

What is a Big Idea?

Big Ideas serve to organize our rapid improvement efforts by aligning many improvement initiatives around one or two ideas powerful enough to “move the needle” of student achievement. Such alignment provides coherence throughout all improvement efforts. Big Ideas, reached through a thorough examination of multiple sources of data, outline areas of focus for the school. Data analyses will uncover both strengths and challenges in student achievement and school processes. Therefore, Big Ideas can be either instructional or organizational. School leaders should identify Big Ideas that are large enough to have implications for all staff but specific and concrete enough to provide direction for improvement strategies.

Instructional Big Ideas have school-wide implications for classroom practices and the focus of professional development and supports. Instructional Big Ideas should guide the work of both instructional leaders and teacher teams as they identify best practices and incorporate them into the School Improvement Plan as strategies and activities.

Examples of Instructional Big Ideas:

- Improve reading comprehension of informational text
- Improve problem solving
- Improve student engagement
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students
- Improve writing

Organizational Big Ideas have school-wide implications for how people, time and money are used. Organizational Big Ideas should guide the work of school leaders as they allocate resources, particularly the time and attention of staff.

Examples of Organizational Big Ideas

- Align current curriculum to CCSS
- Improve student engagement
- Strengthen the use of formative data in our Professional Learning Teams
- Improve school climate by implementing a positive behavior system and providing supports
- Establish a process so that students provide input about preferred ways to access content and demonstrate learning
- Work collaboratively with families and the community to engage in meaningful activities that strengthen student, family and community connections

Pull out three or four key points from this text:

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