MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
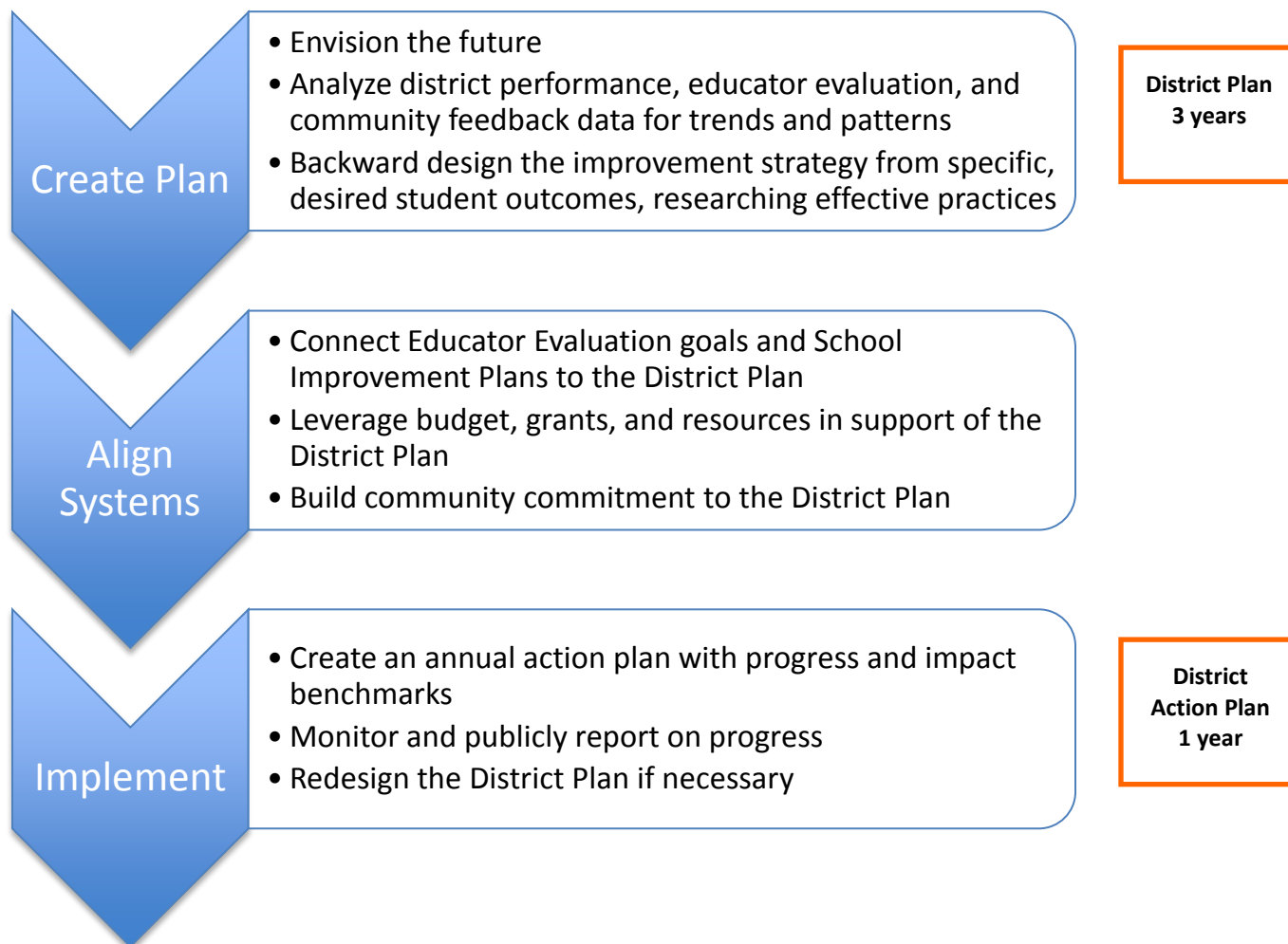ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

The District Planning Process

Create—Align—Implement

From Data Analysis to Outcome-Driven Planning to System Alignment
From Action Planning to Progress Monitoring to Potential Redesign

Create—Align—Implement represent the three phases of a planning process that is designed to strengthen district coherence and support district success. This planning process centers on the creation of a multi-year District Plan that is grounded in analysis of a wide array of district data; sets specific, measurable outcomes and identifies the objectives and initiatives to accomplish them; and serves as the foundation and guide for all other district systems.

This planning process also centers on the creation of an annual action plan that supports success of the District Plan by identifying benchmarks districts can use to monitor progress and measure impact while implementation is underway. The activities and resulting plans for each phase are depicted in the graphic below.

