AGENTS OF CHANGE FOR EQUITY

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

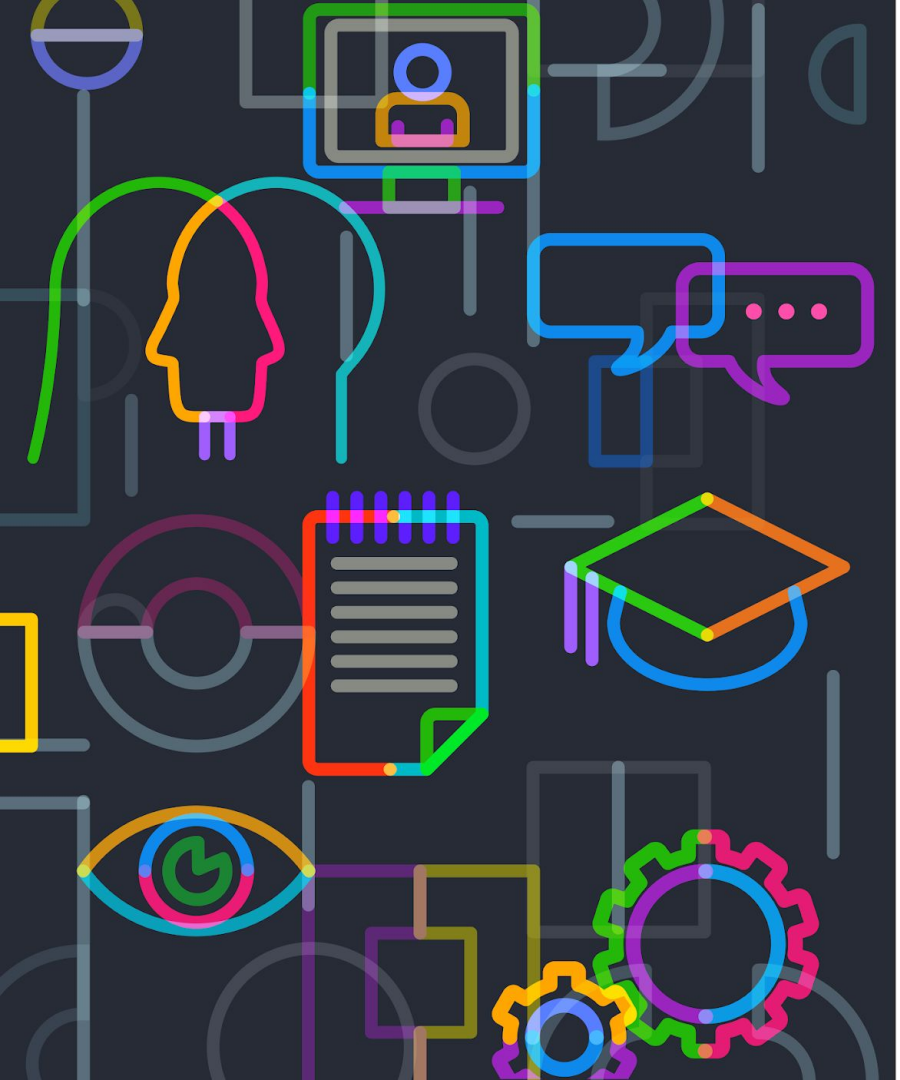
AQuESTT: Statewide System of Support

Dr. Shirley Vargas

Lane Carr

Objectives

- Learn about AQuESTT classifications and designations
- Discern the difference between continuous and school improvement
- Develop an understanding of the statewide system of supports
- Engage in some tools for improvement



Mission:
To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

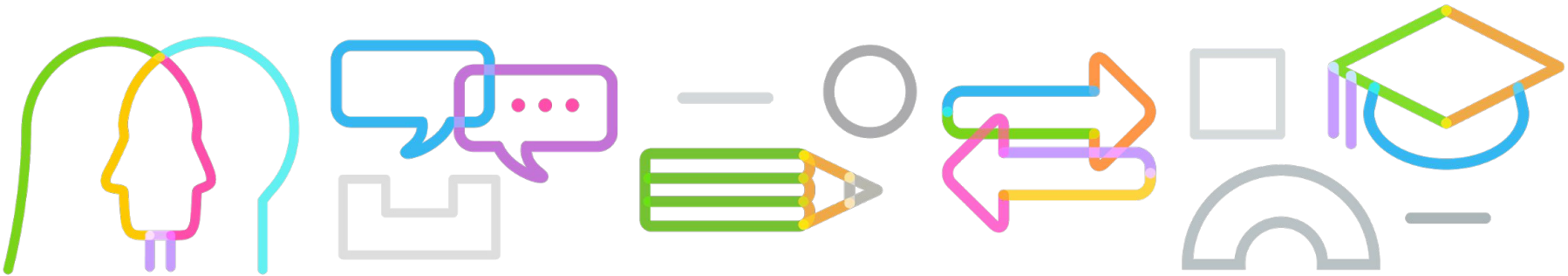
Goal:
Ensure all Nebraskans, regardless of background or circumstances, have equitable access to opportunities for success.

