Support for **Personalized** Learning

Practice Profile

Guidance for **West Virginia** Schools and Districts
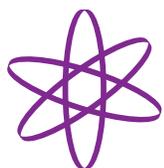
April 2012

Support for Personalized Learning & Practice Profiles

Note: This guidance document is available at http://wvde.state.wv.us/spl

Introduction

Recognizing the need for strong guidance in SPL implementation, WVDE has adapted a set of integrity tools to improve outcomes for students in West Virginia. These tools will support a scaling up of effective practice across the state.

The SPL Practice Profiles are tools designed to assist districts, schools and educators with the implementation of SPL. The profiles provide the means to reflect on policies and practices from the classroom level, to the school, district, regional and state level in order to continually improve outcomes for students. These tools are intended to be used statewide and provide needed support in a continuous improvement cycle. The profiles can also assist districts in their work toward accomplishing their goal of systemic change for increased student achievement.

The Components of SPL:

The Profiles were developed based on the six components of SPL as defined by West Virginia to assist educators with implementation and to provide a framework of reference for implementation that is contextually relevant. The six components of SPL in West Virginia are:

- Leadership
- Teams and Processes
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Assessment
- School Climate and Culture
- Family and Community Partnerships

The Practice Profiles can be used as:

1. **An informational resource**
   The Practice Profiles outline what SPL looks like across classrooms, schools, districts and RESAs. Educators can use the Practice Profiles as a resource to learn about SPL.
2. **A way to measure implementation**
   The Practice Profiles can be used by sites to identify how close they are in relation to the Optimizing stage of SPL implementation.
3. **Tools to assist with planning and school improvement**
   Because the Practice Profiles outline what SPL looks like across four growth stages, sites can use the profiles to identify goals for action planning or school improvement plans.
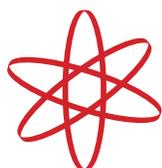
Structure of Practice Profile

In this section the structure of the Practice Profiles and how to use them is discussed.

Description of the Structure of the Practice Profiles

The profiles have been written for four levels of the system - classroom, school, district and region. Each profile discusses the six SPL components across each of the growth stages. The profiles have four growth stages across four columns (see arrow labeled "1") and common anchors and guiding questions in the far left column (see arrows labeled "2" and "3"); thus, a matrix is created with a description of specific SPL features in each cell (see arrow labeled "4"). The profiles are written in a descriptive fashion, with the intention that they can be applicable for grades pre-k through 12th grade.

Figure 1: Snapshot view of School-Level Profile for Leadership

Within the profiles, there are common key anchors across the profiles. They are:
- *Structures* - The pieces of an SPL framework that are relatively static and facilitate implementation (e.g., roles of a team, vision statement, rules for behavioral expectations).
- *Processes and Procedures* - The pieces of a SPL framework that are fluid and involve interactions among the structures (e.g., process for use of the levels, problem-solving process for groups of students).
- *Professional Development* - The knowledge and skills taught to staff and how these are monitored and used.

These key anchors define best practices within the SPL framework and provide a seamless flow between the profiles. How each key anchor is implemented will differ depending on the learners and other site specific variables. These anchors have unique guiding questions attached to them for each component (see Figure 1, arrow labeled "3"). The guiding questions should facilitate discussion and focus educators in their implementation efforts. The common anchors allow educators to compare their progress between components.

The profiles describe what SPL looks like as implementation evolves across the 4 growth stages: Emerging, Developing, Operationalizing and Optimizing. The growth stages show how practices strengthen, deepen, and synergize with commitment to continuous improvement over time. Each stage incorporates the previous stage, building on this foundation and extending it. The phases of implementation used to frame SPL implementation are presented in the chart below.

