

Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S)

User's Guide



2009-2010
Nevada Department of Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	3
Components of the NCCAT-S: Categories, Indicators, & Elements	5
Administering the NCCAT-S: Getting Started – Initial Steps	6
Administering the NCCAT-S: Conducting the Audit	6
▪ How to Begin	
▪ Tools to Assist Audit Teams	
▪ Collecting and Analyzing the Evidence	
▪ Scoring	
Final Steps	9
▪ NCCAT-S Summary Report	
Using NCCAT-S Results	10
▪ Beginning to Plan for Restructuring or Turnaround Plan Development	
▪ Focusing the Plan – Prioritizing Needs & Concerns	
Conclusion	11
Appendices	
▪ Appendix A: NCCAT-S Glossary of Terms	13
▪ Appendix B: Suggested 2009-10 NCCAT-S Pacing Calendar	15
▪ Appendix C: Suggested NCCAT-S Pacing Calendar for 2010-11 and Beyond	17
▪ Appendix D: Addressing the Challenges of Self-Assessment	19
<i>The following Appendices can be downloaded from the NDE Website at http://www.doe.nv.gov/SI_NCCAT.htm</i>	
▪ Appendix E: NCCAT-S Data Collection Tools	NDE Website
▪ Appendix F: NCCAT-S Indicator Worksheets	
▪ Appendix G: NCCAT-S Summary Report Template	

INTRODUCTION

The Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S) is designed to assist schools, districts, and the state in identifying the priority needs of a school in need of improvement and for identifying the types of technical assistance a school will need in order to improve. The NCCAT-S is a collection of 20 rubrics. Each rubric is comprised of one indicator and two to five elements. This audit tool was developed by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) in response to the 2009 Nevada Legislature's Senate Bill 389, which requires districts to conduct a comprehensive curriculum audit of schools identified as In Need of Improvement (INOI) – Year 3, as a corrective action. It is also part of the state's system of support and corrective actions under the requirements of Section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Ultimately, the results of the NCCAT-S will be used to determine the types of focused technical assistance and support that a school will need, and to guide the district in its development of the school's Restructuring or Turnaround Plan.

Many resources were utilized during the development of this instrument. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) December 2005 publication *District Audit Tool: A Method for Determining Level of Need for Support to Improvement* provided the primary format, structure, and content for the document. Additional tools, such as Clark County School District's Universal Audit Tool, the Center on Innovation and Improvement's Rapid Improvement Indicators, Nevada's Five Dimensions of Successful Schools Data Analysis Guide (DAG) and the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Alignment Tool for Districts (NCCAT-D), were cross-referenced and used to inform the development of the final instrument, as applicable. Additionally, audit tools from other states were referenced to further bolster the document. Finally, a statewide task force made up of school, district, and state stakeholders were engaged in shaping the NCCAT-S – providing critical insight, feedback, and consensus on content.

The NCCAT-S reflects the research and serves as the foundation for the work of turning around or restructuring schools. Using a rubric format, the NCCAT-S describes characteristics of high-performing schools in the following categories:

- I. Curriculum and Instruction
- II. Assessment and Accountability
- III. Leadership

These are the areas that the research tells us are the most important foci for turning around schools and rapidly improving student performance. They are overlapping and inter-dependent. When a school is functioning at high levels in all three categories, student achievement improves. Figure 1 illustrates the integrated nature of these functions and how, when they are working effectively and collaboratively, they impact student achievement.

Figure 1. Interdependent Relationship of NCCAT-S Categories.



Curriculum and Instruction. Curriculum and Instruction is the cornerstone of any successful educational program. Research indicates that student access to aligned curriculum, appropriate instructional materials, and grade level standards-based instruction taught by highly-qualified, effective teachers leads to increased student academic achievement. A review of the literature revealed that curriculum alignment, in particular, “is capable of diminishing, if not entirely eliminating, conventional predictors of student achievement, such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, and teacher effect” (pg. 108, CCSSO, 2005)¹. However, once curriculum alignment is in place, “Black and William (1998) noted that standards only influence student learning to the extent that students receive meaningful instruction on their content” (pg. 109, CCSSO, 2005). Consequently, effective classroom instruction plus aligned, standards-based curriculum equates to increases in student achievement.

