
The contents of this framework were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (#H323A170020). However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

Personnel from the Institute for Human Development (IHD), at Northern Arizona University, provide training, education, and service for people with disabilities and conduct research focusing on improving educational and disability systems. For over ten years, this team has worked closely with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education to infuse research into professional development and the statewide system of support. This translation of research into practice occurs through the reciprocal exchange of information, between community members, partner organizations, state agencies, and the IHD. IHD is part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Journeys</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond R-IV</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bloomfield R-III</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickman Mills C-1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar Bluff R-I</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesville R-VI</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from the Field</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCI Statewide Support</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

About District Continuous Improvement

The partnership between the Missouri Department of Special Education (DESE) and Missouri Educational Systems and Instruction for Learning (MOEdu-SAIL) started during the 2017-2018 school year with Missouri Model Districts. This initial year included 19 districts, impacting 103 buildings, over 5,000 teachers and 64,000 students.

The project, now known as District Continuous Improvement (DCI) has grown to include 157 districts with 629 buildings at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. DCI is a statewide system providing support to districts to achieve exceptional outcomes for all Missouri students. The graphic below provides interesting details regarding the impact in numbers over the course of the project timeline.

In DCI, districts are organized into cadres based on their Implementation Zone, a data-driven approach to describing DCI processes and outcomes, providing districts an increased understanding of the DCI journey. There are four Implementation Zones: Early, Developing, Initial Implementation, and Full Implementation.
About This Product

What does that DCI journey look like in our schools? How does it differ between districts which have been in the project for many years and those who are newer to DCI? DCI in ACTION shows glimpses of exactly that - the work in action.

The first section of DCI in ACTION highlights districts from each Implementation Zone - districts at differing points in the DCI journey. Following the district highlights are "advice from the field" sections. You will read thoughts from administrators, teachers, and the statewide support team.

Some districts have been with DCI since 2017 and have experienced tremendous improvements over the years. Some districts, when receiving accolades for the work, often cite DCI as an approach that has been especially effective and has contributed to their success.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories and seeing the DCI work in action!
Early Implementation Zone

In the Early Implementation Zone, there is a focus on learning about DCI products, vocabulary, framework, and tools necessary to implement the DCI work. Districts and CST Consultants begin with establishing a relationship and a clear line of communication. Districts develop a District Leadership Team with the assistance of their CST. The District Leadership Team, together with their CST, determines which DCI Practice(s) will be their initial focus based on their data. Districts then develop an action plan to yield the desired results. As one CST Facilitator noted, *one of the most rewarding experiences is seeing the hard work and growth of these districts as they move forward to set the stage for their personal DCI journey.*

Impact

*_The Diamond R-IV District administration team and teachers have greatly benefited from DCI’s focused PD and systematic process to help us grow our leadership capacity and teacher effectiveness in our classrooms for improved student learning. Thank you DCI team for all of your hard work and we look forward to our continued partnership to help improve our academic practices to help prepare all of our students to be assessment capable learners!*_

Dr. Keith White, Superintendent, Diamond R-IV

---

**Diamond R-IV School District**

- 401 S Main Street, Diamond, MO 64840
- 3 Buildings
- 80 Staff
- 685 Students
- [https://www.diamondwildcats.org](https://www.diamondwildcats.org)
Becoming an Assessment Capable District

The DLT will revisit these questions regularly:

Where are we going?
The goal is to have teachers implement DACL into their classrooms by having the students be responsible for their own learning as they set learning targets.

Where are we now?
Teachers are working collaboratively. The staff continues to create and update common formative assessments. DACL work is in the beginning stages as training, coaching, & walkthroughs continue.

How do we close the gap?
Teachers will implement what they learn in the trainings, coaching, and walkthroughs.

- The building administrators will model DACL language with teachers, participate in walkthroughs, & continue to support & coach teachers.
- All staff will actively participate in PD opportunities provided by the CST mini-team. All staff will utilize the VLP.
- Teachers & students will set learning targets.

Support & Involvement

CST & Mini-Team Support
Review of the CWIS & SAPPs with the leadership team to identify the focus & determining the status of the district
Utilize the Practice Profile with the district
Assisting all staff accessing the VLP
Continue training, coaching, & walkthroughs both in-person & virtually.