Goal:
Increase the number of Nebraskans who are ready for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life.

Goal:
Ensure the education system, including the Nebraska Department of Education, are taking charge of their roles and responsibilities to provide leadership and enhance school support systems in the state.

Educational Equity

Educational equity means all students have meaningful access to the educational resources they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity to not only reach high expectations for learning, but also to discover and explore their passions and make meaningful connections within the context of their postsecondary interests, careers, and civic lives.



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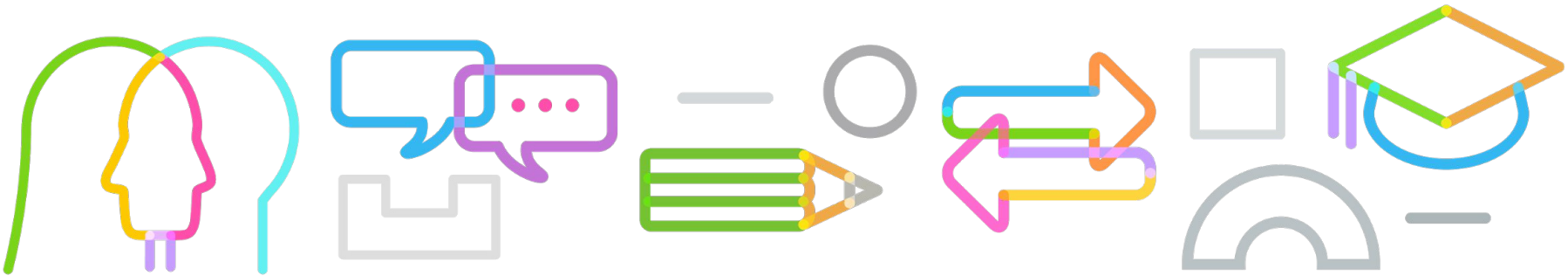


School Improvement Core Beliefs

We believe:

- ...in the value of work already taking place in schools.
- ...all schools can improve.
- ...demography is not destiny.
- ...school improvement is fundamentally about equity.

AQuESTT Tenets

Classification

Status (Percent Proficient): 4, 3, 2, 1

Partnerships/ Relationships	Transitions	Opportunities & Access	CCCR	Assessment	Educator Effectiveness
	0 -1	+1 +0		+1 +0 -1	
	51% 4 Year Graduation Rate	50% Chronic Absenteeism		50% Score Improvement	
	49% Extended Graduation	50% Progress towards English proficiency		35% Non-Proficiency Reduction	
				5% Science Proficiency	
				10% Science Score Improvement	

Evidence-Based Analysis +1 +0

For more information on classification, visit www.aquestt.com/resources and select "2017-18 Classification Rules"

Classifications

15% (150)

44% (443)

39% (386)

13% (131)

Designation

27 schools

Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI)

- Lowest 5% of Title I schools
- High schools with grad rates below 67%
- Consistently low-performing student group

Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)

