

State Spotlight on...

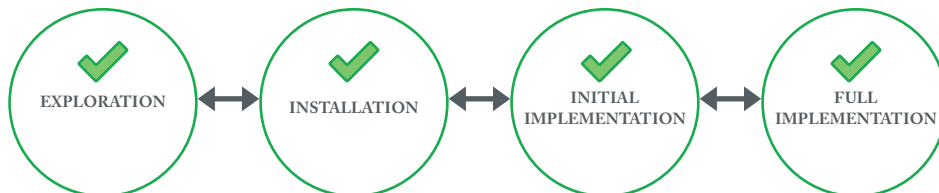
Colorado Department of Education's Initiative Inventory Alignment and Analysis Process Guide for Programs and TA Providers



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to support Colorado Department of Education (CDE) staff in developing, completing, and analyzing an initiative inventory. An initiative inventory is a tool to support teams in “taking stock” of current initiatives/programs that are being implemented and identifying potential area of alignment between them.

The initiative inventory tool is used during the Exploration stage when states are identifying possible new programs to implement. It can also be used at other stages of implementation when a state is trying to align existing programs.



The inventory also provides opportunities to create common language, identify similarities, share resources, and build collective capacity. This process was first developed and utilized by the Quality School's Service Design Team to inventory and analyze the CDE school improvement services being provided to the field through the Empowering Action for School Improvement Application (EASI). Since that time, it has been utilized and refined with other CDE work.

This document provides a step-by-step process as well as key learning for each step. If you need any help using this process please reach out to [Jennifer Gonzales](#) or [Wendy Sawtell](#).

For additional support please watch [Lesson 10: Initiative Inventory on the Active Implementation Hub](#). This process was adapted from the CO-MTSS Initiative Inventory Activity Plan and the SISEP Initiative Inventory process.

STEP 1

Identify the Purpose of the Inventory

This step focuses on defining the purpose of the initiative inventory. As a team, reflect on why this process is being used and how the results will be used. If a purpose is not clearly defined including how the information will be used, the inventory may seem evaluative to those being asked to participate in the process.

PURPOSE OF INVENTORY The Colorado Department of Education has created an initiative inventory process that helps “take stock” of current services and identify potential areas of alignment between services. The tool also provides opportunities to create common language, identify similarities, share resources, and build collective capacity.

OUTCOMES OF INVENTORY

- Identification of current services and who they serve
- Identification of where alignment and integration of efforts would improve implementation and outcomes
- Identification of similar evaluation components and tools
- Identify gaps within services and services needed by the field

VIEW [APPENDIX 1](#)

Possible topics include:

- Objective of the tool
- Its value/importance to systems change
- Define key terms

OUTCOMES OF STEP 1

- Clearly understand the purpose of the tool
- Be able to communicate with clarity its value/importance to systems change
- Understand the key terms and inventory process before engaging with participants



IMPORTANT

Start the process by clearly defining the “WHY” of the inventory before you identify the programs you will inventory. It is important to clearly understand the purpose of the inventory since this will guide what is inventoried, the questions to be answered, and how the results will be used.

STEP 2

Develop and Complete the Inventory

In this step you will develop the questions that will make up the inventory to meet the identified purpose and outcomes. See [Appendix 1](#) for a sample template and potential questions. You will also identify who needs to complete this process, how that will be communicated and the timeline to complete it. The collection of information is most accurate when completed by service/program team members with the support of someone who is familiar with the inventory process. Conducting the inventory during a team meeting may be the best way to facilitate the collection of this information. Encourage the team to spend time analyzing their responses in each area and look for areas that warrant further discussion and clarification.

Suggestions to include in your initial communication with the service/program lead:

- Purpose of the inventory
- A request for the team to complete the survey by [enter date]
- An offer of support to help facilitate the completion of the survey during a team meeting
- A link to the online inventory form
- An offer to answer any questions they may have about the inventory

VIEW [APPENDIX 1](#)

For sample templates and questions.