The District Leadership Team
The team includes: the curriculum director, superintendent, special education director, building principals, and the professional development chairperson.
Meets monthly to assess & maintain the DCI work.
Included DACL in the PD plan, which leads to high student achievement.

Administrator Commitment
The DCI work occurring through the CST training & coaching will continue to build common goals in an organized fashion so everyone knows what is expected. This work will be implemented in all buildings.
The DLT will ensure that staff are speaking the same language & administrators will model expectations so teachers will see true results as they implement the practices.
DCI & strong district leadership have been instrumental in making a positive change in the environment.
All administrators have the same goal: The district, the teachers, & the students to become assessment capable.
District Journeys

Developing Implementation Zone

As districts move into the Developing Implementation Zone, analysis becomes more actionable because district data can be looked at over time. One big advantage of this for districts is the ability to begin monitoring the progress of DCI implementation itself. This gives districts the information needed to develop multi-year plans for teacher and administrator professional learning.

Districts find that some of the keys to success in this zone are monitoring teacher proficiency in DCI Practices, reflecting on communication plans related to DCI, setting goals to monitor throughout the year, having data team meetings that yield positive outcomes, having the district leadership teams complete the Leadership module, and supporting leadership and instructional staff through coaching and feedback for continuous improvement. The Developing Zone Coaching Support Team Consultants are ready to support districts in a variety of in-depth ways through their DCI journey.

Impact

As a CST Consultant that has been working with New Bloomfield the past two years, it has been great to see the progress they are making. When the pandemic hit, New Bloomfield was very intent on not losing ground on the progress they had made so far. They were very creative in finding solutions to maintaining the work in DACL in whatever way they could to keep momentum going. I am so very impressed with their teachers and administrators for their commitment to continue the great work they had already started. The impact that DCI (focus on DACL) is having on the teachers has been a slow process but I do feel like many of the teachers are finally starting to see how the DACL practices that they are trying to implement into their instruction is having a positive effect on student learning.

Chris Redmon, CST Consultant

Our implementation of DCI in our district has provided our staff with a focus to improve instruction as well as enhance the work we have already been doing with teacher collaboration.

Sarah Wisdom, Superintendent, New Bloomfield R-III

New Bloomfield R-III School District

- 307 Redwood Drive, New Bloomfield, MO 65063
- 2 Buildings
- 48 Staff
- 701 Students
- [https://www.nb.k12.mo.us/](https://www.nb.k12.mo.us/)
New Bloomfield R-III
Leading Lifelong Learners

2020-2021 DCI Timeline

July
— Met with Administration – introduction to DCI
— Developing 2 East CST team
— Reviewed Implementation Zone document
— CWIS data was shared
— Continue DACL Focus for 2020-21 school year

August
— Reviewed DCI Framework with new elementary principal, Jennifer Fletcher
— DCI Overview PowerPoint Training with a DACL focus
— Addressed questions and concerns
— Discussion with Sarah Wisdom, Superintendent
— How to get new staff on VLP and what options were available
— Discussion with Paul Cloudwright, high school principal, to create a plan to meet with all staff on
— September 14 date. PD day to review DACL and where we left off last year. Also began planning a
— 3-day 1:1 training for high school staff during their plan periods to keep things moving since PD days
— and subs are becoming an issue.

Sept
— September 2 during the administration team meeting we discussed plans for the year. Superintendent Sarah
— Wisdom confirmed that they had manually put all new staff into the VLP.
— CST Sheila Thurman met with Jennifer Fletcher and Sarah Wisdom to determine implementation in the
— elementary for the 20-21 school year.
— In the elementary building, there are eight new staff members along with the principal.
— The focus is on sustaining Collaborative teams, DBDM
— and DACL.
— SAPP Heat maps were utilized to set training/coaching goals for the year.
— The high school staff reviewed DACL and learning targets. A plan was created on moving forward during
— COVID-19.
— September 14 DACL training review was presented to
— high school staff members and then time to meet with teams after training.

Oct
— Elementary data team walk through on
— October 12 saw a good mix of strengths including roles, agendas, data team process,
— Title ELA and MA teachers participated in grade
— level team meetings. Areas to strengthen might
— include trying to find more time for strategy
— discussion and less time recording information.
— An exit conference with Principal Jennifer
— Fletcher was conducted.

Nov
— Coaching on DBDM and DACL SAPP goals during
— teacher prep period will be provided on — November 6
— at the elementary and November 9 at the high school.

