

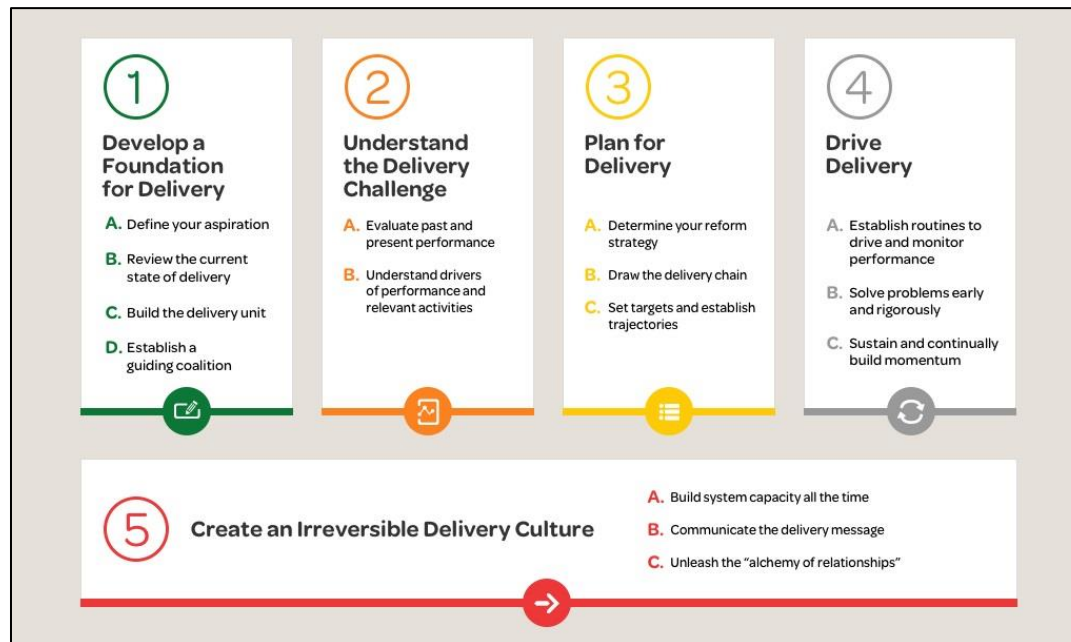
Delivery capacity rubric

This rubric is a tool to assist in understanding the current state of your system’s capacity for effective implementation. In this rubric, “system” refers to the organization being assessed (e.g. a state education agency, a state system of higher education, a school district, an institution of higher education, a school, or any other organization focused on improving student outcomes). “System leader” refers to the head of that organization (e.g. a state chief, district superintendent, chancellor), while “system leaders” refers to a broader leadership team, which is likely composed of the system leader plus other key deputies. The term “delivery” is used to describe effective implementation that leads to improved student outcomes.

HOW TO USE THE RUBRIC

This rubric should be used by the leadership team of the system or organization to help identify strengths in delivery capacity and areas in which it needs to improve. It is a tool for continuous improvement and problem solving.

The rubric is built around the fifteen elements of delivery, as described in the visual below. Each row defines an element and includes guiding questions to consider, as well as descriptors of what strong and weak systems would look like. Participants should use the questions and descriptors to rate their system against each element on a four-point scale (red, amber red, amber green, or green).





1. Develop the foundation for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>1A. Define your aspiration</p> <p><i>Does the system have a clearly articulated and shared aspiration?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has your system clearly articulated an answer to the question, “What are we trying to do?” ■ Is the aspiration defined in terms of ambitious outcomes for students? ■ Is the aspiration translated into a manageable set of goals, each with clear, specific metrics? ■ Is the aspiration shared by the relevant stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is not clear what the system is trying to accomplish. ■ There is no aspiration defined in terms of impact on students. ■ The aspiration has not been translated into specific, measurable goals. ■ Stakeholders are unable to articulate the aspiration or are opposed to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a clear aspiration that states what the system is trying to achieve. ■ The aspiration is well-defined and includes ambitious student outcomes that the system aims to achieve by an expected date. ■ The system has defined a manageable number of specific, measurable goals that align to the aspiration. ■ Nearly all key stakeholders support the aspiration and could articulate it if asked. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>
<p>1B. Review the current state of delivery</p> <p><i>Does the system regularly and deliberately review its existing capacity to drive progress against the aspiration?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do system leaders have a clear understanding of the system’s capacity to implement? ■ Do system leaders take into account feedback from stakeholders when reviewing capacity? ■ Do system leaders use the results of their reviews of system capacity to focus system attention on challenge areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders have not considered the capacity needed to achieve the aspiration. ■ Reviews of capacity are based on anecdotes and assumptions by system leaders; they do not take into account feedback from stakeholders. ■ Any discussion of capacity is more focused on “admiring the problems” than taking action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders regularly and intentionally review system capacity and have a clear sense of the capacity it will take to achieve the system’s goals. ■ Reviews of capacity take into account a wide variety of feedback from internal and external stakeholders. ■ System leaders have a realistic view of the system’s strengths and challenges, and focus attention on challenge areas. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