OUTCOMES OF STEP 2

- Develop questions for inventory
- Identify and list the services/programs to complete the inventory
- Establish the timeline for the completion of the entire process
- Develop inventory template and process to collect inventory questions from different services
- Develop communication to services
- Assist teams in inventory completion as needed



IMPORTANT

Prior the sending out the inventory to the programs you want to complete, clearly communicate its purpose. This will ensure individuals understand it is not intended to be an evaluative tool and they can complete the questions honestly. Let the service know when completing the inventory, please mark N/A if the prompt does not directly apply to the service.

STEP 3

Synthesize Inventory Results

Once all the participants have completed the inventory, you will be ready to analyze the data. Analysis of the inventory results is best done in a team and it takes a minimum of 1.5 to 2 hours to complete. The review team should be broken up into at least two teams (6-8 per team). Each team will be asked to review assigned sections of the inventory responses. We have found that having a spreadsheet, populated with the answers from step two, provides for additional clarity when assigning teams with specific information to review. This allows for teams to not be overwhelmed by the volume of information in the inventory.

In preparing for the analysis meeting:

- Identify participants to engage in the process. We have found that including people who completed the inventory during step two of the process to be extremely helpful during the discussion. In addition to the participants, identify 2-3 facilitators who understand the process, as well as 2 or 3 note takers.
- Prepare communication draft for Analysis Team including the purpose of inventory, outcomes of the meeting, and an overview of what the meeting will look like (i.e., (a) individual reflection (b) small group processing (c) whole group discussion)
- Schedule meeting, invite attendees, and include prepared information in communicate
- Prepare data result materials to be easily readable and clear regarding what is to be reviewed by each group (e.g., colored columns, computer access to a PDF or spreadsheet)
- Determine small group assignments
- Plan and prepare method for gathering notes (e.g., breakout rooms with a whiteboard or jamboard; chart paper for in-person, etc.)

VIEW [APPENDIX 2](#)

This is a template for the meeting protocols. If the analysis is done in person, it helps to have the inventory printed on large poster size paper (multiple copies) and taped to a wall so the team can easily see and highlight results. If done virtually, save inventory in excel or pdf so participants can easily access it and view all the columns.

OUTCOMES OF STEP 3

- Conduct facilitated meeting to review reported data from the inventory tool
- Identify and list potential resources, activities, and information to be considered for alignment
- Identify and list gaps within services/ supports/programs to be considered for future development



IMPORTANT

To help focus the small groups, highlight the columns on the inventory in different colors you want each group to focus on. For example, group 1 highlight all their columns blue. It is essential to have a facilitator assigned to each small group to help the team stay on track with each part of the analysis process and take notes. It also helps to have set up in advance a designated document (e.g., Google Doc) to capture individual, small group, and whole group notes, discussions, and next steps.

STEP 4

Create Alignment

After the synthesis of the inventory results has been completed, assign someone who has been a deep part of the discussion and understands the purpose of the inventory, to summarize the analysis. See [Appendix 4](#) for an example of a written summary.

Include the following in the written summary:

- The participating services
- A restatement of the Purpose of the Inventory, including the specific outcomes for this specific inventory
- Questions that arose during the synthesis meeting
- General observations made by the synthesis team in step 3
- Beneficiaries of the service/program/support (e.g., school and district leaders, principals, superintendents, etc.)
- Identified gaps
- Possible areas for alignment in the three categories: Resources, Activities, Information

AVAILABLE LINKS

VIEW [APPENDIX 3](#)

For specific examples of summaries from CDE groups that have completed this process please reach out to [Jennifer Gonzales](#) or [Wendy Sawtell](#).

VIEW [APPENDIX 4](#)

The analysis team from step 3 should reconvene to discuss the summary and define next steps. A protocol for defining next steps is provided. After the team has defined and prioritized next steps an action plan can be developed for each alignment activity.

