

Positive Deviance

Toolkit for

Educators

*Using the Brilliance of our Communities to find
Existing Solutions to Persistent Problems*



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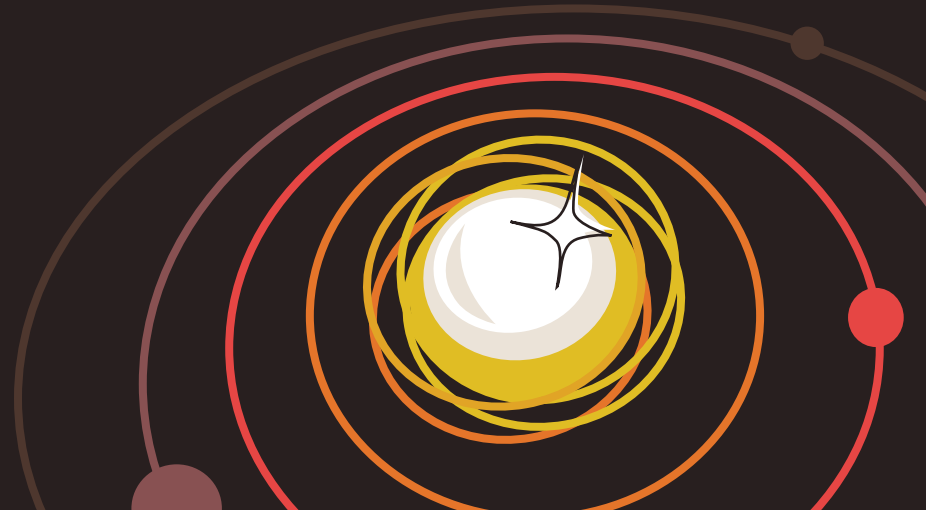
K12LAB

x

Chan
Zuckerberg
Initiative

Developed by Stanford University with funding and support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. Authored by Devon Young, Jess Brown, Marc Chun, and Peter Worth. Grounded in the research of Jerry Sternin, Monique Sternin, and Richard Pascale.

The views expressed are those of the author(s) and should not be attributed to the funders.



Dedication & Acknowledgements

To the designers of the positive deviance process:

Jerry Sternin, Monique Sternin, and Richard Pascale authors of the Positive Deviance process and authors of *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems*, which inspired this work.

To our K-12 Lab community & colleagues, namely

Ariel Raz, Helen Higgins, Laura McBain, Louie Montoya, sam seidel, Susie Chang, and Susie Wise.

To our toolkit advisors, reviewers, & contributors

Darry Strickland, Frank Ciriza, and Marthaa Torres.

To our visual & graphic designers

Ian Moore for his branding and presentation design, and
Lala Openi for their design expertise and creation of this toolkit resource.

To the educators

whose contributions were integral to the development of this toolkit through prototype testing, fellowship, and professional development programs.

To you.



Our Team



Devon Young

**PROJECT MANAGER, EDUCATOR, AND
LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGNER**

SHE DESIGNS

tools, resources, and experiences that support educators in creating equitable, human-centered learning opportunities for all young people, especially those furthest from opportunity.

HER DRIVING QUESTION IS,

“How can we nurture students now to become lifelong learners later?”

SHE’S A BRIGHT SPOT

in remembering (and reminding) her family of all birthdays, anniversaries, and important dates.



Jess Brown

**ORGANIZER, FACILITATOR, AND
LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGNER**

SHE DESIGNS

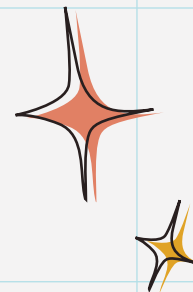
and develops tools and experiences that unpack how we learn, explore the impact of culture, and build more equitable systems. In this work, she creates resources that support positive deviance processes in school communities.

HER DRIVING QUESTION IS,

“How can we intentionally build education models where Black and brown learners can thrive — from cradle to grave?”

SHE IS AN OUTLIER

in her community by prioritizing self and community care within all contexts — especially in professional & formal spaces.





Marc Chun

**DESIGNER, RESEARCHER, AND
FOUNDER OF THE POSITIVE
DEVIANCE PROJECT**

HE DESIGNS

strategies to combine the rigor of research + the power of strategic storytelling + the empathy of human-centered design.

HIS DRIVING QUESTION IS,

“Why don’t good ideas spread more equitably throughout our systems?”

HE IS AN OUTLIER

in his community of friends by his ability to stay calm under pressure when doing escape rooms.



Peter Worth

**DESIGN RESEARCHER, COACH, AND
LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGNER**

HE DESIGNS

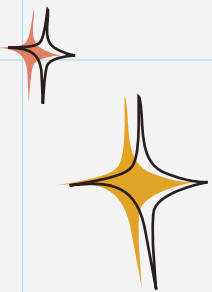
and facilitates learning experiences that empower school communities to foster an equitable and human-centered culture of learning and innovation.

HIS DRIVING QUESTION IS,

“How can we ensure educators have the tools and support they need to tackle the complexity of schools while nurturing meaningful learning?”

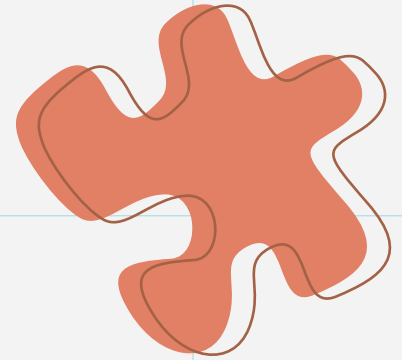
HE IS AN OUTLIER

in his family by his commitment to finding the right tune to complement any activity.



A Letter

From Our Team



To our K-12 Lab community,

There are issues in education that are persistent — keeping up with our changing society, breaking down systemic oppression, creating spaces that foster belonging, championing learning experiences that lead to the growth of thoughtful, community-engaged, competent, and confident young people.

As designers and educators, we have approached these issues in many ways — through the creation of new processes, curricula, professional development, learning networks, etc. We have tried, iterated, and positively shifted experiences for ourselves and our students. Over the years, we have seen many of these successful shifts take hold. We've also seen quite a few approaches that have (at best) missed the mark and (at worst) perpetuated inequity. These cyclical challenges highlight a need to embrace adaptable, emergent processes over one-size-fits-all solutions. They call for context-based, community-centered change.

We felt that there were other approaches that might be helpful — ones that don't ask us to create novel ideas and do not require substantial additional resources. We began to ask ourselves: how might we build upon the brilliance of communities to enable them to spread context specific, place-based practices?



The process we have begun exploring is not new (and once you start doing it, it is rather intuitive). Let's systematically and empathetically look to our communities to see what has been working well — who or what is already solving the issue that we are facing. Let's deeply understand what makes this approach different from others that we have tried before. Let's spread these approaches that work with our students, our resources, and our culture.

We hope with these resources, your community will be able to embark on this process of observation, data collection, conversation, and finding solutions to share. We hope that you can use it to dismantle inequity and barriers to students' success, inclusion, growth, and joy. We hope that you can use it to further appreciate the brilliance that surrounds you — to recognize both what we need to end and what we need to amplify. This resource is not perfect (in fact, we'd still say it's a prototype). However it has been a labor filled with intention, grace, and learning. We sincerely hope it offers the same (and more) for you.

Devon, Jess, Marc, & Peter

I think the change in perspective from feeling insolvable to focusing on what is working helped [the positive deviance process] feel like we were always making positive headway rather than spinning our wheels.

