Implementation Zones Guide

Fourth Edition, 2023

District Continuous Improvement Framework

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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).

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Purpose & Function

Implementation Zones (IZs) are a data-driven approach to describing district- and building-level implementation processes and outcomes.

The purpose of Implementation Zones is to provide a structure to address the following needs.

- To differentiate support for districts based on implementation data
- To help districts better understand the journey from onboarding to sustainability
- To improve efficiency of CST and Facilitator effort
- To improve continuity of support from year to year
- To aid in sustainability of DCI

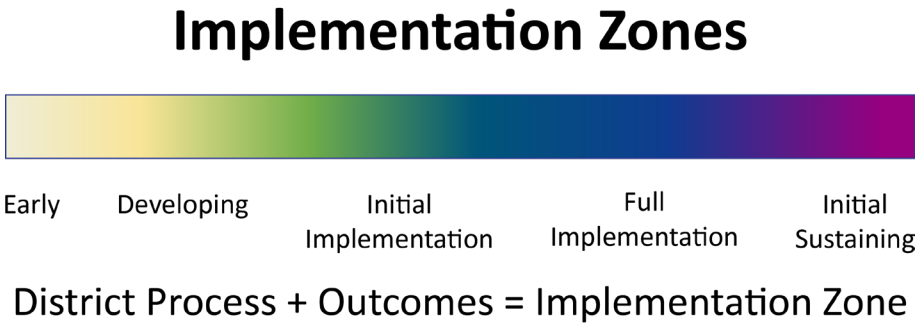
Districts are organized into cadres within each Implementation Zone. Benefits to this approach include the following.

- Clarity in the implementation process. Cadre's provide districts with an increased understanding of the the DCI journey and their progress as they work toward full implementation and sustainability.
- Fidelity to the DCI Framework. The cadre approach also ensures there is consistency between the CSTs and Facilitators working with districts who have similar strengths and needs. Cadres provide opportunities for districts to draw upon and share successful experiences with other districts.

Implementation Zones are similar to a data dashboard and can be used to guide district conversations answering "where are we now?" in the journey toward full implementation of the DCI framework.

Implementation Zones

Figure 1. Implementation Zones and Implementation Stages



A district is placed in one of five Implementation Zones.

- Early: Districts beginning DCI
- Developing: Districts putting elements of the DCI Framework into place and starting to see evidence of effective implementation
- Initial Implementation: Districts implementing all pieces of the DCI Framework to some, and possibly varying, extent across the district
- Full Implementation: Districts showing initial evidence of sustaining effective practices
- Initial Sustaining Zone: Districts showing sustained implementation of effective practices across multiple years

Data Elements & Zone Determination

As noted earlier, the IZ structure is data driven. A new, more streamlined structure for determining Implementation Zone placement has been developed and will be used for placement for the 2023-2024 school year.

The new system continues to use district- and building-level processes and outcomes (see Figure 2). The processes refer to what a district does. The outcomes refer to what a district shows.

The following descriptions of the various processes and outcomes can be seen visually on Figure 2, the Implementation Zone Worksheet. Each district will receive a worksheet illustrating their data and zone placement.

District-level Processes

The district-level processes are measured by engagement with the Coaching Support Team in DCI topics. Topics on which districts are focusing are logged into the CST Coaching Logs and detail the interactions with districts and, specifically, the DCI practices and topics on which the district is focusing. The data used to inform the Implementation Zone placement is the number of DCI Topics in which the district has engaged. For ease of illustration, these topics are organized and distributed by Implementation Zone, but can and should be included at any point in your DCI process. The DCI Topics are distributed through Implementation Zones as follows:

- Early IZ incorporates Collaborative Teams, Data-Based Decision Making, and Common Formative Assessment.
- Developing IZ includes Developing Accessment Capable Learners with Feedback, Metacognition, and Instructional Leadership.
- Initial IZ incorporates School-Based Implementation Coaching and Collective Teacher Efficacy.
- Full IZ includes alignment and systems planning.