OUTCOMES OF STEP 4

- Consolidate the notes from the synthesis meeting
- List potential areas for alignment
- List gaps for potential areas to improve
- Convene the Leads from the services/programs/supports that participated in the inventory analysis
- Review summary of synthesis, discuss results, and develop an action plan for alignment



IMPORTANT

When asking a person to summarize the meeting notes, consider selecting someone who has been a part of the discussion and understands the purpose of the inventory, possibly one of the facilitators or notetakers. The prioritization of next steps usually takes at least an hour and a half. When action planning consider readiness and capacity of teams participating in the inventory, effort vs. ease of the alignment activity, and the SEA's priorities. This will help the team choose activities that are meaningful to them and they will want to invest the time completing them.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

SELECTION

Selection is a process a Service goes through to identify and develop partnerships with schools/districts with a specific priority or need that the Service is designed to address. The goal of the partnership is to be mutually beneficial for both CDE and the schools/districts. Selection criteria should reflect contextual fit to ensure the Service will be integrated into local context and outcomes of the identified priority or need will be sustained.

TRAINING AND COACHING

Professional Learning is the purposeful process that is designed to support the selected participants in being able to implement the new skills the Service is intended to provide. Professional Learning includes both training and job-embedded coaching to ensure that new skills are practiced, implemented with fidelity, and sustained over time.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is a focused, intentional process that involves collection and analysis of data over time. Its purpose is to determine both the fidelity of implementation and whether the desired outcomes were achieved through methods that allow for continuous improvement.

Data collection could include:

- a. Outcome (Dependent on Service. These could include student outcomes, staff development outcomes, systems infrastructure, etc.)
- b. Fidelity (e.g., Level of implementation: Did we do what we said we would do? Was it of high quality? Did the adult behavior of the target population, e.g., principals, change as a result of the Services provided?)

CORE COMPONENT/FEATURE

Core components and/or features are the critical elements that need to be part of a Service for it to have effective outcomes.

SERVICE IS OPERATIONALIZED

A Service is guided by research and/or evidence that meets ESSA's Levels 1-4 and has a Theory of Action and Logic Model. The Service has identified its core components and developed indicators that describe what the component "looks like" in practice which are assessed accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A Service implementation plan is a specified set of activities, developed by the team, that outlines what the Service will provide, funding for the service, who will support implementation, and how the Service will be evaluated, sustained, and scaled.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A systematic and iterative process that intentionally improves the Services' impact and efficiency as informed by data and stakeholder input. It can be used to accelerate progress by guiding the direction of the system's efforts to influence the positive trajectory of the Service's implementation.

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE INITIATIVE INVENTORY TEMPLATE

This tool can be used to guide your team's review of past and current programs to get a clear picture of existing programs, practices, innovations, initiatives, and resource commitments. Information and data collected can be used by the organization when exploring fit of additional initiatives with current work, guiding decision-making to make room for new work, and assisting with alignment of initiatives.

Name of service	
EASI Route	
What are the expected outcomes/impact of the services? What problem are you trying to solve?	
Primary focus Are you targeting a school or district?	
From the list below, who are the primary three stakeholders/roles the service targets? [Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principal, ELL Director, Curriculum Director, Special Education Director, Instructional Coach, Teacher, Parent/Family, Other (Please specify). Please provide more context if needed (e.g., if you support teams, what are they called, who are usually on those teams).	
What are the core components/features that make up the service (implementation actions)?	
Briefly state what research has informed the creation of the core components. Please list at least one citation.	
How does the service ensure readiness when selecting a district/school (selection process and criteria)?	
What training is provided for the service?	
What coaching is provided for the service?	
Briefly describe the implementation plan for the Service.	
Do those responsible for providing the service have evidence to show that the delivered service resulted in a positive change (implementation/outcomes)? If yes, briefly describe?	
What measures are used for the outcomes/impact of the service (e.g., student assessment data, school/district plans, SPFs)?	
What measures are used for the implementation fidelity of the service (e.g., rubrics, progress monitoring tools)?	
How does the CDE team, supporting the service, engage in continuous improvement (discuss data and process)?	