—JENN DEMERS,

Computer Science Teacher,
Battle Ground Academy, Tennessee

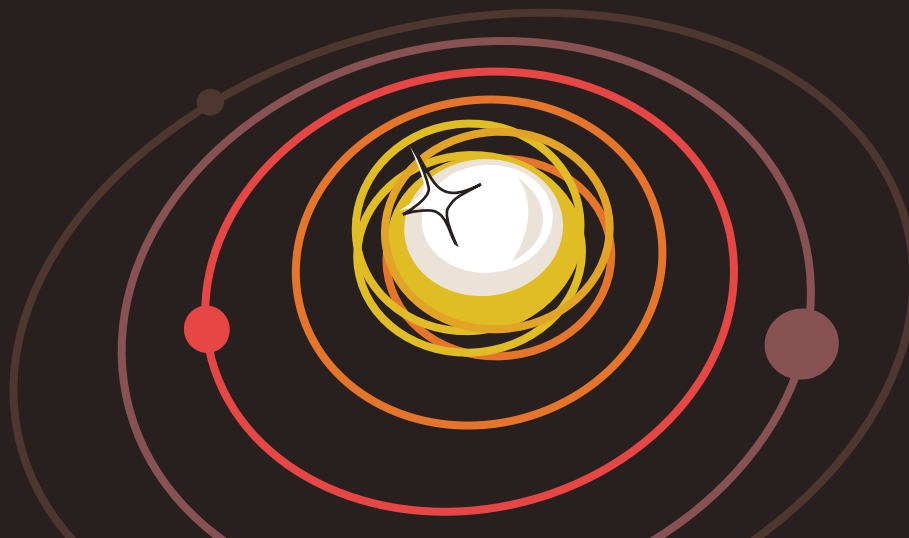
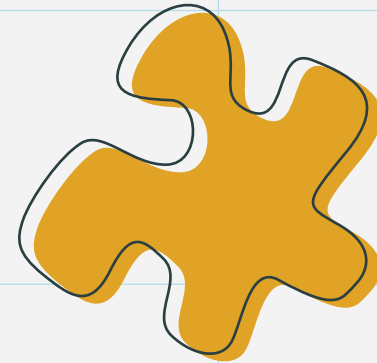
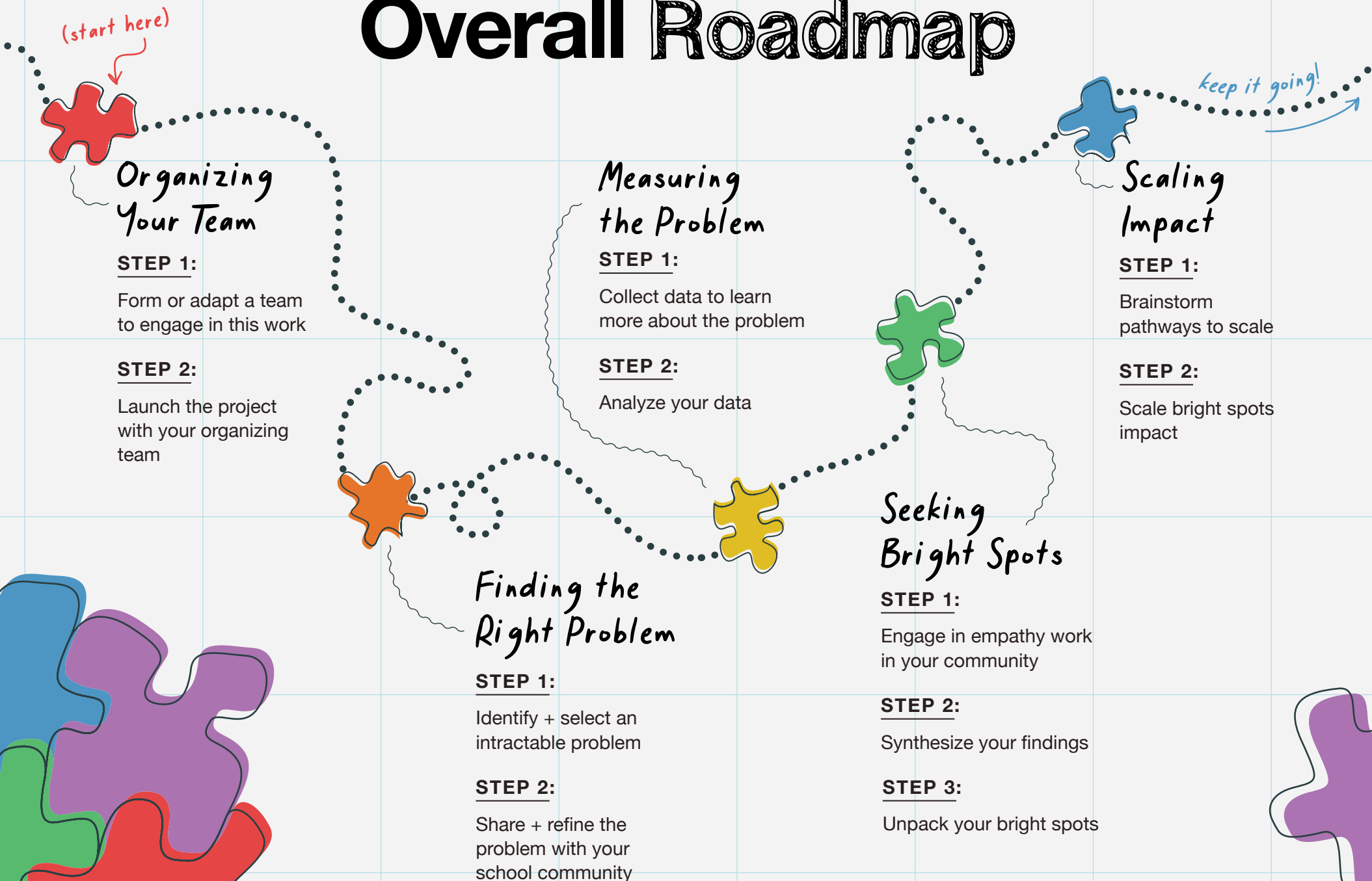


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Overall Roadmap



Key Terms and Phrases to know

+ *Positive deviance (PD)*

is a community-driven approach that looks to local positive outliers for sustainable, scalable solutions to intractable problems.

(Side note: “positive deviance” is the official, technical term of art, but in our initial prototype testing, we learned that “deviance” can be such a negatively loaded term, it was off-putting. “Community-led problem solving” was much more palatable, but know that the idea of looking for those who deviate from the norm in a positive way is the key idea. As you introduce this to your own school, feel free to use whichever term resonates best with your community.)

In this approach, we’re focused on intractable, adaptive problems, where educators, staff, or students might need to change their behaviors.

+ *Intractable problems* are resistant to permanent solutions, and every time you think you’ve fixed them, they show up again (sometimes in a more stubborn form). For example, students aren’t eating the school-provided lunches.

+ *Adaptive problems* are ones that require a behavioral change. For example, increasing student conversations during lunch time.

+ *Technical problems* are ones where there is a known solution or “thing” you can adopt. For example, introducing a contactless payment system in the lunch line to counter long lines.

For this process we are **not** focusing on technical problems or systemic problems (like underfunding of teacher salaries or nationally regulated school nutrition standards). Instead, we’re focused on challenges where educators, staff, or students in the school building might need to change their behaviors.

+ *Bright spots (or outliers, or positive deviants)* can be found by looking at people in the community who are already solving those intractable problems. A bright spot isn't a person — it's what the person is doing that's making them stand out.

It is the behavior, action, and/or practice that is causing them to stand out from the crowd in a positive way.

- * Bright spot seeking is not about just identifying the person or environment — it's understanding the practices and actions and how they are able to manifest to solve intractable problems.
- * Keep in mind: You can't replicate a person — but you CAN figure out ways to replicate the behaviors and strategies they're exhibiting that is making them stand out as bright spots.

You can see some examples and further explanations [here](#).

What is Positive Deviance?

Positive deviance (PD) is the belief that a bright spot within your community has already found a solution for a sticky, intractable problem you are facing. For a more detailed overview of the history of positive deviance, [click here](#).

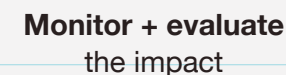
The concept of positive deviance is first noted in nutrition literature research in the 1960s. In 1989 Marian Zeitlin and her colleagues at Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy published a collection of studies from around the world that identified well-nourished children from poor families, labeling them ‘positive deviants’. Zeitlin identified the enabling factors that made these positive deviants successful in these conditions with a series of case studies outlining the aberrations. Richard Pascale, Monique Sternin, and Jerry Sternin later applied this idea to nutrition efforts in rural Vietnam with great success. This led them to apply a positive deviance framework across industries as consultants in medicine, community building, and human rights efforts, which they documented in their 2010 book *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World’s Toughest Problems*. This framework has also been applied in K-12 schools, such as the work of the Supporting Teacher Effectiveness Project (STEP) in Long Beach Unified School District.