Assessment and Accountability. The focus and goal of education is student learning and achievement. Without assessments aligned to the curriculum and state standards, it is difficult to determine if the focus and goal of education is ever achieved. According to a

¹ The Council of Chief State School Officers (2005). *District Audit Tool: A Method for Determining Level of Need for Support to Improvement*. Washington, D.C.: The Council of Chief State School Officers.

review of the literature by CCSSO (2005), “research indicates that assessment and accountability systems are most effective when internal and external measures are coordinated by schools and districts to improve student achievement” (pg. 120). The entire assessment and accountability system must be interconnected and aligned – assessments aligned to the standards, which are aligned with curriculum; assessment results are reported out for all stakeholders (including parents and students) so that all have a responsibility for student learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Furthermore in successful schools and districts, teachers use assessment results, whether from standardized tests or classroom assessments, to inform instruction and curriculum planning and all data are used to determine and respond to student needs. Research suggests that high-performing learning communities continuously examine student achievement using a variety of indicators so all students can reach high standards (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001).

Leadership. CCSSO (2005) says it best in the document *District Audit Tool: A Method for Determining Level of Need for Support to Improvement*: “A preponderance of education research suggests that highly-effective schools are characterized by effective leadership, among other factors. Without such leadership, a school is little more than a set of independent classrooms, each pursuing individual goals without a shared understanding about what is important to be learned” (pg. 103). Leadership is not confined to administration or the principal. It includes teacher leaders and other advisory or decision-making bodies as well. No matter who the leader is, the leadership must, among other things, convey a clear mission and vision for the school, provide instructional leadership, promote aligned initiatives, and focus on and monitor school improvement.

COMPONENTS of the NCCAT-S

Categories, Indicators, and Elements

Categories. As mentioned above, the NCCAT-S addresses 3 overarching categories –

- I. Curriculum and Instruction,
- II. Assessment and Accountability, and
- III. Leadership

Indicators. Within each category, there are Indicators. The entire audit tool contains a total of 20 indicators – Curriculum and Instruction has 9, Assessment and Accountability has 4, and Leadership has 7. Collectively, these 20 indicators characterize the essential components that are typically in place for a school to be successful.

Elements. Under each indicator, there are elements that help to more clearly define the indicator. Elements provide the audit team with descriptors that detail the nuances of an indicator. Additionally, the degree to which an element is implemented will be scored on a rubric using the following scale:

- 4 = Exemplary: This element contributes to the school’s success, and provides a model for other schools to emulate.
- 3 = Meets expectation: This element is fully functional and all required elements are evident.
- 2 = Area of Concern: This element is marginal. Performance in this area should be monitored for change and may need to be addressed quickly.
- 1 = Area of Need: There is little to no evidence that this element is met or understood by the school. This element should be identified as a priority and would need to be addressed quickly.

ADMINISTERING the NCCAT-S

Getting Started – Initial Steps

Who. According to the 2009 Nevada Legislature’s Senate Bill 389, school districts are required to conduct the NCCAT-S on schools identified as In Need of Improvement (INOI) – Year 3 (and on schools INOI Year 4 and beyond during the 2009/10 transition year). However, the NCCAT-S is designed to be utilized as a self-analysis tool (see “Addressing the Challenges of Self-Assessment” guidance in Appendix D) and it is recommended that districts work collaboratively with schools in conducting this audit.

It is recommended that the district in collaboration with the school form an audit team to help manage and coordinate the audit process for the school year. For example, previously existing teams at the school, such as the School Improvement or Leadership team, could serve as the foundation of the audit team. Membership could be expanded to include district level personnel who can provide expertise in specific areas such as data analysis or curriculum. However, the work of the audit team does not need to be limited only to “team members.” It might be appropriate to ask teachers and/or other staff to investigate and explore various indicators and elements and have them report back to the audit team on what they have found.