A checkmark shows on the worksheet for topics covered. On Figure 2, you can see that the Sample District has checkmarks in 3 of the 4 Implementation Zone topic categories, suggesting they are engaged with topics at 3/4 levels.

Figure 2. Implementation Zone Worksheet

District:	Sample District				Date: April 2023
Number of buildings:	8				
Number of instructional staff:	292				
				Criteria	
Implementation Zone Worksheet		Early	Developing	Initial Implementation	Full Implementation
District-level processes	Criteria	Foundations	ETLP	Leadership	Systems
	Engaged in DCI practices: Across implementation zones	✓	✓	✓	
District-level outcomes	Criteria	0-4 items	5-10 items	11-14 items	15-17 items
	Implementation Checklist: # of items "in place"			11	
	By essential function	Number of items "in place"			
	Leadership (3 items)	3			
	Communication (2 items)	2			
	Commitment (5 items)	3			
	Performance/outcomes (5 items)	2			
	Alignment (2 items)	1			
Building-level processes	Criteria	0-19%	20-45%	46-75%	76-100%
	Number of buildings showing CWIS[1] response rates by zone	1	4	2	1
Building-level outcomes	Criteria (number of domains averaging 4 or 5)	<45% OR 0 domains	1-2 domains	3 domains	4-5 domains
	Number of buildings having CWIS domains averaging 4 or 5		5	1	2

[1] *CWIS: Collaborative Work Implementation Survey*

What is the Implementation Survey?

The Implementation Survey contains action steps that districts will accomplish. It provides structure, reflects current status, and indicates next steps. This survey outlines the action steps critical for systems level change and provides a tool to document when each step is accomplished.

District-level Outcomes

The district-level outcomes are measured by data from the Implementation Survey. These data are the number of items "in place" by essential function (leadership, communication, commitment, performance/outcomes, alignment).

- In the Early Zone, districts will have less than 5 items "in place"
- Developing Zone, districts have 5-10 items "in place"
- Initial Implementation Zone, districts have 11-14 items "in place"
- Full Implementation Zone, districts will have 15-17 items "in place"
- Initial Sustaining Zone districts have 15-17 items “in place” for 3 consecutive years

Having items "in place" means a district has accomplished that item. The sample district in Figure 2 has 12 items in place.

Building-level Processes

Both building-level processes and outcomes use data from the Collaborative Work Implementation Survey (the CWIS).

What is the CWIS?

The Collaborative Work Implementation Survey measures the degree of implementation of desired DCI processes and practices across a district. The scale assesses the application of DCI and measures growth in application over time. The CWIS is designed to be administered district wide and reviewed by the district leadership team to identify district-wide goals.

The building-level processes include the number of buildings showing the following CWIS response rates.

- The Early Zone has a response rate by building of 0-19%
- The Developing Zone has a response rate by building of 20-45%
- Initial IZ has a response rate by building of 46-75%
- Full IZ has a response rate by building of 76-100%
- Initial Sustaining IZ districts maintain a response rate, by building, of 76-100% for 3 consecutive years

The sample district in Figure 2 has buildings in each of the four zones.

Building-level Outcomes

The CWIS data used for this measure include the number of buildings showing CWIS domains with a response averaging 4 or 5.

- The Early IZ has either less than 45% response rate OR zero domains with a response averaging 4-5
- The Developing IZ has 1-2 domains with a response averaging 4-5
- Initial IZ has 3 domains with a response averaging 4-5
- Full IZ has 4-5 domains with a response averaging 4-5
- Initial Sustaining IZ districts maintain a response rate, by building, of 76-100% for 3 consecutive years

Professional Judgement

The final element in determining the appropriate Implementation Zone for districts is that of the professional judgement. The Coaching Support Team facilitators, together with the CST consultants, review each district's Implementation Zone data and consider contextual factors ased on their knowledge of the district. Through this review, Implementation Zone determinations are confirmed.

