

Minnesota Personalized Learning Plan Networked Improvement Community: Planning Session

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Meet the presenters.



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Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Introduction to REL Midwest and the Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance
3. An overview of networked improvement communities (NICs)
4. Recruiting NIC participants
5. Building engagement in NICs
6. Next steps

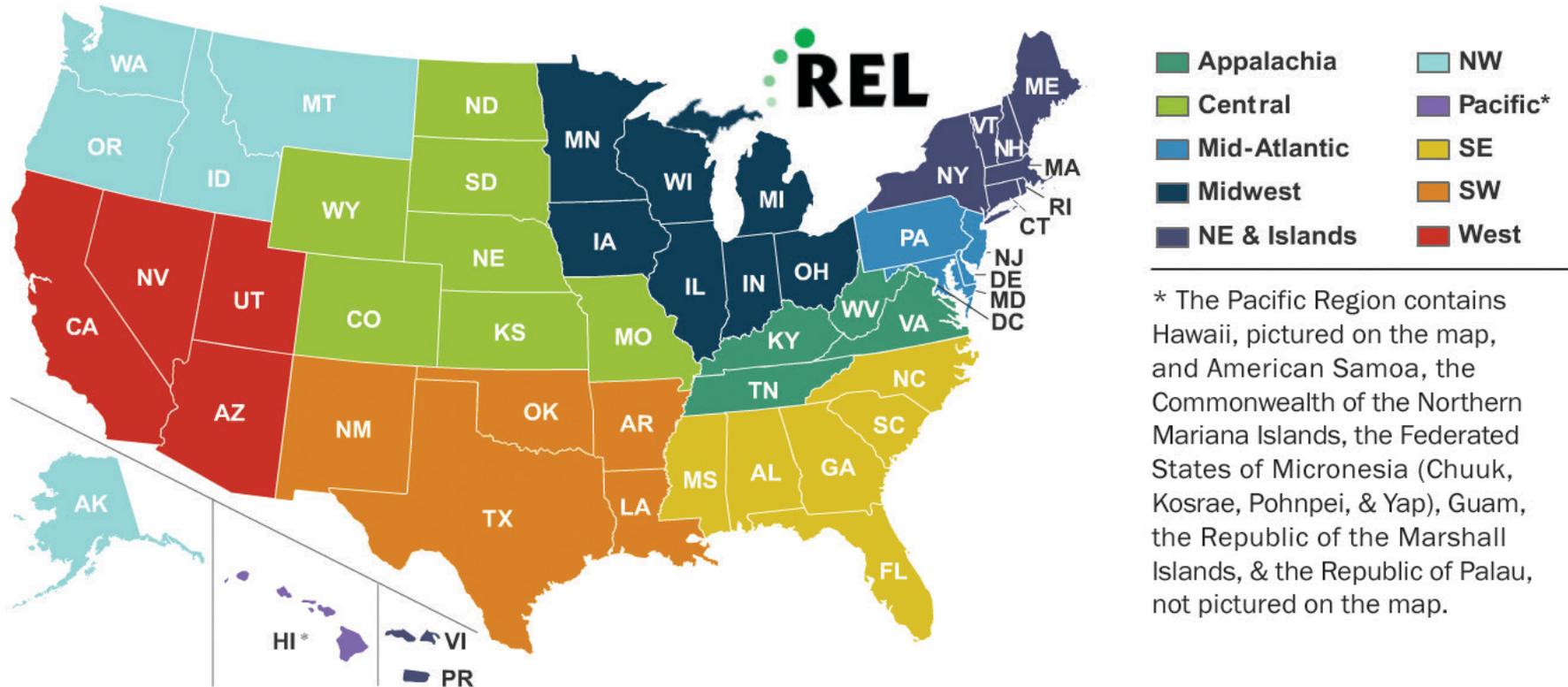
Welcome and Introductions

A stack of colorful sticky notes is placed on a white desk. The top note is yellow and features the word "WELCOME" in a bold, black, hand-drawn font. Below it are several other sticky notes in shades of orange, pink, and lime green. In the background, a white computer keyboard and mouse are visible, along with a smartphone on the left side of the frame.