“Positive deviance is founded on the premise that at least one person in a community, working with the same resources as everyone else, has already licked

the problems that confounds others. This individual is an outlier in the statistical sense – an exception, someone whose outcome deviates in a positive way from the norm. In most cases this person does not know [they are] doing anything unusual. Yet once the unique solution is discovered and understood, it can be adopted by the wider community and transform many lives.” — PASCALE, STERNIN AND STERNIN,

THE POWER OF POSITIVE DEVIANCE: HOW UNLIKELY INNOVATORS SOLVE THE WORLD’S TOUGHEST PROBLEMS

Throughout the past 2 years, the d.school team has been expounding upon the potential of positive deviance in K-12 education. We have engaged over 100 educators from around the globe through testing sprints, a school-based fellowship program, and team-based professional development. In deeper development of these tools and resources, we worked with 15 schools that each represented the complexity, diversity, and opportunity we see across the education sector. These educators provided insight and feedback on the tools, process, and relevance in their community. We are so grateful for all of the support they provided, and are excited to share this toolkit as a reflection of their thoughtful work integrating positive deviance in their communities.



For example, you might get to the Community Engagement section and hear feedback from your community that the strategies and behaviors you're trying to scale don't feel applicable to the needs of your students, staff, and community. If that is the case, you might want to spend more time Bright Spot Seeking. Return to that step and repeat it until you feel like you have found some successful behaviors and strategies that your community can scale.

1



2



3

Traditional problem solving often leads to the creation of NEW solutions while positive deviance is uplifting the solutions that already exist (and are likely hidden).

1

BEGIN WITH ANALYSIS OF DEMONSTRABLY SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS (BRIGHT SPOTS)

2

We aren't losing key skills used in traditional problem solving like: empathetic conversations, relationship building, and action — we are simply employing these skills in a different way.

3

What this toolkit can help you do

THIS TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED TO BE A RESOURCE FOR ALL SCHOOLS, WITH READY-TO-USE TOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN TESTED WITH EDUCATORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, IN THE HOPES OF PROVIDING YOU WITH THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO TRY THE POSITIVE DEVIANCE PROCESS WITHIN YOUR OWN SCHOOL COMMUNITIES.

IN THIS TOOLKIT YOU'LL FIND

- + A detailed walk through of each process step, with examples from our work using this process in schools
- + Tools and resources to support your community in implementing this process
- + Grab-and-go sample meeting agendas for your work with your larger school community
- + Worked examples for each step of the way to help guide your learning and ensure you're on the right track

THERE ARE MYRIAD WAYS YOU COULD UTILIZE THIS TOOLKIT IN YOUR WORK. Here are a few examples of

TOOLKIT IN YOUR WORK. Here are a few examples of questions or challenges you could consider when thinking about where to get started:

- ✦ Accreditation review process
- ✦ Addressing the problem of chronic absenteeism in school
- ✦ Annual school planning process
- ✦ Building a sense of belonging in the classroom, or within school in general
- ✦ Reclassification process for English Language Learners

This folder contains everything you will need to guide you through this work, including printable version of the tools, worked examples, and any videos or additional explainers that can supplement this toolkit.

*Positive deviance allows
us to explore the very potential
inherent in a community.*

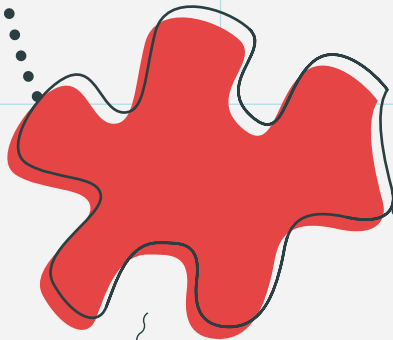
—TATANG SURATNO,
Santo Yusup School, Indonesia

Phase 1

An abstract graphic design featuring overlapping geometric shapes. A large, bright blue circle is positioned at the top left. Below it, a yellow circle overlaps with a large orange circle. A red circle is partially visible at the bottom right. The background is dark, and the shapes are layered to create a sense of depth and movement.

Organizing Your Team: Roadmap

(start here)



What you'll be doing in this section



STEP 1:

Think through
whom to engage
in this work



TOOLS:

- ✦ Organizing
your team tool



STEP 2:

Meet with your
organizing team



TOOLS:

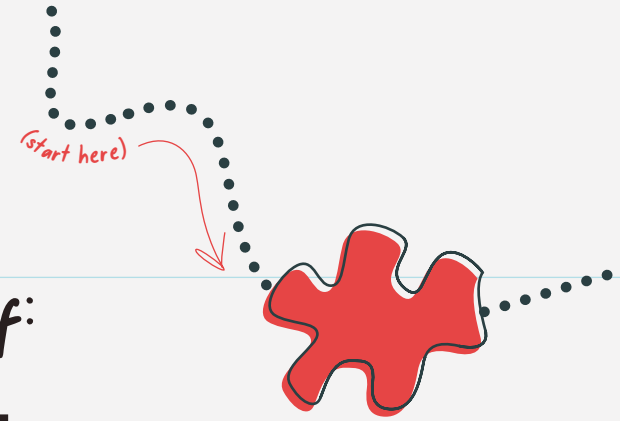
- ✦ Meeting agenda and
facilitation guide
- ✦ Introductory
slide deck

{ Click [here](#) to access the printable versions of this section's worksheets. }



*Before you begin
forming a new team, ask yourself:*

What teams are already doing this type of work?



Yes, this practice can be utilized by newly formed teams, but it can also be applied to problems and processes existing teams are already tackling. When considering whether to organize a new team, think: what groups at my school are already investing in participatory decision-making or action research?

HERE'S A NON-COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF SOME POTENTIAL EXISTING TEAMS THIS PROCESS CAN BE USED WITH:

- + Administrative teams
- + Instructional leadership teams
- + Grade-level teams and/or subject-area teams
- + School attendance teams
- + Counseling teams

- + English Language Learner advisory team
- + Special Education departments, or teams working with students with IEPs

School-based teams have found success introducing this process to existing structures and applying it to problems they've been trying to solve, but haven't yet found solutions. However, we also recognize that the PD approach is likely different from the way existing teams have been working. It can be challenging to unlearn the familiar way the team has previously navigated problem-solving, so forming a new group could be valuable. Use this section to weigh the pros and cons of engaging in this process with an existing team, or starting fresh with a new team. If you're not sure yet, don't worry — we've got a few tools to help you figure this out.

Activity:

Organizing Your Team

**MATERIALS***

Organizing Your Team tool

**TIME**

30-40 mins

**PARTICIPANTS**

individual or colleagues

**OUTPUTS**

- + A list of competencies needed to make the PD process a success in your context
- + A list of potential organizing team members

**OBJECTIVE**

This activity and reflection prompts will support you in figuring out who to engage with for this PD work, or if there's an existing team at your school who would benefit from using this process in current structures.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Print out the Building an Organizing Team tool
2. List what you need on your core team— what skills, roles, mindsets, competencies, personalities, etc. are relevant
3. Draw and/or list proposed organizing team members and why you think they would add value to the team (if you decide to use an existing team, use this as a self assessment to see where you may be missing capacity).

**CONSIDERATIONS**

- + Some potential roles: logistics coordinator, meeting facilitator, a point person for each stage of the process, etc.
- + Is it possible to include students or community members on the organizing team?
- + Does your team reflect the varied identities within your staff and student populations— racial, ethnic, class, language, documentation, gender, neurodiversity, ability, etc.?
- + Are you including members of your community who you aren't close with?
- + You may need to reevaluate and repeat this process as you begin the project and learn of new capacity needed

**POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**

- + What excites you about this potential list of team members? What worries you? Where might you still be missing capacity?
- + What (if anything) surprised you about this brainstorm process? What might happen if you or another member of your newly formed team repeated this activity?
- + How might you reach out to potential team members?

