

# Learning Bites: Engaging in Continuous Improvement



## Identifying Targets

Identifying interim and end target measures are essential elements to the continuous improvement planning process. Starting with a SMART goal, a plan could have more than one measure.

Depending on your goal, your target might include quantitative data, qualitative data, or both.

- **Quantitative** data is information that is expressed using numbers; observations expressed as a number, percentage, ratio; surveys with closed-ended questions, etc.
- **Qualitative** data is information that is expressed using words; concepts, thoughts, experiences/opinions, descriptions, observations, interviews or surveys with open-ended questions. Note: Even though qualitative data is expressed in ideas and words, the improvement target will be expressed numerically, e.g., increasing or decreasing the number or percentage of people who report certain thoughts or ideas gathered through open-ended questions. "The percentage of student comments referring to examples of highly engaging lessons will increase from 30% to 50% as reported in student surveys at the end of the 20— school year.

An End Target is where you want to be at the end of your Goal timeline. In setting End Targets, ask:

- What metric (increase/decrease in adult and/or student performance/behaviors/feelings/attitudes) would best indicate overall growth or improvement?
- What targets are rigorous, yet reasonable?

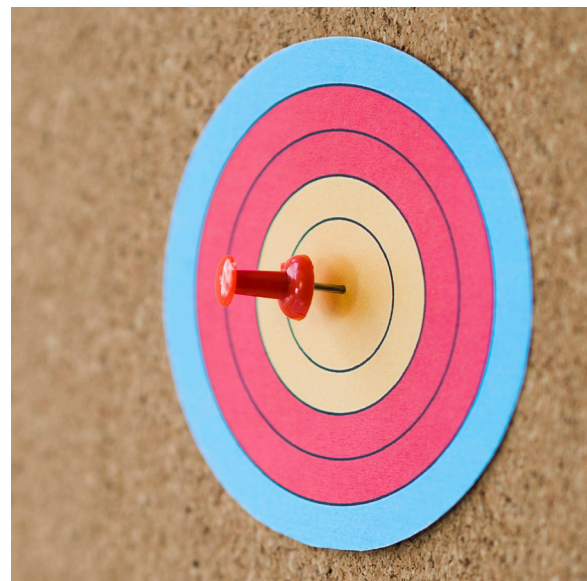
An Interim Target is a monitoring check during Goal implementation that lets you know whether you are making the progress necessary to achieve your End Target. In setting Interim Targets, ask:

- What targets will you need to know whether you are making the right amount of progress to

meet your end target measure?

- What is the reasonable but necessary progress needed to reach the end targets? How often will you review your progress toward those targets?

In MICIP, you can also identify an interim target for a task. A task is typically a one-time action that might be needed to accomplish a goal. Tasks are used to measure progress and should be thought of as a milestone or benchmark without which the goal cannot be met. For example, implementation of a career program might require building a specialized facility or acquiring specialized equipment. If this is not already in the district budget, it might require passing a bond issue. Passing the bond issue could be considered a task. If a district is implementing new instructional programs that require expert leadership, it might require hiring a curriculum director. Hiring the director could be considered a task. Identifying a task is optional if nothing in that category is needed.



## Determining Target Dates

It is important when determining interim and end target due dates that you consider the stage of implementation that aligns with your goal. There are four stages to implementation: exploration, installation, initial implementation and full implementation.

- **Exploration** – Involves an assessment of assets and needs of the focus population, fit of the program or practice with those needs and assets and feasibility of implementation.
- **Installation** – Involves building the infrastructure necessary to implement at the program or practice, including practitioner and organizational capacity.
- **Initial Implementation** – Includes the initial efforts of staff to use the program or practice, with attention to using data for continuous improvement. Initial implementation could also involve implementation on a limited scale.
- **Full Implementation** – Occurs as staff use the program or practice successfully, and population-level outcomes are achieved. Full implementation could also mean moving from implementation on a limited scale to full scale.

Continuous Improvement teams will need to consider what stage best represents their starting point toward creating plans to meet a goal. Taking the time to determine the level will produce a more confident end target due date. Interim target due dates can then be used to identify the various stages of implementation leading to full implementation. This is also what, in part, makes the plan continuous. Districts should avoid haphazardly setting dates only to extend them. Using the [implementation guide](#) from the National Implementation Research Network will aid districts in determining their implementation level as well as what it would take to move to full implementation.