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE SYNTHESIS MEETING PROTOCOL

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION TIME- 15 MIN

Please spend 15 minutes reviewing your assigned questions.

ASSIGNMENT FOR GROUP 1

Spend some time reviewing the initiatives then zero in on the specific columns below:

1. What services share similar stakeholders?
 - Which and how many services are supporting school level? District level?
 - For services focused on districts, schools, or both, what trends are we seeing around the stakeholder/role they are serving?
2. What services share similar selection/readiness procedure?
3. What services share similar training and coaching?
4. Are there gaps in any of these areas?

ASSIGNMENT FOR GROUP 2

Spend some time reviewing the initiatives then zero in on the specific columns below:

1. What services share similar implementation or outcome measures?
2. What services share similar core components/features?
3. Are there gaps in any of these areas?

SMALL GROUP PROCESSING- 45 MIN

1. Rotating around the group so everyone has a turn, ask each person to share identified similarities and gaps
2. Facilitator will lead discussion/further analysis
3. Analysis Synthesis
 - Where might there be alignment and/or integration of efforts that might improve implementation and outcomes?
 - Where might there be gaps within CDE services?
 - What questions/wondering do you still have?

Suggestions for the Note taker

As comments about similarities/gaps are coming in, divide into 3 different buckets:

- Resources (e.g., needs assessments, coaching plan)
- Activities (e.g., training)
- Information (e.g., data)

WHOLE GROUP PROCESSING- 30 MIN

Whole group discussion of Analysis Synthesis

1. Where might there be alignment and/or integration of efforts that might improve implementation and outcomes?
 - Place comment in 3 buckets:
 - a. Share and/or align resources (e.g., needs assessments, coaching plan)
 - b. Share and/or align activities (e.g., training)
 - c. Share and/or align information (e.g., data)
2. Where might there be gaps within CDE services?
3. What questions/wondering do you still have?

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE OF A WRITTEN SUMMARY

SERVICES ANALYZED School English Language Development (ELD) Review, District ELD Review, Special Education Service Review, Focused Review of Early Literacy (PK-3), School Unified Improvement Planning (UIP), District UIP, Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation, CO-MTSS, Connect for Success, Literacy Training, Turnaround Network, School Turnaround Leaders

PURPOSE OF INVENTORY The Initiative Inventory supports the Low Performing Systems, Service Design Team (SDT), to “take stock” of current services and identify potential area of alignment between services. The tool also provides opportunities to create common language, identify similarities, share resources, and build collective capacity.

OUTCOMES

- Identification of current EASI services and who they serve
- Identification of where alignment and integration of efforts would improve implementation and outcomes
- Identification of similar implementation or outcome tools
- Identify gaps within CDE services and services needed by the field

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- 6 services were in the exploration route and 6 services were in the Offered Service route
- 3 services primarily focus on the district, 6 focus on the school, 3 focus on the district and school
- Each service has a clear focus on capacity building
- Many services are focusing on systems work within district/school not necessarily a specific content area
- Commonalities across CDE offered services (MTSS, CFS, Turnaround- needs assessment, ongoing training and coaching, strong ongoing relationship)
- Highly customizable services for school/district needs are offered
- Services are using different language/vocabulary for similar activities (e.g., needs assessment)
- 10 services stated research that informed development or use of the service

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS THAT THE SERVICE PRIMARILY FOCUSES ON?

- 6 services target principals and other school leaders
- 3 services target district-level staff (e.g., superintendent, special education director, ELD director)
- 3 services target leaders from both schools and districts

HOW DOES THE SERVICE ENSURE READINESS WHEN SELECTING A DISTRICT/ SCHOOL?