Step 1
~~~~~

**BRAINSTORM THE SKILLS, ROLES, MINDSETS, PERSONALITIES, ETC, THAT ARE NEEDED TO MAKE THE PROCESS A SUCCESS.  
AFTER THINKING THROUGH EACH PIECE, ASK YOURSELF: WHY? NEXT, CIRCLE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES.**

  
**TIP**

Some potential roles include a logistics coordinator, a meeting facilitator, a point person for each stage of the process, etc. This process involves data analysis. Consider engaging someone comfortable using and interpreting Excel documents and doing basic data analysis.

---

*Skills*

---

*Roles*

---

*Mindsets*

---

*Personalities*

---

*Other Qualities*

  
**Step 2**

**WHO CAN YOU INVITE TO JOIN YOUR TEAM TO ENSURE YOU HAVE THOSE SKILLS, ROLES, MINDSETS, PERSONALITIES, ETC.?** If you're introducing this process to an existing team, are there any additional individuals you want to invite into this work, given the needs you identified in Step 1?

**TEAM SIZE**

There isn't a specific ideal team size for PD, but you don't want a team that's too small or too big to do the work well. When thinking about your team try to build a team where all of your bases are covered, but there aren't so many people that you can't all fit around the (conference) table you will be using for this work.

| WHO? | WHY? | WHO? | WHY? |
|------|------|------|------|
|      |      |      |      |
|      |      |      |      |
|      |      |      |      |
|      |      |      |      |

# Facilitation Guide:

## Organizing Team Kickoff



**MATERIALS\*** introductory slide deck,  
stickers or post-its, whiteboards or vertical space



**TIME**  
60-120 mins



**PARTICIPANTS**  
organizing team



### OUTPUTS

- + Team mindset map
- + Group understanding of PD



### OBJECTIVE

Bring together the individuals or team you identified during the previous activity and introduce them to positive deviance. Start to think about what intractable problem you could tackle using this process.

### SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA:

1. Participants introduce themselves & optional stoke (i.e. a warmup)



2. Activity: **MINDSET / SKILL MAPPING**

- + Pre-populate the wall with specific mindsets or identities your group may identify with. Examples may be: experimental, rebellious, optimistic, courageous, data-driven, equity champion, empathetic etc.
- + Have folks add stickers or post-its with their names on it under the identities that resonate with them

- + Reflection: What do we notice when we look at our Mindset/Skill Map? What is a mindset/skill that you'd like to develop while collaborating with this community?

3. Using the introductory slides, introduce and discuss PD



4. Activity: **ROLEPLAY**

- + Practice explaining PD to your teammates who will be playing different members of the community — fellow colleagues, teachers, parents, other community members.
- + Reflection: How was the process of explaining PD in your own words? What new questions does it bring up for you?



5. Reflection:

- + What excites you about the PD process? What worries you?
- + Think about other approaches you've used. What feels familiar? What feels different?
- + What problems might you explore using this process?

*By engaging the  
community in problem-solving,  
we will have allies in  
implementing our solutions.*

—JENN DEMERS,

Computer Science teacher,  
Battle Ground Academy, Tennessee

## Phase 2

# Finding the Right Problem: Overview

## PROGRESS CHECK:

So far, you've reviewed the background information on positive deviance and started building your community organizing team. Collaboration with your team is integral to this part of the process.

## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

- + Brainstorm the intractable problems your community is facing.
- + Complete the Problem Identification and Problem Refinement tools to select and clarify details around the specific problem you will be addressing using this process.
- + Begin brainstorming what types of data can help you learn more and identify outliers, related to your problem.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN, CONSIDER:

This part of the process sets the stage for the rest of your work, so ensure you take special care in selecting the right intractable problem. This section will enable your team to have and facilitate a wider community discussion about an intractable problem facing your community. This problem should represent a “felt need” — community members should be able to name the impacts that this issue has on their experience, even if not all in the same words.

## A TIP:

A pitfall to avoid is selecting a problem that is too big and where solutions may be out of your hands to fix without additional resources (i.e. a problem focused on how state test scores are tied to school funding). Also make sure you're not picking a problem that has recently popped up, and there haven't been many attempts to solve it. Rather, your goal is to find a problem that is more proximal, where there have been many attempts to resolve it with no success.

# Finding the Right Problem: Roadmap

*What you'll be doing in this section*



## **STEP 1:**

Identify an intractable problem



## **STEP 2:**

Refine the problem with your school community



## **TOOLS:**

- + Problem ID tool
- + Sentence frame tool



## **TOOLS:**

- + Meeting agenda and facilitation guide
- + Meeting slide deck

{ Click [here](#) to access the printable versions of this section's worksheets. }

# Activity:

## Problem Identification

**MATERIALS\***

Problem Identification Tool, Problem Identification Sentence Frame, post-its, whiteboards or vertical space

**TIME**

60-120 mins

**PARTICIPANTS**

organizing team

**OUTPUTS**

- ✦ A clear, intractable problem your community wants to explore using the PD process

**OBJECTIVE**

In this session your organizing team will explore potential intractable problems that would benefit from the positive deviance approach.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Review or introduce the PD process.
2. Review what makes a problem intractable. Intractable problems are resistant to permanent solutions, and every time you think it's been fixed, it shows up again (sometimes in a more stubborn form).
3. Have a generative brainstorm around intractable problems that are persistent in your school community.
4. Use the Problem Identification Tool to capture notes and guide your brainstorming process. A summary:

- ✦ Discuss and narrow your key issues — are they brand new, technical, or outside of your influence? Set these aside for now. From the remaining list, select one to work on.
- ✦ Draw the current state of the issue. Draw the desired future state. Compare and discuss.

5. Capture your final problem via the Problem Identification Sentence Frame. Share with a few students and colleagues to gather early feedback.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Make brainstorming visual. Capture responses and reflections on post-its, on a whiteboard, a large sheet of paper, or on a virtual document.

**POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**

- ✦ What (if anything) surprised you about this activity?
- ✦ Why does this problem feel like a good fit for the PD process?



**THIS TOOL WILL HELP YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY DETERMINE WHICH PROBLEM(S) ARE BEST SUITED TO BE SOLVED USING THE POSITIVE DEVIANCE PROCESS, AND WHICH PROBLEMS ARE NOT THE RIGHT FIT FOR THIS PROCESS.**

*(start here)*

## Step 1 GATHER YOUR COMMUNITY AND DISCUSS

What are the key issues your community *wants* to solve, has been *trying* to solve but has so far been unsuccessful in doing so? Use the space below or a large paper or whiteboard to list the important issues facing your school community. Feel free to select one of the problems identified in the prior section, or use them as launching points for drafting your own problem. Ensure that the challenge is truly resonant to your own community.

Jot down the ideas your team has identified

## Step 2 CLASSIFY YOUR CHALLENGES

Take your ideas from Box A and begin to label or sort. Which challenges are...

**Brand New:** The community hasn't yet tried to solve it  
— *for example, launching a new homework policy*

**Technical:** Readily solved by an authority or an expert  
— *for example, faculty needs training on a new reading program*

**Outside your sphere of influence:** Require changes that are beyond the scope of the community to immediately solve — *for example, state assessment and accountability requirements*



## Step 3

### WHAT'S LEFT?

List ideas that didn't get eliminated in Step 2:

### FROM THE REMAINING LIST, SELECT THE ONE YOUR COMMUNITY IS MOST INTERESTED IN FOCUSING ON FOR YOUR SET PD PROCESS TIME

Pick one that:

- ✦ Everyone in the community wants to help solve, so much so that they are all willing to make changes in their behavior to help solve it (in other words, do not pick a challenge that only senior leadership cares about and no one else in the community finds compelling)
- ✦ Is resistant to permanent solutions, and every time you think we've fixed it, it shows up again (sometimes in a more stubborn form)
- ✦ Is specific and measurable (e.g., you can count it). That is, you can say you'd like to increase/decrease something in order to get from %/count to %/count
