Definitions

Qualitative

The qualitative component of the consolidated needs assessment focuses on four key domains: Leadership, Talent, Instruction, and Culture. For each domain, you'll find a set of specific indicators designed to guide your team's evaluation. During the assessment process, your leadership team will engage in a thorough discussion of each indicator, gathering and documenting concrete evidence to support your observations. Subsequently, your team will assign a score from 1 to 4, reflecting the Local Education Agency's (LEA) current state for that particular indicator. Detailed descriptors for each rating level (1, 2, 3, and 4) are provided within the assessment tool itself, ensuring clarity and consistency in scoring. These four domains are derived from the 'Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement' framework, developed by the Center on School Turnaround at WestEd, a widely recognized model for driving effective school improvement

Qualitative data illuminates the nuanced realities of a school environment, providing rich context, deeper understanding, and insights into lived experiences. This type of data is gathered through various methods, including:

- **Interviews:** Engaging in one-on-one or group conversations with students, teachers, parents, and community members to capture their individual perspectives and stories.
- **Observations:** Systematically observing classroom dynamics, school culture, and interactions among different stakeholders to gain firsthand insights.
- **Focus Groups:** Facilitating guided discussions with diverse groups to explore and unpack complex issues and gather a range of viewpoints.
- **Document Analysis:** Scrutinizing school reports, student work samples, meeting minutes, and other qualitative records to identify patterns and themes.

While quantitative data, such as standardized test scores and attendance rates, offers valuable numerical metrics, it often lacks the contextual depth and human element that qualitative data provides. By incorporating qualitative data, we gain a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Leadership	Leadership encompasses the proactive and collaborative efforts of education leaders at the state, local district, and school levels to initiate and sustain significant, positive change for all schools. Recognizing the interconnected nature of the education system, effective leadership acknowledges that initiatives at any level – state, district, or school – ripple through and impact the entire system. Therefore, a systemic approach to leadership is essential for driving coherent and impactful improvement strategies.
Talent	In the pursuit of continuous school improvement, "talent" refers to the presence of competent, committed, and highly effective personnel at all levels and within every role. Recognizing that human capital is the driving force behind student success, a strategic and systematic approach to talent management is crucial. This includes implementing robust policies and procedures for identifying, selecting, placing, developing, retaining, and sustaining qualified personnel, with a particular emphasis on teachers and school-level leaders. Strategic staffing decisions, ensuring that each school is equipped with the necessary expertise and leadership, are essential precursors to achieving significant gains in student achievement.
Instruction	Achieving meaningful gains in student learning outcomes hinges on a cohesive, system-wide commitment to fostering transformative classroom instruction. This necessitates the identification, implementation, and sustained support of effective instructional practices at the school, district, and broader system levels. Key components of effective instruction include: • **Strong Standards-Based Instruction:** Ensuring that curriculum and teaching are aligned with rigorous academic standards. • **Data-Based Planning:** Utilizing student data to inform instructional decisions and tailor teaching to individual needs. • **Differentiation and Individualization:** Adapting instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. • **Research-Based Pedagogical Approaches:** Employing instructional strategies that are supported by evidence and

	proven to be effective. • **Effective Classroom Management:** Creating a positive and productive learning environment conducive to student engagement. System-wide support involves providing teachers with the necessary resources, professional development, and collaborative opportunities to implement these practices with fidelity.
Culture	School culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the learning environment and influence student success. Effective leadership fosters a collaborative culture by establishing structures and opportunities for faculty and staff to work together towards common goals, cultivating mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a laser focus on student learning. A thriving school community actively cultivates a positive culture both within and beyond the school walls, systematically gathering input from diverse stakeholders and regularly assessing perceptions about the school's climate. A positive school climate is characterized by: • A supportive and fulfilling environment for all members of the school community. • Learning conditions that are responsive to the diverse needs of every student. • Clear roles and relationships that contribute to student learning. • A foundation of trust, respect, and high expectations.