WELCOME

Introduction to REL Midwest and the Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance

Regional Educational Laboratories



The regional educational laboratories (RELs) are funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

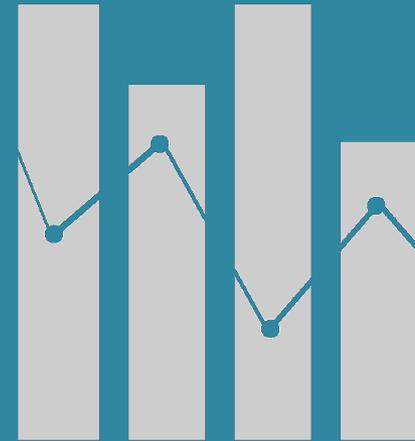
With whom does REL Midwest work?

School districts, state education agencies, and other education organizations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin



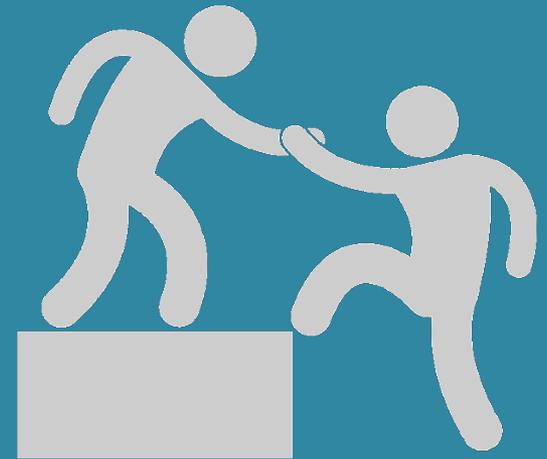
What does REL Midwest do?

Applied research,
technical assistance,
and engagement
activities to help
partners understand
research and evidence



How does REL Midwest do this work?

REL Midwest conducts its work through collaborative research partnerships with stakeholders in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.



Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance (MCRRA)

- Aims to improve high school students' career readiness and equity of access to career readiness opportunities.
- The primary focus is Minnesota, with a community of practice connecting key stakeholders across the region.

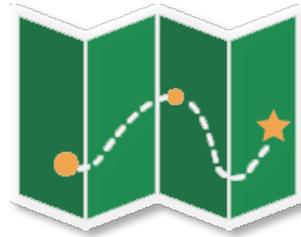


Alliance Members

- **Mary Barrie, MDE**
- **Kari-Ann Ediger, MDE**
- **Julia Espe, Princeton Public School**
- **Jane Harstad, MDE**
- **Troy Haugen, Lakes Country Service Cooperative**
- **Greg Keith, MDE**
- **Tim Lutz, Kelliher Public Schools**
- **Josh Noble, Worthington Public Schools**
- **Paula Palmer, MDE**
- **Jason Vold, Onamia Public Schools**
- **Robyn Widley, MDE**
- **Jeremy Hanson Willis, DEED**
- **Leah Zimmerman, Minnesota School Counselors Association and Crookston High School**



Research Agenda



MCRRA developed a research agenda that serves as a **road map for alliance work** to:

- Help ensure that projects directly address alliance members' needs.
- Supply research that informs policy and practice.
- Increase members' capacity to conduct and use research.

Current Projects

- Supporting the Minnesota Department of Education to Strengthen Its Workforce
- The Postsecondary Pathways of Minnesota Public High School Graduates: Investigating Opportunity Gaps



Proposed Project: Improving the Implementation of Personalized Learning Plans

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must fervently act. There is no other route to success.”

— Pablo Picasso

Research Questions

- How do schools leverage personalized learning plans (PLPs) to ensure students are ready for postsecondary experiences?
- Do students who are traditionally underserved receive the same supports through PLPs?
- What are common practices in PLPs in urban areas and rural areas? Are these opportunities the same?
- To what extent are the PLPs implemented with fidelity?

An Overview of Networked Improvement Communities

**What is a networked
improvement
community (NIC)?**

**A NIC
is a group of
organizations that
use systematic
inquiry to address
a common problem
of practice.**



Why use a NIC?

