

# Join the Student-Centered Assessment Network: A Networked Improvement Community Focused on Formative Assessment

## About American Institutes for Research

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## Contact Information

Contact project director Steve Plank ([splank@air.org](mailto:splank@air.org)) to discuss SCAN.

To learn out more about NICs at AIR, visit [tinyurl.com/AIRNetwork](http://tinyurl.com/AIRNetwork)

**WHAT:** Networked improvement communities (NICs) use a process of continuous improvement to develop, implement, test and refine practices in real settings. A NIC is a partnership between practitioners and researchers that **propels innovation and improvement** in schools and other organizations.

Our NIC, the Student-Centered Assessment Network (SCAN) is focused on improving the use and effectiveness of student-centered formative assessment practices in high schools.

SCAN implements Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles where teachers and researchers work together to test and document specific aspects of formative assessment that can improve outcomes for teachers and students.

The cycles are driven by the following three questions:



- What are we trying to accomplish?
- What changes can we make?
- How will we know whether a change yields improvement?



PDSA cycles are repeated to refine and test interventions while scaling up when there is an indication that an intervention is promising.

**WHY:** NICs are action-oriented collaborations focused on measuring the effectiveness of small changes to address problems of practice.



NICs empower participants by increasing their capacity to implement simple changes and quickly collect data to inform practice.



NICs collaborate to learn what works, for whom, and under what conditions. Throughout PDSA cycles, NIC participants share what they learn.

## **WHO: NIC members come from diverse contexts to learn to improve practice together.**



SCAN includes teachers from Rhode Island high schools. In 2017–18, 23 teachers from East Providence and Westerly high schools participated. SCAN seeks up to 24 additional teachers from a total of three Rhode Island high schools (including East Providence and Westerly) to join SCAN during the 2018-19 school year. We seek teachers who recognize this initiative as an opportunity to grow in their practice and to help students thrive.



The [American Institutes for Research](#) (AIR) has received a grant from the [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#) to facilitate the NIC. The AIR team consists of coaches, measurement experts, and communications staff.



In planning and launching this initiative, we are drawing upon the successes and lessons learned from a group of educators and researchers collaborating through the [Better Math Teaching Network](#). AIR is pleased to have the engagement and involvement of the [Great Schools Partnership](#), the [University of Pittsburgh](#), and the [Highlander Institute](#). The [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#) is also an advisor in this work. The Carnegie Foundation is a leader in conceptualizing and systematizing methods for engaging in rapid cycles of inquiry to improve educational practice.

## **HOW: The NIC meets in person and virtually several times throughout the year to refine a shared understanding of student-centered formative assessment and to learn principles of PDSA cycles.**

### **Between September and January:**

- The NIC members and AIR staff will build relationships.
- The AIR team will learn about each participating school's and teacher's context and current formative assessment practices and future aspirations.
- New members will learn from the past experiences and collective learning of SCAN's experienced members.
- NIC members will implement and test a few "change ideas" involving specific strategies or practices around formative assessment using PDSA cycles.
- NIC members and AIR staff will refine measurement and "data debrief" strategies to support PDSA cycles.

### **Long-term goals:**

- Demonstrate linkages across high-quality formative assessment practices, teacher satisfaction and empowerment, increased student engagement and agency, and improved student learning outcomes.
- Expand the membership of SCAN in future years.
- Share lessons learned and effective strategies with other colleagues in the participating schools, and eventually with other schools in Rhode Island and beyond.

**COMPENSATION:** Stipends of \$3,300 are available for teachers who participate in all SCAN activities between September 2018 and July 2019. We anticipate a time obligation of approximately 66 hours above and beyond standard teaching duties.