**State**

State of Michigan

**Agency:** Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB)

**Award category:** Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships

**Project title:** Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP)

**Project dates:** Idea: June 2018; Project Start: November 2018; Project Go-Live January 2021; Project (Product) Enhancements: On-going

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The Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) is an excellent example of a Cross-Boundary Collaboration & Partnership because it brings together multiple state agencies, statewide educational organizations, and district leaders to create a custom-built platform. This platform mirrors the education continuous improvement process, begins to move school districts into creating robust plans that are easily monitored, and brings to life stakeholder groups suggestions from Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) stakeholder groups across Michigan.

When Michigan created its ESSA plan in 2017, it reflected various stakeholder requests that focused on the need to support schools and students, improve educator quality, and increase accountability and assessments.  At that time, the current planning platform requirements created a heavy focus on compliance and did not lead to the results that were needed or wanted to help students succeed. Research has clearly indicated that there are many other factors that influence student success besides academic achievement on state assessments. The Michigan ESSA plan acknowledged that whole child factors along with systems needed to be considered and included in district plans. By combining a change in mindset on continuous improvement that is reinforced by a researched-based process and supported by a platform that contains robust tools and resources, MICIP was designed to update our processes to match our whole child promise. With data that is easily accessible and targets stakeholder requests, MICIP captured compliance elements and transferred them to the state systems used to monitor compliance, such as the consolidated application for federal title funds. District planning data elements were populated into various systems thus eliminating the perception that plans were ineffective for making improvements.

MICIP crosses boundaries in state government agencies, post-secondary research, k12 schools, education professional networks, and the private sector unlike any prior initiative in Michigan.  The level of authentic collaboration to achieve a common good is demonstrating commitment at the highest levels and as you will see the results are impressive. This engagement includes significant input, feedback, and direct contributions from individuals as well as meaningful partnerships and authentic collaboration among state agencies, public school districts, regional service agencies, professional networks and associations, and private vendors from Michigan and across the country.

 The MICIP application reinforces effective continuous improvement by its many tools and resources. It streamlines the process thus creating many benefits to district efforts. These benefits include:

- Integrating assessments and processes that had previously been individual stand-alone compliance requirements.
- Providing pre-populated data from academic, non-academic, and systems using state and local data sources thus eliminating district by district duplicative data mining.
- District-determined multi-year cycles and focus on the whole child needs, as opposed to the single-year plans of the past that largely focused on short-term efforts to improve student scores on state assessments.

## IDEA (25%)

Idea: The Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP**)** is a pathway for Michigan school districts to improve student outcomes, by assessing whole child needs to develop plans and coordinate funds. It was designed to enable a transition to longer term strategic planning.

MICIP involves a shift in how we think about improving student outcomes (mindset) to engage in a comprehensive and iterative continuous improvement cycle (process) using a streamlined, integrated, web-based software application (platform).

### What problem or opportunity does the project address?

The problem was that the existing process and platform did not lead to desired results. The improvement process was perceived as compliance-driven, and it isolated various education units rather than integrating them. Improvement plans were created by teams operating in silos rather than as a cohesive group. Districts and buildings created separate plans to comply with federal requirements and did not look at district-wide problems challenges. In addition, the current platform was sunsetting in the next school year.

When the opportunity came to incorporate the ESSA stakeholder findings, MICIP was designed specifically to enable a transition to longer-term strategic planning, starting with data-supported analysis and with verifiable results. Districts wanted a streamlined and integrated process to diagnose the needs for supporting the whole child, creating a high-quality plan focusing on systems and supports, and a monitoring and evaluation implementation process that is embedded into the platform.  MICIP helps to remove silos; district-wide teams are formed, thereby allowing the district systems vision to inform school-level implementation processes.

### Why does it matter?
Simply stated, MICIP is about a focus on the success of ALL Michigan students. The MICIP platform provides an effective and efficient way to target needs, create strong plans, and monitor success.  The mindset and process switch to a district-led process has empowered leadership to connect continuous improvement to their strategic plans and other important school district initiatives.

### What makes it different?

MICIP has completely transformed the continuous improvement process by going from mandatory deadline-based annual submissions to strategic continuous improvement-based planning and associated investments. Data driven decision-making and data-backed feedback/analysis help a school district to prioritize its efforts.

Functionality in MICIP includes support for long-term school district planning featuring a platform loaded with tools such as goal creation, best-practices based strategy selection, and Root Cause analysis and integrations with select data sources to substantiate data-driven analysis and spending. To our knowledge, the collection of such analytical tools in a single application that supports a continuous improvement process is quite unique among state planning processes.

In addition, MICIP streamlines the process and makes plans usable. In contrast, MICIP facilitates conversations (whether in-person or virtually) around the elements of continuous improvement and

provides them a place to record their thinking. Subsequent cycles build upon past-knowledge. Planning becomes active and not just an annual.