Implementation Zone Landscape

The IZ Landscape is the visual representation of the data, bringing all the data elements together to illustrate the Implementation Zone for that district. The IZ Landscape has been redesgined for ease of understanding. Figure 3 on the next page shows a sample IZ Landscape using data from the Sample District Implementation Zone Worksheet in Figure 2.

What does CWIS Domains averaging 4 or 5 mean?

An average of 4 or 5 on CWIS Domains means average responses of “most of the time” or “always” for Effective Teaching and Learning Practices, Common Formative Assessment, and Data-Based Decision Making, or responses of “agree” or “strongly agree” for the Professional Development and Leadership domains.

Putting It All Together

Figures 2 and 3 below provide an easy-to-view representation of how this works.

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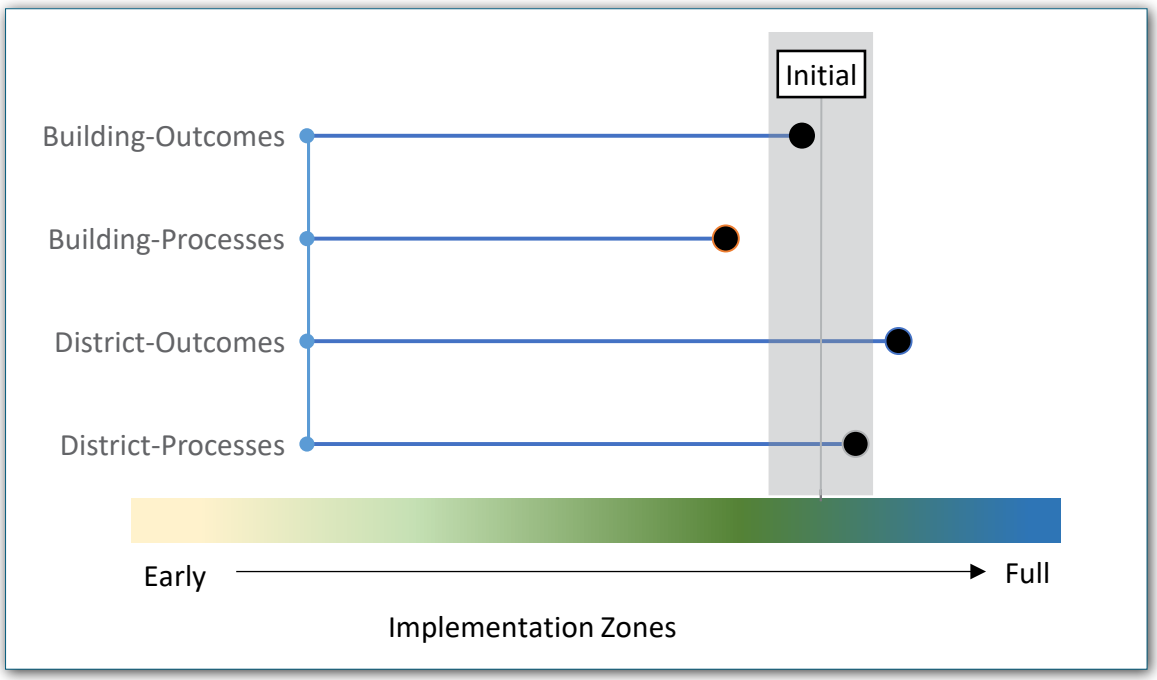
Figure 3. Implementation Zone Landscape



Looking at the top horizontal line in the Implementation Zone graphic, you will see that the district's building-level outcomes fall in the area of the Initial Zone. The next line represents the building-level processes which fall just a bit short of the Initial Zone. The district-level outcomes, however, fall closer to the Full Zone, with the district-level processes inside the Initial Zone. The preponderance of this district's data falls in the Initial Implementation Zone.

Facilitators and CST members work closely to help districts understand how their data has informed their Implementation Zone recommendation. Data visualized through the Implementation Zone Worksheet and Landscape, together with the facilitator and CST judgement, makes Implementation Zone placement transparent and can serve to help districts create a plan to move forward through the DCI implementation process.

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