

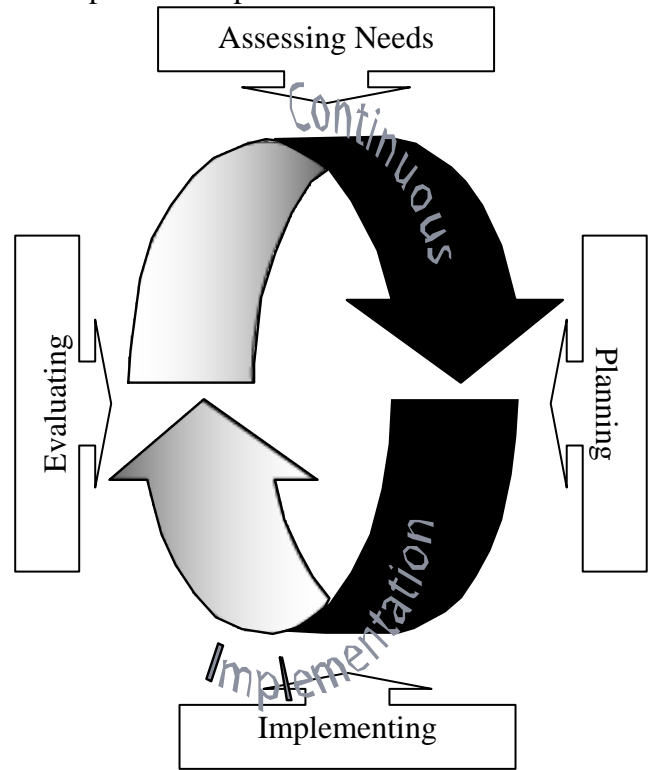
School Improvement: Cycle of Continuous Improvement

The models in this document illustrate the general concepts and are not intended to fully convey the complexity of continuous improvement, nor all of Iowa's accreditation requirements. Readers should refer to other documents for greater detail about the continuous improvement process and accreditation requirements.

*Reference to "LEA," or local education agency, means public school district or accredited non-public school.

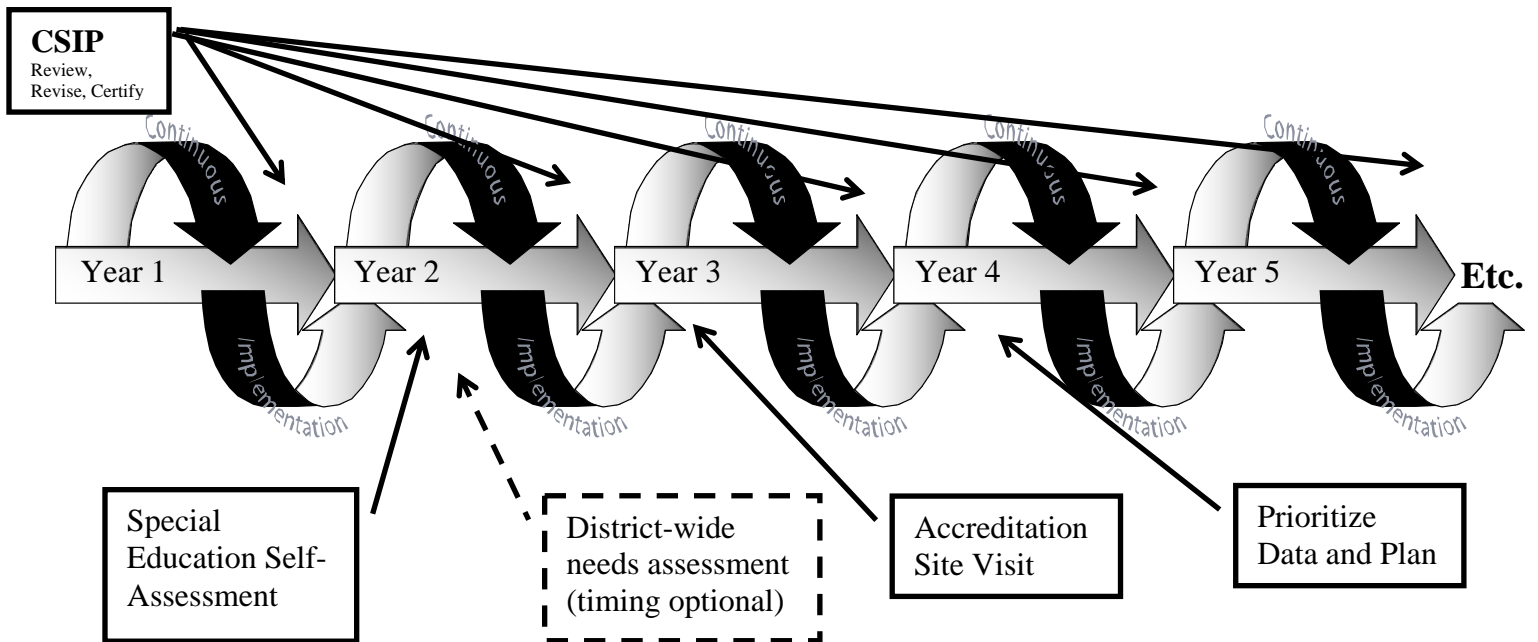
Iterative Improvement Process:

This graphic illustrates continuous implementation/improvement of an individual project or initiative. Many of these cycles may occur concurrently in a LEA's continuous improvement process. The actual life cycle of a single iteration of this process may consist of a single year or several years. Projects would likely be in various stages of the process at any given time.



Long-Term Continuous Improvement:

This graphic illustrates how various aspects of comprehensive school improvement and accreditation are incorporated within the cycle of continuous improvement.



Application of a Cycle of Continuous Improvement

Each year school LEAs implement improvement processes within various programs and initiatives. These programs and initiatives may be at different stages at different times. For example, in the same year, one program may be in evaluation, another in implementation, and yet another in the planning stages.

Comprehensive school improvement site visits take place Year 3 in this continuous process, representing a snapshot of the current status. The comprehensive school improvement plan is a dynamic document, with check-points anchored by the school improvement site visit and annual LEA review. The content of the plan is driven by the ongoing implementation of the plan, the results of evaluation, and assessment of needs.

It is not reasonable to hold all programs and initiatives to the same improvement schedule. Some require more or less time. Some LEA programs might be scheduled for summative evaluation in a particular year, while other programs may be in a formative evaluation phase. Because of the time-consuming nature of evaluation, it would be a wise use of resources to have all programs engaged in summative evaluations on a staggered schedule. For example, curriculum evaluation has traditionally been on a staggered cycle, with content areas in different stages of the continuous improvement process each year to facilitate allocation of resources, time, and people.

This cycle of continuous improvement is the primary focus of the school improvement process. Some projects, programs or initiatives will be in the planning process at the time of a site visit. Others will be in the evaluation phase. The improvement process is ongoing. The comprehensive school improvement site visit and ensuing revisions to the CSIP are simply checks in the system informing ongoing efforts. They are not intended to be viewed as a beginning and ending to this cycle.