Implementation of Growth Stages

Growth Stages	Definition
Emerging: "Establishing Consensus"	During this stage, schools and districts are building consensus and buy-in for SPL. The focus is on building an understanding of what SPL is and how it can assist schools with improving student outcomes. It is important that faculty and staff understand why SPL is being implemented and what resources and skills it takes to implement it. Typical activities during this stage include taking stock of current practices, discussing what curricula and programs are currently being used, providing trainings on the purpose, components and processes of SPL for staff and on evaluating the current data management system.
Developing: "Building Infrastructure"	Within this stage, the district or school builds its capacity to implement SPL. Time and energy are spent on creating the support systems and structures needed to implement SPL, such as identifying teams, selecting and training on the use of assessment tools, creating and sharing a vision statement, and outlining procedures for providing effect supports. This is the phase in which the key structures and logistics of implementing SPL are laid out and presented to the faculty and staff.
Operationalizing: "Gaining Consistency"	During the Operationalizing stage, the focus is on building consistency and routine. Schools and districts have previously agreed on the "what and how" of their SPL model. Now, the focus is on implementing SPL and getting everyone on the same page. For example, in the Developing stage, a school staff selects assessment tools. During this phase, part of the emphasis would be on using those assessment tools appropriately and accurately. Additionally, ownership of SPL is becoming widespread and routine, and the model is being adjusted slightly for a better fit within and across existing structures (e.g., adjusting forms or adjusting the process for obtaining INTENSIVE support in order to increase efficiency, adjusting the master schedule).
Optimizing: "Innovating and Sustaining"	This stage focuses on systemically implementing SPL with innovations to adapt practice to needs. Schools and districts have a smooth running SPL model that is embedded and integrated into daily practice, so now the focus is on determining the effect of the model. Data from multiple sources are analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the SPL framework and adjustments are made to either ensure effectiveness or to increase effectiveness. The key difference between this stage and Operationalizing is: (1) the clear use of data to evaluate the systemic effects of the model and (2) making adjustments based on the data to improve the model. Also, the ownership for practice is complete as stakeholders now have the knowledge and skills needed to both implement as designed and to adapt implementation to increase effectiveness.
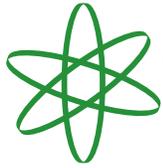
Use of Practice Profile

Using the profiles is a self-reflective process in which educators can (1) gauge their current practice in relation to the Optimizing stage of SPL implementation and (2) plan for next steps in implementation.

Using the Practice Profiles to Measure Integrity

The Practice Profiles can be used by sites to identify how close that site is to the Optimizing stage of SPL implementation. Schools and districts may require other information or tools to get a sense of where they are with implementation. For example, a school may need to reconsider their use of certain assessment tools or perhaps their current documentation procedures. With this information, a school can then better gauge their school's relation to the Optimizing stage on the Practice Profiles.

Using the Profiles to Assist with Planning & School Improvement

The Practice Profiles are written as blueprints or roadmaps of SPL. They outline what SPL looks like across four growth stages. Because of this, the Practice Profiles can be used to identify goals for action planning or school improvement plans. Schools can prioritize next steps for implementation and then create an action plan to accomplish those next steps.

A piece worth mentioning is that the Practice Profiles are written from a descriptive standpoint and not a prescriptive one. For example, assessment is a component of SPL, so each site that implements SPL will utilize regular assessments and screeners as features of their implementation. However, like snowflakes, no two SPL models will be identical because of situational factors (e.g., resources, personnel, size of student population, etc.). Therefore, the Practice Profiles only say that screeners and regular assessment should be used, but do not specify which tools to use, how often, or by whom they should be administered. The Practice Profiles outline what the components of SPL look like without describing the model in such detail that it sacrifices the flexible nature of SPL.

Directions for Use of the Practice Profiles to Measure Integrity:

1. Decide if you are going to focus on a subset of components, or the entire profile.
2. Read the rows and columns for a particular component to gain a sense of the scope of it.
3. Using existing data (e.g., permanent products, school processes data, attendance data in trainings, achievement and growth trends, perception data, etc.), determine which cell within a component's matrix best describes your classroom, school, or district. Circle or highlight that cell. (Note: circle/highlight the cell you are currently in, not the one you are working toward. If you do not have all of the items completed in a cell, that is the one you are working within.) Work your way though the profile, highlighting or circling cells that describe your current level of implementation.
4. When you have completed a component or profile, indicate the growth stage that best fits your classroom, school, or district on the Scoring Summary sheet.