When. Districts have an entire school year to conduct the NCCAT-S on schools identified as In Need of Improvement – Year 3. For example in a traditional school year, it would be anticipated that the initial steps in conducting the audit begin in September and the completion of the audit occurs by May. Also, depending on the audit team’s particular work style, meetings could occur weekly or monthly or sometime in between. In the appendix are two pacing calendars that have been developed to assist districts and schools in planning for anticipated NCCAT-S activities. The first calendar suggests pacing during the transitional year of 2009-10. The second calendar guides a team on how to plan for conducting the audit in subsequent years.

Conducting the Audit

How to Begin. Once an audit team is identified, work can begin. With 20 indicators and 70 elements, it is recommended that the audit team break down the work into metered, manageable steps. For example, the first audit team meeting in September

could conclude with work assignments that only encompass the first five indicators (i.e., Curriculum and Instruction, Indicators 1.1 – 1.5). Small sets of teams can be assigned to investigate and collect evidence against the indicators they were assigned. In this scenario, it might be that 2 classroom teachers, the district data coordinator, and the principal are assigned Indicator 1.5. Over the next month, it would be their job to collect evidence that indicates the level of implementation for each element designated under Indicator 1.5 and the evidence collected would then support the score or rating given for each element.

Tools to Assist Audit Teams. Data collection tools have been developed and are located in Appendix E. These tools were developed to assist teams in managing the collection of evidence as well as to provide teams with suggestions regarding what types of evidence might best support indicator/element accomplishments. The types of tools include protocols for interviews and focus groups, as well as a list of documents or sources to review and analyze. In addition, NCCAT-S Indicator Worksheets (Appendix F) have been developed to assist teams in recording their findings relative to an indicator, its elements, and the associated scores.

Collecting and Analyzing the Evidence. Using the available tools in the Appendix, audit teams can guide their work relative to gathering appropriate evidence and data that supports the level of implementation of any given indicator/element. For example, work groups could use the “Document/Sources” list provided to assist them in determining what evidence to examine and analyze. Also, the provided NCCAT-S Indicator Worksheets can be used by small work groups to list their evidence, and record their analyses, findings, and scores.

It is recommended that at least three forms of evidence be analyzed in order to inform the scoring of an element. For instance, the analysis of evidence such as curriculum mapping, lesson plans, and the results of a teacher focus group could provide the needed information for rating the elements of Curriculum and Instruction Indicator 1.1. Please note, teams should collect a sufficient amount of evidence to make informed decisions but do not need to collect more evidence than is necessary to do so.

Scoring. Each element on the NCCAT-S must receive a rubric score based on the supporting evidence. As mentioned earlier, an element can receive one of the following rubric scores on the NCCAT-S:

Rubric Score:

- 4 = Exemplary,
- 3 = Meets Expectation,
- 2 = Area of Concern, or
- 1 = Area of Need.

Accuracy of element rubric scores is essential because rubric scores provide critical information for the district and state and inform the consequences and supports that the school will receive. If a score is low, say a 1 or 2, eventually it will need to be addressed in some way by the district when it develops the school’s Restructuring or Turnaround

Plan. It is also important to note that these rubric scores guide the state in differentiating the types of support the school will receive. Therefore, it is recommended that the full audit team have a system or process in place for affirming the veracity of the element rubric scores, especially if small teams are used to investigate individual indicators and score the related elements.

It may happen that a school does have a large number of elements accurately scored on the rubric at a 1 (Area of Need) or 2 (Area of Concern) level. Having many low scores may seem overwhelming at first, but there is a process in place that assists audit teams in determining priorities. The School Indicator Worksheets will guide a team through assigning a priority and opportunity score, which creates an index score. These scores are explained here. For each element, the priority score represents what the audit team considers to be of either highest (a score of 3), medium (a score of 2), or lowest (a score of 1) priority for the school to address. The opportunity score represents the level of ease or difficulty the audit team believes the school will face in addressing the element. Multiplying the priority score by the opportunity score, the audit team will create an index score (Priority score x Opportunity score = Index score). For example, the audit team may determine that an element is of highest priority, so it selects a 3 as the Priority score. For the Opportunity score, the audit team determines that addressing this element can be accomplished within the current policy and budget conditions, and therefore assigns an Opportunity score of 2. The Priority score 3 multiplied by the Opportunity score 2 equals an Index score of 6 (e.g., $3 \times 2 = 6$). The following is a synopsis of the priority, opportunity and resulting index scores:

Priority Score:

- 3 - highest priority for school/district to address
- 2 - medium priority for school/district to address
- 1 - lowest priority for school/district to address

Opportunity Score:

- 3 – relatively easy to address
- 2 – accomplished within current policy and budget conditions
- 1 – requires changes in current policy and budget conditions

Index Score:

- Highest Index Score possible = 9
- Lowest Index Score possible = 1

A high index score of either a 6 or a 9 will identify those elements that should be addressed by schools and districts first. Likewise, a lower index score, such as a 1 or a 2, will indicate that those elements that do not need to be addressed first but rather may be considered at some point, if appropriate, throughout the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan process.

In the end, audit teams should have the following ratings and scores per element:

- Rubric Score, ranging from a 4 (Exemplary) to a 1 (Area of Need),

- Priority Score, ranging from a 3 (Highest priority for school/district to address) to a 1 (Lowest priority for school/district to address),
- Opportunity Score, ranging from a 3 (Relatively easy to address) to a 1 (Requires changes in current policy and/or budget conditions),
- Index Score, ranging from a 9 (highest priority for addressing first) to a 1 (lower priority for addressing).

As mentioned earlier, the School Indicator Worksheets will help audit teams keep track of the scores and ratings. Additionally, the worksheets provide space to list the evidence that supports the rubric scores as well as allows teams to summarize the current level of development or implementation for the given indicator.

Final Steps

Summary Report. Once all of the elements have been investigated and the associated scores assigned, audit teams will need to complete the NCCAT-S Summary Report template. This template, which can be found in Appendix G and is also available for use in Excel format, asks for each rubric and index score per element as well as for the list of evidence used to support the rubric ratings. The template also requests that the team provide a summary list of those indicators and/or elements that are considered to be of highest priority based on Index and Rubric scores.

Elements that receive a high index score and a low rubric score are good candidates for being placed on the summary list. Districts and schools will want to critically examine elements that fall into this area (e.g., a high index score of 9 and a low rubric score of 1). These elements have been identified not only as an “Area of Need” but also as an element that is of high priority to the team and is considered to be relatively easy to address. Likewise, the team may find that all of the elements of an indicator have received low rubric scores (ones and twos) and high index scores (nines and sixes). In this case, it would be appropriate for a team to identify the entire indicator on the summary list as a high priority for further examination and discussion.

During the next school year when a school (INOI-Year 4) and district are planning for Restructuring or Turnaround, the summary list will provide the beginning framework for determining where to focus Restructuring or Turnaround efforts. In the event the school is not INOI-Year 4, the information derived through the NCCAT-S is very useful for development or revision of a school improvement plan and/or other school improvement efforts.

As part of the monitoring requirement set forth in SB 389 by the Nevada 2009 Legislature, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) expects the NCCAT-S Summary Report be submitted to the NDE by June 1 of each year.

USING NCCAT-S RESULTS

In Need of Improvement – Year 4

Beginning to Plan for Restructuring or Turnaround Plan Development. After the NCCAT-S is conducted as the Corrective Action for schools INOI-Year 3, districts are required over the next school year to develop Restructuring or Turnaround Plans for schools INOI-Year 4 based on the audit results. The Summary List within the NCCAT-S Summary Report provides the initial starting point for Restructuring or Turnaround Planning. Additionally, all of the work and rich discussions that occurred during the audit year, and that continue throughout the planning year, provide valuable information when developing the Restructuring or Turnaround Plans. With the NCCAT-S results as well as notes and minutes from the past year, planning teams will have the essential information necessary to begin the important process of Restructuring or Turnaround Plan development.