### What makes it universal?

All states face similar educational systemic challenges that can best be solved by data-driven root cause analysis, results-based planning, and execution. States can learn from similar implementations, compile practices and results, and collaborate in a manner benefiting all children. MICIP supports CIO Top 10 Priorities through modernizing a legacy application and improving collaboration technologies.

## IMPLEMENTATION (25%)

**Implementation:** Supported by coordinated communications and training for districts, the MICIP Platform was launched with a feature set including district portfolio creation with goals, related strategies, and the identification of associated funding. These goals could later be referenced by external systems such as the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Grants Management System for the Consolidated Application.
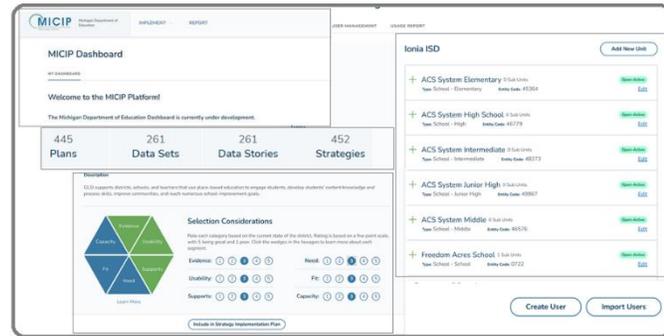


### What was the roadmap?

Since the idea was first conceived at the MDE in 2018, various components were drafted to focus on mindset, process and platform. The DTMB Enterprise Project Management Office was engaged to provide the project management guard-rails and IT best practices-based oversight, ranging from the typical scope, budget, time project constraints to Agile method implementation and technical compliance, including security, accessibility, and similar concerns.

MDE led three work groups to create the MICIP process. These groups were composed of school district leaders from different district demographics, intermediate school districts leaders who specialized in data usage, curriculum, and planning, and MDE experts in finance, continuous improvement planning, multi-tiered system of supports, data usage, and assessment/accountability. Total participation from three groups totaled roughly 100 members.

Wireframes were created to capture the MICIP process. The wireframes were vetted with both the work groups and at highly attended educational conferences where MDE facilitated feedback sessions for public input. Using an agile method of implementation, volunteers from intermediate and local school districts tested sections of the platform starting with assessing needs. (state-issued memo regarding testing partners). As the initial launch approached, volunteers from the testing partner pool had full access to the platform even as development of the final functions were being added. These volunteers were invaluable as they used the process and platform to determine process changes and improvements to the application itself.

The MICIP statewide launch occurred on January 4th, 2021. Leading up to this were several educational and promotional events and a highly viewed website containing training materials, resources, and newsletters. As an agile development project, MICIP continues to evolve since its launch in January 2021. Current efforts focus on third-party integrations for a true cross-application integration district experience. Actual measured success will come from districts reporting their continuous improvement planning results over the next two years.

## Who was involved?

The MICIP Initiative has engaged dozens of stakeholder groups and thousands of individuals in designing and developing and promoting an evidenced based mindset, process, and platform to improve educational outcomes for all of Michigan's students.  Leveraging prior investments and public resources such as MiDataHub (midatahub.org), MiSchoolData (mischooldata.org), and MiStrategyBank (https://www.gomaisa.org/projects/mistrategybank/) MICIP enhances and benefits from years of investment in K12.

A MICIP Steering Committee comprised of representatives of three primary partners in the project. These partners include MDE, CEPI, and MAISA, with support from the DTMB, meet monthly to provide strategic guidance and to facilitate additional and enhanced partnerships.  As primary partners: MDE serves as the lead agency, facilitates process definition, training partnerships, and formal communications. CEPI provides expertise and resources to support data systems, security, and privacy. MAISA serves in a co-product owner role with MDE, facilitates partnerships with several external K12 systems and organizations, and provides the system development, hosting, and service desk resources to create and support the MICIP Platform.  DTMB also plays a critical role in providing supports and guidance in the areas of project management, business analysis, compliance, and technical consulting.

In addition to the primary partners the list of other partners is extensive.  A few of the more significantly contributing include, the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), the Michigan Multi-Tiered System of Support (MiMTSS) Technical Assistance Center, the Michigan Continuous Improvement Facilitators Network, the Michigan Collaboration Hub, and the General Education Leadership Network.

## How did you do it?

In the development of the MICIP platform, agile-like scrum/Kanban method is being used. Work items from epics to defects are all entered and managed using Jira for the project/development management tool. The MICIP platform is a Web application, accessible in multiple browsers and is ADA compliant. The application is AWS cloud-hosted for five-nines platform availability and eleven-nines data durability. Relevant technologies include modern methods and tools such as Elastic Beanstalk, GraphGL, Lambda functions, Redis, and OpenAPI for integrations.

The MICIP platform integrates with widely used, education-centric data sources within Michigan such as CEPI MiSchoolData, MiStrategyBank, MiDataHub, and State-endorsed applications. The MICIP project has also helped to spur on innovations such as the development of the CEPI PowerBI API that will be used for increasingly sophisticated reporting and analysis tools (https://www.mischooldata.org/).