- Consistently low-performing student group

**Beginning in 2019, any school with consistently low-performing subgroup may not be classified as Excellent*

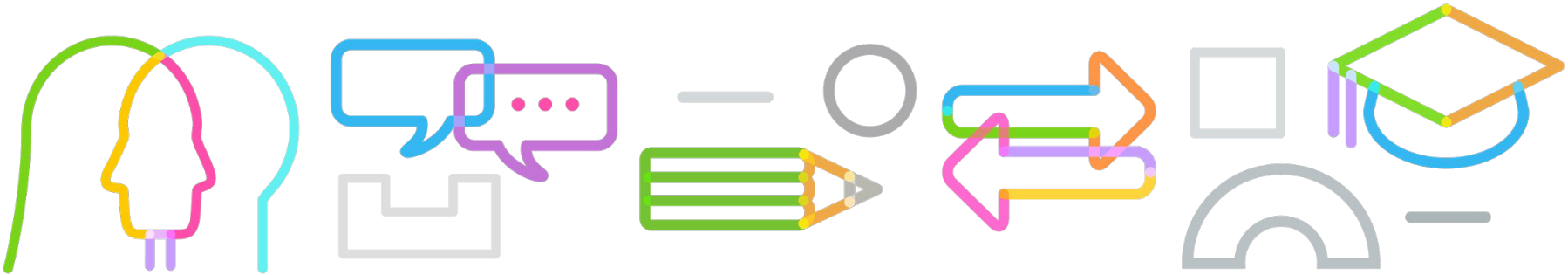
Priority Schools

Among the lowest performing schools AND demonstrate the greatest need to implement and sustain school improvement efforts

4 schools

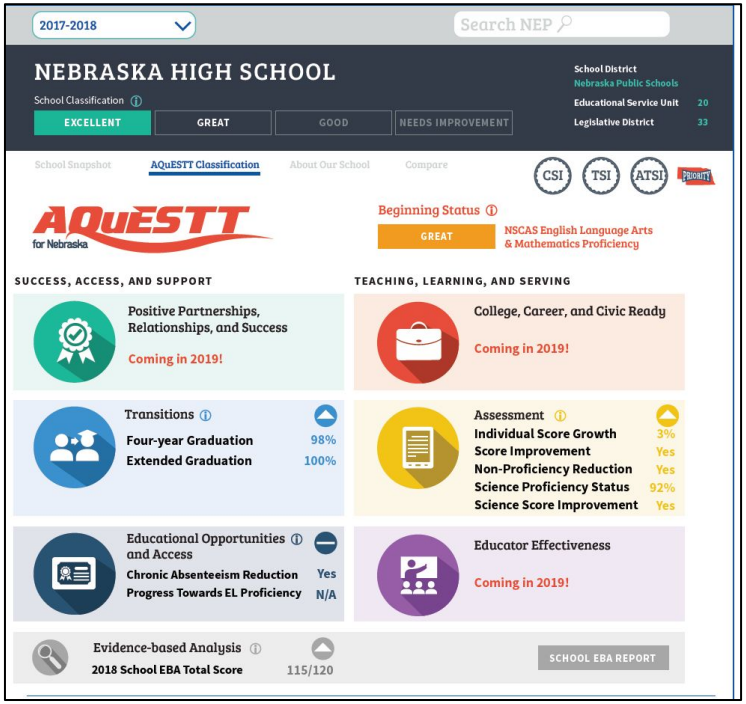
Student Groups for Targeted Support and Improvement

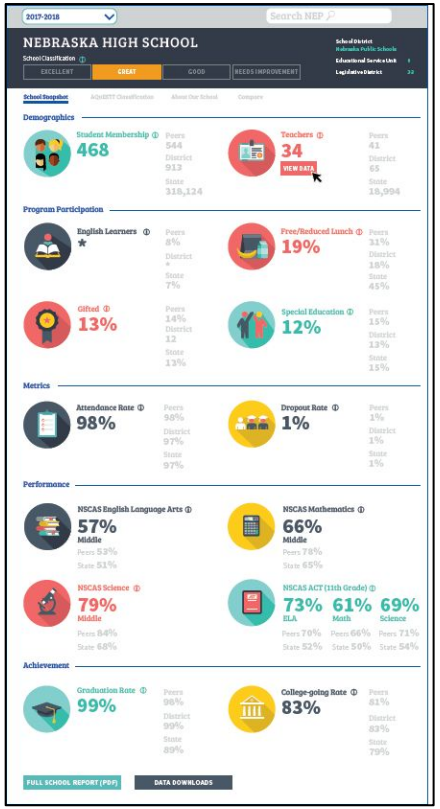
- Black/African American
- Latinx/Hispanic
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Two or More Races
- White
- Economically Disadvantaged
- English Learners
- Students with Disabilities



Nebraska Education Profile

- nep.education.ne.gov
- One-stop shop for education data
- Compare Feature
- Data Downloads