Focusing the Plan – Prioritizing Needs and Concerns. While the Restructuring or Turnaround Planning Teams are examining the results of the NCCAT-S and specifically the items on the Summary List, they may find that there are several elements and/or indicators that were identified as a high priority to address. The planning team recognizes it needs a way to review and filter the Summary List in order to distinguish the one or two most critical items that will eventually become the focus of the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan. Thankfully, there are ways to approach the challenge of narrowing a Restructuring or Turnaround Plan’s focus and identifying the essential areas that need to be addressed for rapid school improvement. Below is information to assist teams in thinking preliminarily about prioritization, understanding that the bulk of this work will happen during development of the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan.

The following suggested steps and guiding questions will assist planning teams to narrow the focus of Restructuring or Turnaround Plans by identifying priorities that will likely have the greatest positive impact on student achievement:

First Step: Have individual planning team members identify priorities independently. Each member identifies the top three items from the Summary List that he or she feels should be addressed in the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan and believes is likely to have the most impact on raising student achievement. Once each member selects his/her top three, as a group identify the top five items that received the most “votes.”

Second Step: In order to narrow the top five to one or two items, the team will need to work together and come to a consensus utilizing Sork’s Importance and Feasibility Criteria (Sork, 1982)² as described here:

² Sork, T. (1982). *Determining Priorities*. Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia.

Importance Criteria:

1. How many individuals are affected by this need?
2. If we took this step, to what extent would it contribute to the school's goals?
3. Does the need require immediate attention or will it resolve itself over time?
4. How large is the difference between the current conditions and the desired results?
5. To what extent would taking this step have a positive impact in other areas?

Feasibility Criteria:

1. To what degree can this step contribute to reducing or eliminating the need it is supposed to address?
2. To what extent is the school willing to commit to this change?

Using this approach is one way for planning teams to initially move towards developing focused and concise Restructuring or Turnaround Plans. However, beyond this approach, teams will also want to identify those one or two areas that, if addressed, will likely reap the biggest benefits and have the greatest impact on school improvement and student achievement. In Spring 2010, a companion document that does just that will be available. The document will further assist planning teams by providing them with the effect size (i.e., anticipated impact) of addressing a given set of indicators and/or elements. By knowing the effect size, planning teams will be able to decide which indicators and/or elements to focus on first. For example, if three different indicators have initially been identified as an area of need that should be addressed, planning teams will be able to consider and make decisions based on the effect sizes for each of those indicators. If an indicator has a large effect size, planning teams would want to focus on that indicator in the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan so that schools can concentrate on an area that will likely have the most beneficial effect on improvement. Once the companion document is finalized, it will be posted on the NDE website and districts will be notified of its availability.

Conclusion

As with all school improvement efforts, the ultimate goal of this entire process is to increase student achievement. In order to reach this goal, schools and districts must utilize the results of the NCCAT-S to develop focused and meaningful Restructuring or Turnaround Plans that can be implemented effectively by schools and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). Additionally, district-level assistance, guidance, and support throughout this valuable process will further ensure schools accomplish targeted goals and increase student achievement. Given the appropriate implementation of this system, schools across Nevada will begin to realize the positive impact of their efforts and students will reap the benefits.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NCCAT – S Glossary of Terms

Alignment

Alignment is the degree to which curriculum, instruction, or assessment is related to content standard expectations for student learning.

- **Vertical alignment** is the degree to which expectations progress from lower grade levels to higher grade levels for a given content area.
- **Horizontal alignment** is the degree to which expectations are matched across classrooms for the same grade level in the same content area.

Assessment

Measuring the learning and performance of students or teachers. Different types of assessment instruments include achievement tests, minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments.

Classroom assessments

Teacher/school generated measurements of student achievement of performance goals and objectives.

Curriculum

Although this term has many possible meanings, it usually refers to a written plan outlining what students will be taught (a course of study). Curriculum documents often also include detailed directions or suggestions for teaching the content. Curriculum may refer to all the courses offered at a given school, or all the courses offered at a school in a particular area of study.

Effective Instruction

A critically important characteristic of a successful instructional program is that it is effective at promoting student learning. Effective instruction in Nevada schools is empirically-proven instructional practice that achieves the goals of forwarding student learning and achievement of grade-level content standards. Effectiveness is demonstrable and defensible.