- 9 services used the selection/readiness questions built into the EASI application
- 3 services had a more in-depth readiness process (e.g., FTE, time, fiscal, release times)

TEAM OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS

TEAM OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS	WHAT ARE THE CORE COMPONENTS/FEATURES THAT MAKE UP THE SERVICE? • 10 services conduct diagnostic reviews, but at varying levels of intensity • The diagnostic assessment process and vocabulary used seems to vary based on the service (e.g., systems analysis, diagnostic review, data analysis) • 11 services listed improvement planning as a core component • Services in the “Offered Services” route listed ongoing coaching support as a core component
	WHAT TRAINING IS PROVIDED FOR THE SERVICE? WHAT COACHING IS PROVIDED FOR THE SERVICE? • Many of the services focused their training and coaching on schools’ or districts’ leadership • All services had some type of training embedded in the service • All services offer some type of coaching, although there was a large variation in the type, time, and intensity
	WHAT MEASURES ARE USED FOR THE OUTCOMES/IMPACT OF THE SERVICE AND FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES? • Many services use State Performance Frameworks and Unified Improvement Plans to monitor outcomes • Some holistic measures are being used to evaluate outcomes (e.g., walk-throughs, participant pre-post knowledge) • 5 services monitor implementation fidelity through a plan they develop with the school/district or their UIP • 6 of services monitor implementation fidelity through a service specific rubric (e.g., MTSS MLT Self-Assessment)
GAPS	• Unit of change is district or school leadership, consider how to incorporate classroom teachers • Services are using different terminology to possibly mean the same thing • Stakeholders targeted- heavy on school and district administration- possible consideration of assisting with training and coaching of teachers • Few services support specific instructional content • Nothing explicitly addresses graduation rate or attendance • There are limited explicit readiness criteria and processes • Knowledge and skill in developing infrastructure to support services with fidelity, sustainability, and scaling • Explore the “need” for services (this was not fully represented in the selection question)
POSSIBLE ALIGNMENT RESOURCES	• Use the Four Domains as a grounding document- broader way to look at services • Data analysis- written process for all internal teams to use • Short cycle action planning • Human Capital- decrease duplication and increase coordination • Exploration route diagnostic reviews (e.g., align for same look and feel) • Communication Planning tools • Professional development trainings • Training and coaching resources

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE OF A WRITTEN SUMMARY

POSSIBLE ALIGNMENT ACTIVITIES	• Analysis of Four Domains around services provided • Developing communication protocols between services • Coordinate plans each service co-creates with schools/district • Program Evaluation- supporting best practice across services • Identifying effective components of diagnostic reviews and aligning processes (e.g., similar look and feel) • Standardize and operationalize key terms (e.g., needs assessment, progress monitoring) • Standardize plan requirements (e.g., what makes for a strong plan) • Support adult learning principles in training
POSSIBLE ALIGNMENT INFORMATION	• Services working with similar stakeholders could have follow-up discussion around alignment • Sharing plans across services if multiple services are supporting the same school/district • Similar collection/reporting process of LPS Data across Units/Offices • Identify data all services might collect and/or review (e.g., SPF)