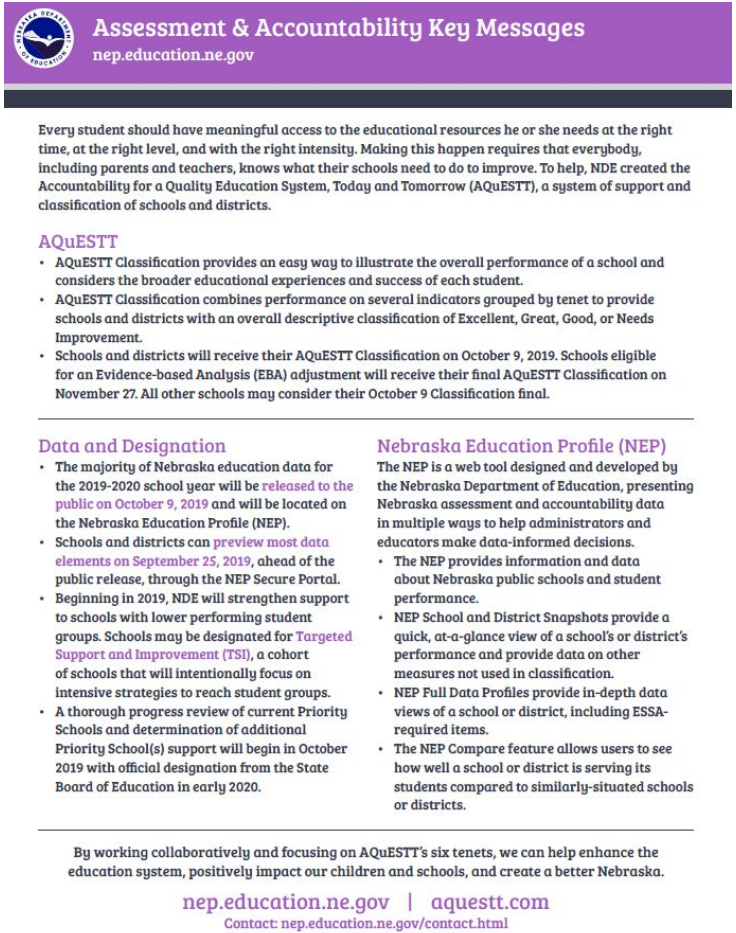




Key Messages

Highlights

- Very few, small tweaks to AQuESTT system this year
- Earlier timelines
- Enhancements to streamline the EBA process
- Data available on Nebraska Education Profile
- Targeted Support and Improvement Designation



Assessment & Accountability Key Messages

nep.education.ne.gov

Every student should have meaningful access to the educational resources he or she needs at the right time, at the right level, and with the right intensity. Making this happen requires that everybody, including parents and teachers, knows what their schools need to do to improve. To help, NDE created the Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT), a system of support and classification of schools and districts.

AQuESTT

- AQuESTT Classification provides an easy way to illustrate the overall performance of a school and considers the broader educational experiences and success of each student.
- AQuESTT Classification combines performance on several indicators grouped by tenet to provide schools and districts with an overall descriptive classification of Excellent, Great, Good, or Needs Improvement.
- Schools and districts will receive their AQuESTT Classification on October 9, 2019. Schools eligible for an Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) adjustment will receive their final AQuESTT Classification on November 27. All other schools may consider their October 9 Classification final.

Data and Designation

- The majority of Nebraska education data for the 2019-2020 school year will be released to the public on October 9, 2019 and will be located on the Nebraska Education Profile (NEP).
- Schools and districts can preview most data elements on September 25, 2019, ahead of the public release, through the NEP Secure Portal.
- Beginning in 2019, NDE will strengthen support to schools with lower performing student groups. Schools may be designated for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), a cohort of schools that will intentionally focus on intensive strategies to reach student groups.
- A thorough progress review of current Priority Schools and determination of additional Priority School(s) support will begin in October 2019 with official designation from the State Board of Education in early 2020.

Nebraska Education Profile (NEP)

The NEP is a web tool designed and developed by the Nebraska Department of Education, presenting Nebraska assessment and accountability data in multiple ways to help administrators and educators make data-informed decisions.

- The NEP provides information and data about Nebraska public schools and student performance.
- NEP School and District Snapshots provide a quick, at-a-glance view of a school's or district's performance and provide data on other measures not used in classification.
- NEP Full Data Profiles provide in-depth data views of a school or district, including ESSA-required items.
- The NEP Compare feature allows users to see how well a school or district is serving its students compared to similarly-situated schools or districts.

By working collaboratively and focusing on AQuESTT's six tenets, we can help enhance the education system, positively impact our children and schools, and create a better Nebraska.

nep.education.ne.gov | aquestt.com

Contact: nep.education.ne.gov/contact.html

bit.ly/2019nep

Timelines

Assessment & Accountability Key Dates

nep.education.ne.gov

Below are key dates for the release of Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) and Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) data. Published data elements can be found on the Nebraska Education Profile (NEP), the Nebraska Department of Education's one-stop education data website.