Future plans include continue
— meeting with the leadership team
— each month and provide coaching as
— time allows during COVID issues.
Initial Implementation Zone

The Initial Implementation Zone is where the DCI framework truly becomes the way districts do business. When districts enter the Initial Zone, they have a solid background in the DCI Foundational Practices with a deep understanding of DACL and movement toward SBIC. Each district, however, is in a different place within their journey. Districts are able to see the connection of all pieces within the DCI Practices. For instance, CFAs are written based upon individual learning targets, CFA data is then collected and analyzed through the DBDM process during Collaborative Team time, specific feedback is given, teachers change/improve their instruction, students master the learning target, growth occurs and is celebrated.

Districts find key characteristics of this zone include having regular DLT meetings, with a focus on both short and long-term goals based upon their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan; working toward internal training and coaching rather than relying on outside support; actively utilizing the VLP to train and grow the knowledge of their new and veteran members; and using data to determine next steps. Districts are connecting the dots between teacher evaluations, professional development goals/needs, teacher growth, and also student growth.

Impact

As a DCI participating district, Hickman Mills has had the opportunity to enhance our instructional practices through thoughtful and strategic professional development implementation. We have seen evidence of improvement in the functioning of our collaborative teams, data-based decision making practices, and the development of assessment capable learners through providing effective feedback. We look forward to making continuous progress and remain committed to increasing student achievement.

LaTanya Franklin, Assistant Superintendent, Hickman Mills C-1

Hickman Mills C-1 School District

5401 E. 103rd Street, Kansas City, MO 64137

12 Buildings

424 Staff

5099 Students

https://www.hickmanmills.org/
The Hickman Mills C-1 committed journey toward District Continuous Improvement

**COLLABORATIVE TEAMS**
We had a well established collaborative team culture in elementary and secondary buildings from the beginning. Our expectations included weekly collaboration for teachers to discuss data, instructional strategies, and celebrate successes. DCI allowed us to build on our successes in this collaborative culture and incorporate instructional strategies to improve student learning.

**FOUNDATIONS**
Our first year of the process was spent training and coaching our teachers in foundational practices in collaborative teams, data based decision making, and common formative assessments.

**KEEPING CONSISTENT**
At the end of our second year we spent time with our principals in the DLT recommitting to the DCI process. Principals used walkthroughs with the DACL look-fors to assess the consistency of DACL integration in their buildings.

**ELEMENTARY SUCCESS**
Our elementary schools have consistently used DACL and Collaborative Teams to account for student gains. Teachers are moving toward Collective Teacher Efficacy and we are celebrating those strides.

**DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAMS**
Our Leadership team was made up of central office and building administrators. We included instructional coaches to serve as the conduit for training and accountability.

**DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT CAPABLE LEARNERS**
Our second year was spent coaching and emphasizing learning targets, rubrics, using strong and weak samples of student work, and setting goals with students for academic achievement. We continued our foundational collaboration and were able to measure and celebrate success using DACL strategies.

**DESCRIPTIVE FEEDBACK**
As we moved into our third year we decided to make sure all of the foundational pieces of the DCI framework were ingrained in our classrooms. We emphasized Descriptive Feedback as the instructional strategy that would help us improve student learning most of all. This proved to be a good decision as teachers were able to use this powerful tool in remote learning classes during pandemic.

**SECONDARY PERSEVERANCE**
Our secondary schools continue to make gains in using DACL strategies to improve student achievement.
District Journeys

Full Implementation Zone

The Full Implementation Zone is where the DCI framework becomes grounded in and across a school district. When districts enter the Full Zone, they have the DCI Practices embedded in each school at varying levels of depth, including DACL, Collaborative Teaming, Data-Based Decision Making, and Common Formative Assessment. The District Leadership Team diligently builds vertical and horizontal alignment and also serves as a model of collaboration for the rest of the district. Schools regularly monitor and reflect upon their implementation through the Self Assessment Practice Profiles. The district works for proficiency across all DCI Practices and regularly engages in walkthroughs to provide evidence of this proficiency. The Full Implementation Zone is truly DCI in Action. Two districts are highlighted for the Full Implementation Zone.