1. Develop the foundation for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>1C. Build the Delivery Unit</p> <p><i>Is there a person or team dedicated to driving implementation and monitoring progress?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there a person or team responsible for driving the achievement of the system aspiration and keeping the focus on the aspiration? ■ Is this person or team responsible for managing the <i>process of implementation</i> (aspiration-setting, planning, progress monitoring) and do they have time for this work? ■ Do they have direct access to and the trust of the system leader? ■ Are they among the most talented and capable people in the system, with strong relationships and with problem-solving, data, and coaching skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No clear person or team has been designated; implementation is seen as “everyone’s responsibility.” ■ Responsibility for managing the implementation process is fragmented or assigned to someone with too many day-to-day responsibilities to focus on the process. ■ Any performance management function lacks access to and influence with the system leader. ■ Those responsible for the process of implementation lack the necessary relationships and skills to manage the implementation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation and performance management are led by a person or team whose main purpose is to ensure a consistent focus on the aspiration. ■ The person or team is responsible for managing the process of implementation; other leaders are accountable for the achievement of specific goals and strategies. ■ The person or team reports directly to the system leader, with a clear mandate to influence from outside the line management hierarchy. ■ The person or team has the tools and skills to manage the implementation process. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



1. Develop the foundation for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>1D. Establish a guiding coalition</p> <p><i>Has the system leader identified a group of key people outside the system office who are influential in driving progress against the aspiration?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has the system leader identified 7-10 influential people who support the aspiration and the work being done to achieve it? ■ Is this coalition composed of the right mix of stakeholders who can be counted on to provide support, expertise, and guidance? ■ Does the system leader actively engage the coalition (formally or informally) to influence implementation and drive progress? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is no deliberately identified coalition; key stakeholders are not aligned on the aspiration. ■ The stakeholders around the system leader represent a limited range of people, OR are people who are irrelevant to achieving the aspiration. ■ The system leader does not utilize a coalition to “champion” the system’s efforts and help drive progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The system leader has strong relationships with a coalition of influential people with a shared understanding of the aspiration and how it will be implemented. ■ The coalition includes the right balance of power, influence, resources and expertise. ■ The system leader strategically uses the coalition to garner support for the aspiration and champion the system’s work. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



2. Understand the delivery challenge

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>2A. Evaluate past and present performance</p> <p><i>Does the system regularly and consistently use data to evaluate performance?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the system regularly analyze data to identify recurring trends; do system leaders understand <i>how the system is performing</i> on major metrics? ■ Do analyses include data on a wide variety of metrics? ■ Are data benchmarked against history, within the system, and against peers? ■ Does the system use an iterative cycle to test hypotheses about performance patterns and identify the need for further analyses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data are not readily available or are not analyzed regularly; system leaders lack a clear sense of how the system is performing on key metrics. ■ If analyses are conducted, they are focused only on goal metrics. ■ Data are viewed in isolation without benchmarking. ■ Data analyses are seen as a one-off exercise, done for a specific request or discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders have a clear sense of how the system is performing; trends and patterns, particularly on metrics related to the aspiration, are regularly identified through rigorous analysis and shared with those involved in implementation. ■ Analyses look beyond goal metrics to include progress metrics and perverse metrics. ■ Data are benchmarked against history, within the system, and against other systems to reveal performance patterns. ■ The process of data analysis is an ongoing, iterative cycle. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



