



Applying the Equity Lens to Understanding Resource Planning & Usage

As part of implementing the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) equity-embedded mindset, the continuous improvement team will consider how available resources are allocated and utilized to equitably support desired outcomes for each child. Applying the equity lens to resource planning and usage may be accomplished by including additional reflection questions throughout the continuous improvement process that narrow the focus to the accessibility and usage of resources supporting a given goal, strategy, and/or activity. The additional equity-focused questions assist a team exploring a topic in developing clarity on the equitable alignment of available resources (e.g., people, time, materials, funds, and course offerings) ensuring strategies are adequately resourced. Resource equity-focused questions also assist teams in identifying how resource availability and use impact implementation and outcomes for groups (e.g., students, employees, and parents) served by the district.

Assess Needs Process: During exploration of various data objects, the continuous improvement team includes a consideration on how available resources are allocated, utilized, and impact student outcomes. Through this inquiry, the team explores the necessary resources required to implement the chosen strategies to ensure that each student has the necessary support for improved outcomes. By asking questions from the [MICIP Process Guide](#) and/or optional questionnaires provided later in this document, the team may identify areas for growth in how various resources are distributed and utilized by employees, students, and families as intended.

Resource Equity and the Data Story: The team will apply an equity lens when reviewing a variety of data objects throughout the exploration of a topic. These data objects may be compiled to create a data set within the MICIP platform focused on the resources supporting the topic being explored. Upon determining strengths and/or opportunities for growth, the team will summarize its understandings in the resource equity modal. This summary is utilized in the development of a comprehensive data story.

Root Cause Analysis: This structured process for identifying “the why” of a challenge includes exploring the relationship of resource availability, distribution, and utilization related to one or more potential causations using a “[fishbone](#)” diagram, the [Five Whys](#), and/or other district preferred tools. Considering the impact of how and where resources are allocated and utilized is important in helping to determine root cause.

Plan: Planning includes tasks such as defining a measurable goal, target measures, identifying a strategy, and creating a strategy implementation plan. The implementation plan clarifies necessary adult competencies and actions, infrastructure needs, and organizational systems. Additionally, it identifies how strategies, activities, and assigned resource utilization will be monitored, evaluated, and communicated throughout implementation. This process and resulting plan provide an opportunity to consider the impact of distribution and utilization of resources required to implement the strategy for the intended equitable outcomes.

Implement: Research has identified [factors](#) that are critical to successful implementation. Such factors include an [enabling context](#) ensuring sufficient resources are available and utilized to support the given strategy. Any factor missing or lacking elements will have a negative impact on the desired student outcome and may lead to unintended inequities.

Monitor/Evaluate Process: As the team reflects on the hexagon tool results, implementation plan, resource utilization data, and implementation data points, the team can monitor/evaluate the impact of resource distribution and utilization on strategy implementation and desired outcomes. An equity lens provides an opportunity to consider how each student group is impacted by the resources supporting strategy implementation.

Sample Questions for Facilitating Resource Equity Discussions

The following sample of questions from the MICIP Process Guide, questionnaires, and other guidance documents may assist a team to navigate the continuous improvement process utilizing a resource equity lens.

Assess Needs: Keeping in mind the information from the initiative inventory, hexagon tool, monitoring documentation, and other data objects, the team may reflect on the following questions:

- What additional perspectives might be necessary to accomplish equitable planning, implementing, and monitoring adequate resourcing of strategies and activities?
- What additional perspectives might be necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the allocation and utilization impacts student outcomes?
- What does the district methodology for school funding and comparability reports indicate about equitable distribution of resources?
- What does the data indicate about how the district ensures initiatives are adequately resourced throughout the life of an initiative?
- What does the data indicate about any strategy that may be under resourced?
 - What is the impact on implementation?
 - What student group or school is most impacted by the identified insufficiency of resources?

Plan:

- In what ways will the distribution and use of the allocated resources be monitored?
- What does the research/evidence say about the impact on various populations for the strategy being considered? What does it say about the flexibility to adjust the strategy to address the needs of the target population without negatively impacting outcomes?
- In what ways does the district prepare for resource adjustments that might arise?
- What data will the team use to monitor and evaluate implementation and impact of the strategies to ensure equity in systems and in outcomes while safeguarding against unintended consequences from disproportionately affecting certain student groups?

Implement:

- Are strategies supporting the goal adequately resourced to ensure implementation as intended?
- Are allocated resources being expended as planned to support implementation?
- What does the data indicate the progress is for supporting completion of strategies and activities on time with sufficient resources?
- What do the data points identified in the strategy implementation plan indicate concerning the equitable impact of the strategy?

Monitor/Evaluate Process:

- What does the data indicate about the sufficiency and equitable distribution and use of resources to support implementation of strategies and activities?
- What student group(s) are impacted by any insufficiencies in resources intended to support implementation of strategies and activities? How are challenges in resource sufficiency and equitable distribution and utilization addressed?
- Are students and families accessing available resources? Why or why not?
- What does the data collected from those being impacted by the continuous improvement plan indicate (e.g., student, family, and employee [Street Data](#))?

Optional Google Form Questionnaires

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| • School Funding | • Positive & Inviting Climate | • High-Quality Early Learning |
| • Teaching Quality & Diversity | • Tier I Social Emotional Learning (SEL) | • Learning-Ready Facilities |
| • Leadership Quality & Diversity | • Tier II & III SEL | • Diverse Classrooms & Schools |
| • Empowering, Rigorous Content | • Tier II & III Mental Health & Family Support | • Specific District/School Initiative |
| • Instructional Times & Attention | • Post-Secondary Success Support & Intervention | • Resource Equity Diagnostic |