Directions for Using the Practice Profiles to Determine Stage of Implementation:
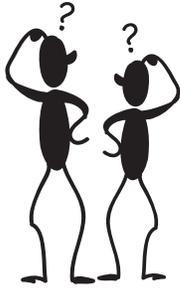
- • Determine focus: one component or entire profile
- • Read rows and columns of component to get a sense of the scope
- • Use existing data
- • Highlight or circle the cells that describe your site
- • Once completed, indicate growth stage on Summary Sheet

Directions for Use of Practice Profiles to Assist with Planning & School Improvement:

5. Identify the next level of implementation of SPL for your site.
6. Compare the gap between the current level of implementation and the next level of implementation identified in step 5.
7. Create an action plan with timelines to close the gap between the next and current level of implementation.
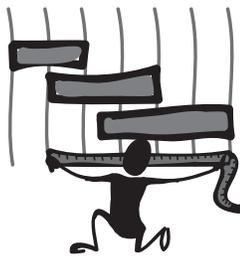8. Check on the progress on the action plan throughout the year to ensure the site is completing the steps on the action plan.
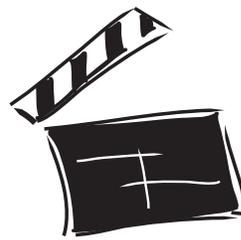
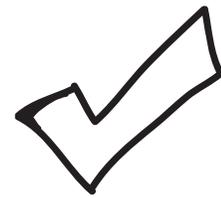## Directions for Using the Practice Profiles to Assist with Planning & School Improvement:

- • Identify next level of implementation
- • Compare gap between next level and current level
- • Create action plan for next steps
- • Check progress throughout year

Next are some important key points to keep in mind as you use these profiles.

- *The Practice Profiles can be read horizontally or vertically.* Educators and schools can read the profiles horizontally to get a sense of how a particular anchor or item looks across the 4 growth stages (e.g., How does the development of expectations for positive school climate and culture look over the 4 stages?). The Practice Profiles can also be read vertically to get a sense of how a particular component looks within a particular growth stage (e.g., what does assessment look like during the "Developing" stage?).

- *You do not have to read each component each time you use the profiles:* Pieces of the profiles can be used to guide implementation or to reveal growth. It is not necessary to read each piece of the profiles every time they are used. Educators can opt to focus on one component, a subset or all of the components simultaneously.

- *If you feel that two growth stages in one row describe your school, pick the cell to the left.* Each cell assumes the cell to the left of it is fully in place. It is essential that foundational pieces of the framework are in place before moving forward. If there is any confusion or doubt about which cell best fits your school, then your school or district is in the further left growth stage.

- *It is possible to be in two different growth stages across components.* It is quite normal to be in one growth stage for one component compared to another one (e.g., in Developing for Problem-Solving component and in Emerging for Curriculum & Instruction).

- *It is possible to be in two different growth stages within one component.* It is quite normal that one part of a component is further along or further behind relative to another. For example, a school could be in the Operationalizing stage for one row within the Assessment component, but in the Developing stage for another row.

- *Discussing the information in these profiles requires collaboration and input from several departments/ stakeholders/colleagues.* In order to have an accurate sense of implementation, schools must work together to have all information available when discussing their implementation process.

- *These are not intended to be direct guides and do not describe how exactly to move forward.* The profiles only tell you what SPL looks like, not how to build your model within your specific school for your specific population. Schools/districts will have to plan how to move forward after using the profiles.

Review Process

When schools use the Practice Profiles to self assess and plan for next steps, they are engaging in the Review Process. This section describes how to use the profiles with suggested timelines and discusses the Review Process.

The SPL Practice Profiles Review Process

The Review Process is a dynamic and iterative process in which districts, schools, and/or teachers use the Practice Profiles to reflect on their present level of SPL implementation in order to plan what is needed for improvement. This process is a formative review (i.e. information and insights gained are used in planning) that may lead to periodic summative transition points (i.e. information helps make determinations as to specific policy and program outcomes).