2. Understand the delivery challenge

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>2B. Understand drivers of performance and relevant system activities</p> <p><i>Do system leaders understand the impact of their work and what works in improving outcomes?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the system regularly use data to identify root causes of performance; do system leaders have an understanding of <i>why the system is performing the way it is</i> on major metrics? ■ Do system leaders the full breadth of work that is currently underway to help achieve the aspiration, including what is working and what is not? ■ Does the system use an iterative cycle to test hypotheses about root causes and identify the need for further analyses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is no systematic assessment of root causes; system leaders may understand performance patterns but do not dig into the reasons behind them. ■ Current system activities are poorly understood; there is little connection between work being done with past performance or expected impact on the aspiration. ■ If root cause analyses are conducted, they are seen as a one-off exercise, done for a specific request or discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders and staff have a clear understanding of why the system is performing the way it is; they regularly use both quantitative and qualitative data to identify root causes. ■ System leaders have identified areas of success and understand the factors contributing to that success; they have also identified areas of challenge and understand the factors that limit progress there ■ Hypotheses about root causes are generated, investigated, and communicated on an ongoing basis. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



3. Plan for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>3A. Determine your reform strategy</p> <p><i>Has the system identified and defined a cohesive set of strategies that will maximize the collective impact on the aspiration?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has the system deliberately identified a coherent, prioritized set of strategies designed to achieve the aspiration? ■ Is there a clear, shared theory of action of how and why the strategies fit together to collectively impact the goals? ■ Are clear leaders assigned for each of the goals and strategies? ■ Are the strategies clearly defined in a written plan that drives the day-to-day work and links strategies to goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no clearly stated, agreed-upon strategies, OR the strategies that have been identified are insufficient to achieve the system's student outcome goals, OR an unmanageable laundry list of initiatives has been identified. ■ There is no clear theory of action for how the strategies will combine to help the system achieve its goals. ■ It is unclear who is responsible for delivering on the goals and strategies. ■ Strategies may be identified, but not defined in written plans, OR plans are too detailed and confusing to drive the day-to-day work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The system has clearly articulated a manageable, coordinated set of strategies; system leaders are confident that these are the right strategies to help the system achieve its goals. ■ The system has a well-articulated and thoughtful theory of action, explaining how the chosen strategies complement and build on one another to impact the goals. ■ Each goal and strategy has a clear owner, even when the work within them involves multiple departments or offices. ■ Strategies are defined in clear plans that are just detailed enough to drive day-to-day implementation; plans include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explicit links to the goals – Success measures – Scale of strategy – Resources needed – Major milestones. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



3. Plan for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>3B. Draw the delivery chain</p> <p><i>Do system leaders understand the chain through which implementation must occur?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do system leaders understand the chain of actors, and the relationships between them, through which the system's strategies will be implemented at scale? ■ Has this "delivery chain" been articulated in the system's plan(s) and is it widely understood? ■ Have system leaders identified potential weak links and risks associated with implementation? ■ Have system leaders identified "feedback loops" – opportunities for collecting data to understand whether implementation is happening as planned? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is little understanding of how the strategies will be implemented or the role that various actors must play in that process. ■ The delivery chain has not been articulated; system leaders have differing views about how implementation will happen. ■ There has been little or no analysis of risks, or plans made for mitigating them. ■ System leaders have not identified feedback loops; they may monitor whether the work has happened, and whether outcomes are changing, but there is little attention to the steps of implementation in between. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders can clearly articulate the chain of actors through which implementation must occur; there is agreement in the system about the structure of that chain. ■ The delivery chain is included in a written plan to ensure shared understanding. ■ System leaders have analyzed the delivery chain to identify potential weak links and other risks; they have robust plans to mitigate these risks. ■ System leaders have identified feedback loops to help them monitor various parts of the chain; they regularly collect data from these feedback loops and use it to inform their work. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



