

Smarter School Spending

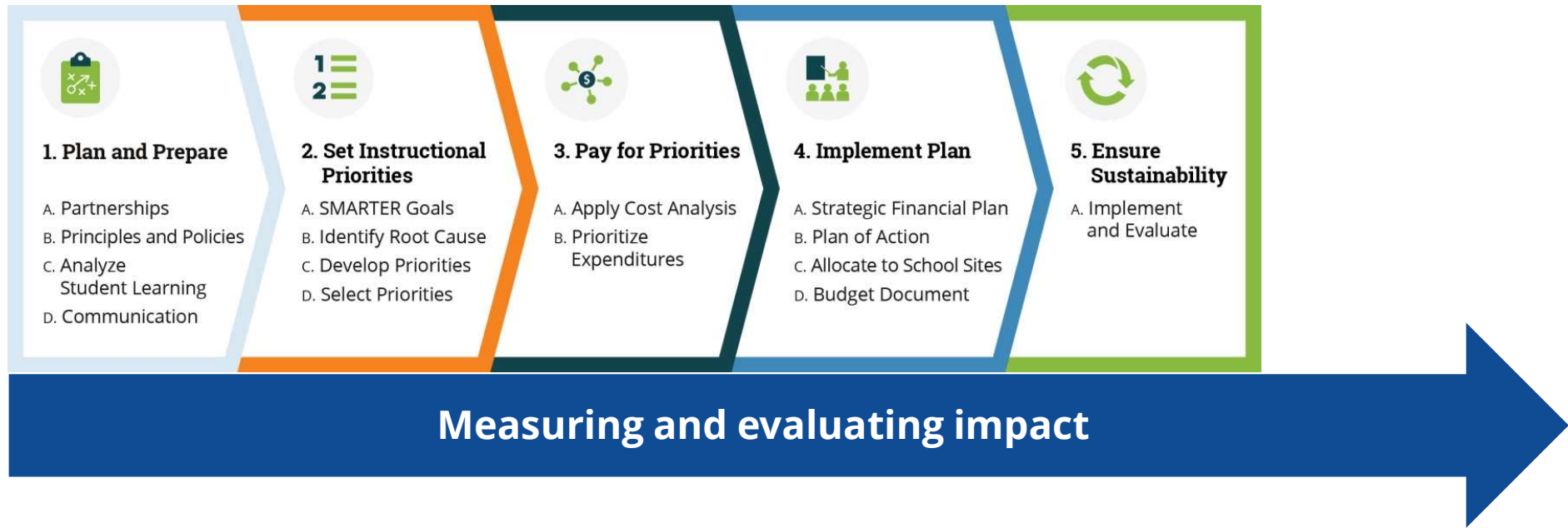


Measuring Impact Guide

This guide is an introduction to assessing the impact and spending effectiveness of your district's initiatives and the resources that support them.

The idea of measuring impact runs throughout the Smarter School Spending process and should be part of your district's efforts at each step of the way. This guide will introduce your district to how to go about implementing efforts to measure impact throughout the Smarter School Spending process.

The concept of measuring impact should be part of your district's mindset every step of the way



Measuring the impact of your district's initiatives is at the core of the Smarter School Spending process because of its important role in helping to:

1. Maximize student outcomes
2. Spend dollars as effectively and efficiently as possible
3. Track your investments to identify what is and is not working

This guide will allow you to understand what measuring impact means and how it fits in to the Smarter School Spending process



This guide introduces you to the process of measuring and evaluating the impact of your programs as you implement Smart School Spending

1. Before You Begin: What should you know about measuring impact?

2. Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending: How does this philosophy fit in throughout the process?

Before you Begin

What does it mean to measure impact?

- 1. Identify which of your programs are having positive outcomes
- 2. Estimate the cost of each program
- 3. Think about next steps; expand, maintain, or disinvest from your programs

Example: A district is looking to invest more in after school programs to support K-3 literacy. It has three programs already running. Which of these programs should they invest behind?

(1) Outcomes: Identify average gains in ELA tests	<u>Student Outcomes:</u> Average Per Pupil Increase in ELA Standardized Test Scores	<u>Cost:</u> Program Costs Per Pupil	(2) Cost: Estimate per pupil cost of each program
After-school program 1	5	\$200	
After-school program 2	3	\$100	
After-school program 3	6	\$500	

(3) Next Steps: Program 3 produces the most positive student outcomes, but is also the most expensive by far. Would district dollars be more efficiently spent expanding Programs 1 and/or 2?

