

8 Steps to Develop a Successful Action Plan

Step One: Define the problem.

Example

What result are you trying to improve?	Student pillar "My Education"
How did you know you needed to improve it?	Downward trend
How will you know when you've fixed the problem?	Pillar score improves
Determine the best measure(s) for this problem.	"My Education" pillar score

Step Two: Write your SMART objective for improvement.

Once you have a clear picture of what you need to accomplish, the next step is to set a measurable objective.
Example: Center Middle School will improve the student "My Education" pillar score from 5.8 to 8.0 by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Step Three: Identify the root causes.

Why are the results in this area low?
What are the earliest, most basic, deepest, causes for the problem?
Look at the questions that are low
Why are those questions low?

Three common techniques for schools conducting root cause analysis:



Step Four: Generate strategy and action ideas.

Example

Conduct a brainstorming activity to identify	Use this brainstorming activity to generate ideas to improve scores
Use the Modified Affinity Brainstorming process	

Step Five: Identify a few key strategies that address the root causes of the problem you're solving.

Using the prioritized action ideas from step four, select a few key strategies to be implemented that will have a high likelihood of achieving the SMART objective.

Step Six: List the actions necessary to accomplish each strategy.

It is important that all activities necessary to reach the objective are included in the plan. Include the person responsible for ensuring the action is completed, the measure of completion, the target for that measure, the start and end dates, resources allocated, and the status of the action.

Step Seven: Build in accountability and sustainability.

Track your actions often. Define how follow-up will occur. Once your action plan is created and shared with the staff, the next step is simple: make it a habit to frequently follow-up. Build reviews into routine activities like a monthly meeting and/or report. For example, you may review the plan with your leadership as part of a regular leadership meeting. You can create a schedule of reporting progress that you put in the calendar. Success with an action plan depends on follow-up and accountability. Use tools and processes that support sustainable plan implementation.

Step Eight: Monitor and adjust.

Monitor accomplishment of the strategies and action steps as well as progress toward achieving the goal. Make adjustments to the plan as needed if your progress is not on track toward success.