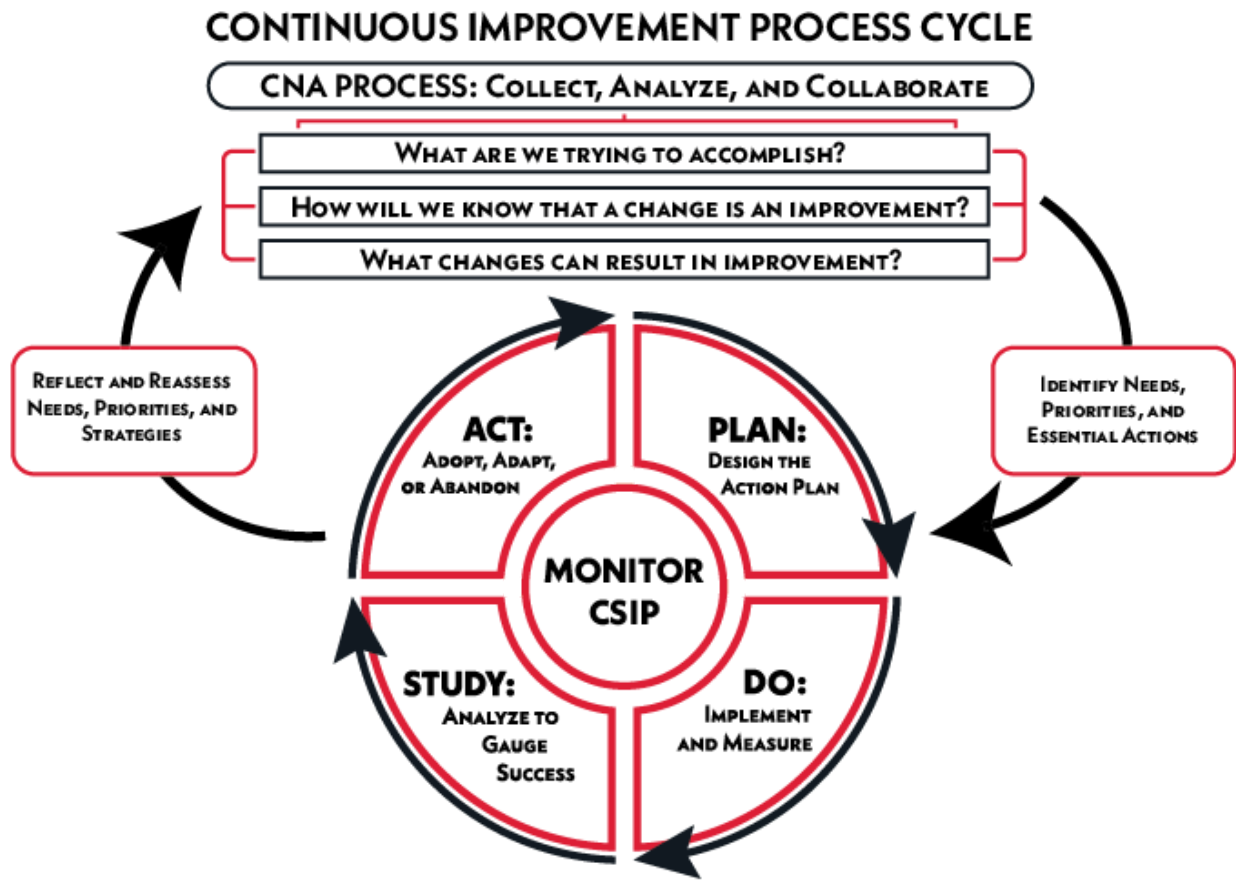


VIRGINIA'S CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (VCSIP)

Virginia's Continuous School Improvement Process (VCSIP) is a cyclical process designed to assist internal and external stakeholders to set goals, identify ways to improve, and evaluate change with a continuous feedback loop. Continuous improvement also "refers to a school's and/or a division's ongoing commitment to quality improvement efforts."

Continuous improvement planning is an important step towards "ensuring [that] schools have a plan that addresses identified needs and provides for an academic program addressing student academic performance as measured by the school quality indicators," which is a requirement of state and federal regulations.



Virginia's Continuous School Improvement Process (VCSIP) was designed by VDOE "as a tool to assist schools and divisions in the utilization of a comprehensive approach to the continuous school improvement planning." School and district leaders can use the VCSIP to support:

- Engaging school-based teams in a rich school improvement planning process that integrates focused data review and analysis with research-based strategic planning;
- Supporting school-based staff in the development of rigorous data review process and development of data analysis skills;
- Addressing all elements of federal, state, and local school improvement planning requirements in a single, integrated format;
- Ensuring that all schools have a streamlined, focused, appropriately targeted, and useful school improvement plan that serves as a meaningful tool for managing and tracking improvement against measurable goals;
- Confirming that the funding necessary for the successful implementation of school improvement strategies is appropriately aligned to the strategic goals and activities outlined in the continuous school improvement plan, and,
- Creating a common mechanism that connects the comprehensive needs assessment, with the establishment of a meaningful continuous school improvement plan, and aids in the development of a monitoring process.

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Five Phases of the VCSIP Process

Phase I: Results in a list of steps with associated responsibilities and timelines for those participating in the continuous improvement cycle. Specific tasks include identifying and/or determining the following:

- Purpose and objectives and the core issue, challenge, or area of focus at the core of the process
- Potential causes and contributing factors to the challenge or area of focus
- SMART goals and data to track these goals
- Action steps – what solutions are you going to test and how?
- Predictions about the proposed change or solution

Phase II: Represents the time for implementing the action plan and collecting data related to your planned intervention or change. Specific tasks relate to creating documentation about the implementation:

- What occurs within each action step
- How to determine impact of change
- Observations about change and impacts
- Problems, challenges, or unexpected results

Phase III: Responsible for data analysis should compile, review, and analyze necessary datasets with the goal of determining if the change or intervention resulted in the expected outcome. This analysis should include data from multiple sources collected both prior to and after the new intervention resulting in an understanding of:

- If there is additional data needed to make an informed decision
- The true root cause of the challenge, not a symptom
- If and how the process could be improved in the future

This phase of work should culminate with a written summary of what has been learned, including both successes and failures.

Phase IV: Review the findings that come out of the Study and Analyze phase to identify:

- Findings and patterns
- Potential modifications to improve future implementation
- Major conclusions and lessons learned during the process
- Next steps – which may include considerations related to the school's capacity and needs

Key outcome is to understand if the intervention or change should be refined, adapted, adopted, or abandoned:

- **Adopt** – the intervention should continue to be implemented and potentially expanded across the organization
- **Refine** - there are only slight modifications needed to account for organizational culture or needs
- **Adapt** – there are some changes and modifications needed and the continuous improvement cycle should be repeated to understand if the new version of the intervention or change is meeting its intended outcomes
- **Abandon** – based on the results, the approach should be changed entirely and a new continuous improvement cycle initiated for another intervention or change

Phase V (final phase): An opportunity for reflection and reassessment of needs, priorities, and strategies. This phase promotes reflection and encourages a revisit the foundational questions for continuous improvement:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we know that a change is an improvement?
- What changes can result in improvement?

This phase also provides an opportunity to specifically reflect and link the outcomes of the continuous improvement cycle with future or ongoing comprehensive needs assessment and school improvement planning

Some Suggested Tools to support the VCSIP Process include the:

- **Fishbone analysis** to identify root causes for an identified challenge or problem as a group brainstorming exercise.
- **The "5-Whys"** is another method for understanding root causes of a problem.