Maintaining high product standards and engagement of the user community is essential to platform creation and growth. The MICIP team has focused on:

- Quality Controls: Rigorous development quality controls (both manual and automated) including several levels of testing, which include development testing, user acceptance testing, product owner sign-off, and post-production release validations.

- Partnership in development: The MICIP team partnered with several pilot districts to shape the platform and smoothen development and rollout.

- User training: Significant time/events were spent on developing training content and its delivery via various channels including webpage and training presentations.

- Continuous communications: This includes communication leading up to application launch, features rollout, and scheduled maintenance periods.

- Customer feedback: The MICIP team actively seeks input from districts directly through surveys and from customer service data.

- Continuous Platform improvement: Continuous improvement of the MICIP platform itself by district user requested enhancements is the future of the platform.

Information about the application and the application itself can be inspected at:
- Application informational Webpage:  https://www.michigan.gov/mde-micip
- Application Main Login (SSO): https://micip.org  MICIP is not publicly accessible and is restricted to authorized users.

## IMPACT (50%)

### What did the project make better?

From the start, MICIP has been a customer-centric project.  Accordingly, we believe it is best to let them tell the story.

*"MICIP, even in its first year of existence, is a huge improvement over ASSIST (prior application). Where before there were boxes to check and extra screens to populate for compliance reasons, we now have a flexible system that is set up to work <u>for</u> improvement teams. Districts have many choices throughout the process and can choose tools that work for their context. It encourages district-level teams to think deeply about a small set of issues that are important to the district. In documenting these conversations and decisions, the system helps the teams also comply with state and federal requirements in a way that doesn't feel like extra work."* David Hundt, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, State and Federal Programs and School Improvement Consultant.

Kaytie Palmiter, Education Consultant for Eaton RESA lists the limitation of the prior application compared to MICIP. Prior to MICIP:
- *Didn't allow the pulling in of data or uploading. This feature is super helpful.*
- *Didn't link to the funding streams - this will also be an amazing feature once the links are finished!*
- *Didn't include an easy way to monitor, track, and assign goals.*
- *Didn't connect to the MiStrategyBank.*
- *Didn't require the hexagon tool (I love this because I love implementation science and when districts complete the hexagon tool, they are better equipped to implement something new since it requires them to think about areas maybe they have not thought about prior and add the tasks to their implementation plan/activities.)*
- *Wasn't district focused – so we had everyone working in silos – and district plans were due before building plans – which seemed backwards.*

*"We're thankful MDE took the approach it did.  MICIP is ready when you are was your consistent message. We processed ONE area of inquiry to learn the MICIP process and, in May, we'll learn the data entry piece of MICIP.  It is clearly on 1.0 version. I will adjust some things to the process when more features are available in MICIP. So far, I am hopeful for this to be a more accessible and feasible experience for schools."* Tom Livezey, Superintendent, Oakridge Schools

**How do you know?  What now?**

The program and application are targeted at the approximately 900 school district/entities in Michigan, which serve over 1.5M students. MICIP educational and promotional events, surveys, and customer service data collection provides the feedback necessary to maintain the momentum the platform is currently experiencing. The MICIP team utilized the Human Centered Design team within DTMB to facilitate focus groups and create survey questions resulting in impactful informative responses.

Metrics used to determine success:

- **Number of districts who elected to use MICIP before it was mandatory** - Currently we have 92% authorized and the original measure of success was 75% adoption.

- **Traffic on the website and subscribers to the newsletter** - On average there are 8,000 views per month for the MICIP website and ~10,000 subscribers to a bi-weekly newsletter with a high open rate of 38% (industry standard is 25%).

- **All districts would have at least one plan created** - Currently, districts of an average of 1.25 plans within their respective portfolio.

- **The MICIP process and platform will be easy to use and not contain major flaws** - The Help Desk started with 78 tickets in January and is now averaging fewer than 30 tickets.

As stated by one of our users, MICIP is in its 1.0 version. Over the next two years, plans include process and application enhancements in the areas of: monitoring and plan modifications, additional integration with statewide systems in monitoring and adjusting plans, integrating more statewide systems, such as Special Education, Nutrition and Health and Safety, Office of Great Start (birth to pre-school) along with third party venders that support districts. The MICIP team will continue to solicit feedback from districts for future features and enhancements.

Just as we started this section, we will end by letting a customer describe the impact.  Teresa Sharkey, Instructional Technology Coach, Melvindale Northern Allen Park Public Schools, summarizes the impact to her district,

*"As our district transitioned to MICIP throughout the 2020-21 school year, our continuous improvement team has become more focused & efficient. The MICIP platform walked us through the process with built in prompts, questions, and tools, which kept our data at the center of the discussion and kept our team focused on digging into the 5 whys and identifying the needs of our district. MICIP has fostered meaningful discussions about the needs of our district, not isolated buildings within our district, but whole district discussions where each school is represented, and the entire district is a focus. MICIP has elevated our efficiency as a team, which in turn has elevated our effectiveness."*