

# Engaging in a Root Cause Analysis

School and District Improvement



# What is a root cause analysis?

A root cause analysis is an approach to problem solving through discussion to dig deeper than surface symptoms and causes and uncover underlying problems impacting the school.

# Why should schools conduct a root cause analyze?

- RCA helps districts and schools identify the root cause of problems and implement solutions to prevent future occurrences, improving quality and student outcomes
- RCA helps keep the focus on challenges that are within the scope of control in a school setting.

## Identify Local Needs - Conducting a Root Cause Analysis

A root cause analysis is a systematic process for identifying the underlying (or “root”) causes of the challenges that organizations or institutions face. A root cause analysis is an approach to problem-solving through discussion to dig deeper than the surface symptoms and uncover the underlying causes.

Addressing the root causes of the problems or challenges your system faces, rather than addressing obvious symptoms, enables stakeholders to make lasting and impactful systemic changes.

Steps	Guiding Questions
Define the Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the nature of the problem?</li><li>• What happened? (Example: The achievement gap between groups continues from year to year with little to no change in proficiencies among student groups.)</li><li>• Where and when does it occur?</li><li>• To whom does it happen?</li><li>• How does it affect our goals?</li></ul>

# Define the problem

What is the nature of the problem?

When and where does it occur?

To whom does it happen?

How does it affect our goals?

# Identify possible causes and categories

**What factors and causes are contributing to the problem?**

**Which factors are within our control, and which are not?**

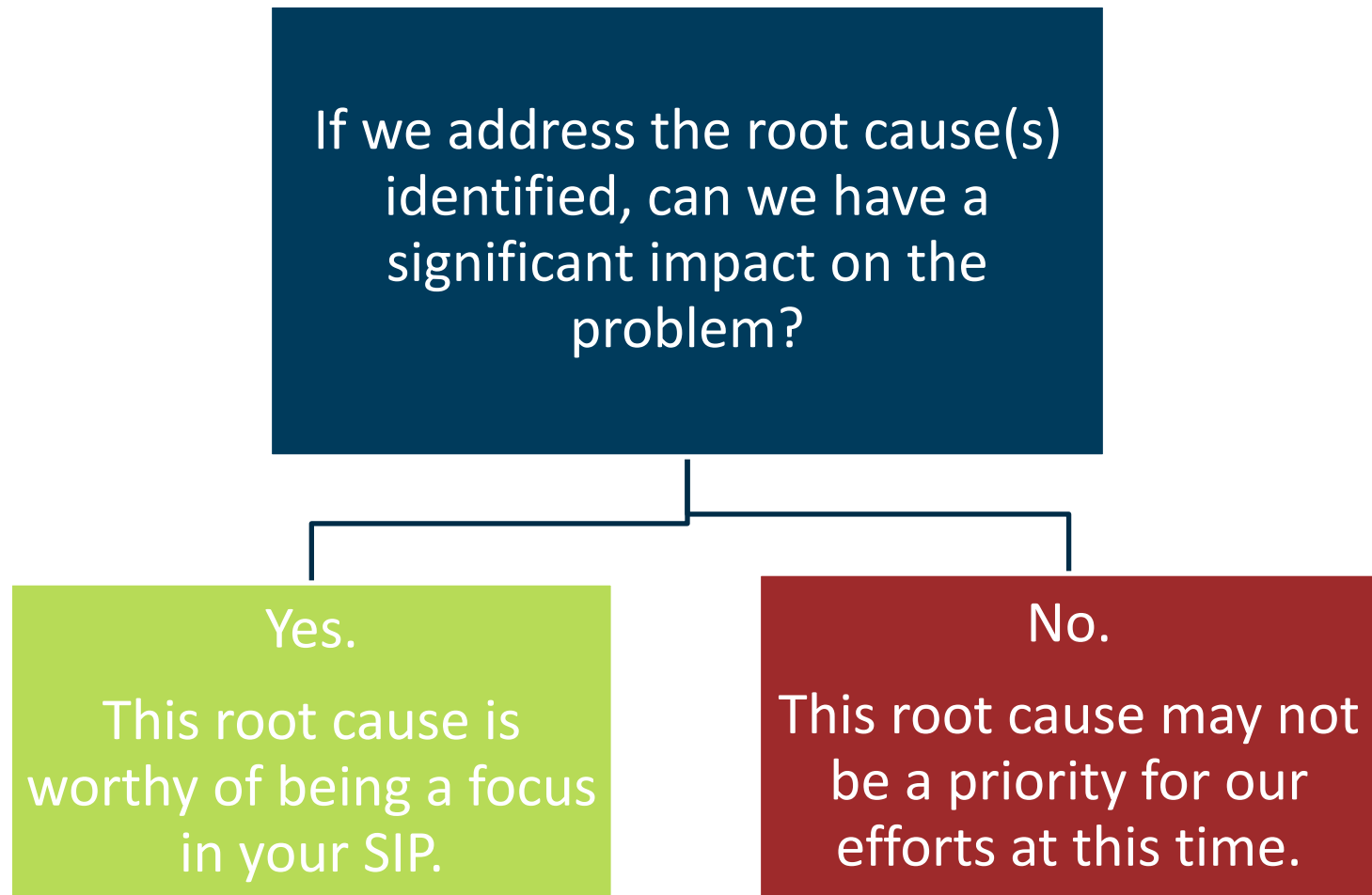
**How can causes be grouped into categories?**