Instructional Staff

The instructional staff is the school-based personnel, other than principals, responsible for the supervision, instruction, and evaluation of students. This group should include teachers, librarians, counselors, psychologists, resource teachers and other specialists charged with instructional duties.

Quality, Balanced Assessments

Educational assessments measure student learning. Different types of assessment instruments include summative tests, formative tests, diagnostic or predictive tests,

minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments. Assessments can be given at the state, local or classroom levels.

Assessments should provide valuable information to Nevada students, teachers, administrators, and parents. They should be of high quality, be valid and reliable, and be available to all students in the state. Assessments should also be balanced in order to provide valuable data collected *of* and *for* student learning. A quality balanced assessment system includes both summative and formative assessments, promotes improvement of student learning, and involves the students in ongoing evaluation of their own work.

Progress Monitoring and Reporting

Effective instruction and achievement of content standards requires careful monitoring of student progress. Effective progress monitoring is research-based, assesses students' academic performance, and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Standards-based System

Nevada schools operate within a standards-based system. Expectations for students are based on identified knowledge and skills students must first learn and then demonstrate on assessments. Teachers are responsible for the critical task of ensuring that students are given opportunity to learn the standards through purposeful curriculum and instruction and classroom assessments. School, District, and State administrators are responsible for the critical task of ensuring teachers are given the opportunity to teach and develop professionally in order to support student learning targets. Summative, statewide assessments provide feedback to the system through student achievement on those targets.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED NCCAT-S PACING CALENDAR for 2009/10 School Year

OCTOBER

- Identify and notify Audit Team Members
- Select 1st Meeting Date

NOVEMBER

- Conduct 1st Meeting
- Assign small group work – focusing on Curriculum and Instruction Indicators 1.1 – 1.5

DECEMBER

- Team Meeting
- Report progress/results on work regarding Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) Indicators 1.1 – 1.5
- Continue any needed small group work relative to C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.5
- Assign small group work – focusing on C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9

JANUARY

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.5
- Report progress/results on work regarding C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9
- Continue any needed small group work relative to C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9
- Assign small group work – focusing on Assessment and Accountability (A & A) Indicators 2.1 – 2.4

FEBRUARY

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9
- Report progress/results on work regarding A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Continue any needed small group work relative to A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Assign small group work – focusing on Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4

MARCH

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Report progress/results on work regarding Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4
- Continue any needed small group work relative to Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4
- Assign small group work – focusing on Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7

APRIL

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for Leadership 3.1 – 3.4
- Report progress/results on work regarding Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7
- Continue any needed small group work relative to Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7

MAY

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for Leadership 3.5 – 3.7
- Complete NCCAT-S Summary Report Template

JUNE

- Submit the NCCAT-S Summary Report to NDE by June 1st.

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED NCCAT-S PACING CALENDAR

For 2010/11 and beyond

MONTH 1 (e.g., July or August)

- Identify and notify Audit Team Members
- Select 1st Meeting Date

MONTH 2

- Conduct 1st Meeting
- Assign small group work – focusing on Curriculum and Instruction Indicators 1.1 – 1.5

MONTH 3

- Team Meeting
- Report progress/results on work regarding Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) Indicators 1.1 – 1.5
- Continue any needed small group work relative to C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.5
- Assign small group work – focusing on C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9

MONTH 4

- Team Meeting
- Report progress/results on work regarding C & I Indicators 1.6 – 1.9
- Review all work on C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.9
- Assign any necessary follow-up work on C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.9 (e.g., verification of scores, collection of any additional evidence still needed, etc.)