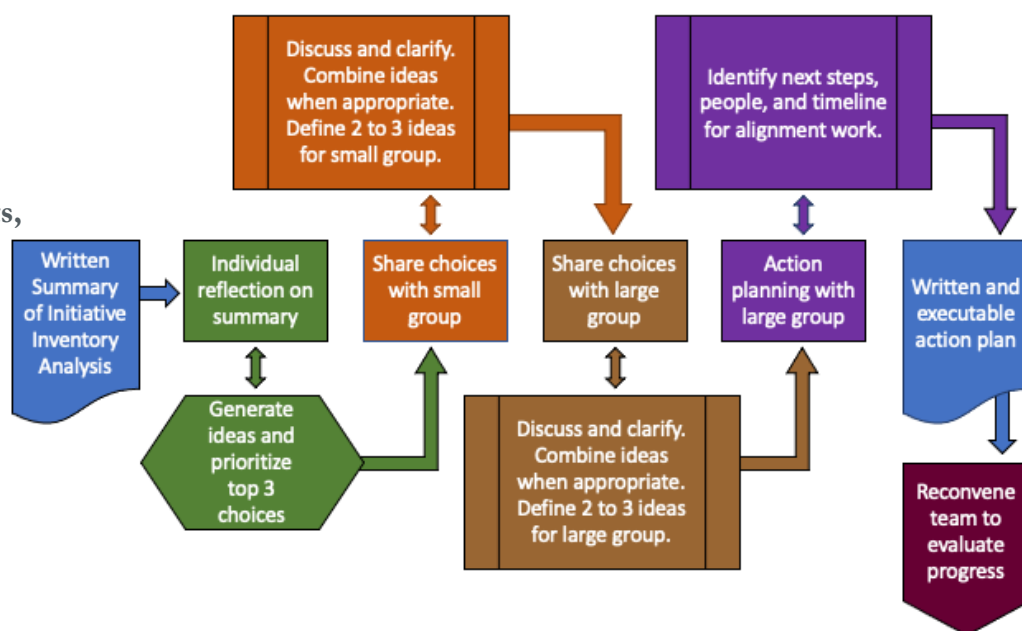
APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE ALIGNMENT AND ACTION PLANNING MEETING PROTOCOL

WELCOME- 3 MIN Reiterate the purpose of the Initiative Inventory and the Outcomes for the Action Planning Meeting

NOMINAL GROUP

TECHNIQUE

The Clarifying, Merging, Adding New Insights, Prioritizing, and Action Planing for Next Phase



INTRODUCTION OF THE ACTIVITY- 5 MIN

Prioritizing actionable items for alignment that outlines in the analysis summary.

- Consider order, sequence, and readiness when selecting alignment activities
- Consider those that are partially in place as easier movement
- Consider common themes across small group reflections
- Consider the focus and priorities of leadership

Clarify Activity Process:

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION,
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION,
LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION,
PRIORITIZE IDEAS FOR ALIGNMENT,
ACTION PLAN NEXT STEPS**

INDIVIDUALLY REFLECT ON THE DOCUMENT AND GENERATE IDEAS FOR PRIORITIZATION ON YOUR OWN- 5 -8 MIN

- As you reflect on the Summary of the Inventory Analysis, write down any clarification questions and ideas that are relevant to alignment opportunities.
- Make a list and limit your prioritized ideas to no more than 3.

CLARIFY AND COMBINE IN A SMALL GROUP- 25 MINUTES

- Review and discuss any clarification questions as needed.
 - Use a Round Robin format and participants read their top 3 prioritized ideas with clarification as needed.
 - Facilitator may combine like ideas if both originators agree.
 - Clarify wording and unclear statements as needed.
 - As a group, define your top 2-3 ideas for alignment.
 - Nominate 1 person to share out small group's 2-3 ideas.
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CLARIFY AND COMBINE IN A LARGE GROUP- 25 MIN

- Review and discuss any clarification questions as needed.
 - Use a Round Robin format and each small group spokesperson reads out the group's top 2-3 prioritized ideas providing clarification as needed.
 - Facilitator may combine like ideas if both small groups agree.
 - Clarify wording and unclear statements as needed.
 - Define large group's top 2-3 ideas.
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ACTION PLANNING- 20 MIN

- Identify next steps for alignment work considering the readiness and capacity of teams that will be aligning work, effort vs. ease of the alignment activity.
 - Identify appropriate individuals who will engage in the alignment work.
 - Determine individual's and team's readiness and capacity building opportunities if needed.
 - Create time line for work to be aligned.
 - Schedule follow-up meeting with this team to evaluate progress.
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