Create Plan
- Envision the future
- Analyze district performance, educator evaluation, and community feedback data for trends and patterns
- Backward design the improvement strategy from specific, desired student outcomes, researching effective practices

**District Plan
3 years**

Align Systems
- Connect Educator Evaluation goals and School Improvement Plans to the District Plan
- Leverage budget, grants, and resources in support of the District Plan
- Build community commitment to the District Plan

Implement
- Create an annual action plan with progress and impact benchmarks
- Monitor and publicly report on progress
- Redesign the District Plan if necessary

**District Action Plan
1 year**

The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework

Element	Definition
Mission	Your purpose: why the organization exists.
Core Values	What you believe in: the principles that guide decision making and action.
Vision	Your aspirations for students: what you value and why, and what future success will look like.
Are the foundation of the…	
Theory of Action	The beliefs and assumptions you hold about why certain actions will lead to the vision you seek. Framed as an "if…then" statement.
Which leads to the development of the…	
Strategic Objectives	The coherent group of overarching goals and key levers for improvement that will achieve the vision.
Which will be achieved by the…	
Strategic Initiatives	The projects and programs that support and will achieve the strategic objectives.
For which you set…	
Outcomes	The expected results: what they will be, how they will be measured, when they will occur. Outcomes are SMART goals: specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, results-focused; timed and tracked. **Final outcomes** set targets for improvement achieved at the end of plan implementation. For example, in Year 3, reduce the MCAS achievement gap for English language learners by 25% as measured by the Composite Performance Index (CPI). **Interim outcomes** set targets for improvement during plan implementation.
Which you evaluate progress toward attaining by setting…	
Implementation Benchmarks	The planned action steps and their impact. Two different types of implementation benchmarks are required to determine whether you did what you had planned, when you planned to do it—and whether early evidence indicates effectiveness. **Process benchmarks** specify what will happen, who will do it, and when. For example, 20 teachers will complete an ESL course by June. **Early evidence of change benchmarks** identify changes you should begin to see if the plan is having its desired impact while being implemented. Early evidence benchmarks are indicators of effective implementation rather than measurements of interim results. Early evidence benchmarks might include changes in practice or attitude from sources such as classroom observation or surveys. For example, an increase in student use of oral language was observed in 80% of these ESL teachers' classrooms between October and May.
Which you consistently monitor and use as indicators for assessing whether the plan is on track to achieve desired change, or requires adjustment.	

Create—Align—Implement

District Plan and Action Plan Components

The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework

The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework, displayed on the previous page, was developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to support plan creation. The framework provides a common planning language and supports the shared understanding critical to successful planning and execution. The framework defines all improvement and action plan components.

District Plan

An effective District Plan is developed with input from staff, families, students, and community partners. The outline below identifies a proposed structure for the multi-year District Plan. These components reflect legislative requirements, educator evaluation expectations, and best practices in planning.

 I. District Mission, Vision, Core Values
   a. The district's **core values**
   b. The district's **mission**
   c. The district's **vision**
 II. Data analysis and theory of action for improvement
   a. **Data analysis** of student achievement and gaps between student groups in core subjects
   b. The district's **theory of action** for improvement
 III. Strategic Objectives and Initiatives
   a. **Strategic objectives** for improvement (3-5 recommended, to support focus)
   b. The **strategic initiatives** that will achieve these objectives
   c. The **professional development** that will support each initiative
   d. **Teacher induction** and **mentoring activities** that support successful implementation
 IV. Outcomes
   a. Performance benchmarks—**interim and final outcomes—**and processes for evaluating initiative effectiveness

District Action Plan

The annual Action Plan supports the implementation of the multi-year District Plan. The outline below identifies action plan components.

 I. Implementation Benchmarks
   a. **Implementation benchmarks** for the year, defining specific activities, persons responsible, and timelines for action to be taken to accomplish the initiatives in the District Plan
 II. Resources Supporting Implementation
   a. The staff and financial resources allocated to support these initiatives

The Massachusetts Planning and Implementation Framework identifies two types of implementation benchmarks: process and early evidence of change. Process benchmarks help monitor progress, specifying what will be done when and by whom. Early evidence of change benchmarks help monitor impact during implementation, specifying changes in practice, attitude, or behavior one should begin to see if the plan is having its desired impact.

Create—Align—Implement

Connecting Existing District Systems to Create Coherence

The graphic below depicts the data sources that inform District and School Improvement Plans; the contents of improvement and action plans and the relationships between these plans; and the connections between these plans and district systems. District and School Improvement Plans are living documents that should guide district systems and respond to changes in the district context, including data about plan implementation and impact gathered through action plan monitoring.

| District Performance Data | Educator Evaluation Data | Community Feedback |

District Action Plan
Implementation
Benchmarks
Resources

District Plan
Vision, Mission, Core Values
Data Analysis
Strategic Objectives
Strategic Initiatives
Professional Development
Teacher Induction & Mentoring
Outcomes (SMART Goals)

Budget
Grants
Technology
Resource Allocation

Educator Evaluation System

School Improvement Plan
Vision, Mission, Core Values
Data Analysis
Strategic Objectives
Strategic Initiatives
Professional Development
Teacher Induction & Mentoring
Outcomes (SMART Goals)

School Action Plan
Implementation
Benchmarks
Resources

| School Performance Data | Educator Evaluation Data | Community Feedback |