- ✦ Can be solved through a change in human behavior, although there may be big, systemic issues (e.g., policy, funding, etc.), tools resistant to permanent solutions, and every time you think we've fixed it, it shows up again (sometimes in a more stubborn form)

*The problem we want to solve, or the gap we want to narrow, is...*



## Step 4 AS A COMMUNITY, GET A LARGE SHEET OF PAPER OR A BLANK WHITE BOARD, AND DRAW THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ISSUE

**Try to represent** all the persons involved in the issue — where are students, parents, teachers, school support staff, administrators, leaders?

### Try to represent:

- + How are things different?
- + What are people doing differently?
- + Are students more engaged?
- + Are teachers more satisfied?
- + How are students identities — racial, class, gender, etc — being honored?

## Step 5

AS A COMMUNITY, GET ANOTHER LARGE SHEET OF PAPER OR A BLANK WHITE BOARD, AND DRAW THE DESIRED STATE OF THE ISSUE THREE TO SIX MONTHS FROM TODAY

### Get some post-it notes, and think about the following prompts:

- + What are the key verbs you would attribute to the persons in the images? Are teachers LISTENING to students? Are students VOLUNTEERING in the community? Are administrators SHARING stories about student successes? These behavior changes will be the key for this process.
- + Also, note things you can observe as the key outcomes you hope to achieve. Is it the number of students who are suspended? Is it the percentage of students who are on track to graduate on time? Is it the percentage of teachers who attend professional development? These measures will be the way you look for exceptional performers in your midst.

## Step 6

NOW, ANALYZE THE TWO DRAWINGS. WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Record your notes here or on another paper or whiteboard.

**DRAW THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ISSUE**



**Try to represent:** all the persons involved in the issue — where are students, parents, teachers, school support staff, administrators, leaders?



## Step 5



**Try to represent:** How are things different? What are people doing differently? Are students more engaged? Are teachers more satisfied?  
How are students identities — racial, class, gender, etc — being honored?

**ANALYZE THE TWO DRAWINGS. WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?**

Record your notes here, on another sheet of paper, or on a whiteboard.



**Think about the following prompts:**

- ✦ What are the key verbs you would attribute to the persons in the images? Are teachers LISTENING to students? Are students VOLUNTEERING in the community? Are administrators SHARING stories about student successes? These behavior changes will be the key for this process.
- ✦ Also, note things you can observe as the key outcomes you hope to achieve. Is it the number of students who are suspended? Is it the percentage of students who are on track to graduate on time? Is it the percentage of teachers who attend professional development? These measures will be the way you look for exceptional performers in your midst.



THIS TOOL HELPS CLARIFY YOUR CHALLENGE OR PROBLEM

## Step 1

### CREATE YOUR SENTENCE FRAME

Complete this tool to define your problem. Feel free to edit the form to suit your problem.

THE PROBLEM WE'RE TRYING TO SOLVE IS .....  
(the problem, simply stated)

IN OTHER WORDS, OUR COMMUNITY WANTS .....  
(a group of people in our community)

TO DO/HAVE MORE/LESS .....  
(the condition related to the problem)

OUR INITIAL ASSUMPTION: TO FIX THIS PROBLEM, WE THINK .....  
(community members)

WILL NEED TO CHANGE .....  
(behavior, if known)

WE WILL KNOW THIS IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE WE'LL SEE AN INCREASE/DECREASE IN .....  
(data that would indicate success)

## Step 2

### CHAT WITH A FEW STUDENTS AND A COLLEAGUE OR TWO TO HEAR THEIR REACTIONS TO THE SENTENCE FRAME.

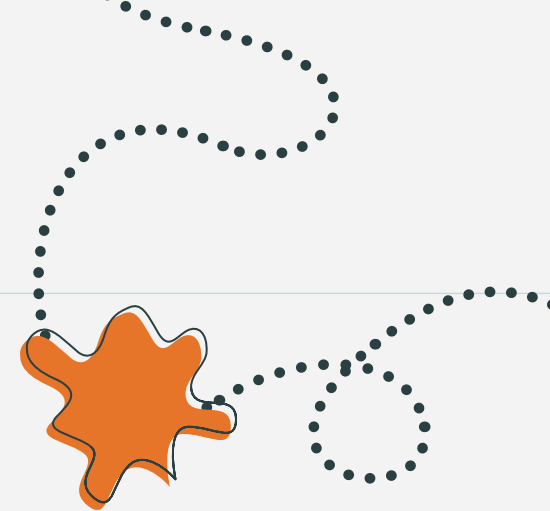
What resonates with them? What is missing? Who do they think you should talk to about this issue?



## Process check:

# Intractable Problems checklist

A strong intractable problem is rooted in a felt need. It impacts multiple members of your community and they should be able to identify with and want this problem solved. Go through this checklist. If you answer “NO” to any question, rephrase or change your problem.



- ☐ Does your community recognize there is a need to address this problem?
- ☐ Is it resistant to permanent solutions and current processes?
  - ☐ Every time you think you’ve fixed it, it shows up again (sometimes in a more stubborn form).
- ☐ Is it specific and measurable (you can count it)?
  - ☐ That is, you can say you’d like to increase or decrease something in order to get from % or count to % or count.
- ☐ Does the solution require a change in human behavior, adaptive leadership, or social shifts?
  - ☐ Focus on behavior even though there may be big, systemic issues (e.g., policy, funding, etc.), too.

*Though you won't know this at first, against the odds there have been some people within your community who have figured out a way to solve this problem already.*

# Facilitation Guide:

## Problem Refinement

**MATERIALS\***

Completed Problem Identification Sentence Frame, paper, post-its, whiteboards/vertical space

**TIME**

60-90 mins

**PARTICIPANTS**

organizing team, school community

**OUTPUTS**

- + Clarity around the problem you are addressing
- + Begin an ongoing dialogue with the wider school community

**OBJECTIVE**

In this session your organizing team will lead a conversation with your wider school community (colleagues, parents, students, etc.) to get feedback and potentially adjust the problem.

**SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA:**

1. Share your Problem Identification sentence frame

**2. Activity: REPORT FROM THE FIELD**

- + What have you learned about the impact this problem has on the school community? How do they (and you) know this is a problem?
- + What additions or edits have members of the community offered to the problem statement? (You should know this from having casual conversations about your sentence frame — Step 2 of the Sentence Frame tool.)

**3. Activity: STORYTELLING**

- + Split participants into small groups and ask them to think about a story that illustrates this problem (encourage folks to speak from their own experience).
  - + Have the groups share their stories with one another.
4. Facilitate a group discussion about the stories and surface any other feedback the group has.
    - + Edit the problem statement to incorporate the feedback from your school community.

**5. Activity: LOOK-FORS**

- + Gather around a white board or shared Google doc and list the behaviors and enablers that perpetuate this issue.
- + List the behaviors and enablers that disrupt this issue.
  - \* Where might you find examples of these behaviors and enablers in your school? (Tip: the answers to this will give you a preliminary idea about where bright spots may be).

**6. Activity: GROUP BRAINSTORM**

- + What data might align with the behaviors and enablers you have listed?
- + What data would help you learn more about your problem?

Sometimes we are faced with problems with numerous and complicated causes. Identifying and solving the origins of the problem in this case can be very difficult and time-consuming — if not impossible. By use of the [positive deviance] approach, we can get to the end result by a shortcut.

— MINA FALLAH,  
educator and fellowship participant, Iran

### Phase 3

# Measuring the Problem: Overview

## PROGRESS CHECK:

So far you've formed your community organizing team and landed on an intractable problem that is resonant with your school community. Now you're ready to start seeking possible homegrown solutions.

## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

- ✦ Gather relevant quantitative data that can give you insight into your intractable problem.
- ✦ Use a data analysis tool to start to identify any outliers that your community organizing team can learn from.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN, CONSIDER:

Data is essential within this process to best understand the depth of the problem and to measure future success.

As you prepare to select your data for this step, one question to ask yourselves repeatedly is, "How do we know?" For the intractable problem you have selected, how do you know that it's a problem? How do you know who is doing better or worse than others at solving the problem? How would you know if more people started to solve the problem?

You might be surprised! The data may reveal unexpected results - colleagues or students that you would never have guessed would be positive outliers. At first, your team might immediately think about that teacher or student who everyone knows is doing better than expected, but if you stop there, you might overlook someone flying under the radar. Maybe there's a new teacher you don't quite know very well, who quietly has been making great progress, and only by looking at the data will you realize they're doing better than you ever would've known. This section is designed to help reveal the unexpected, and see who might be able to help your team see possible solutions to your problem in a new light.

In some cases, you may already have quantitative data relevant to your problem. Existing data such as attendance, achievement, experience surveys, and extracurricular activity registration are often readily available. In other cases, you may need to develop simple methods for data collection. Sometimes a 1-question survey or a simple count is all you need.

