Key Driver Diagram (KDD)

Now that you have a strong aim for your improvement initiative, we will share the other building blocks of a Key Driver Diagram (KDD). KDDs help teams to visualize what it will take to reach the aim, prioritize and sequence efforts as a team with a shared road map, and document the improvement initiative so that it can be translated and spread elsewhere.

Anatomy of a Key Driver Diagram

AIM (Why)

A SMARTIE aim that is compelling, meaningful and co-created with your community.

LONG TERM EQUITY IMPERATIVE

It is helpful to include your organizational vision or longer term equity imperative on the Key Driver Diagram. This helps stakeholders to see how this improvement initiative will contribute towards achieving these longterm, transformational goals.

PRIMARY DRIVERS (What)

Primary Drivers are the most important factors that you believe are essential to accomplishing the aim. Primary drivers:

- Act independently or together towards accomplishing the aim;
- Often align with the dashboard of measures for the improvement initiative;
- Serve as a common framework for team members to prioritize and reference efforts;
- Are most powerful when they are succinct, simple (without jargon) and describe the ideal state. One way to practice writing simple language is to use 1-2 adjectives with a noun.

SECONDARY DRIVERS (Optional)

Breakdown Primary Drivers:

- This is a way to provide more detail on the key drivers if needed.

CHANGES TO TEST (How)

The list of changes to test includes the Ideas or concrete actions tied to one or more primary or secondary drivers. It is important to keep the following in mind when listing changes to test:

- Change ideas are actions, and therefore are typically stated as verb.
- Change ideas should be based on evidence and powerful examples for how to do them.
- It will be important to test and adapt changes prior to full implementation.
- Consider adding additional detail, like color coding changes to show which changes are being actively tested, or sequencing fundamental versus advanced changes ideas.

Attribution: The Equity Imperative was inspired by The Building Equitable Learning Environments (BELE) Framework.

Identifying Key Drivers

Primary Drivers

Drivers describe the main factors, leverage points or ideal conditions that would need to be present to accomplish the aim of the improvement initiative. Drivers should be descriptive categories to sort and visualize how change ideas interact in the theory of change. For large scale improvement initiatives, you may find it helpful to include further breakdown of primary drivers into secondary drivers.

There are many sources to start to identify the drivers in your theory of change. Some may include: root cause analysis tools, process maps, observation, stakeholder interviews, and researching evidence in the literature.

Tips to create succinct, descriptive drivers include:

· Describe what the factor is (not how to do it - these are the change ideas!).

· Frame the driver in the positive, ideal state.

· Be descriptive without being verbose, for example, an adjective (timely, accurate, effective) with a noun.

Prioritizing and Categorizing Change Ideas

Change Ideas

Change ideas describe how you might create the conditions described in your drivers in order to accomplish the aim. Change ideas should be generalizable enough to be relevant in different contexts, while also stating enough specifics or providing examples so an improvement team could try the change idea (more information about this in the test and scale section).

Strong change concepts are those that intentionally change the system to make the desired action the default or simplest action, as opposed to relying on the error introduced by human memory or bias. For example, many efforts (improvement initiatives and other well meaning initiatives) focus on building awareness, training and capacity building, and creating basic standardization. While these are typically necessary first steps to mobilizing change, they are often insufficient by themselves to make lasting improvement in a system.

A suite or package of change ideas should also include concepts that involve deeper systems change. Examples of these concepts include:
• Automate reminders that don't rely on human memory
• Use decision aids or detailed protocols
• Build in redundancy to ensure that an important step in a process is not missed
• Identify and resolve process failures in real-time
• Build the system around positive behaviors that are already working
• Make the system visible and transparent to all

There are many sources to find change ideas: research and literature, insights from the use of continuous improvement tools, observation and learning from "bright spot" organizations or schools, and most importantly, the lived experience of your community. Identifying and prioritizing change ideas should be done in a group that includes the people most impacted by your aim. Examples include students, teachers, school counselors, parents / families, or system leaders.

Change ideas are added to the right hand column of the KDD. There are many ways to make your KDD a living document, such as color coding the change ideas and drivers currently being tested or to show a sequencing of change ideas from foundational to advanced.

Key Driver Diagram - Example

AIM (Why)

Sunnyside Elementary School will reduce the percent of students, across races and income levels, who are chronically absent from 18% to 9% by June, through partnerships with families and communities.

LONG TERM EQUITY IMPERATIVE

Sunnyside Elementary School strives to build a school community that supports the academic, social and emotional growth and wellbeing of all students.

PRIMARY DRIVERS (What)

Accessible, real time attendance data

Supportive student and teacher/ staff relationships

Strong relationships with families and caregivers

Accessible transportation to/from school

Driver

Driver

CHANGES TO TEST (How)

Regular cross disciplinary meetings to identify students at risk from data (attendance, GPA).
Use data to differentiate supports based on student need.

Pair students and staff based on who has the strongest relationship. Work together to generate strategies to resolve obstacles to attending school.

Include Families and Community Representatives on all school leadership teams.

Back-up transport for students who need it (e.g. volunteer group -with waivers and registration).

Add change idea here!

Add change idea here!

Add change idea here!

Key Driver Diagram - Template

CHANGES TO TEST (How)

PRIMARY DRIVERS (What)

AIM (Why)

LONG TERM EQUITY IMPERATIVE