. • Community resources are engaged and integrated with school services and supports. |

What are key questions to consider in effecting coherent alignment of policies and procedures to support implementation of innovative educational practices?

Each policy, funding and regulatory decision must be evaluated through an aligned set of lenses that operates from the individual student level, to the teacher or classroom level, school level and district level. Some key questions to drive the discussion and support coherent alignment are listed below.

- How will this decision impact student outcomes?
- How will this decision support teacher confidence and competence?
- How will this decision support school building administrators in developing teacher confidence and competence?
- How will this decision impact the effective use of the Core Implementation components?
- How does this decision align with the current stage of implementation?
- How is this decision constrained by or supported by the system?

For more information on coherent alignment of policies and procedures to support educational practices, see Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Horner, R., and Sugai, G. (2009, February). *Scaling-up evidence-based practices in education. Scaling-up Brief #1*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence Based Practices (SISEP). Available at

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