3. Plan for delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>3C. Set targets and establish trajectories</p> <p><i>Have the aspiration and associated goals been translated to concrete end targets and trajectories?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has the system translated goals into numerical targets that are specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-limited (SMART)? ■ Has the system created a trajectory – a series of interim targets that plot the planned path of the metric between now and the target date – for each goal? ■ Are targets and trajectories rooted in evidence from past experience or research? ■ Are targets and trajectories included in the plan(s) and communicated with relevant stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Numerical targets are not identified for all or some goals. ■ Where targets do exist, there are no interim targets (no trajectories). ■ Any targets that exist are the result of “guesswork” rather than rigorous benchmarking; system leaders have not considered whether the planned strategies will be enough to achieve the targets. ■ Any targets that exist are not widely shared or understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SMART targets are defined for each of the system’s goals. ■ The system has identified a trajectory for each goal. ■ Targets and trajectories are based on available evidence about what is ambitious and realistic, based on benchmarks, and take into account the estimated impact of each strategy on the goals. ■ Targets and trajectories are included in plans(s); key stakeholders can easily reference the targets. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



4. Drive delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>4A. Establish routines to drive and monitor performance</p> <p><i>Are there regular results-driven conversations that allow for shared review of and action on performance?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are there regular, structured conversations to review progress, solve major challenges, and make decisions to drive implementation forward between the system leader and those accountable for implementation? ■ Do these “routines” provide system leaders with a clear view of how implementation is going in the field (using available indicators)? ■ Are routines well-executed, so that they enable the right conversations to occur and result in action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conversations for monitoring progress occur infrequently, if at all; they are often canceled or postponed in favor of conversations about whatever seems most pressing right now. ■ Conversations do not focus on performance data, and instead focus on merely sharing what work has been done; if performance data are used, they center on goal metrics and do not include progress metrics or feedback loops. ■ Conversations are not well-prepared and do not have a clear agenda; as a result, they frequently get off-topic and do not lead to clear conclusions or action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The system leader has regular conversations with the accountable owners to discuss progress, problem-solve, and identify next steps for implementation; these routines occur on a regular cycle, to ensure that each goal and strategy is consistently reviewed. ■ Routines take into account relevant quantitative and qualitative data on implementation including progress on goal metrics and progress metrics, as well as data collected via feedback loops; data are used to come to a shared view of progress. ■ All parties involved are well-prepared for routines, which results in a productive, focused conversation and the identification of clear actions.. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



4. Drive delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>4B. Solve problems early and rigorously</p> <p><i>Are there mechanisms to ensure problems are identified, raised early, and solved in order of priority?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the system have a process in place for identifying and prioritizing problems in implementation before they become too big to handle? ■ Does the process help system leaders and staff to identify the toughest problems, break them down into manageable pieces, and draw out the insights that lead to real solutions? ■ Is there a shared culture of problem solving in the system? ■ Are solutions communicated and acted on effectively? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is no clear process for identifying and addressing problems; problems may be logged but are not prioritized or acted upon in a systemic way (i.e. system solves problems by “firefighting”). ■ System leaders and staff do not have the skills or resources to break problems down or analyze them to identify solutions. ■ Staff are not empowered to identify and solve problems; a general attitude of pushing problems up the line (or hiding them, or playing the “blame game”) exists. ■ Solutions, if identified, are not communicated; the system does not learn for next time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a process in place for identifying and addressing problems; sufficient attention is given to problems to resolve them quickly; priority is given to tackling the biggest, most important problems (in terms of impact on the aspiration) first. ■ System leaders and staff have the tools and resources they need to analyze and resolve problems and as a result can arrive at insightful and effective solutions drawn from best practices. ■ Individuals system-wide are encouraged to address problems and propose solutions. ■ Solutions are integrated into plans and communicated to relevant stakeholders; best practices are identified and shared widely. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