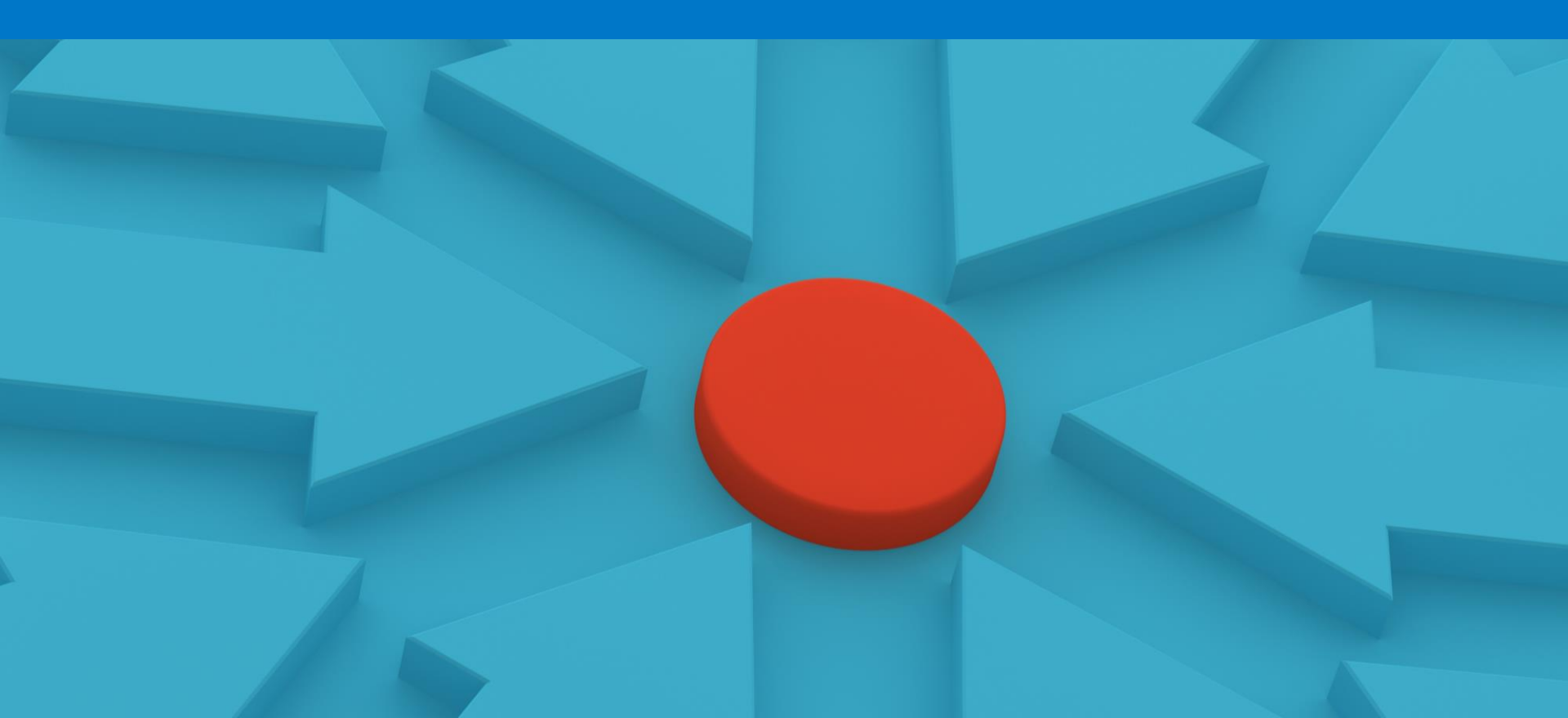
# Dig deeper into the “why”?



- Why is it happening?
- How come?
- Why would that be?
- What's the reason for that?
- Why is that?
- That's because ...
- I wonder if ...

# Select one or more root cause as priorities in your school improvement plan.





**The priorities identified in the root cause analysis become the foundation of the key activities in your SIP.**



# School Improvement Helpline



[schoolimprovement@isbe.net](mailto:schoolimprovement@isbe.net)



(217) 524-1817