Impact - Waynesville

The DCI impact on Waynesville is somewhat unconventional. Waynesville is a district hyper-focused on instruction and pedagogy. In order for this focus to be embedded and rooted in every building and with every staff member, there had to be systems alignment in place. DCI from the beginning complemented their systems approach and it was one specific practice that supported the systems alignment: coaching. In Leadership, the teacher-leaders moved into peer coaches increasing the efficacy of not just classroom teachers, but the district as a whole. In Common Formative Assessment, it was coaching that led to sound assessment design, a piece that built upon their Data-Based Decision Making. And for Assessment Capable Learners, DCI helped support the system to build a district of Assessment Capable Teachers. In Waynesville, the marriage of systems alignment with coaching has led to visible impact.

Carla Williams, CST Facilitator

Waynesville R-VI School District

- 200 Fleetwood Drive, Waynesville, MO 65583
- 10 Buildings
- 405 Staff
- 5898 Students
- https://www.waynesville.k12.mo.us/
Facilitating a Peer Coaching System to Develop Collective Teacher Efficacy

With the core practices of DCI in place across the district and a culture of collaboration that is known across the state, Waynesville made the decision they need to strengthen the supportive structures for building collective teacher efficacy. Teacher Leaders guide the work to strengthen the following dimensions: relational trust, acceptance of feedback, celebration of successes, and collective collaboration.

Teacher Leaders

In the constant drive for improving and deepening instruction, a system of teacher leaders was created to build collective efficacy within buildings and cross the district as a whole. Through an application process, teachers can interview to be part of the District Leadership Team, and engage fully in peer coaching.

Missouri Model Districts

In transitioning from Collaborative Work to MMD, Waynesville knew they wanted to continue to with the core work they were doing with the Collaborative Work. They also wanted to continue to refine and strengthen their collaborative teams. The Collaborative teams are the core of everything they did for teaching and learning.

Collaborative Work

From the beginning, Waynesville participated in the CW, focusing on Collaboration, Data-Based Decision Making, Common Formative Assessment and Effective Teaching and Learning Practices.

District-Wide System for Peer Coaching

Through a process of developing coaching relationships, observing, providing effective 30 second feedback, using solution dialogue, and developing a strategic and differentiated coaching plan, Teacher Leaders work to ensure peer coaching is happening with high fidelity. Vicarious experiences are a source of collective efficacy, and learning from one another in action is a research-based way to draw on this benefit.

Collaboration

District wide collaborative teams function with a sense of collective responsibility and efficacy in order to work together to focus on student learning. Through a data-based approach, teams across the district examine assessment and instruction.

Waynesville R-VI
Impact - Poplar Bluff

Poplar Bluff School District: Eugene Field Elementary and Lake Road Elementary, National ESEA Distinguished Schools

We are so incredibly proud of our district, but the real reason that I am writing to you is to share Eugene Field’s success story with you. It is indicative of how all of our schools feel about the work we’ve been involved in over the years (CW, MMD, and DCI). Mrs. Jennifer Taylor, principal at Eugene Field Elementary, identified their involvement with Missouri Model Districts as being a primary reason for their sustained improvement. She spoke about several of the specific effective teaching and learning practices that helped them get focused and specific with their work, which ultimately increased student engagement and achievement. I hope that this school testimony adds value to the work you are doing and builds excitement for the days and years ahead. I am incredibly thankful for all of the support we have received over the years. Through the changing phases of this initiative, DESE staff were always a constant for me. Both of them were so responsive to my questions and needs. In our most recent years, our CST Facilitators have been tremendous team leaders.

Patty Robertson, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum/Instruction, Poplar Bluff R-I

Poplar Bluff School District

1110 N. Westwood Boulevard, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901

10 Buildings

343 Staff

4959 Students

https://www.poplarbluffschools.net/
Students conference with teacher to determine where they want to go and select strategies to assist them in reaching their goal. Students track their growth on goal sheets.

In-depth professional development in which teachers worked to unpack standards, define learning targets, and create common formative assessments with aligned success criteria rubrics.

Collaboration during grade level meetings to ensure curriculum and assessment practices are aligned and rigorous.

Grade level teams developed rigorous common formative assessments and success criteria rubrics.

Teams developed a digital data system to guide reflective discussions.

Intervention cycles are designed around CFA results.
Dr. Kimberly Mauck has been a part of the project from the very start. First as a building administrator and currently as the district Director of School Improvement. She is also the district contact person for DCI.

Dr. Matt Martz has also been with the project from the very beginning. He has not only served as superintendent of schools, but also the district’s instructional leader.