“Rather than asking whether an ‘intervention works,’ a network improvement community asks, ‘what works, when, for whom and under what sets of circumstances?’”

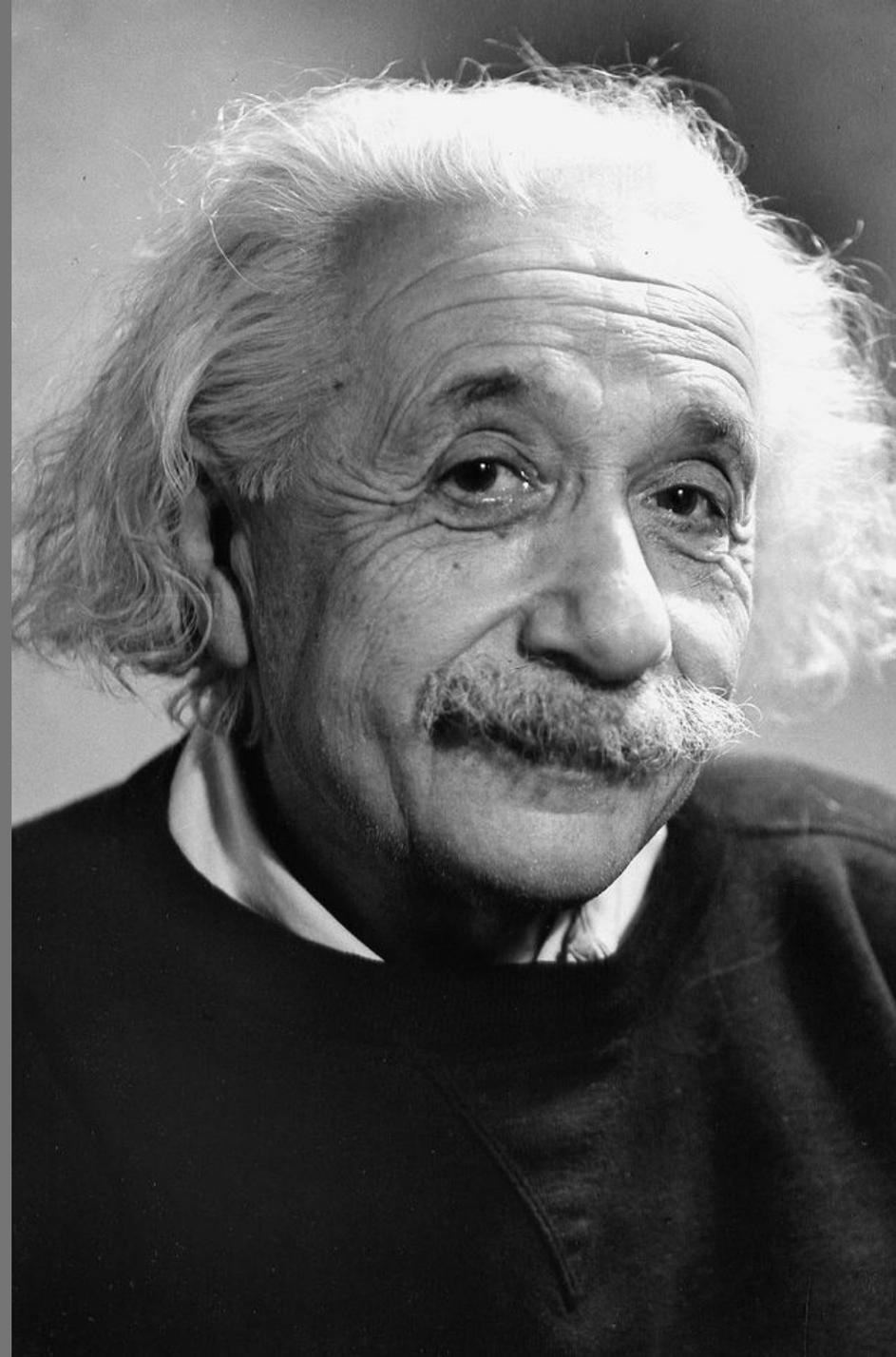
— Bryk, Gomez, LeMahieu, & Grunow, 2015

What does a NIC do?