The figure below shows the dynamic nature of the self-reflection process across each level (e.g., classroom, building and district) of implementation. The process involves formal reviews that are coordinated across all levels (district, school, and classroom). Aside from these formal reviews, however, additional reviews should be initiated at any point that self-reflection on implementation would be useful. This fluid use of self-reflection keeps the process dynamic, meaningful, and proactive.
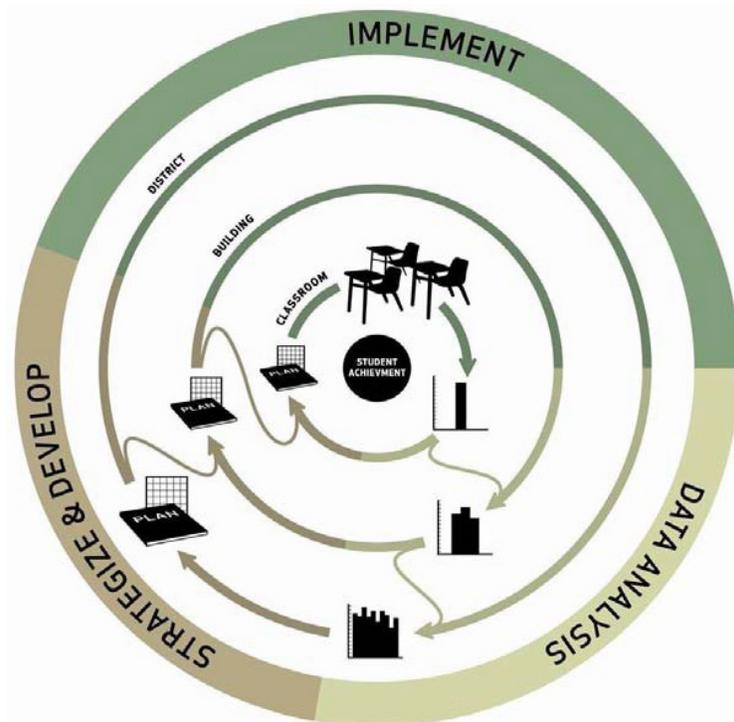
As a self-reflective process, the review relies on the integrity of those involved. An honest refection on current practice is the only way to lay the foundation for helping you get to where we want to be. The Review Process should not be an isolated event; it should connect with other initiatives and needs. For example, information gleaned from the reviews should help to shape district strategic planning, school improvement planning, and individual professional growth plans. Information from other processes and initiatives should likewise inform the review process. Decision making throughout the process should be based on the best evidence (data) available.

Data sources used as the basis for decision making during the review process will most often be those that are readily available because they are already collected. These may include things like your documentation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports implementation as part of your evidence-base for determining implementation within the Positive School Climate and Culture profile, or the district's assessment plans can support decisions within the Assessment profile. The data used to help you determine where you are in the implementation stage can include evidence of process (did we do what we said we would do?) and evidence of impact (what effect did it have?).

Below is an example of how you might document the evidence used during the Review Process for the Curriculum & Instruction component. The school in this table is determining what growth stage they are in for the guiding question "How is professional development being provided to the staff to support a 21st century learning based system" (under the Anchor of "Professional Development").

Example of Evidence Used to Document Decision-Making

Curriculum & Instruction	Evidence of Process (Did we do what we said we would?)	Evidence of Impact (What effect did we have?)
Professional Development - *How is professional development being provided to the staff to support a 21st century learning based system?*	• PD schedule, agenda, etc. • attendance lists • evaluations of PD	• teacher reflections and action plans • lessons showing use of strategies • principal walk-through data demonstrating use of strategies • outcome data for students (e.g. differentiated products, assessment data showing growth)

Suggested Timeline for Use

It is suggested that the Practice Profiles be used within the Review Process at least twice per year. However, value is acknowledged in sites deciding to use the Practice Profiles periodically to check on their implementation and in using the Practice Profiles as a resource when implementing SPL throughout the year.

A sample timeline of when and how this review might be implemented is shown in the Suggested Timeline Review. It displays an example of a district and its schools using the profiles twice per year: in the fall and in the spring. Within this example, a district level team determines the supports that can be provided to schools to help them with this process. Because the district is using the Practice Profiles along with its schools, the implementation process can be integrated across sites and SPL components.

Suggested Timeline Review

Year 1 - Fall Review	Year 1 - Spring Review
District develops a district-level team to identify district implementation based on the profiles for each component. District provides resources and professional development to support practices that need adjusting.	District team self-reflects on each component and the district progress in each component utilizing the profiles. Reflection should include identifying professional development provided, resources used, and student achievement data. District team identifies professional development needs and provides reflection on district next steps to schools.
District leadership meets with individual school teams to determine each school's phase of implementation across the components using the profiles. District provides school leadership with resources and professional development options to support implementation. School teams should use the profiles to identify current practices and next steps.	Individual schools use the profiles to self-reflect on implementation across the six components. This should include professional development that was provided, changes in practices, student achievement data and potential next steps.
School administration meets with school staff to identify current phases of implementation across the six components. School administrators provide staff with the profile and opportunities to dialogue about the six components. Staff is given the opportunity to reflect on current practices.	School administrators meet with teachers to assist teachers in identifying individual level of implementation across the six components. Furthermore, administrators assist teachers in developing goals to support identified areas of next steps.

