

Developing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Your CNA should focus on academic and other information about all students on your campus, including economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, and migrant students. This information must include student achievement in relation to state standards, and should also include the campus's current status regarding student needs, curriculum and instruction, professional development, family and community involvement, and campus context and organization.

There are five recommended steps you should take to conduct the CNA:

- 1. Establish a schoolwide planning team.** Your campus needs an effective team to lead the development of the schoolwide program. This team should organize and oversee the CNA process; lead staff in developing the campus improvement plan; and conduct or oversee the program's annual evaluation. In addition to the principal or another knowledgeable instructional leader, the team might consist of campus and district administrators; teachers representing different grades and content areas; other professional staff on the campus, such as guidance counselors and curriculum specialists; parents and other community members; and students (in a secondary school).
- 2. Clarify the vision for reform.** Before the CNA begins, campus staff should discuss their vision for a reformed campus in terms of student success, and the difference between that vision and the campus in its current state. This discussion helps identify the strengths and challenges the campus must address to achieve meaningful change, improve student achievement, and attain the collective vision.
- 3. Create the campus profile.** All staff must understand the campus's current state in order to understand the gap between the current campus and the campus after reform. A campus profile, which is a data-driven description of the campus's student, staff, and community demographics, programs, and mission, can help identify the focus areas of the CNA and suggest critical areas that the team can address in the campus improvement plan.
- 4. Identify data sources.** The schoolwide planning team should gather and organize data in the identified areas of focus. Some of the necessary quantitative data, such as student achievement results, enrollment counts, dropout rates, and graduation rates is readily available. The team may also have to gather qualitative data by using written surveys or interviews, focus groups, or classroom observations.
- 5. Analyze data.** The team should conduct thorough data analysis to progress from gathering information to creating a campus improvement plan that accurately and realistically addresses the key issues facing the campus.

The schoolwide planning team should create a report or other document that summarizes the data it gathered and used, the conclusions it drew from the analysis, and the needs it identified.