Identify the problem

“If I had only one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem, and only five minutes finding the solution.”

— Albert Einstein



Understand the problem

Participants conduct a root cause analysis to identify the factors that contribute to the problem.



Identify an intervention

Participants identify an intervention—or change in practice—to address the problem and its root causes.



Test the intervention

Participants engage in plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles to implement and test the intervention.

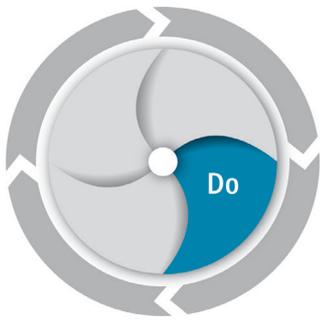


Plan



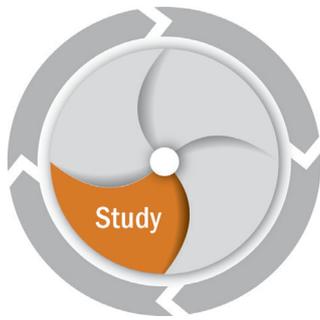
- Use research or other local evidence to identify an intervention or change in practice that addresses one or more root causes of the problem.
- Develop an implementation plan for the intervention, considering:
 - What the intervention will look like.
 - Who will be involved.
 - The specific roles of those involved.
 - How often the group will meet to discuss the intervention.
 - The projected timeline.

Do



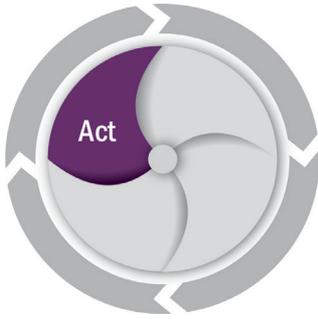
- Implement the intervention.

Study



- Collect data to monitor the progress of the intervention.
- Analyze data and interpret findings to learn about the successes and challenges of the intervention.

Act



- Based on data analysis, decide how to proceed.
- Participants may want to adapt, adopt, abandon, or expand the intervention.

**Share
learnings with
network
organizations
and others
outside the
network**



Repeat

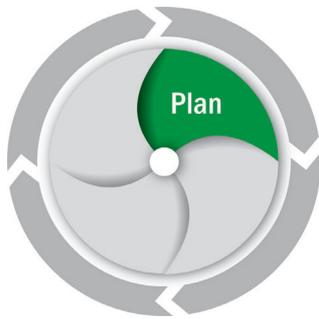


Example: Michigan Focus Schools NIC

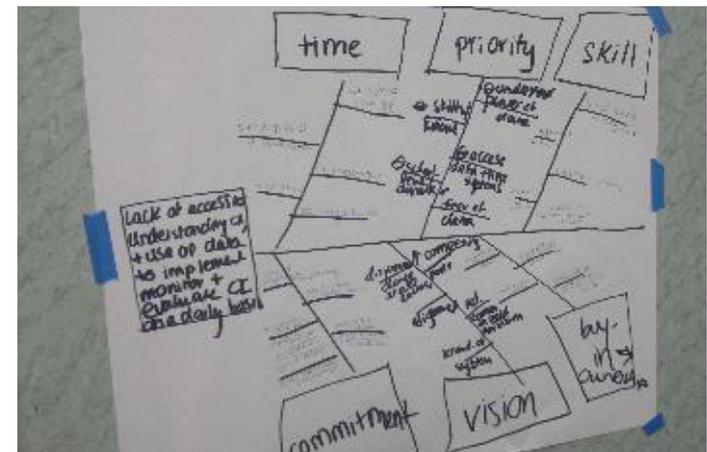
Michigan Focus Schools NIC



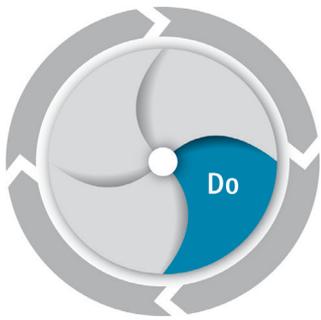
Plan



- Participants identified lack of math fluency skills as the primary driver of achievement gaps in math in Michigan Focus schools.
- They set the following aim: “Students in the bottom 30 percent of math achievement will achieve mastery on grade-level benchmarks in math fluency by the end of the school year.”

