

Introduction to Process Mapping

Process maps are a visual representation of the sequence of steps or activities in a process. This is a foundational tool in continuous improvement as it will help your team to truly understand the processes that make up the system. In order to achieve different results, you will need to develop a deep understanding of those processes and re-design or change how they function.

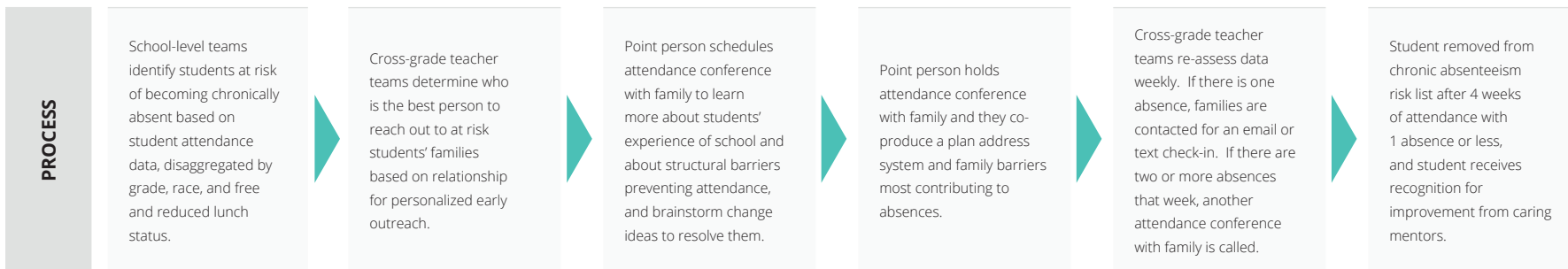
A process map is an important tool to:

- Take a critical look at the system and how it is designed
- Notice specific problems or failures, especially related to inequities, biases and inconsistencies in how the process functions
- Identify unclear steps or missing steps in a process
- Illuminate redundant steps or bottlenecks in a process that could create waste or frustration for stakeholders
- Align as a team about the current versus ideal state of the process to guide the development of potential solutions

There are various types of process maps. In this self-guided workbook, we will focus on the high level process map as this is a simple yet very powerful tool that can be created in a short amount of time. It provides a high level “birds-eye” view of the process and can inform where deeper work may need to occur to provide greater time and detail into specific problematic steps of the process.

To create a high level process map, your team will benefit from a dry erase board or virtual whiteboard. Flip charts with sticky notes are also very helpful. Make sure that you have at least 45-60 minutes for each process.

Example: High Level Process Map to Co-Produce Attendance Plans



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Components of a Process Map

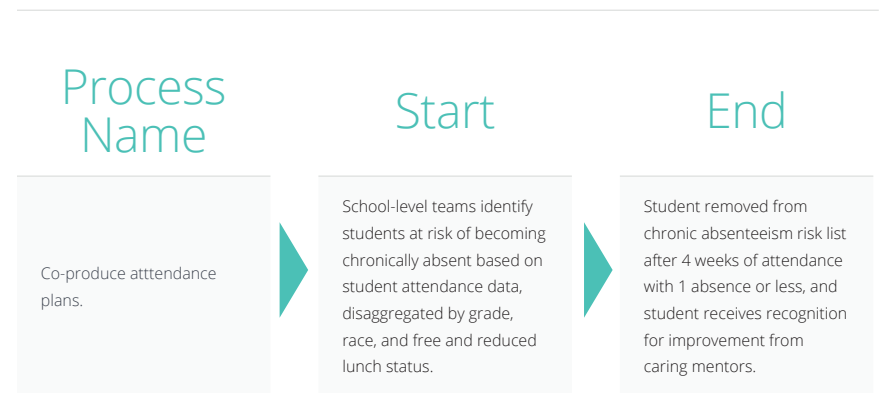
Here are some basic instructions to create a high level process map:

1. Clarify the process that you are mapping. Determine start and end points (referred to as the “terminal”).
2. Brainstorm the steps to the process. Try to keep to a high level with about 5-7 steps between the start and end points.
3. Keep each step at about the same level of detail.
4. If you get stuck on one step, mark it with a cloud and keep moving. You can come back to this later or complete a process observation activity to learn more about how the process functions in reality.

Note that it is often helpful to start with the current, actual process. Your team can also build off the current state process map to create an ideal state process map.

A high level process map is a strong launching place for many of the root cause analysis tools. By clarifying the high level steps in a process, your team will then be able to identify how and how often there are failures or breakdowns in each of those steps. This is a foundation for the next tools in this workbook.

SYMBOL	NAME	FUNCTION
	TERMINAL	Shows start/end of the process flow
	ACTIVITY/TASK	Describes the actual task at a given point in a process
	DECISION	Displays a Yes/No or True/False question that leads to two different activity flows
	DIRECTION LINE	Connects steps in a process and show activity flow direction
	ISSUE	Denotes that there is a lack of consensus or unclear understanding for this activity or task



Simple Process Mapping Template

