



INFOGRAPHIC CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Nebraska Department of Education



The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is in the process of updating and refining its Continuous Improvement Process and Procedures in accordance with Section 009 of NAC 92 Chapter 10 (2015). This infographic provides an overview of Continuous Improvement (CI) along with important background context on how CI can be used to achieve higher levels of accountability within schools.

Continuous Improvement is a fundamental part of accreditation regulations in Nebraska and woven into each tenet of the AQuESTT model. NDE will work to ensure a greater and intentional focus on the key components of CI shown to be most important and relevant for K12 schools.

WHAT IS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Continuous Improvement (CI) is the process or conditions within an organization or group that allow for incremental change and progress towards a goal. The CI term is often used to describe a group's culture, an improvement cycle, or a method for approaching problem-solving.



CI CULTURE

A group's mindset around improvement and change



CI CYCLE

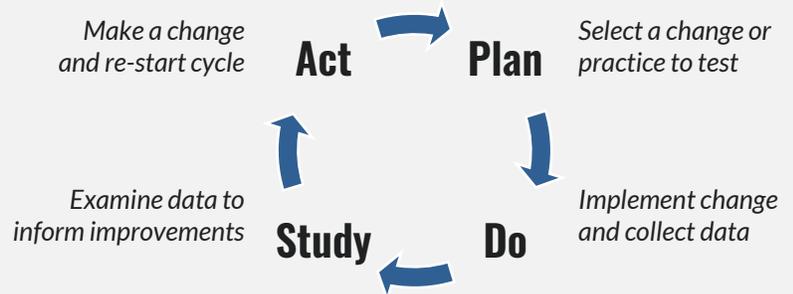
A structured approach to achieve improvement



CI METHOD

A tool or practice for problem-solving

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle is among the most common strategies for CI. This cycle provides a continuous feedback loop driven by data collection and analysis for groups to test out and refine strategies that lead to positive change or improvement. The PDSA cycle is designed to be iterative, allowing for incremental change that adjusts for successes, challenges, and specific contexts.



WHY USE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

CI offers school and district leaders a reliable process for supporting improvement while addressing the complexities of teaching and learning. K12 leaders and researchers recognize both the relevance and potential for meaningful positive change that can come from CI. CI in K12 settings represents a shift away from "what works" and researcher-driven improvement methods and towards a focus on the importance of practitioner- and school-specific approaches.

CI is a key practice for quality education in Nebraska and the NDE is striving to clarify and will build on the expectations for CI found in the current guidance.

SECTION 009 OF RULE 10 (2015)



A school system develops and implements a continuous improvement process to promote quality learning for all students.

(009.01 Quality Indicator)



- Analysis of data including; student performance, demographics, learning climate, and former high school students
- Continuous improvement action plan
- Routine analysis of data
- Routine monitoring of progress towards improvement goals 1

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Successful CI relies on strong leadership, organizational culture, and technical skills. Leaders and their mindset and openness to CI are critically important factors that influence the overall vision and approach to CI across an organization. Leaders that are open and supportive of change and transformation create an environment that is also conducive to CI. However, everyone in the organization must develop a culture of CI to ensure that the practices and improvements coming out of a formal CI process are implemented and sustained over time. Finally, those responsible for conducting a CI process also require a capacity, or skills, to carry out this work. Key CI success factors within these three categories are listed below.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE



TECHNICAL SKILLS

- ✓ Transformational Leader Supportive of Change
- ✓ Systems-Level Thinker
- ✓ Ability to Set Clear Vision and Group Culture

- ✓ Shared Commitment to Goals
- ✓ Transparent and Inclusive Relationships
- ✓ Community of Practice

- ✓ Strategic Visioning and Action Planning
- ✓ Data, Evaluation, and Analysis Processes
- ✓ Collaborative Decision Making

ALIGNMENT WITH AQuESTT

AQuESTT provides school and district leaders with a framework for creating systems of support and building effective practices to ensure student success. Its tenets are closely aligned with key components and success factors for CI. At its core, AQuESTT supports and values CI through its expectations for schools, leaders, and educators. The following AQuESTT investment areas have a particular connection to CI:

- **Leadership** – CI empowers leaders in their commitment to educational equity and accountability
- **Student Achievement and Growth** – CI informs a balanced assessment system and enables data literacy to improve learning and growth
- **Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success** – CI allows for inclusive and relevant engagement with community members to enhance experiences and opportunities
- **Educational Opportunities and Access** – CI enhances effective, comprehensive, and continuous learning opportunities for students



SOURCES

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