



## Continuous Improvement and the Supporting Educators Webinars

Michigan is embarking on a new approach to Continuous Improvement through MICIP, the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process. MICIP is a pathway for districts to improve student outcomes by assessing whole child needs to develop plans and coordinate funds. MICIP represents a Mindset, a Process, and a Platform. The Mindset refers to three things: 1) a district-driven process with on-going improvement cycles rather than one annual cycle; 2) addressing the needs of the Whole Child through the Whole School and the Whole Community; and 3) a focus on systems to support implementation of the entire plan. The Process consists of subprocesses - including assess needs, plan, implement, monitor/adjust, and evaluate -, focused on the Whole Child and contextualized within the district vision, mission and beliefs. The Platform is simply a vehicle for identifying the conversation around continuous improvement as well as a place to record the thinking that results from that conversation. The themes of the Supporting Educators webinars connect strongly to the ideas in the MICIP Mindset and Process while the Platform will be a vehicle to put them into action.



Research has shown that student achievement is not likely to succeed unless both students and adults experience a safe, orderly, and respectful environment. From Maslow's research we know that students are not likely to be successful academically unless they also have their basic physiological, safety and emotional needs addressed. While in the past, continuous improvement plans almost totally focused on academics – and the state previously required goals in five academic areas -, more recently those plans have also focused on building a **positive and effective school culture and climate**.

This also leads to the Whole Child, one of the essential components of the MICIP mindset. Health and educational practitioners came together to recognize that a Whole Child who is characterized by being healthy, safe, engaged, challenged, and supported is comprised of not only the cognitive or academic dimension but also the dimensions of the physical, behavioral, social, and emotional. Whereas in the past these other aspects were seen primarily as the responsibility of the home, today we recognize the significant role that educators play in cultivating these areas, and we are now seeing continuous improvement plans that address goals in **social emotional learning/well-being** or in behavioral or physical well-being. Especially as districts are responding to the effects of COVID-19, it is likely that these other dimensions may demand more than or at least attention equal to the cognitive.

And while all of these are critical to and support a child's academic success, if focusing on these other areas does not also lead to academic achievement, the district will not be perceived as having achieved its goal. Many studies have shown that the factor having the largest impact on the child's learning is the quality of the tiered **high leverage academic instruction**, and here is another place that MICIP aligns with this work. Through its connection to a Strategy Bank, it provides the resources and tools for addressing instructional/learning goals and those goals that support them, including the goal of equity for all learners.

While it is primarily the role of the school to implement the continuous learning cycles of assess needs, plan, implement, monitor/adjust, and evaluate at the instructional level, it is primarily the role of the district to support that instruction at the systems level, whether that be with systems that have more direct impact such as curriculum/instruction/assessment, data, student support, or technology, or those that support education more generally, including leadership, communication, human resources, finance, transportation, or food service. MICIP provides the data and the structure for identifying gaps in systems work as well as the tools to address those gaps.

The Whole Child model recognizes that addressing all dimensions of the child cannot only be the responsibility of the district and school. Rather, it necessarily must also **engage families as well as the entire community**. It is families who provide the first educational experiences for children and who can support the ongoing efforts of the school and district. It is also the community that frequently has the resources to partner with the district in supporting improvement efforts around the physical, behavioral, social, and emotional dimensions as well as the cognitive. MICIP provides that opportunity to engage families and the community both as members of the continuous improvement team and in being resources for support.

In summary, the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process is strongly aligned with and reinforces the themes of the *Supporting Educators in Preparation for the Fall* webinars.

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