4. Drive delivery

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>4C. Sustain and continually build momentum</p> <p><i>Does the system maintain its focus through challenges and distractions?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the system sustain a consistent focus on the aspiration and the reform strategy for achieving it? ■ Do system leaders leverage and build on momentum that comes from good news, regularly celebrating successes? ■ Do system leaders prepare themselves to sustain the work through challenges, distraction, monotony, resistance, and the “implementation dip”? ■ Do relevant stakeholders – in addition to system leadership – remain committed to the goals and plans, even once the initial excitement has worn off? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The system does not maintain a consistent focus; priorities shift frequently with the “political winds”, and leaders do not demonstrate a commitment to any agenda. ■ Successes are celebrated too early, irregularly, or not at all, causing momentum to be lost. ■ Priorities tend to shift when challenges, resistance, or distractions arise. ■ Progress is superficial and not internalized; people inside and outside the system are eager to go back to “the way it was.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders maintain a relentless focus on the system’s goals and strategies, making adjustments based only on data and facts. ■ Successes are celebrated regularly, publicly and appropriately; system leaders recognize them as opportunities to generate momentum. ■ System leaders are deliberate in pursuing the goals and strategies, even through crises and opposition. ■ The aspiration, goals, and strategies are increasingly internalized throughout the whole system; an attitude of “we should have done this years ago” emerges. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



5. Create an irreversible delivery culture

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>5A. Build system capacity all the time</p> <p><i>Is building implementation capacity a priority for system leaders and an ongoing endeavor?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do system leaders regularly and deliberately assess the necessary “skill and will” of individuals throughout the system to deliver on the aspiration? ■ Are there opportunities to learn, practice, and reflect on new skills as part of the capacity building process? ■ Do the structures and processes within the system support the continuous building of capacity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders do not deliberately identify changes in staff capacity that need to occur. ■ There are few opportunities for staff or other stakeholders to learn new skills needed for their work, practice those skills, or get feedback. ■ Organizational structures and processes (e.g. HR procedures or professional evaluations) inhibit staff learning and growth; staff have no personal or professional incentive to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System leaders are deliberate about identifying the skills needed for staff and other stakeholders to implement the strategies. ■ The system has created opportunities for staff and other stakeholders to formally learn necessary and new skills, practice those skills, reflect on that practice, and get feedback. ■ Organizational structures and processes (e.g. HR procedures or professional evaluations) promote learning and improvement and make it easy to get staff with the right skills in the right place to drive implementation. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



5. Create an irreversible delivery culture

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>5B. Communicate the delivery message</p> <p><i>Does the system regularly communicate about the aspiration and the strategies to achieve it?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are communications anchored in the goals and strategies, planned alongside them, and monitored rigorously? ■ Are communications targeted at the most influential stakeholders (internal and external to the system)? ■ Are communications two-way? ■ Are communications consistent and effective in engaging stakeholders in the implementation effort? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The work of implementation is disconnected from the work of communication. ■ Communications are not targeted to different stakeholder groups; some important stakeholders are not reached. ■ Communication only flows downwards/outward; little or no feedback is gathered from key stakeholders. ■ Communications from the system are inconsistent and confusing; stakeholders do not feel engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communications are anchored in the aspiration, goals and strategies; planning for communication is linked to implementation planning; communication efforts are monitored alongside implementation efforts. ■ A prioritized set of influential stakeholders has been identified; the system has identified objectives for each stakeholder group and these inform communications. ■ Communication is two-way; feedback is collected and acted on. ■ Communications from the system are clear, consistent and valued by stakeholders; stakeholders throughout the system feel engaged. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>



5. Create an irreversible delivery culture

Element of delivery	Questions to consider	Weak delivery (Red)	Strong delivery (Green)	Current rating and rationale
<p>5C. Unleash the “alchemy of relationships”</p> <p><i>Are relationships that are central to successful implementation deliberately identified, cultivated, and maintained?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do system leaders (particularly the Delivery Unit, if there is one) have strong relationships and effective interactions with those they must work with to drive implementation? ■ Do system leaders build targeted relationships with high-priority individuals? ■ Are relationships set up to be “win-win” for all involved, i.e. is there a focus on protecting and furthering others’ interests as well as the interests of system leaders? ■ Is conflict managed proactively and sensitively? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relationships with key individuals involved in implementation are strained, unproductive, or dissatisfying to those involved. ■ Relationship building happens by chance. ■ There is little focus on how system leaders can help those with whom they interact; offers of support feel inauthentic. ■ Poorly managed conflict (or the avoidance of conflict) may damage key relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key individuals have strong relationships with system leaders and value their contribution. ■ System leaders identify the people who are critical to successful implementation and focus on building relationships with them. ■ System leaders work hard to make key relationships “win-win,” balancing support and challenge. ■ Conflicts are surfaced and resolved quickly by finding common interests but not compromising on core principles. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>