Advice from Administrators

Support and participation from district administrators is a key element for successful participation in DCI. As one CST Facilitator notes, The true growth in District Continuous Improvement comes from the leadership, not only in each building, but from the district level, too. The leaders are the drivers of full sustainable implementation.

Below are two thoughtful contributions from long-participating administrators.

From a Director of School Improvement

Kimberly Mauck, Ed.D, Dir. of School Improvement, Belton School District

Belton has partnered with CW/MMD/DCI for many years. As a building leader, it is important to understand the “why” and communicate that often to staff. Making connections to what is currently a best practice in your district is important. By doing so, staff do not feel like it is anything different and one more thing in respect to teaching and learning.

Because I am responsible for the implementation of DCI, I have to know and understand this work. I am fortunate to work with a stellar team made up of administrators and instructional coaches who help lead. I meet with each building administrator’s leadership team on their DCI data during our data meetings. Prior to COVID, we had these meetings monthly.

My advice to any administrator would be to start small and not try to do everything all at once. Have a goal in mind and plan with your team so that you are not the only one communicating the vision. Continue to progress monitor where you are in the process. Use your resources. I have always felt supporting through this work with DCI staff.

Thoughts from a retiring Superintendent... "Why DCI?"

Matthew Martz, Ed.D., Superintendent, Worth County R-III

When I became an administrator twenty-one years ago, I made a commitment to my teachers that I would not expect them to alter their instructional practice without giving them the professional
development to support the change. I knew from experience that the one day, one workshop approach to professional development did not work to make a difference in the classroom. Educational research confirmed this fact. So what would work? My review of educational literature identified collaboration of teachers, more depth and less breadth of topics, and a focus more on processes rather than content.

As a building level administrator, this task of developing these types of PD opportunities challenged me. When I became a superintendent of Worth County RIII schools, the task of moving the whole system of professional development for the district overwhelmed me. While each person needed differentiated learning opportunities, it created a major problem on PD days when we were all together. Maybe you have had this same experience. I posed these questions to my administrative team, “What can we do to support our teachers in improving their instructional practice? What effective researched-based practices can we work on together?” District Continuous Improvement offered us a framework on which to build our teachers’ processes of instruction as well as their abilities to look at student work.

The DCI Framework supports district and building leaders in school improvement efforts in many ways. First, we have access to a support team that guides us on our journey by developing the capacity of our leadership team to affect change. In addition, we have access to professional development topics that integrate academic and behavioral practices for our teachers (Developing Assessment Capable Learners, Metacognition, and Collaborative Teams are three practices that we have immersed ourselves in over the past six years.) We also have tools that allow our staff to reflect on their practices which the district leadership team uses to guide our journey (e.g. Self-Assessment Practice Profiles, Collaborative Work Implementation Survey). As an added benefit, the structures in the DCI process (e.g. District Leadership Team) allow us to grow our teacher leaders in our district.

For the framework to make an impact, however, you as the chief instructional leader of your district, have to stay involved in the process. You set the tone for the importance and urgency of the work. Your building administrators need to engage as well. This framework helps them to focus on the implementation of the practices as they conduct their building walkthroughs. Additionally, you build your district leadership team. For me, I built my district leadership team purposefully by adding the professional development committee leaders into the team along with teachers that building leadership identified as potential teacher leaders in our district. We hold monthly leadership team meetings to monitor our progress on our goals and to plan for the upcoming monthly professional development.

I will retire at the end of this school year. I believe, however, that we have laid the foundation for our journey to continue. The DCI Framework allows our district to continue working toward our vision and provides our staff with the essential processes of good instructional and behavioral practice. I highly recommend the DCI Framework to all superintendents because of its research-based approach to school improvement and because it works.
Advice from the Field

Advice from Districts

Advice from District Leaders

The focus on systems work and alignment makes so much sense. This work and support is filling my bucket.

I think it is the perfect time for our district because we are just now in a spot where we have common grade levels/resources/and leadership amongst all three elementary buildings. This is the next step and the coaches do a great job of laying the groundwork to make this an exceptional district.

This process seems to organize best practices in a systematic way, it brings together many portions that we have started and gives us quality feedback on the implementation of those best practices. The DCI Initiative gives us quality professional development to ensure that students benefit from correct implementation of research based practice.