## A TIP:

If you're finding that you just can't imagine a type of quantitative data to help you measure your problem, you might need to go back and refine your problem.

# Measuring the Problem: Roadmap

*What you'll be doing in this section*



## **STEP 1:**

Collect your data



## **STEP 2:**

Analyze your data



## **TOOLS:**

- + Meeting agenda and facilitation guide



## **TOOLS:**

- + Pchart
- + Explainer slide deck
- + Video explainer

{ Click [here](#) to access the printable versions of this section's worksheets. }

# Facilitation Guide:

## Collecting your data



**MATERIALS\*** Problem Identification Sentence Frame (for reference); whiteboards, vertical space or paper; (eventually) raw data, access to Excel



**TIME**  
30-60 mins



**PARTICIPANTS**  
organizing team



### OUTPUTS

- + Clarity on what data to collect
- + Collected data to analyze in the next step



### OBJECTIVE

In this session your team will determine what type of data will help you learn more about the intractable problem you selected. You'll also determine what type of data you need to gather to assess potential bright spots (i.e. positive outliers).

### SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA:



#### 1. Activity: KEY MEASURE SELECTION

- + Review the problem your community selected. What reactions have you gotten as you've shared the Problem ID Sentence Frame?
- + Draft a key measure— How will you know the scope of your problem, and whether you're making progress? Use this sentence to get you started: "We'll know we are successful when..."



#### 2. Activity: DATA BRAINSTORM

- + What data will you need related to your problem? Do you already have those data sets handy (e.g., student test scores or grades, student attendance, teacher participation levels in professional development)? If not, can you quickly collect relevant data sets? Can you administer a brief survey? Conduct an informal poll?
- + Based on your discussion or reflection, what data will you collect?



#### 3. Activity: GATHER YOUR DATA

- + Now that you've identified the data you want to collect, go find it!



### CONSIDERATIONS

- + You will be using your data to plot charts and look for bright spots, or positive outliers who appear to be having success with the same conditions and resources.
- + Find raw data. Your data should be the counts or percentages of the measure of interest, and not aggregated.
- + Consider the unit of analysis. Depending on your problem, it may make more sense to have your data at the student, class, or school level— wherever you want to look for bright spots.
- + Proportions and totals. Your data may include both the number of cases and total n or just a percentage.
- + Format. Your data should be in an Excel or similar spreadsheet from which you can copy and paste into a template shared later in the toolkit.

# Activity:

## Analyzing your data

**MATERIALS\***

Analyzing Your Data Slides, Pchart Tool\*\*, access to Excel, computer, collected data, [short video explainer](#)

**TIME**

60-90 mins

**PARTICIPANTS**

solo or with organizing team

**OUTPUTS**

- ✦ A clean data set
- ✦ A p-chart (or multiple p-charts) indicating outliers in your data sets — giving you insight on where to look to uncover bright spots

**OBJECTIVE**

Now that you've gathered your data set, this activity will help you make sense of the numbers and identify any positive outliers using the Pchart tool. This part can be tricky, so make sure you read the tips in the CONSIDERATIONS section, and [review this short video explainer](#) to help you move through this data analysis section. And remember — you can always review a worked example in this folder if you need extra support.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Review your problem and data you planned to gather.
2. Share the results of your data gathering with your team.
3. Review the Analyzing your Data Slides.
4. Make a copy of the Pchart tool, and review the examples.
5. Input your own data by pasting into the tool.
6. Reflection:
  - ✦ What do you notice about the distribution of your data? Where are the outliers?
  - ✦ For your data set, what does it mean to be an outlier above or below the control limits?
  - ✦ Pick an outlier. What is your hunch about why this exists?
  - ✦ What does this make you think about your school community with regard to your problem.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

- ✦ It's important that you are able to access student and school data. Remember, you won't have to share these data externally — it is only for your school's use in this project.
- ✦ The formulas are embedded in the pchart tool so you can play with the examples, adjust the data, and see how that impacts the p-charts.

**POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**

- ✦ What (if anything) surprised you about this activity?



*At the beginning of the process we guessed the bright spots, but we decided to wait until data confirmed they were bright spots. The data we gathered showed us that we were wrong about most of our guesses.*

—VÍCTOR JUÁREZ,  
Centro Escolar, México

## Phase 4

# Seeking Bright Spots: Overview

## PROGRESS CHECK:

At this point, your organizing team has examined quantitative data related to your intractable problem and identified a few key outliers. The p-chart tool should have given your team insight on where to begin your search for bright spot behavior.

## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

- + Engage students in conversation about your intractable problem, and see who they might identify as bright spots based on what they have experienced in their own experiences in school.
- + Shadow students, educators, and spaces that have emerged as fostering bright spots.
- + Talk with community members about their actions, mindsets, and resources that support their bright spot behavior.
- + Synthesize your data.
- + Create detailed summaries of bright spots.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN, CONSIDER:

This is a time to capture as much information as possible. Your organizing team should all participate in at least one of the activities in this session so everyone can contribute to insights and unpack bright spots in your community. This part of the process will take the most time to complete; think of yourselves as anthropologists within your own school. Be prepared to spend an ample amount of time digging into this bright spot seeking practice.

## A TIP:

Think about where you will have these conversations. How can you ensure you'll meet in a space that will make them comfortable? What will you do to support them bringing their most authentic self to the conversation?

# Seeking Bright Spots: Roadmap

*What you'll be doing in this section*



## **STEP 1:**

Identify an intractable problem to focus on



## **TOOLS:**

- ✦ Student empathy conversation guide
- ✦ Empathy conversation reflection
- ✦ Shadow observation guide
- ✦ Shadowing Reflection
- ✦ Bright spots conversation guide



## **STEP 2:**

Synthesize your findings



## **STEP 3:**

Unpack your bright spots



## **TOOLS:**

- ✦ Bright spot sentence frame
- ✦ Bright spot unpacker tool

{ Click [here](#) to access the printable versions of this section's worksheets. }

# Activity:

## Student Empathy Conversations

**MATERIALS\***

Student Empathy Conversation Guide

**TIME**

30-90 min. per conversation

**PARTICIPANTS**

organizing team, students, colleagues

**OUTPUTS**

- \* Notes and/or recordings of the conversation
- \* Raw, qualitative data about a student's or multiple students' experience
- \* A deeper understanding of your intractable problem and early insights about where you might look for bright spots

**OBJECTIVE**

These conversations are intended to help you understanding students' experience with your intractable problem.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Set the space.
2. Warm up with a stoke. (optional)
3. Introduce relevant aspects of the PD process.
4. Ask a curated set of questions or lead a set of activities that engage(s) the student(s) in reflection about themselves, their school, the intractable problem, and the bright spots that are addressing that problem.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

- \* Spend some time with the Student Empathy Conversation Guide. Decide how you want to use the tool.
  - \* What questions do you want to ask?
  - \* What questions are missing?
  - \* Will you design it as a casual conversation, formal interview, activity?
- \* You may want to customize the Conversation Guide between conversations. If you do, be sure to keep some questions constant to understand students' varied experiences.
- \* Meet students where they are, not where you want them to be.

**POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**

- \* What did you hear that surprised you?
- \* What did you hear that confirmed an existing belief? Challenged a belief?

# Student Empathy Conversations Reflection

(Make as many copies of this sheet as you need.)



## Step 1

**CAPTURE  
OBSERVATIONS  
AND QUOTES**

In our conversation with ..... we heard:  
(name + brief description)

## Step 2

**IDENTIFY KEY  
OBSERVATIONS  
AND QUOTES**

*Group similar or  
related ones, and pull  
relevant notes into  
separate boxes*

**THIS IS  
IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE**