MONTH 5

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for C & I Indicators 1.1 – 1.9

MONTH 6

- Team Meeting
- Assign small group work – focusing on Assessment and Accountability (A & A) Indicators 2.1 – 2.4

MONTH 7

- Team Meeting
- Report progress/results on work regarding A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Continue any needed small group work relative to A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Assign small group work – focusing on Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4

MONTH 8

- Team Meeting

- Finalize element scores for A & A Indicators 2.1 – 2.4
- Report progress/results on work regarding Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4
- Continue any needed small group work relative to Leadership Indicators 3.1 – 3.4
- Assign small group work – focusing on Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7

MONTH 9

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for Leadership 3.1 – 3.4
- Report progress/results on work regarding Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7
- Continue any needed small group work relative to Leadership Indicators 3.5 – 3.7

MONTH 10

- Team Meeting
- Finalize element scores for Leadership 3.5 – 3.7
- Complete NCCAT-S Summary Report Template

JUNE

- Submit the NCCAT-S Summary Report to NDE by June 1st.

APPENDIX D

Addressing the Challenges of Self-Assessment

Challenge 1: Overestimation

The most consistent challenge associated with self-assessment is the overestimation of skills, abilities, and dispositions. This type of inflation usually means that people rate themselves and their peers higher than an outsider would based on the same evidence. How might the district assist schools to avoid this common pitfall?

- **Enlist outside assistance in conducting the audit**
- **Require specific evidence for the rating of an element**
- **Focus on “school improvement” rather than “accountability”**
- **More than one person/team collecting evidence and establishing a rating for a particular element**
- **Conduct a root cause analysis**

Challenge 2: Bias based on team composition

Another common challenge comes from the “lenses” of the particular team members being used to bias their perceptions. For example, when a team has counselors or social workers on it, many of the findings and solutions appear to be influenced from that way of looking at the world, emphasizing instruction less and environment more. When the team has only teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics, the emphasis either tends to be in those areas rather than looking at the school as a whole or tends to be more favorable to some subject areas and less favorable to others. How might the district assist schools to avoid this common pitfall?

- **Ensure the team has a variety of different backgrounds and/or roles at the school or district**
- **Provide the school/district with a suggested list of membership on the review team**
- **Provide a facilitator to oversee the process**

Challenge 3: Friendships

Teams from districts and schools working in their own arena often do not want to step on the toes of their friends. This makes them reticent to acknowledge shortcomings from people they know well. Teachers oftentimes do not want to surface anything that will make a principal suspicious of a fellow faculty member (or sometimes, just the opposite, picking on someone they don't like!). How might the district assist schools to avoid this pitfall?

- **Rely on data as evidence, not unsubstantiated and perhaps biased reports**

- **Stress the process as one of assessment to determine where the school is (potential solutions) rather than as an evaluation (negative connotation)**

Challenge 4: Politics

Some teams find it politically difficult to say anything but “we are great.” Thus they undermine the evidence and credibility of the process by only considering certain types of data or interpreting data in more positive ways than the data deserve or providing excuses (e.g., oh, that was an off year because the teacher had family issues or it’s just that one difficult kid, without him, everything would be fine.) How might the district assist schools to avoid this common pitfall?

- **Stress the importance of evidence**
- **Identify barriers up front**
- **Share Doug Reeves’ research around 100/100/100 schools**
- **Identify what the school has control over and what it doesn’t, and then move on to address what the school can control**

Challenge 5: Data interpretation-1

Challenges can emerge when team members really do not understand what exemplary practice looks like. For example, if team members are unfamiliar with best practice in differentiated instruction, they may not know how to collect and interpret the classroom observation and the interview data they receive. Likewise, team members may not have the background or training to engage in data analysis as a team, and may find it difficult to understand the complexity of this process. How might the district assist schools to avoid this pitfall?

- **Provide training using videos or other models of effective teaching strategies**
- **Provide training to improve inter-rater reliability**
- **Provide guiding questions to develop analytic thinking**
- **Have specialized personnel from the district assist in specific areas (a data analyst or curriculum director)**

Challenge 5: Data interpretation-2

Team members may not know the appropriate ways to weight the data. For example, should they “trust” the point-in-time classroom observations more than the focus group responses? Should they rely more on student perceptions or teacher perceptions when these perceptions disagree? Are there requirements that could be put in place that will help schools undertaking this process to ensure they address this challenge?

- **Stress triangulation of data to support conclusions**
- **Have specialized personnel from the district assist in specific areas (a data analyst or curriculum director)**
- **Have external entity do the audit**