The Review Process described above is completed in year one and serves as a baseline for changes and improvements overtime. It is important that a similar self-reflection process is followed in subsequent years to provide feedback across the system over time. The concept of "across the system" is important. The reflection should not only be a top-down approach to feedback, it must be an inclusive, iterative process. When incorporating systems change there is as much to learn from the ground-up as there is from top-down.

Finally, districts and schools are encouraged to incorporate the use of these profiles into their current evaluation processes. These evaluations might include Five-Year Online Strategic Plans. This allows for the continuity and integration needed for true systems change to take place. If the Review Process with the Practice Profiles is seen as a separate process, true systems change may be difficult to achieve.
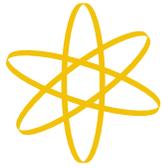
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Integrity?

Integrity is the extent to which an approach or intervention is used as it was intended, defined, or designed (Coleman, Shah-Coletrane, 2010; Lane, Bocian, MacMillan & Gresham, 2004; Gresham, 2004). Approaches or interventions are "practices" we use in the education setting, and they range in scope from classroom strategies to full systems approaches (such as SPL and PBIS).

To consider whether a practice has been implemented with integrity, the practice must first be clearly defined (Century, Rudnick & Freeman, 2010). The definition of the practice should provide a comprehensive description of what the practice will look like when it is implemented as intended, and it should address explicit expectations for implementation. By clearly defining a practice, expectations are spelled out creating an understanding of what needs to be accomplished. From that understanding, educators are able to reflect on the integrity of their work and then plan for next steps to improve implementation (Fixsen, Blasé, Horner & Sugai, 2009). In most cases, a profile is used to guide reflections on practice and to document levels of implementation integrity (Century, Rudnick & Freeman, 2010). The Practice Profiles were created to support West Virginia's implementation of SPL.

Why is documenting integrity important?

Documenting integrity is important for several reasons. Integrity:
- helps to ensure that the practice has been implemented with quality
- avoids misattributing the effects or non-effects of practices *(e.g., concluding that an intervention did not work when integrity of implementation was actually the reason why)*
- provides guidelines for "taking stock" of where implementation is so that goals for improvement can be set
- documents strengths and needs to guide planning for resources and support
- documents change over time when data are collected at various points during implementation, and
- provides essential information to help us accurately interpret evaluation results and research findings.

Integrity of implementation is built on the understanding that what we do makes a difference. There is a cause and effect relationship: the quality and intensity of our efforts directly impacts the outcomes of our students. Through the use of integrity measures we hold ourselves accountable for this relationship by documenting what we are doing, showing the impact we are having, and using these data to continually improve our practice for the benefit of our students.

How can we honor the need for flexibility while maintaining integrity of implementation?

Because circumstances, conditions and needs vary across districts and sites, expectations for implementation should also vary. This means that in establishing integrity, attention must be given to the flexibility needed to successfully implement the practice in a variety of ways (Fixsen, Blasé, Horner & Sugai, 2009). While combining flexibility with integrity may seem oxymoronic, it is critical when complex practices are brought to scale across multiple settings and sites (Coleman & Shah-Coltrane, 2010). Integrity with flexibility means finding the balance between consistency (i.e. the practice is implemented with integrity in a reliable and recognizable way) and plasticity (i.e. implementation remains malleable and supple enough to respond to contextual strengths and needs).

This balance between consistency and plasticity ensures that integrity does not become a rigid adherence to a doctrine or a "no think" approach.

Balancing consistency and plasticity:
- respects the professional experiences, insights and judgment of the implementers
- honors the context or circumstances surrounding implementation, and
- facilitates adaptive innovations of the practice allowing it to grow and improve.

Integrity with flexibility helps to ensure that:
- the implementers of the practice take ownership of it
- the practice is deeply integrated within the context where it must live and grow, and
- the practice will become sustainable.

Achieving this balance is harder to accomplish than it may seem. The key to integrity with flexibility is to identify key anchors for practice that must be in place to ensure integrity while simultaneously allowing for "flex-points" where the practice can be adapted for individual settings and needs. This means being "descriptive" rather than "prescriptive."

Profiles need to carefully describe goals for the practice as it evolves but they should not prescribe how these goals should be reached. Descriptive profiles help to achieve the integrity needed while still honoring flexibility. The following example shows what this looks like for Leadership, one of the six components of SPL in West Virginia.