Before you Begin

Why should you care about measuring impact?

Measuring impact helps districts determine...

...what's working (Outcomes)

- Track every program against the target outcomes you have set
- Understand which programs are maximizing student outcomes
- Allocate dollars towards programs that most benefit students

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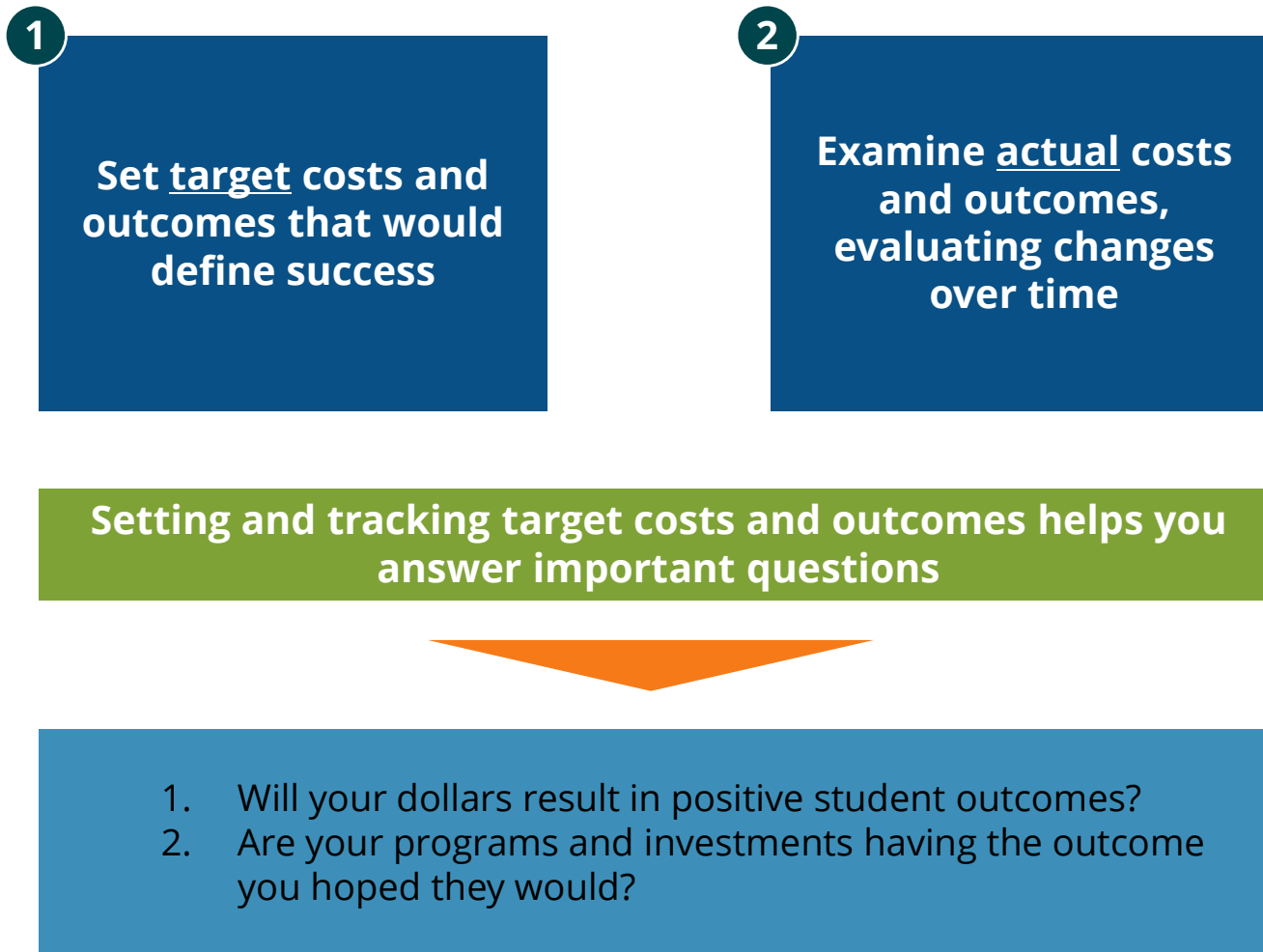
...if it's worth it (Costs)

- Track costs in order to call attention to excessively expensive programs
- Avoid wasted resources by identifying if costly investments are improving student outcomes
- Consider more efficient ways to spend district dollars

Before you Begin

How do you measure the impact of your initiatives effectively and consistently?