Advice from District Leadership Teams

Some cadres and zones have created a "district dashboard" as a place to house materials for all the districts in the cadre. The Initial East Zone District Dashboard is easy to access, placing materials, DCI links, and resources all in one place. We love seeing all 19 Districts listed so if we want to reach out to another district who is doing similar work, we can do so at any time.

The Professional Growth Community serves as our DLT. The form and function is to directly support the district Mission Statement, Vision, and CSIP. Our district honors growth by encouraging excellence in teacher leadership also, so having teacher leaders on the district leadership team is essential. The PGC's primary goal is to foster excellence in all district initiatives.

Advice from Principals

Our high school and the DCI team have worked collaboratively over the past year and a half to develop meaningful and intentional professional development for our staff. Everyday with the help of DCI we are improving step-by-step to develop a culture that closes learning gaps and promotes growth.
Advice from the Field

Our Middle School teachers appreciate the guidance and support offered through the DCI process... Their personal and professional experiences provide for a grounded approach to improving teaching and learning.

I appreciate the knowledge and experience that the DCI team brings to our school. As we continue to focus on being a school that uses data to drive our decision making, having this team available to give us guidance has been incredible.

Advice from Teachers

DCI has given me a great bank of resources along with the training to use them to help students understand their own learning.

DCI has given our district a wealth of PD and resources. With the VLP and CWIS data, we have been able to focus our PD and coaching for our administrators and teachers. Our teachers are growing and implementing what they are learning within their classrooms. Our DCI team have become a part of district as they provide the PD with their personal and professional experiences. They are always there to help!

Effect on Students

Diamond R-IV, highlighted above, recently held a DACL Fair. When asking the question "Where am I going" they showed the example (see right) of success criteria where the student makes the story more complete with each version, resulting in a 4-star story. And as students self-assess, their confidence grows with their academic achievement as illustrated below.
Advice from DCI Statewide Support

A key element of the DCI Framework is the Statewide Support - the people involved in DCI work. DESE provides Statewide Support to participating districts through a partnership with MoEdu-SAIL and Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs). DESE staff, MoEdu-SAIL staff, and RPDC Directors and Consultants are at the heart of DCI work.

Advice from CST Consultants

Training and coaching is provided through Coaching Support Teams (CSTs), comprised of consultants from MoEdu-SAIL and RPDCs. CST Consultants are in the districts, working closely with administrators and educators. They are the "front line" workers of DCI. Some consultants have been with the project since day 1 while others are newly "retired" educators. Their expertise is invaluable. When asked how the DCI work impacts districts, CST Consultants shared the following thoughts.

Alignment

Working closely with DCI modules has provided me the opportunity to deeply explore each one. After you start tweezing them and pulling the information, the beauty of how they all come together and align with one another becomes clear. When reflecting on all modules, I was trying to determine which one was the most powerful for a district to implement. I immediately thought about Developing Assessment Capable Learners. But a district can't just utilize DACL. A district would need School Based Implementation Coaching (SBIC) to meet the highest level of learning of DACL and metacognition for student clarity. But to have SBIC, you'll need strong leadership which can be provided through Leadership for Effective Implementation of District-Wide Evidence Based Practices. And with that leadership module, you'll want strong Collaborative Teams (CT) tied in with Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) which are then enhanced through the Data Based Decision Making (DBDM) module. While you're looking at your data within teams, you can't ignore crafting Common Formative Assessments (CFA's) which, in turn, leads you right back to DACL and so the cycle begins again. Districts can blend each module together over a period of years within your district and the amount of student growth and teacher clarity is incredible. The work isn't easy, and everyone will have to
persevere through it. This work benefits the students of Missouri (our driving light and focus), and the level of growth is amazing.

Communication

The close examination of a district level communication plan allows for all stakeholders to be aware and share in the decision-making processes across the district. Throughout our work with districts, it has become clear that when a systematic communication plan is in place, developed, and implemented, commitment and buy in from stakeholders increases.

DCI Practices

DCI is district-level professional development, grounded in essential learning practices to increase student achievement. The PD provided is relevant to every grade level and content. Through the CST, the PD is tailored and a coaching model begins to support the learning and ensure the implementation into the daily practice of the teachers.