*Interpret and analyze  
your observations  
above in these boxes*



# Shadowing Colleagues, Students, and Spaces



## MATERIALS\*

Shadow Observation Guide



**TIME** Between one class period and half a day per educator, student, or space



**PARTICIPANTS** organizing team, wider school community



## OUTPUTS

- ✦ Notes and/or pictures from your shadowing experience
- ✦ Raw data about a educator's, student's, or group's experiences
- ✦ A deeper understanding of how the bright spot practices work and feel within their context



## OBJECTIVE

Now that you've begun the conversation with students and done your own brainstorming about where bright spots might be found, this activity will allow you to observe the behaviors, mindsets, activities, etc. that contribute to the bright spot.



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ensure you're shadowing the right people or spaces by reviewing your p-chart data analysis and your student empathy conversations.
2. Prep for your shadow logistics: time, place, permissions, how you will take notes, etc.
3. Do a brief reflection activity pre-shadow to unpack what the problem looks, feels, & sounds like. Then brainstorm what you might look for in potential bright spots.
4. Shadow and take notes and pictures (if allowed).



## CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Try to shadow your student or educator at least twice so you have different experiences to compare.
- ✦ Shadowing is meant to observe folks in the most natural way possible. Think about how you can limit disruptions.



## POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION

- ✦ What did you see/hear that surprised you?
- ✦ What did you see/hear that confirmed an existing belief? Challenged a belief?
- ✦ What early insights do you have about why the data or students led you to this bright spot?
  - \* What makes the bright spot unique from other attempts to solve this problem?
- ✦ What questions does this raise for you?
- ✦ What did you hear that confirmed an existing belief? Challenged a belief?

# Shadowing Conversations Reflection

(Make as many copies of this sheet as you need.)



## Step 1

**CAPTURE  
OBSERVATIONS  
AND QUOTES**

In our observation of ..... we heard/saw/experienced:  
(brief description)

## Step 2

**IDENTIFY KEY  
OBSERVATIONS  
AND QUOTES**

*Group similar or  
related ones, and pull  
relevant notes into  
separate boxes*

**THIS IS  
IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE**

*Interpret and analyze  
your observations  
above in these boxes*



# Activity:

## Bright Spot Conversation

**MATERIALS\***

Bright Spots Conversation Guide

**TIME** 30-90 mins  
per conversation**PARTICIPANTS** organizing team,  
colleagues, community, (potentially) students**OUTPUTS**

- + Notes and/or recordings of the conversation
- + Raw, qualitative data about behaviors, mindsets, practices, etc that fosters this bright spot
- + Early insights about whether this practice is a positive outlier within your community and what impact it has

**OBJECTIVE**

Now that you have honed in on and observed potential bright spots in action, it is time to have deeper conversations with your colleagues, community members, and students via a focus group-type conversation. This will allow your team to uncover the behavior and strategies these bright spots are employing that makes them stand out as outliers.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Set the space.
2. Warm up with a stoke.
3. Introduce relevant aspects of the PD process.
4. Ask a curated set of questions or lead a set of activities that engage(s) the participant(s) in reflection about themselves, their school, the intractable problem, the bright spots, and what makes this practice successful.
  - + How does it work?
  - + What resources are involved?
  - + What makes it unique from other attempts they have tried to solve this problem?

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Bright spot is not a synonym for “new to me”, even though it may be. A bright spot is something that is producing unusual positive results where everything else has failed.

**POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**

- + What did you hear that surprised you?
- + What did you hear that confirmed an existing belief? Challenged a belief?

# Activity:

## Field Work Synthesis

|                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>MATERIALS*</b><br>whiteboards, vertical space or paper; post-its |  <b>TIME</b><br>30-90 mins |  <b>PARTICIPANTS</b><br>organizing team |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

-  **OUTPUTS**
- + Insights from student and educator empathy conversations
  - + Insights from shadowing educators, students, or spaces

 **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this synthesis is to make sense of all the data and stories you have collected so far. Your team will organize, shape, and filter the data into a cohesive form to inform your next steps.

-  **INSTRUCTIONS**
1. Reflect on what each team member heard and learned throughout the shadowing and empathy conversation.
  2. Capture reflections on the Empathy Conversation, Shadowing Reflection tools, and Bright Spot Conversations.
  3. Share key observations and insights.
  4. Notice where your key observations and insights overlap, and organize your insights into groups.
  5. Hone in on those groups. Ask:
    - + What is the headline (summary sentence or two) that captures this group of insights? Write that down.
    - + What excites us about this group of insights?
    - + What do we still have questions about? How can we answer those questions?
  6. Capture your synthesis by taking pictures or recording the main takeaways in a document.

-  **CONSIDERATIONS**
- + An insight is a realization that gives you new understanding or helps you see a new direction.
  - + These bright spot-related insights are likely about human belief, human behavior, spaces, practices or an interaction between them.

-  **POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION**
- + What insights surprised you?
  - + What potential bright spots have you uncovered?

# Activity:

## Bright Spot Building



### MATERIALS\*

Bright Spot Sentence Frame, Bright Spot Unpacker Tool



### TIME

30-90 mins



### PARTICIPANTS

organizing team



### OUTPUTS

- ✦ Bright spot sentence frame that capture practices, behaviors, and impacts concisely
- ✦ Unpacked bright spots that provide a more detailed description of the practices, mindsets, and behaviors that led to the positive deviation



### OBJECTIVE

Now that you've sorted through your data, what bright spots have risen to the top? These activities will help you clarify and crystalize your bright spots into a form that can be shared with your community.



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create Bright Spot sentence frames based on your insights from your Field Work Synthesis.
2. Narrow your Bright Spot sentence frames to a few that feel exciting to your team.
3. Split into groups and unpack your chosen bright spots using the Bright Spot Unpacker Tool. Refer back to your conversation and shadowing reflections to parse out details such as:
  - ✦ How the bright spot works
  - ✦ The resources used or needed
  - ✦ Its current and future impact
4. Share out your unpacked bright spots.



### CONSIDERATIONS

Don't forget the data. Remember that your bright spot practices should point to what's different in those classes or among the students who are currently thriving.



### POST ACTIVITY REFLECTION

- ✦ What (if anything) do your bright spots share?
- ✦ What conditions would allow these bright spots to thrive?



THIS TOOL HELPS CLARIFY AND SHARE EARLY BRIGHT SPOTS

## Step 1

### CREATE YOUR SENTENCE FRAME

Create Bright Spot sentence frames based on your insights from your Field Work Synthesis.

ONE BRIGHT SPOT WE FOUND IS .....

.....

IT IS A POSITIVE OUTLIER BECAUSE .....

.....

THE BEHAVIOR, MINDSET, OR PRACTICE SHIFT THIS BRIGHT SPOT HIGHLIGHTS IS .....

.....

IT IMPACTS OUR STUDENTS(AND/OR COMMUNITY) BECAUSE .....

.....



**SPLIT INTO GROUPS AND UNPACK YOUR CHOSEN BRIGHT SPOTS USING THIS TOOL.**

Refer back to your conversation and shadowing reflections to parse out details.

**ONE BRIGHT SPOT WE FOUND IS** — *Describe the bright spot.*

**HERE IS WHAT THIS BRIGHT SPOT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION** — *Describe the bright spot step-by-step.*

**HERE'S HOW IT RELATES TO OUR DATA (QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE)** — *Describe how your data analysis connected to your bright spot.*

**IT'S DIFFERENT FROM OTHER SOLUTIONS WE'VE TRIED BECAUSE** — *Share how and why this bright spot is a novel solution.*

**THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR SCHOOL BECAUSE** — *Name how this could create positive impact in solving your intractable problem.*

**THESE RESOURCES WERE USED** — *List all resources that allowed this bright spot to happen (human, financial, space, etc.).*

**HOW COULD THIS SCALE?** — *How could you implement this bright spot across your school community?*

*The key is in the mindset and how we see things. It is important to see things not as problems, but as unrevealed potentials. And not to see ourselves as the heroes, but seeing the people in the community as the agents that understand their community more than us. Our role is to highlight or spot the potentials that have been there all the time waiting to be revealed/spotlighted. By being like this, it is hoped that the problems will be solved in an organic, contextual, integrated way.*

