



# WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK: OHIO

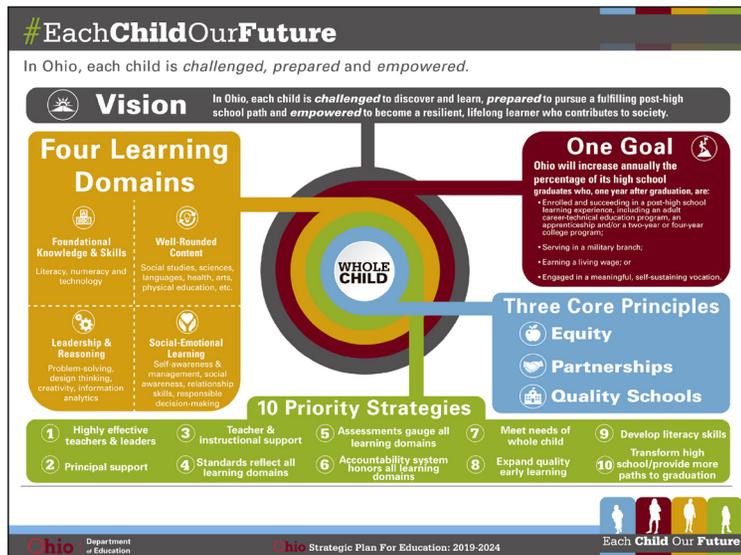
The What Matters Now Network is a tri-state network of Maryland, Ohio, and Rhode Island, focused on the intersection between effective professional learning and high-quality instructional materials. It considers varied leadership and systems topics, uses improvement science methods, and keeps an intentional focus on the practice occurring in schools to drive changes in policy at all levels.

As a multi-state, multi-agency collaboration with through lines from classroom to state policy, the network integrates job-embedded professional learning with curriculum implementation, and shares leadership among diverse stakeholders. The initiative provides clear and scalable pathways for improvement that can be leveraged in additional subject areas or geographies.

The network has resulted in increased **focus, purpose, and impact** of the **collaborative process** of teacher-based

teams, and increased **educator efficacy** in assessing the **quality of instruction and instructional materials**. It has fostered the collaborative development and successful use of **tools to guide educators** in assessing student data/curricular materials and formulating strategies, and supported the use of **improvement science practices**, including peer-based reflection and iterative testing of protocols and practices.

The participating districts include Lancaster City and Western Local, with three schools (two from Lancaster and one from Western) participating as part of the cohort. The Ohio network is supported by the Systems Development & Improvement Center – a Center within the University of Cincinnati’s College of Education, Criminal Justice, & Human Services – working in partnership with WordFarmers Associates, and the overall initiative is supported by Learning Forward. Funding to support the effort has been generously provided by the Carnegie Corporation.





# WMN OHIO: FOCUS



Ohio's participation is anchored in the *Each Child, Our Future* Strategic Plan for Education 2019-2024 and focuses on the improvement of literacy achievement for all children, highlighted as one of state's Priority Strategies (#9). The network catalyzes *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement*, and additionally strengthens the use of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) at the teacher-based team level<sup>1</sup> whose members have developed deeper content knowledge and improved pedagogy in the area of literacy.

Pursuing a long-term vision of all PK-grade 3 children, including students from marginalized groups (e.g., students with disabilities, students of color, etc.) reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade, the network's aim is for Ohio districts, through the use of aligned collaborative learning teams [i.e., teacher-based teams (TBTs), building leadership teams (BLTs), and district leadership teams (DLTs)] to strengthen teacher capacity to improve literacy outcomes for all PK-grade 3 children. The tools developed through the network, particularly the Decision Rules (DR) Flowchart, has supported TBT members in better analyzing student data, identifying evidence-based literacy practices