At a high level, measuring impact involves 2 steps:



Before you Begin

There are different ways to evaluate your investments

What can you analyze?

1. Specific programs
2. Specific groups of people or departments
3. An individual school
4. The overall district

For example...

Programs being analyzed:

After school program for K-2

Professional development of new teachers



Potential outcomes you would be interested in measuring and tracking:

- Student growth in reading levels
 - Student participation & attendance rates
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- Teacher evaluation ratings
 - Teacher retention rates
 - Student performance

Before you Begin

How can your particular district measure the impact of its programs?

If your district has a robust data set on previous investments, it can...



...determine the effectiveness of past investments

This will require :

- A discrete target population—typically students
- Data on specific costs
- Outcomes results—starting point, progress points, current point

However:

Lots of districts don't have this type of data, so moving forward it's important to...



...track investments closely and commit to carrying out evaluations of future investments

This will require :

- Defining discrete target populations for each investment
- Collecting data about specific costs
- Closely and consistently tracking outcomes results—starting point, progress points, current point

This guide introduces you to the process of measuring and evaluating the impact of your programs as you implement the Smart School Spending process

1. **Before You Begin:** What should you know about measuring impact?

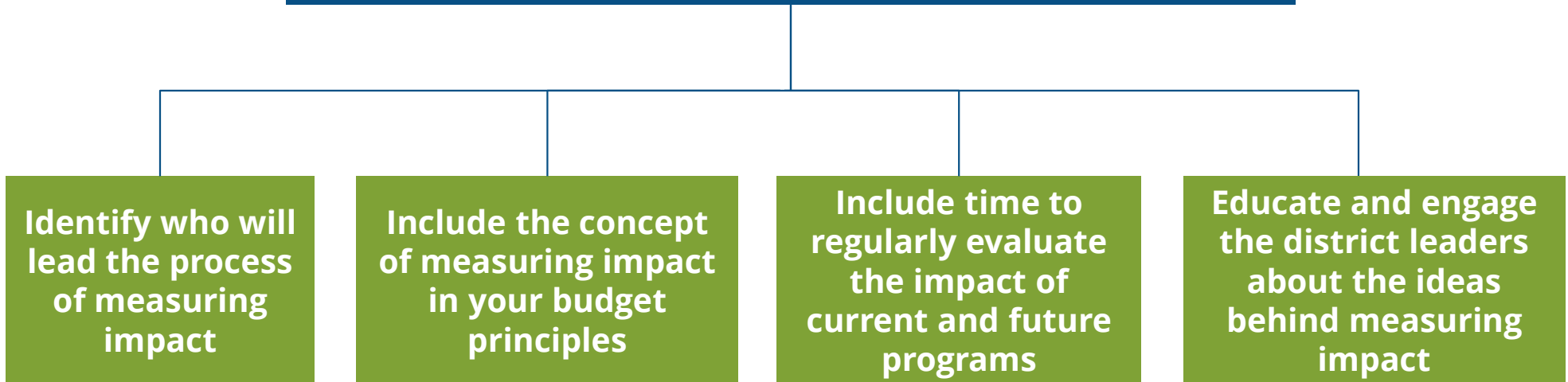
2. **Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending:** How does this philosophy fit in throughout the process?

Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

Plan and Prepare is the time to plant the importance of measuring impact in your district's mindset



Plan to measure impact from the beginning:



Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

During Set Instructional Priorities, evaluate proposed instructional priorities for potential impacts on student learning



When considering specific instructional priorities...

Both A and B can have significant impacts on student learning...

Instructional
Priority A

Instructional
Priority B

...but your district should not base their investment solely on proposed outcomes

The district should evaluate the proposed instructional priorities based on:

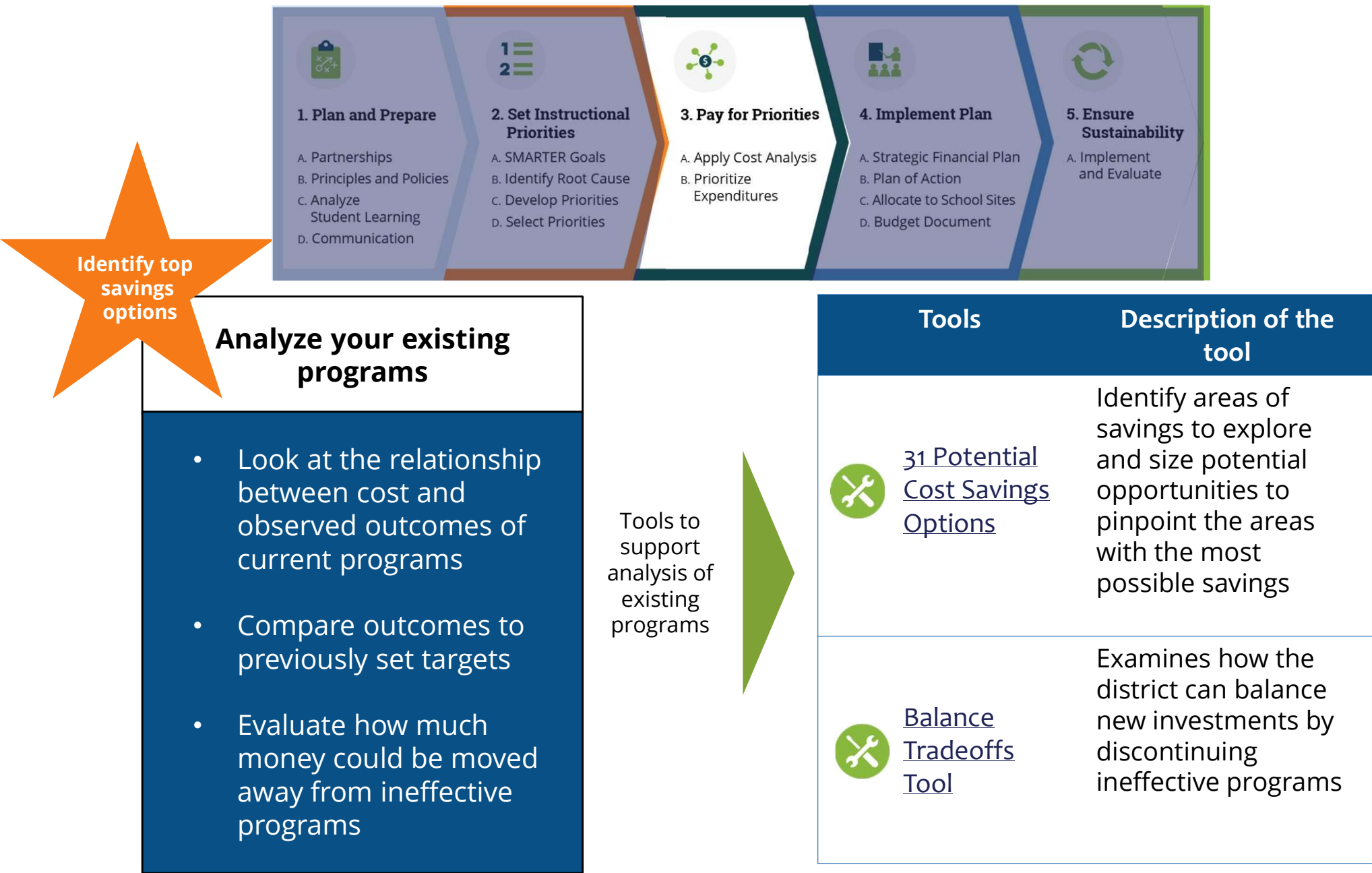
- **Potential impact on student learning**
- **Long-term affordability**
- **Feasibility of implementation**
- **Level of stakeholder support**



See GFOA's Best Practice - [Evaluate Choices between Instructional Priorities](#)

Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

In the Pay for Priorities section, your district can find ways to save money by measuring the impact of existing programs



Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

In Implement Plan, communicate how goals will be implemented in the district's strategic financial plan and develop an implementation plan



By step 4, you will have figured out where you will best:

- **Spend money**
- **Save money**

Communicate your district's goals for each program in the Strategic Financial Plan



Strategic Financial Plan Template

Develop a plan of action for how instructional priorities will be implemented with fidelity, including how progress will be monitored and adjusted

Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

Ensure Sustainability is when your district ensures all programs are being regularly tracked and evaluated



Establish a process to evaluate programs

Going forward, your district should track the cost and outcomes of all programs to assess effectiveness

Ensure there is capacity to carry out evaluations

Your district must have the capacity to track and evaluate its programs for the process to be sustainable

Regularly reassess programs

District leaders should regularly evaluate and re-evaluate their programs



Use the [Program Success Tracker](#) to track the outcomes of your programs against original targets. This tool will provide high level recommendations for next steps each year based on program performance

Measuring impact in Smarter School Spending

What might a plan to ensure the sustainability of a new program look like?



One Smarter School Spending district created a processes for continuing the work and evaluating district investments:



Note: Some steps in the process can be concurrent