Quantitative

All Educators' Years of Experience	All educators are defined by employees that are assigned to a position that requires an educators license.
K-12 Classroom SPED Teachers' Years of Experience	The previous years of experience of educators with a .5 FTE or greater SPED assignment. (sum of those years)
Teacher Hiring	This section of the CNA asks LEAs to

	consider important vacancy, hiring, and attritions rates. However, this information is not currently available to the USBE. LEA's are encouraged to record their respective data into these fields.
Licensed Staff Full-Time Equivalent	Fulltime equivalence of positions that require a license.
Classified Staff Full-Time Equivalent	Fulltime equivalence of positions that do not require a license. (Not collected in CACTUS)
Credentials	Educators that are fully qualified for their assignment.
Salaries	Currently displaying years of experience This section of the CNA asks LEAs to consider important compensation rates. However, this information is not currently available to the USBE. LEA's are encouraged to record their respective data into these fields.
Mobility Rate	The number and percentage of students transferring out of a school within a school year, excluding those changing grades within the same school.
4 Year Graduation Rate	The number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who formed the adjusted cohort for that graduating class.
Dropout Rate for 4 Year Graduation Cohort	The cohort dropout rate is the percentage of students in a cohort whose status is Dropout at the end of their cohort period. A student's cohort year (four-year cohort) is their expected graduation year, calculated as four years from the start of their ninth-grade year.

Dropout Rate for Grades 7 – 12	The single-year dropout rate is the percentage of students who dropped out of school in a single year, regardless of their cohort year. Students who drop out multiple times in a school year are reported as a dropout only once for that school year. Students who drop out in more than one year are reported as single-year dropouts for every year in which they drop out.
Suspension/Expulsion 1 to 9 Days	The number and percentage of students that received a suspension or expulsion code that totals between 1 and 9 days.
Suspension/Expulsion 10 Days or More	The number and percentage of students that received a suspension or expulsion code that exceeds 9 days.
Ever Suspended/Expelled	The number and percentage of students that have ever been suspended or expelled.
Average Daily Attendance	Average of the days attended reported, divided by the average of the days enrolled.
Over 15 Days Absent	The number and percentage of students that missed more than 15 days.
Chronic Absenteeism	The number and percentage of students that missed 10% or more of their days/classes.
ACT Composite	The number and percentage of students in the prior year's graduating class that earned a composite score on the ACT of at least an 18, during their 11th grade administration.
Advanced Placement	The number and percentage of students who enrolled in one or more advanced placement course as well as numbers for passing the course with a

	grade of C or higher.
Career Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator	The number and percentage of students who have completed at least two career and technical education (CTE) courses within a specific CTE program.
Reaching EL Growth Goal	The percentage of students who met their EL progress target or who reached proficiency.
Attained EL Proficiency	The percentage of students that met the English language proficiency exit criteria during the previous school year.
Monitoring Group	Students who have reached English language proficiency within the previous four years. (cohort groups)
Academic Percent Proficient	The percentage and number of students in grades 3-10 for ELA and mathematics and grades 4-10 in science that met or exceeded the proficiency cut score on the RISE or Utah Aspire Plus assessments.
USBE Academic Data	This data includes all valid test scores on the associated statewide assessments.
Acadience Data	The percentage and number of students meeting or exceeding benchmark levels on the reading and mathematics benchmark assessments (use the dropdown to toggle between assessments)
Acadience Data – Pathways of Progress	The percentage and number of students making or exceeding typical levels of progress on the reading and mathematics benchmark assessments (use the dropdown to toggle between assessments)
USBE Academic Data MGP	The percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the ELA, mathematics, and science grade 3-10

	RISE and Utah Aspire Plus assessments (use the dropdown to toggle between assessments) as well as the median growth percentile.
Final Summary	In this section data and reflections from the qualitative and quantitative portions of the CNA or summarized and organized to support additional reflections that can lead to specific goals and related strategies that increase the likelihood for sustained and continuous improvement for all schools.

Root Cause Analysis

A **Root Cause Analysis (RCA)** is a structured, investigative process designed to uncover the fundamental, underlying causes of a problem, rather than merely addressing its visible symptoms. In the context of Local Education Agencies (LEAs), RCA serves as a critical tool for leadership teams to delve beyond surface-level challenges impacting student achievement, school performance, or district operational efficiency. By systematically exploring the "why" behind observed issues, LEAs can move beyond temporary solutions and develop targeted, sustainable interventions that address the true root of the problem. This process empowers LEAs to create lasting, positive change by focusing on the core drivers of success.