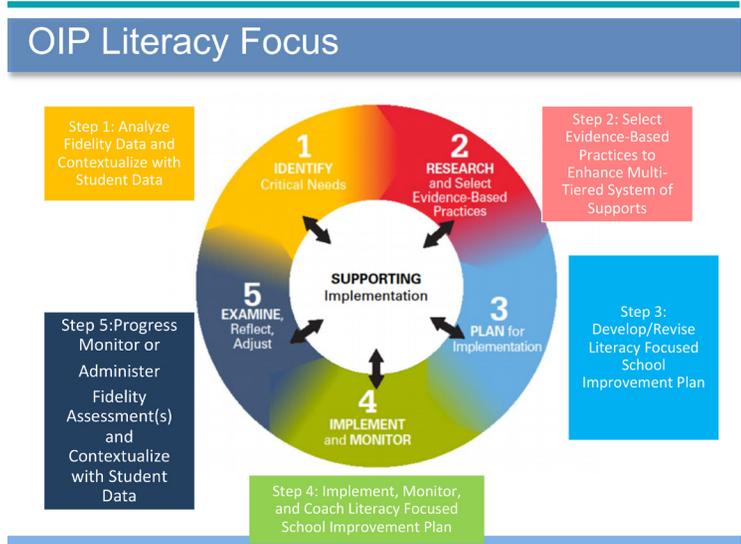
*“Our TBTs [are] definitely stronger. I think we had a target, and that’s what our meeting was for, and we made sure that we stayed on task. And I think looking at the student data was probably the best.”*

– Participating Teacher

based on those data, and implementing, monitoring, and gauging the effectiveness of the practices used – all steps in the OIP. The DR flowchart is also used by TBTs to support members in selecting high-quality instructional materials for teaching reading.

The network is focused on using continuous improvement processes (e.g., the OIP) that leverage rapid testing and learning using real-life evidence. The tools and processes developed to-date were all evaluated using data gathered over multiple iterations of use that gave deep insight on how the decision rules were used during TBT meetings, the quality of the discourse itself, and an additional tool (Application of Concepts) was developed to determine a focus for instructional strategies for each teacher.

<sup>1</sup>The OIP is a structured process that relies on the use of aligned collaborative leadership teams at the district, school, and teacher team level to support adult and student learning on a continuous basis.



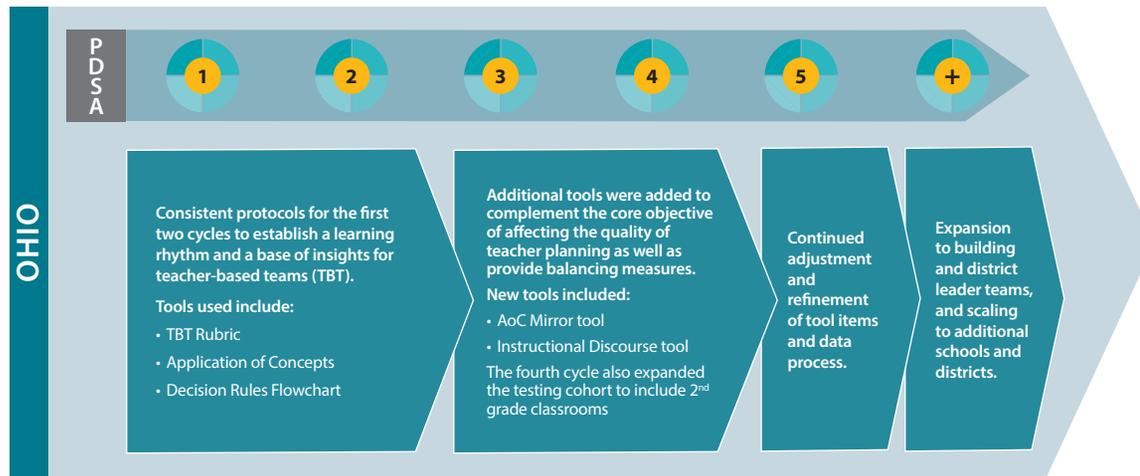


# WMN OHIO: SCALABLE PROCESSES AND TOOLS

...teacher teams have gone from a mindset of “we just ‘know’ what to do with our students,” to “we have to ground our work in the data that we see about our students.”

– Participating Principal

The tools summarized below were developed or augmented through the network by iterative testing and adaptation. Usage of the tools can be scaled within additional Ohio districts and adapted by other states in the network. Participants in Maryland and Rhode Island leverage the work of the Ohio team, and in turn, provide opportunities for the Ohio team to incorporate learning from their respective state efforts.