Example of Definition and Row from Leadership Profile within School-Level

West Virginia Department of **EDUCATION** **S**

Leadership

Leadership refers to the activities of leaders, and includes:
- creating a clear vision and commitment to the SPL process
- inspiring, facilitating, & monitoring growth & improvement, along with holding high standards for everyone
- promoting the essential components of SPL & the significant systemic changes needed to implement SPL with integrity
- committing resources, time, & energy to building capacity & sustaining the momentum needed for change
- supporting collaborative problem-solving approaches with colleagues, families, learners & community members to build partnerships

Key Anchors and Guiding Questions:	Emerging*: Establishing Consensus	Developing: Building Infrastructure	Operationalizing: Gaining Consistency	Optimizing: Innovating and Sustaining
Structures: 1. How is a vision and commitment to SPL created?	School leadership and staff develop a common understanding and definition of SPL, and they discuss how the SPL framework could strengthen their school.	School leadership commits to SPL implementation by: • sharing a vision of collaboration and commitment to creating positive outcomes • working with all school stakeholders (e.g., paras, PTA, school-based teams, community, etc.) • discussing priorities and plan steps for implementation • creating momentum for implementation	Leadership is actively involved in SPL implementation through various activities, such as: • facilitating or attending meetings • supervising the implementation process • building staff ownership • celebrating successes to strengthen motivation for implementation • ensuring roles and procedures are followed • coordinating trainings to grow building capacity	School leadership, staff and families actively participate in a systemic, culturally-resonant framework of SPL. Current data is examined to refine implementation progress.
2. How are resources (e.g., personnel, time, materials, etc.) aligned to support SPL implementation?	Leadership examines current resources to determine their alignment with SPL.	Leadership collaboratively works with staff and outlines a plan that devotes resources to SPL implementation, such as adjusting the master schedule, comparing current roles and responsibilities of staff to those needed to provide high-functioning SPL and purchasing relevant materials.	School leadership has aligned resources to needs based on data. Systems are established for efficient sharing of resources among various school depart-ments/units.	Leadership reviews and refines allocation of resources as part of a continuous cycle of improvement.

*Each phase of implementation includes and extends the prior phase. 2

The guiding question centers on creating a vision for SPL. Reading across the cells, a description of "vision" is given as it evolves during implementation at the school level. As you look at this example you may note that the vision develops collaboratively with faculty, families and community input. You may also notice that as implementation becomes refined and optimized, this vision is used to align and integrate practices school-wide.

Please note that this profile does not define or dictate what this vision should be. It merely describes what SPL "looks like" across the growth stages. The specific vision statement **must** reflect the school's strengths, needs, values, programs and culture; the profiles do not dictate the exact words in the vision statement or how it is developed. Thus, a descriptive profile identifies the key anchors of a practice, leaving it up to the implementers to determine how to accomplish the implementation. The profiles developed for West Virginia SPL are descriptive and are designed to provide guidance for integrity of implementation without prescribing practice.

What are appropriate uses of integrity data?

The ultimate purpose of integrity data is to strengthen our practice. It is used to identify how close current efforts are to desired efforts, and to then action plan toward reaching those desired efforts. It is a proactive process and should never become punitive.

One appropriate use of the review findings is to guide decision-making. The integrity data helps in planning professional development and in seeking technical assistance support. It provides a platform for determining resources and needs, and intended to help sites trouble shoot and plan for challenges that might emerge. As schools determine their adherence to SPL practices, they can plan for ways to improve practices.

Additionally, integrity information used to evaluate someone is an inappropriate use of data. Integrity is not intended to measure how well someone can perform their job. It is intended only to measure the extent to which someone or some institution implemented what they intended to implement. For example, if you started a diet and were measuring integrity of the diet, you would only measure the extent to which you followed the diet (i.e., did you eat a certain number of calories, like you intended to?). If you did not, you would determine what prevented that. You would discuss barriers to implementation and action plan to correct them.

Should the focus be on one component or all six?

There is no clear answer to this question, as research does not indicate whether focusing small first or big first is ideal. Because it can be very frustrating for systems to attempt to overhaul all six components at once, it may be wise to focus on a component or two in the initial years of implementation. Selecting one or two components to implement deeply provides a foundation for continued growth and can help make systems change more manageable.