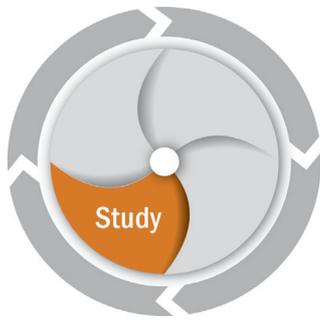


Do



- Teachers in two Focus schools implemented 15 minutes of daily math fluency practice in their schools.
 - Math fluency practice targeted to students in bottom 30 percent of math achievement.
- District math coaches provided professional development and support to teachers.
- Principals provided guidance, coaching, and support to math teachers.

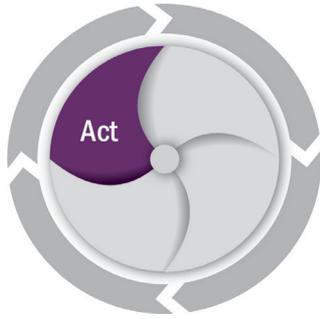
Study



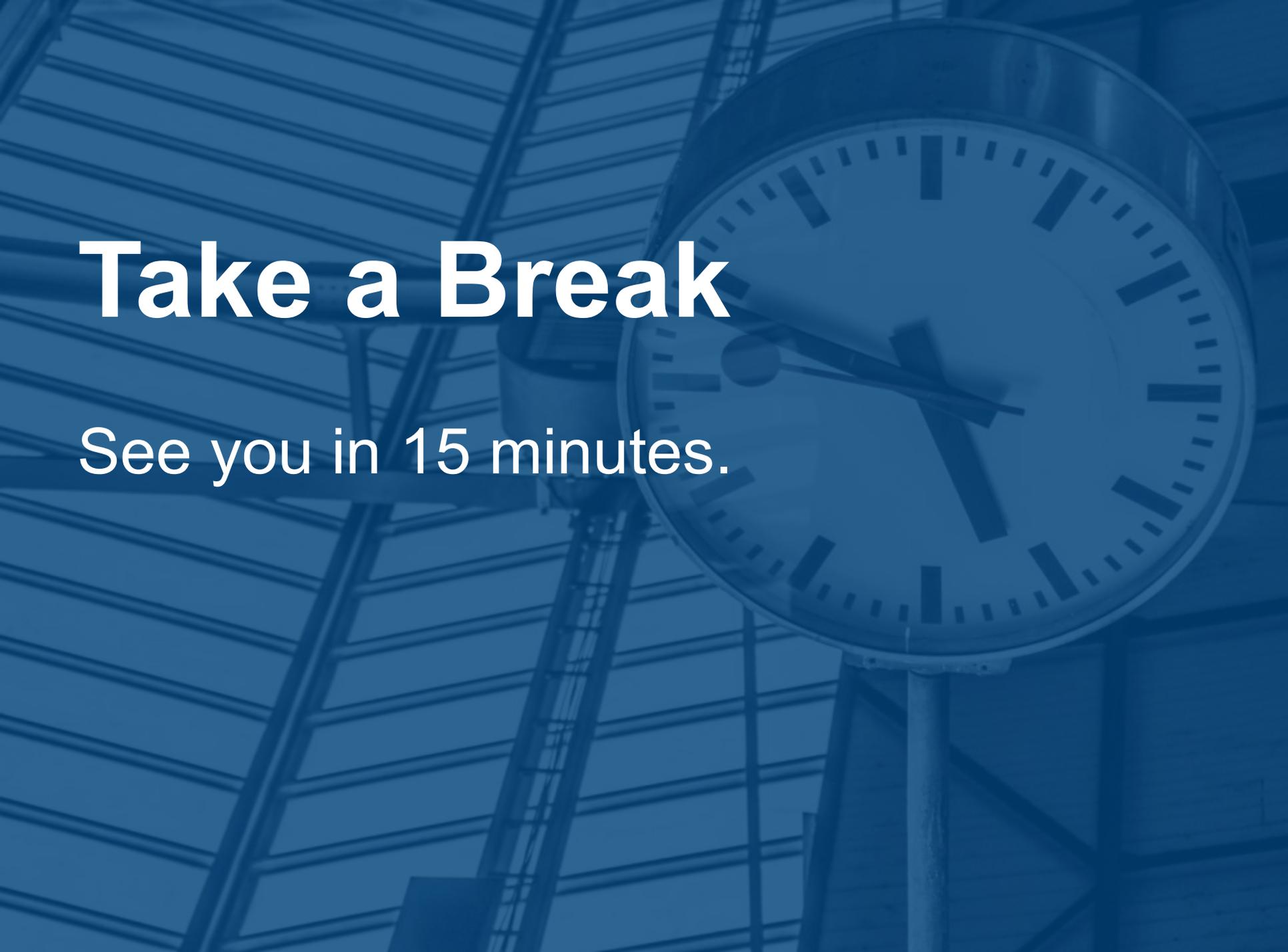
- Teachers completed **logs** to track daily math practice of fluency skills.
- Principals conducted **classroom observations** every two weeks.
- Students completed **assessments** of their performance on math fluency benchmarks.

NIC participants reviewed these sources of data and discussed challenges encountered and lessons learned.

Act



After the first cycle was completed in March 2016, participants chose to repeat the cycle, continuing to monitor student progress.

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Take a Break

See you in 15 minutes.

Recruiting NIC Participants

Responsibilities of a NIC Member

**Participate in
regular meetings**



**Contribute to
identifying
problems of
practice and
developing a
solution to test**



**Share
information
about how the
solution is being
implemented**



**Participate in
conversations
about analyzing
results and
refining the
solution**



Types of Expertise

NICs require distinct types of expertise

- Champions
- Content experts
- Context experts
- Research experts



Champions

- Are decisionmakers in the organization and have the power to commit institutional resources to the project.
- Help recruit participants and contextualize the work for participants.
- Advocate for the process across stakeholder groups.

Champions are most effective when viewed as knowledgeable and valuable by other stakeholders.

Content Experts

- Specialize in the content or disciplinary areas targeted by the NIC.
- Leverage their content expertise to build legitimacy for the work.

Context Experts

- Are knowledgeable about the political and personal landscape of the local context, including:
 - The responsibilities of stakeholders in their organization.
 - How stakeholders interact with each other.
 - How stakeholders are supported and challenged.
- Can connect the NIC to resources, anticipate and propose solutions to barriers to implementation of an intervention, and provide guidance on how to structure the NIC for sustainability.

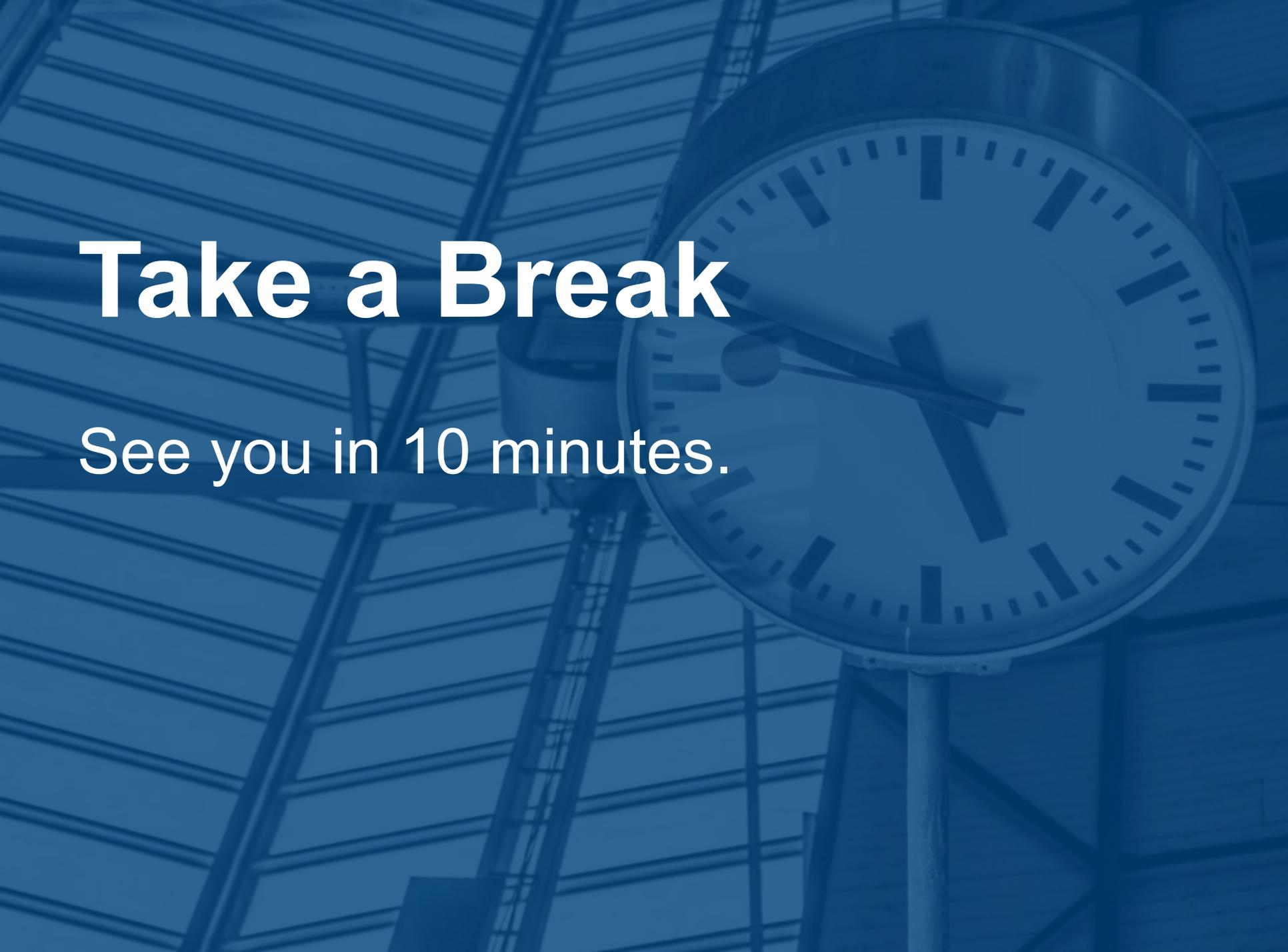
Research Experts

- Are skilled in data collection and analysis.
- Are able to contribute thinking to the development and assessment of outcome measures.

Consider the following questions:

- Who would be the champion for this work in your organization?
- Who can provide each type of expertise (content, context, and research) needed for the NIC?
- What challenges might you face in recruiting participants?



The background is a solid blue color with a faint, light-colored grid pattern. On the right side, there is a large, semi-transparent image of an analog clock. The clock has a white face with black hour markers and hands. The time shown is approximately 10:10. The clock is mounted on a thin vertical post.

Take a Break

See you in 10 minutes.

Building Engagement in NICs

Opportunities to use existing resources

- Staff
- Content and research expertise
- Lessons learned from previous work
- Materials and other resources
- Connections with district and school staff



Opportunities to fill research needs

- What are some questions of interest that your organization hasn't explored yet?
- How could the NIC add value to work that is already happening?



**Consistently
thinking about
alignment**



Consider the following questions:

- What current efforts would complement the work of the NIC?
- What current efforts would conflict with the work of the NIC?
- What challenges would you need to overcome to implement the NIC process in your school?



Next Steps

Learn More

- [Many Heads Are Better Than One: Principal Reflects on Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest Collaborative Project](#) (newsroom post)
- [Michigan Focus Schools Networked Improvement Community](#) (project description and video)
- [We Are Better Together: Researchers & Educators Partner to Improve Students' Math Skills](#) (podcast)

References

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Proger, A. R., Bhatt, M. P., Cirks, V., & Gurke, D. (2017). *Establishing and sustaining networked improvement communities: Lessons from Michigan and Minnesota* (REL 2017–264). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.