

Getting Started: How Do I Implement Progress Monitoring in My School?

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Once you have decided that you want to implement student progress monitoring (SPM) to monitor student progress in your school, and once you have “buy-in” from the building (and district level) staff to undertake this initiative, there are a number of factors that must be considered before you begin. It is important to develop a plan and make some decisions at the outset in order to reap the full benefits SPM can offer your students and your school.

You can find resources on this website (click on the Summer Institute and Library tags) that provide details on implementing SPM. This brief offers an overview of the issues you will need to address as you begin to plan:

1. Goal-Oriented Issues

A number of decisions concerning your goals need to be made before you can proceed further:

- Determine the level of implementation – Do you want to start implementing SPM only in certain classrooms, groups of classes, or in the school as a whole? Validated SPM measures are available for reading and math skills in the elementary grades; the overview of tools on this website provides detailed information on the measures available.
- Determine long-range goals – What exactly is it that you want to achieve? Is it, for example, greater accountability, increased accuracy in disability identification, or higher student achievement? Setting long-range goals for individual students or groups of students can provide information regarding student achievement over time.
- Determine short-term objectives – How much do you want students to progress each week? Data can be used to determine whether students are making progress toward annual goals and whether they are on track to meet benchmarks on high-stakes assessments
- Determine intended uses for SPM data (student performance, class performance, school performance/Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP])
- Decide if SPM will be a part of a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach

Once these decisions have been made, you will be better prepared to determine what type of SPM model you’d like to implement, as well as the plan you will follow to ensure implementation is conducted with fidelity.

2. Staff-Oriented Issues

Teachers and other staff involved in implementing SPM and using the data generated are central to your school's success with this initiative. Early and ongoing training of staff and formation of teams are critical to a positive beginning. The following factors are ongoing concerns throughout the process:

- Adequate staffing in terms of numbers, roles, and levels of expertise
- Staff resistance to change, especially to varying instructional strategies
- Integration of SPM into routine classroom activities
- Consistent administration and graphing of the measures, and implementation of data decision-making rules to use the data generated from the measures
- When utilizing the graphed data, teachers need to have a working knowledge of a variety of evidence-based instructional strategies, including how they are intended to be used and the particular learning difficulties they address

It's important that you ensure that all staff who will be involved in the implementation of SPM in your school are also involved in the initiative's planning process. These are the personnel who can best identify individualized or standardized instructional strategies, and assist in establishing teacher assistance teams to help ensure that SPM is implemented successfully.

3. Logistical and Administrative Issues

As you plan and, ultimately, implement the SPM initiative, there are several requirements that you must consider. These administrative and management requirements must be addressed at the outset, and as problems arise during implementation. Building and district-level administrators need to be attuned to three major areas in the implementation of student progress monitoring. These three areas are: a) Consensus building, b) infrastructure, and c) implementation. The most critical of these issues include the following:

- Choose the SPM tools that are appropriate for your school. Click on the "tools" tab on this web site for information on those major SPM systems, measures, and software that have been submitted to and reviewed by the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring's Technical Review Committee.
- Once you've chosen the appropriate tool, make sure that adequate technology is available to support the SPM system you choose and to assist in generating graphs and analyzing trends in the data you collect.
- Develop a one-year plan that specifies month-by-month tasks, detailing what is to be done and who is responsible, including a roll-out plan, staff training and team tasks, diagnostic screening, and class-by-class implementation.
- Monitor adequacy of staffing as the year progresses and as staff leave and are replaced.
- Identify training needs—both at the outset and as the year progresses—incorporating refresher training and training of new hires during the year.

- Plan for continued monitoring of implementation, to ensure that: (a) measures are administered correctly and repeated at planned intervals (at least once a week after initial diagnostic screening); and (b) data are used for making changes in instruction, to avoid the pitfall of collecting data that is not used.

For further information on these and other issues in planning and implementing SPM on a school wide basis, click on “2006 Summer Institute” tab on this website and consult the following resources:

Deno, Stanley; Erica Lembke; and Amy Reschly, “Progress Monitoring: Leadership Team Activities.” <http://www.education.umn.edu/EdPsych/Projects/cbmMODldrshp.pdf>

Lembke, Erica and Laura Saenz, “Supporting Teachers Who Are Implementing Student Progress Monitoring: A Guide for Administrators.”

“Choosing a Progress Monitoring Tool that Works for You.” The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, 2006.



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