I have found working with districts in the early developing zone that are starting with the Instructional Leadership Module refreshing! These districts have been very thoughtful and intentional in their planning and implementation of the DCI work in their districts. They are more concerned about making the work sustainable in their schools rather than looking at it from a compliance issue. DCI is about moving students forward, implementing researched-based effective instructional strategies throughout the entire district. Kindergartners will have the same great instructional practices that the middle school and high school students will receive. It is exciting to see district leadership teams make this commitment to their students by being involved with the Why and How from the very beginning for the DCI work and rolling up their sleeves with the teachers to ensure the work continues.

DCI Through the Eyes of a New Consultant

DCI is a collection of actions that work together like parts on a machine all with the ultimate purpose of improving and strengthening teacher instructional practices to improve student achievement.

Getting Started

Successful leaders and leadership teams begin by looking at data to see evidence of effective practices and opportunities for growth. They
evaluate the opportunities for growth and prioritize the needs for the district. This creates a vision for the district. This vision is clearly communicated with the rest of the staff and outlined in professional development plan. Effectively monitoring the work that has been outlined is key to success. An effective tool to monitor the work is the Self-Assessment Practice Profile. Leadership teams should communicate the successes and areas of concern.

Leadership

It is quite rewarding when working with District Leadership that is involved, understands, and works with the CST consultants throughout the DCI process. This type of district leadership is seen at trainings, during DLT meetings, and at coaching debrief sessions. For example: After administrators did a DACL walkthrough, they conversed with the CST consultants on areas of strengths and those still needing support. Consultants were then able to gather the necessary materials or review trainings to help support staff members. When district leadership is involved at this level, it is quite evident to see growth in the DCI practices; supporting and encouraging staff members, leading to self-sustainability.

It starts and ends with alignment within the District Leadership Team. By giving communication roles to DLT members, it ensures monitoring and consistency of message to the buildings. This is critical because DACL should start day one of a district’s DCI journey. And while it may take a few years for district-wide DACL implementation to be in place, if the DLT begins the work with a consistent message, then the DCI processes become the foundations of teaching in the district and under gird the construction of district teaching.

The DCI Leadership module allows the DLT to grow and develop their personal leadership skills. The development of these skills allows leaders to gain a deeper understanding of the DCI framework and to closely examine the routines, procedures, roadblocks, and successes within the entire district to begin developing a plan for productive change. The decision-making process, culture, and climate are closely examined in order to allow for sustainability.
Advice from the Field

Starting the DCI work with a focus on leadership and how to build a culture of change in their district/building is a critical first step to moving a district forward. I have found that districts that start here see the big picture from the beginning and know the end in mind. District and building administrators become lead learners and then build the capacity of their teachers.

My best advice, from experience both as a CST Consultant and a practitioner, is that District and Building Administrators need to PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE stay involved with your teams and their work! What gets monitored gets done! Also, in order for this work to become institutionalized, teacher leaders must be grown and nurtured. Principals and superintendents come and go with much more frequency than teachers. When teacher leaders own the work, the rate of success grows exponentially.

Meeting districts "where they are"

After a day of grade level meetings at an elementary school, one CST Consultant shared the following report with her facilitator.

We had some great conversations about possible next steps and talked at some length about how to strengthen the use of data in the building, as well as to shore up some of the gaps in collaboration. Each group shared some great reflections and thoughts on things that they "used to be good at" but due to CoVID, they had strayed from some of those practices. There is lots of strong commitment to getting back on track for next year. At the end of the day we set plans to work with grade level teams on collecting data, data walls, etc., and as I left the Principal thanked me and said "This is the most energized I've felt in a long time!"

Value of DCI

Consistent + Collaborative + Commitment = Systemic + Sustainable + High-Yield Results
DCI is a systemic process for learning about and reflecting on best practices in Missouri schools. DCI consultants provide consistent staff development and coaching emphasizing collaborative analysis of evidence of student learning. Individual educators, teacher teams, and administrators work toward sustaining implementation of best practices, and, overall, districts will see high-yield results because of their commitment to DCI work.
Advice from the Field

The beliefs, attitudes, and culture of an administrative team are critical as a school moves forward to implement and support effective practices to maximize impact on student growth and learning. We have found the Leadership Modules to be quite essential as a school starts into the process. One district provides a perfect example of a group of administrators working through the leadership modules in order to implement and sustain a systemic framework. This group spent the first half of this year learning together as an administrative team. During the second half of the year, they are beginning to move forward with the core modules with their staff. They have become a more cohesive group of administrators throughout the year.