DISCUSSION RUBRIC FOR TEACHER-BASED TEAMS	To identify if the TBT 5-step process orients the team to basing decisions on data, implications regarding learning progressions and selecting instructional materials.
LITERACY DECISION RULES FLOWCHART FOR GRADE LEVEL TEAMS	To guide instructional decisions and the selection of appropriate materials for teaching reading skills based on the student assessment outcomes.
TBT DISCOURSE INSTRUMENT FOR LITERACY COACHES	To cross-check the quality of discussion within TBT meetings about early literacy-focused curriculum and instruction and to establish coaching priorities.
LANGUAGE ESSENTIALS FOR TEACHERS OF READING AND SPELLING APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS (AOC)	To identify if what teachers are learning in the professional development sessions transfers into classroom practice. Observational data from the tool is used for instructional coaching and support in the form of feedback, and goal setting.
EDUCATOR MIRROR REFLECTION TOOL	To determine teachers' perception of needs re early literacy curriculum and instruction.



“If we looked at student data before, sometimes we just didn’t know where to go next – what do we need to do with these students? So, this has helped us have better conversations about what exactly these students need.”

– Participating Teacher



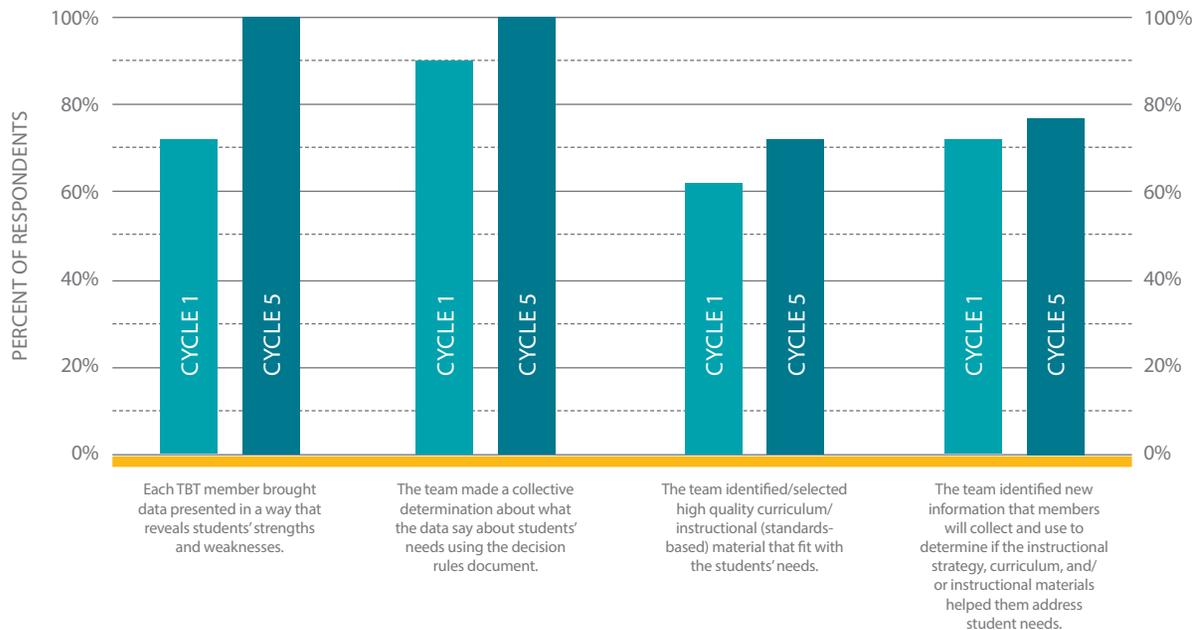
# WMN OHIO: RESULTS



Ohio's effort to affect literacy outcomes by strengthening TBT functioning is showing strong initial results. The work has allowed for more focused discourse on the part of team members related to effective literacy instruction, resulting in positive changes in instructional practice. Further, the network activities have resulted in benefits from the development and use of common language, including all grade levels engaging in dialogue around literacy, a common use of language for assessments and interventions, and a common understanding of next steps.

For more information about the What Matters Now Network, visit: <https://learningforward.org/networks/what-matters-now-network/>.

## TBT PRACTICES: PROGRESS FROM PDSA CYCLE 1 TO CYCLE 5 (SELECTED DATA)



OHIO'S WORK HAS ALLOWED FOR MORE FOCUSED DISCOURSE ON THE PART OF TEAM MEMBERS RELATED TO EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION.