



Step 1: Craft a Problem Statement

Determine the scope of the overarching problem(s) of practice that will inform the school’s efforts to realize its desired state and based on the available school, local school system, and state data. Discuss individual data sources, and, once all data sources have been examined, reflect on themes and similarities among the data sources.

Data Source	Key Takeaways (2–3)	
Themes Across Data Sources (Topics)		Ranking



Remaining Questions	

Problem Statement Guidance

Discuss major themes across data sources as they relate to the reason for the school’s identification as a TSI school. Use the discussion to determine what areas(s) of focus are most likely to have an impact on student outcomes through adult behaviors and actions. Craft a problem statement that reflects this focus area and provides a direction for the root cause analysis.

Well-developed problem statements set the stage for a successful root cause analysis. These statements may describe a situation, issue, barrier, impediment, or challenge that a school must address to meet its obligation to its community and to prepare students to be contributing citizens, or it may define a gap between current reality and desired performance.		
Condition	Condition Present? (Y/N)	Description
To whom does it happen?		
What is the nature of the problem? What happened?		



Where and when does it occur?		
Is there a defined gap ?		
How does it affect or connect to our desired state?		
Step Output. Write Problem Statement Below:		

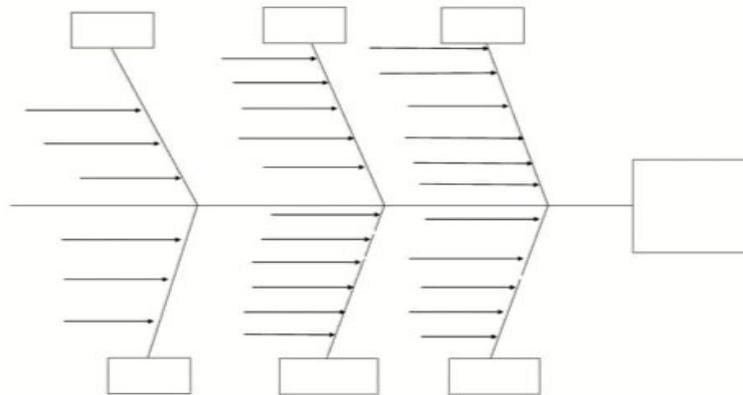
Step 2: Brainstorm Causal Factors

Capture the collective knowledge and capacity of the people in the room by brainstorming *causal factors* that may contribute to the occurrence of the problem statement. Using the Post-it Notes on your table, identify individual factors related to the overall problem statement.

- Brainstorm individual factors on notes.

- Pass notes to left, review the notes, and add any additional causal factors (repeat this step one more time.)
- Share brainstormed notes across the group, removing duplicates.

Organize the factors into like groupings or themes and populate the fishbone for the overall problem statement. On the fishbone diagram, the problem statement becomes the top organizational level, or the “head”; the themes become the intermediate organizational level, represented by rectangles; and the individual causal factors (captured on notes) are represented by the arrows.





Causal Factor Statement Guidance

Craft causal factor statements that describe the overall condition or themes contributing to the problem statements. Each theme represented on the fishbone diagram is crafted into a single causal factor statement. Repeat the step below for each causal factor statement.

Well-developed causal factor statements describe the theme for further investigation to describe the similarities and conditions across the causal factors within the theme. These statements summarize the main points and rationale for combining the causal factors as a theme.		
CATEGORY:		
Condition	Condition Present? (Y/N)	Description
To whom does it happen?		
What is the nature of the problem? What happened?		
Where and when does it occur?		
Why or to what extent is this an issue?		



Step Output. Write the Contributing Factor Statements below:

Step 3: Analyze Underlying Causes to Identify Root Causes

Analyze the causal factor statements to determine underlying causes of the problem statement. Identifying the underlying causes ensures that issues have moved past surface “symptoms” to deeper “causes.” **This step is repeated for each** (or as many as possible) of the causal factor statements.

Causal Factor Statement:	
GUIDING QUESTION	POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS
Why do we have this challenge? <i>Note: During this phase of the process, ask the question “why” until arriving at the underlying cause.</i>	First Response:
	Why is that the case?
	Why is that the case?
	Why is that the case?



	Why is that the case?
	Why is that the case?
Underlying Cause:	

Root Cause List

The underlying causes may or may not be the root cause that is driving the conditions and factors leading to the existence and persistence of the problem statement. Use the questions within the decision tree flow chart to determine whether each underlying cause statement is a root or contributing cause and capture the results in the root cause list.

Underlying Cause Statement	Is this a root (R) or contributing (C) cause?	What data should we review or analyze related to this cause?	How will we obtain and review the data?
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<i>The school does not publicize the importance of testing and prepare families for it.</i>	C	<i>School assembly plans Parent communications</i>	<i>By asking parents in survey By asking students in survey</i>

Step 4: Prioritize Root Causes for Intervention

Prioritize the root causes for intervention to ensure that they are important and feasible. The prioritized root causes lead recommendations for implementation are important and feasible. The prioritized root causes lead to discussion of the school's recommendations for the root cause analysis report. Prioritization is determined based on individual participant voting.



Criteria for prioritizing root causes:

- How important is the problem to addressing our needs?
 - Student outcomes will be improved.
 - Teacher efficacy will be increased.
 - Organizational systems will be improved.
- How feasible is it to address this problem?
 - Available resources are adequate.
 - Available staff and capacity are adequate (or can be developed through training and recruitment).
 - Support and buy-in are sufficient.
- How aligned is the root cause to our need?
 - Root cause is related to the reason the school is identified as a CSI school by the state.
 - Root cause can be addressed by effective selection and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Final Output. Prioritized Root Causes (Recommended Areas for Improvement):	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



Preliminary Recommendations for Improvement

Preliminary Recommendations for Improvement	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