Why is RCA important for LEAs?
- **Focuses on solutions, not symptoms:** By going beyond the surface, LEAs avoid Band-Aid solutions that only temporarily address symptoms and don't prevent the problem from recurring.
- **Increases effectiveness:** Identifying root causes allows for evidence-based interventions tailored to the specific needs, leading to more effective use of resources and time.
- **Promotes collaboration:** The process often involves diverse stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents), fostering shared understanding and buy-in for solutions.

- **Improves long-term outcomes:** Addressing the root causes leads to more sustainable improvements in student achievement, school climate, and overall district effectiveness.

How does RCA work in LEAs?

1. **Define the problem:** Clearly identify the issue (e.g., low graduation rates, achievement gaps, teacher turnover).
2. **Gather data:** Collect information from various sources (e.g., test scores, surveys, interviews) to understand the scope and context of the problem.
3. **Analyze data:** Use tools like fishbone diagrams or "5 Whys" to identify contributing factors and potential root causes.
4. **Validate root causes:** Gather additional evidence and stakeholder input to confirm the most likely root causes.
5. **Develop solutions:** Design interventions that address the root causes, not just the symptoms.
6. **Monitor and evaluate:** Track the effectiveness of the interventions and make adjustments as needed.

Examples of LEA issues requiring RCA:

- **Low student achievement in a specific subject:** Is it a curriculum issue, instructional practice, student support, or lack of motivation?
- **High teacher turnover:** Is it workload, compensation, school climate, or professional development opportunities?
- **Chronic absenteeism:** Are there family circumstances, transportation issues, or lack of engagement with school?

By conducting thorough RCA, LEA leadership teams can move beyond surface-level solutions and address the root causes of challenges, ultimately leading to long-term improvements in student learning and district success.

5 Whys Root Cause Analysis Protocol Instructions

The 5 Whys is a simple yet powerful tool for uncovering the root cause of a problem. Here's how to use it:

1. Define the problem clearly: Start by clearly stating the issue you want to understand. For example, "Our student engagement in science class is low."

2. Ask "Why?" five times:

- **First Why:** For your stated problem, ask "Why is this happening?"
  - Example: "Why is student engagement in science class low?"
- **Subsequent Whys:**

- o For each answer to your "Why?" question, ask another "Why?" to delve deeper.
- o Example: "Because the lessons are too theoretical and don't relate to real-life."
- o Continue asking "Why?" for each answer until you reach a point where the answer cannot be logically questioned further. This is likely the root cause.

3. Document your work: For each level of the "Why?" chain, write down the question, answer, and any supporting evidence. This helps visualize the cause-and-effect relationships and prevents getting lost in the loop.

4. Analyze the root cause: Once you reach the root cause, carefully evaluate its validity and consider alternative explanations. Gather additional data if needed.

5. Develop solutions: Based on the root cause, brainstorm and prioritize solutions that address the real issue, not just the symptoms.

Tips for success:

- **Be honest and objective:** Focus on uncovering the truth, not assigning blame.
- **Don't jump to conclusions:** Stop and think critically before accepting an answer as the root cause.
- **Involve different perspectives:** Consider various stakeholders' input to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the problem.
- **Follow through:** Implementing effective solutions based on the root cause is crucial for lasting change.

Final Summary

This section serves as a comprehensive synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the Consolidated Needs Assessment (CNA). By organizing and summarizing the key insights and reflections from both data streams, LEA leadership teams will gain a clear, holistic understanding of their current state. This summary will facilitate a focused discussion on identifying both areas of strength and areas for strategic growth. Building upon this analysis, LEA teams will formulate specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals and develop targeted strategies to drive sustained and continuous improvement across all schools. These goals will directly inform the development of the LEA's Utah Continuous Improvement Plan, which is a critical component of the Consolidated Pre-application within the Utah Grants Management system. This process ensures that data-driven insights translate into actionable plans for enhancing educational outcomes for all students.