Advice from Facilitators

Facilitators act as a conduit between the districts and the CSTs. Facilitators are likely the first contact a district has with DCI. Facilitators match a district with a CST mini-team that supports the district’s unique needs. Many of the Facilitators were originally CST Consultants, so they have that understanding of DCI from the ground up. When asked for advice, they replied the following.

DCI Practices & Data

When working with school leaders and district leadership teams, as their knowledge of the DCI Practices increased, you could see how their use of relevant data from the SAPP and CWIS impacted how they approached student learning. The leaders became keenly aware of the importance of having the foundations in place to ensure students were successful in each classroom.

DCI is important work that will truly make a difference in those committed districts as they drive forward to improve. I believe it starts with strong leadership as well as strong Collective Teacher Efficacy. Once the leaders and the teachers feel they can make a difference, the foundational pieces of the work and the effective teaching and learning practices are easier to implement. These practices will then lead to exceptional outcomes for all students.

As a facilitator of DCI, I have the privilege of supporting and watching the growth of a district. It has been such a valuable experience to witness districts take on the commitment to implement best practices district-wide. Results are evident when
district and building leaders as well as teachers and students all collaborate in a shared understanding of support, expectations, and outcomes for the betterment of the school community.

Leadership

The district-wide focus of the DCI Framework is often a time for growth. When a District Leadership Team, including special education representation, come together to consider their impact, it is exciting to watch. The Leadership Professional Learning Modules are great resources for collaboration when beginning this work.

The true growth of DCI comes from the leadership, not only in each building, but from the district level, too. The leaders need to be an active part of the DCI framework, including being an active participant in trainings and coaching. This allows them to be aware, have knowledge of, and know what to expect to see and/or hear within classrooms and during data team meetings. The leaders are the drivers of full sustainable implementation.

DCI, since its inception, has been a systems approach to implementing the most effective practices across a district. To take a step and observe a district’s journey from forming a District Leadership Team, to starting to build collaborative teams to seeing DACL in action in classrooms, to school-based implementation coaching where the teachers become the drivers of the work is really worthy of awe, astonishment, and praise. It is the school district, and everyone in it including students, that make this work come alive.

When our goal begins with ensuring all staff are proficient in the DCI Practices and supported through leadership, coaching, and collective efficacy, then designing the action steps to achieve the goal becomes our journey.
Advice from RPDC Directors

RPDC Directors provide support and guidance to the CST Consultants. When asked how the DCI work impacts the state educational system, RPDC Directors shared the following thoughts.

Commitment

The power of District Continuous Improvement lies in the commitment of all leaders, both district and building, to the underlying principles of DCI: data-based decisions, use of research-based instructional strategies, and the development of a culture of collaboration. If these drivers of school improvement inform every related district and building decision, student learning will improve and the culture and climate within both district and building will strengthen.

Effective Practices

DCI assists districts in establishing systems. These systems are based on effective practices research. Districts that commit to full implementation establish proven practices that will raise the achievement of all students.

Leadership

When considering DCI initiatives that have been effective in our districts, I have observed growth in several areas, but specifically in leadership. Our administrators have grown as educational leaders as they progressed through the leadership module on the VLP. Through facilitation of the tenets of this module, they have become aware of how to build a collaborative culture, gain a broader understanding of DCI initiatives, and understand how CFA’s are utilized to positively impact classroom instruction.

Research-Based

District Continuous Improvement includes research based practices that will move any district toward higher student achievement. When district leaders commit to district-wide implementation of these practices, it will change the culture within the district. Teachers will be empowered to collectively
make decisions based on data, and make adjustments to instruction that will best meet the needs of all students. DCI is the right work, at the right time, for the right reasons. Any district that embraces this work will see lasting improvement.

Systemic Approach

DCI is a wonderful opportunity for Missouri school districts to embrace a systemic approach to district-wide continuous school improvement. District leaders receive support on how to align district-wide efforts that will directly impact student learning. Leaders gain access to specific data collection and analysis tools to better inform their professional learning plans. Teacher leadership capacity is elevated through leadership training designed specifically for district leadership teams. Classroom teachers are provided training and coaching services in their efforts to embed high leverage instructional practices into their daily instruction. DCI is a statewide collaborative network that works to ensure that all Missouri districts have access to high quality professional learning tools to maximize their overall district performance.
www.moedu-sail.org

Scan Me

Effective teaching and learning for ALL students
District Continuous Improvement (DCI)