—GINA KARUNIA KUSUMAH,  
Santo Yusup School, Indonesia

# Scaling Impact

*Phase 5*

# Scaling Impact: Overview

## PROGRESS CHECK:

At this point, you should have reflections and insights from your conversations and shadowing. You should also have detailed, clear bright spots that are grounded in your school's context. Now is the time to figure out how to start scaling the impact from these bright spots.

## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

- + Review bright spots.
- + Create a plan for scaling the impact of this process and the bright spot practices.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN, CONSIDER:

Scaling is an intervention and it can be evaluated. Scaling produces dynamic change (it affects systems that in turn affect it) so it requires dynamic evaluation (Stanford Social Innovation Review). You're not scaling your bright spots — you're scaling the impact your bright spots will have on your school community. What impact will your bright spots have when implemented?

## A TIP:

Don't teach new knowledge — encourage new behavior. Let the people who have discovered the bright spots (i.e. positive deviants) spread the word in their group(s). Don't require adherence to the new practices, but do offer incentives for those who try it.



# Scaling Impact: Roadmap

*What you'll be doing in this section*



## **STEP 1:**

Brainstorm  
pathways to scale



## **STEP 2:**

Scale Bright Spots  
Impact



## **TOOLS:**

Scaling Bright Spots  
facilitation guide



## **TOOLS:**

Starting to Scale  
3-2-1 Tool

{ Click [here](#) to access the printable versions of this section's worksheets. }

# Facilitation Guide:

## Scaling Bright Spots



**MATERIALS\*** Takeaways from the prior activity, post-its; whiteboards, vertical space or paper



**TIME**  
30-60 mins



**PARTICIPANTS**  
organizing team



### OUTPUTS

- \* A list of ideas for how you will take action



### OBJECTIVE

You've done the work and captured one or more bright spots that will make progress toward solving your intractable problem. This activity will help your team reflect on your bright spots and start to think about the potential impact your bright spot could have on your school community.

### SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA:



#### 1. Activity: BRAINSTORM

- \* Select ONE bright spot to start this process. Review the Bright Spot Unpacker tool you completed in the previous section.
- \* Imagine it's the future and the bright spot has been implemented across your school. Discuss:
  - \* Who's leading the charge in spreading this bright spot behavior? You can focus on specific people (i.e. Ms. Hernandez), or groups of people (i.e. the 11th grade team).
  - \* What impact have you started to see from this bright spot behavior?

- \* Where has this bright spot behavior really taken hold? Where has implementation struggled?
- \* Who is most affected by the bright spot? Who isn't being impacted? Why?



#### 2. Activity: REFLECT & DISCUSS

- \* Review your ideas. What does this make you think about? What surprises you?
- \* What needs to happen now to get to a place where this bright spot could be implemented across your school community? How might you encourage others to adopt the bright spot behaviors (without mandating it)?
- \* When you've had a chance to discuss, put your ideas to paper.



### CONSIDERATIONS:

- \* Every step in the process thus far has been community-led: the community named the problem, the community analyzed the data, the community found the bright spot. At this stage the community should already feel ownership over the process and will be ready to take it and run with it.
- \* If the community DOESN'T run with this idea, examine the potential barriers. Was this the problem they really wanted or needed solved? Do they don't trust the data or was compelling data found? Do they believe the behavior change will work for them? You may need to revisit a step in the process based on the community's feedback.

# Activity:

## Scaling Bright Spots



**MATERIALS\*** Takeaways from the prior activity, post-its; whiteboards, vertical space or paper



**TIME**  
30-60 mins



**PARTICIPANTS**  
organizing team



### OUTPUTS

- \* A list of ideas for how you will take action



### OBJECTIVE

You've done the work and captured one or more bright spots that will make progress toward solving your intractable problem. This activity will help your team reflect on your bright spots and start to think about the potential impact your bright spot could have on your school community.



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Complete the Starting to Scale 3-2-1 Tool
2. Use the ideas you generated in the previous section to complete the tool. The tool will guide you through these steps:
  - \* Capture the impact the bright spot will have on your school community.
  - \* Determine three immediate next steps to take to engage and mobilize your community. *These should be small steps - nothing that requires too much planning, time, or extra resources. For example, a step can be to hold another community meeting, or set up a time to share these findings with the principal. Try to come up with something that can be done in the next two weeks, rather than something that will take a few months to try out.*

- \* Identify two people, groups, or organizations within your community to share this work with. *Get specific. List key people or groups that could help you move this work forward.*
- \* Identify one way you will know this bright spot is having the impact you desire. *Think about some quantitative measures (e.g., a survey) and qualitative measures (e.g., student behavior look-fors) that can help you know if this bright spot is having the impact you desire.*
- \* Figure out who on your team will tackle each step. Will you move through the action plan as a group, or have a few members focus on different steps?



### CONSIDERATIONS:

When thinking about impact, it's really important to think about small, measurable ways you can start to seed larger impact. You could think about creating a timeline for what types of metrics you will use to measure success over the course of a few weeks, a semester, a year, etc. This will help you stay on track and ensure you're seeing the progress and outcome you are expecting to see, rather than hoping to see the full impact in a longer length of time.



IN ORDER TO SCALE THE IMPACT OF YOUR BRIGHT SPOTS, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOUR TEAM TO CONTINUE FINDING WAYS TO MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY IN THIS WORK. USE THIS TOOL TO PLAN OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS IN SCALING THE IMPACT OF YOUR WORK.

WHAT  
*impact*  
WILL YOUR  
BRIGHT SPOT(S)  
HAVE ON  
YOUR SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY?



SHARE  
*three*  
IMMEDIATE  
NEXT STEPS  
YOU WILL TAKE  
TO MOBILIZE  
YOUR  
COMMUNITY.



*Step 1*

*Step 2*

*Step 3*

LIST *two*  
MORE PEOPLE  
OR GROUPS  
TO TALK WITH  
WHO DON'T  
ALREADY  
KNOW ABOUT  
THIS PROJECT.



*Person / Group 1*

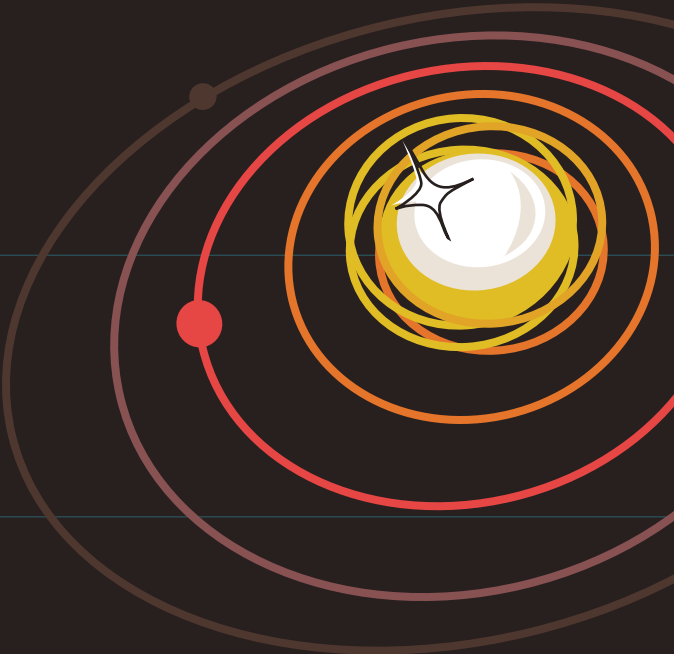
*Person / Group 2*

*[After completing this process], similar bright spots conversations are happening in other strategic vision groups.*

— KINDERGARTEN TEACHER  
AND FELLOWSHIP PARTICIPANT,

North Carolina

# Building Our Community.



# We are the ones we've been waiting for

The issues that continue to emerge in education call for urgent, intentional action.

As the ones closest to the problem, we may have relevant solutions that we haven't taken the time to examine. Educators are humble, and oftentimes don't always want a spotlight on the incredible work currently being done to impact students. Positive deviance helps us uncover how significant these practices, behaviors and mindsets can be. It creates a pathway to share, learn, and create fuller educational and social spaces for students (and the rest of us too). We hope this toolkit will provide your school community with a new way of seeing the bright spots that already exist around you.

[Visit this link](#) to explore worked, completed examples of all the resources shared throughout this toolkit.

If you're interested in learning more about positive deviance, we recommend starting with these two resources:

- ✦ The book that inspired this work: *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems* by Jerry Sternin, Monique Sternin, and Richard Pascale
- ✦ A great resource with case studies, additional tools, and much more context for how PD has worked across a multitude of industries and environments: [Positive Deviance Collaborative](#)

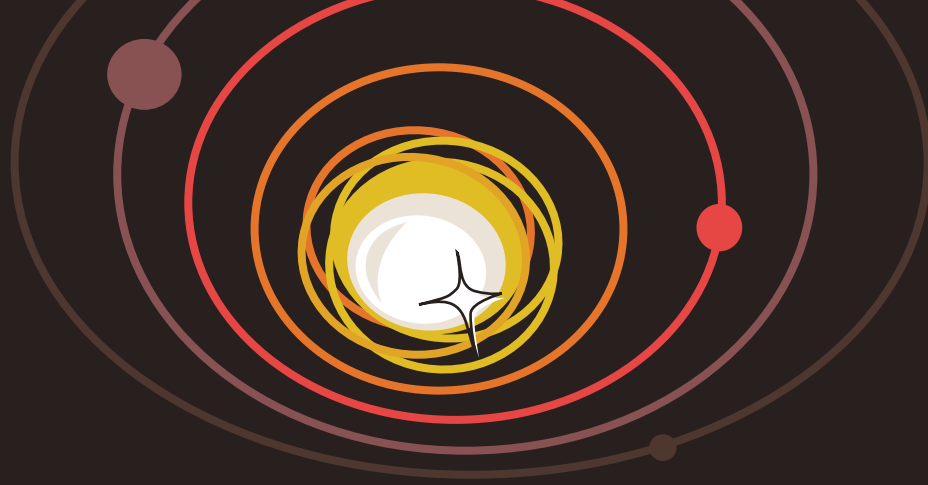
Please share your experiences with this process and toolkit at [K12@dschool.stanford.edu](mailto:K12@dschool.stanford.edu)

Stay connected with all the the work at the K12 Lab by visiting the [d.school's website](#), [K12 Lab website](#), and [K12 Lab Twitter](#).

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*[This process] has given us permission  
to experiment and try new things.*

—DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES,  
North Carolina



**We** are  
the experts  
in what  
**our** school needs.