August 5, 2019	Printed *NSCAS Alternate* Individual Student Reports (ISRs) delivered to districts
August 12-20, 2019	NSCAS District Preliminary Data Clean-up Window
August 30, 2019	Printed *NSCAS ACT* Individual Student Reports (ISRs) delivered to districts
September 25, 2019 (Secure Release)	Assessment Performance, Attendance, Participation, Demographics, and AQuESTT Raw Classification data published to the NEP Secure Portal (district view only, not public), district data validity verification
September 27, 2019	Notification of Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) adjustment-eligible schools
October 9, 2019 (Public Release)	Full Data Profile and Snapshot published on NEP with AQuESTT Classification and Assessment data (full public view)
October 14, 2019	Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) evidence due to NDE (for adjustment-eligible schools)
October 15-November 1, 2019	Review of Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) evidence
October 21-25, 2019	Printed *NSCAS General* Individual Student Reports (ISRs) delivered to districts
November 27, 2019 (Public Release)	Final AQuESTT Classifications, including EBA adjustments, published on the NEP

bit.ly/2019nep

From Classification and Designation to Support

School Improvement and Continuous Improvement

Continuous Improvement

Any school or instructional-improvement process that unfolds progressively, that does not have a fixed or predetermined end point, and that is sustained over extended periods of time. The concept also encompasses the general belief that improvement is not something that starts and stops, but it's something that requires an organizational or professional commitment to an ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth.

http://edglossary.org/continuous-improvement/

School Improvement

Dramatic and comprehensive intervention in low-performing schools. Involves turnaround leadership, culture shift, instructional transformation, and talent development.

https://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CST_Four-Domains-Framework-Final.pdf

Continuous vs. School Improvement

Headache	**= Symptom/signal for improvement (ex. test scores)**
Doctor	**= Needs assessment/Root cause analysis**
High blood pressure	**= Diagnosis / identification of areas of focus**
Eating Healthy, Brushing your Teeth, Exercising	**= Continuous improvement**

School Improvement Requires Differing Levels of Support

School Improvement Beliefs:

- All schools can improve
- School improvement is fundamentally about equity

There must be a concerted effort to improve our lowest performing schools, so that we can achieve the aspirational measures of success, as outlined in the State Board's Strategic Vision and Direction.

https://nebraskaeducationvision.com/about/

Defining a Statewide System of Support

- Recall your classroom teaching experience
- Think about one of your students and what made their learning unique
  - How did you **differentiate** supports and tailor your teaching to meet their needs?
  - How did you **intensify** your approach to ensure that student's success?
  - How did your **focus** change when you discovered that student wasn't learning or needed additional supports?
- How did you elevate the students who were excelling?

Think - Pair - Share

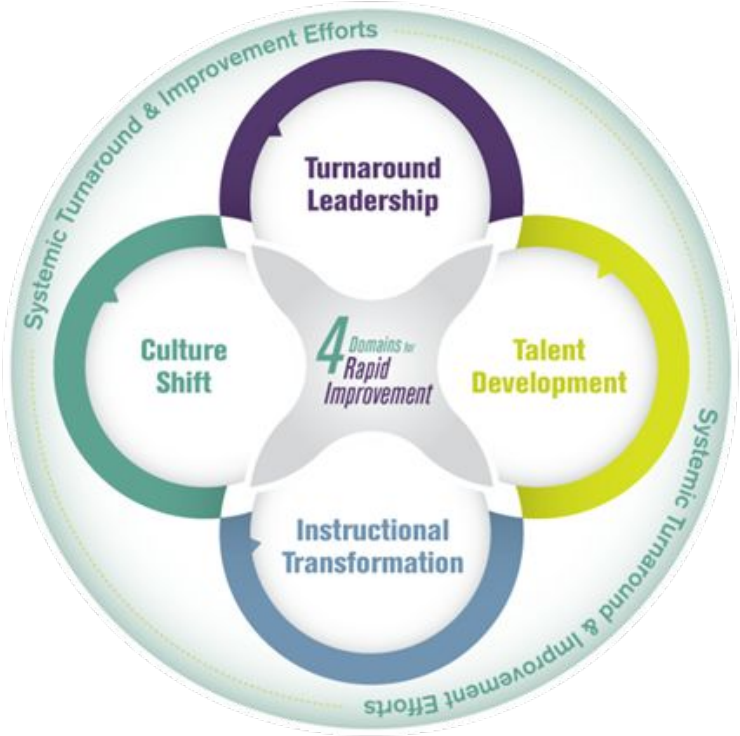
Statewide System of Supports

Focus - Prioritize the highest leverage areas (leadership, instruction, culture, talent) to school improvement using the Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement

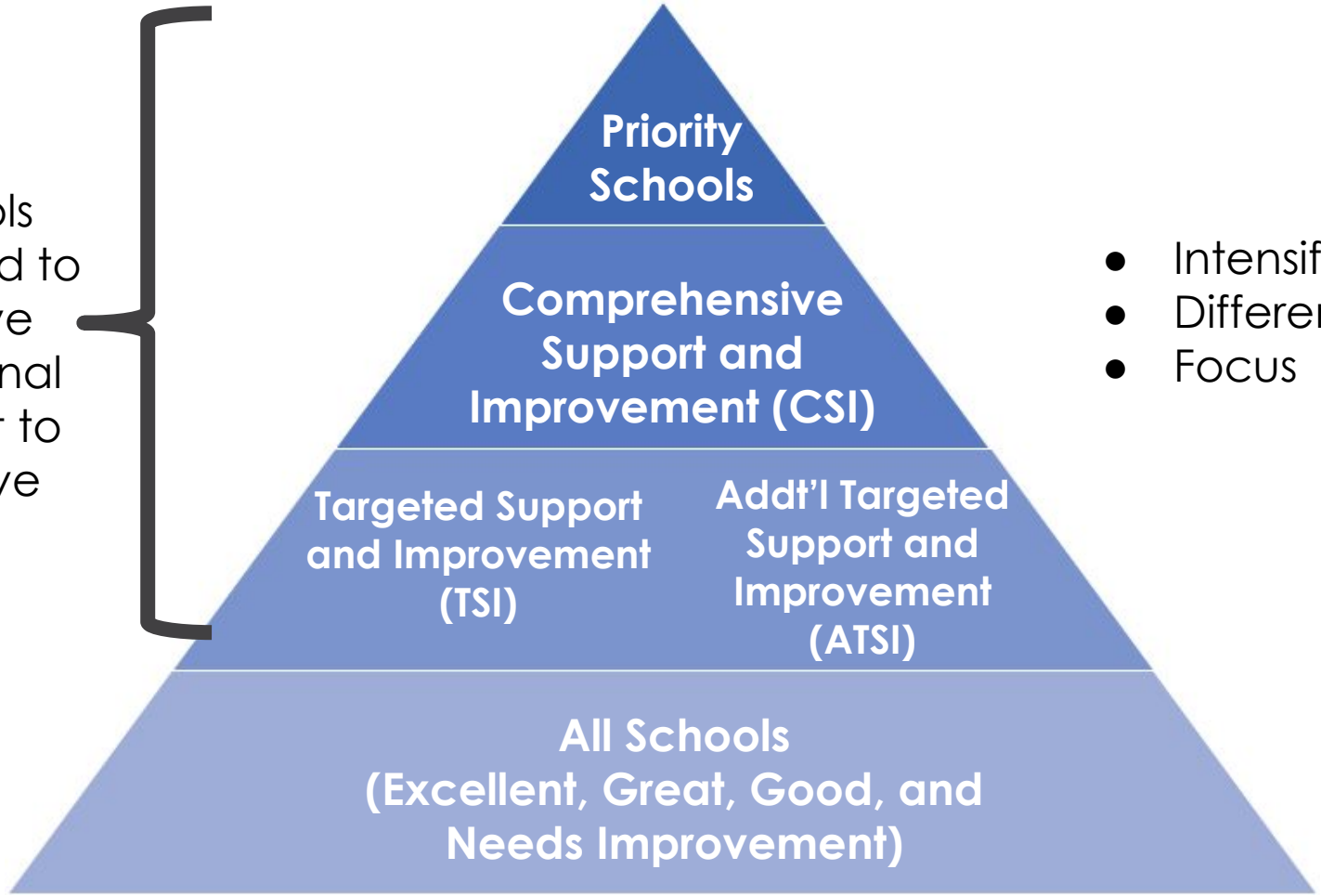
Differentiate - Consider the different needs of schools and adjust supports based on those needs

Intensify - Frequency of current supports increase

Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement

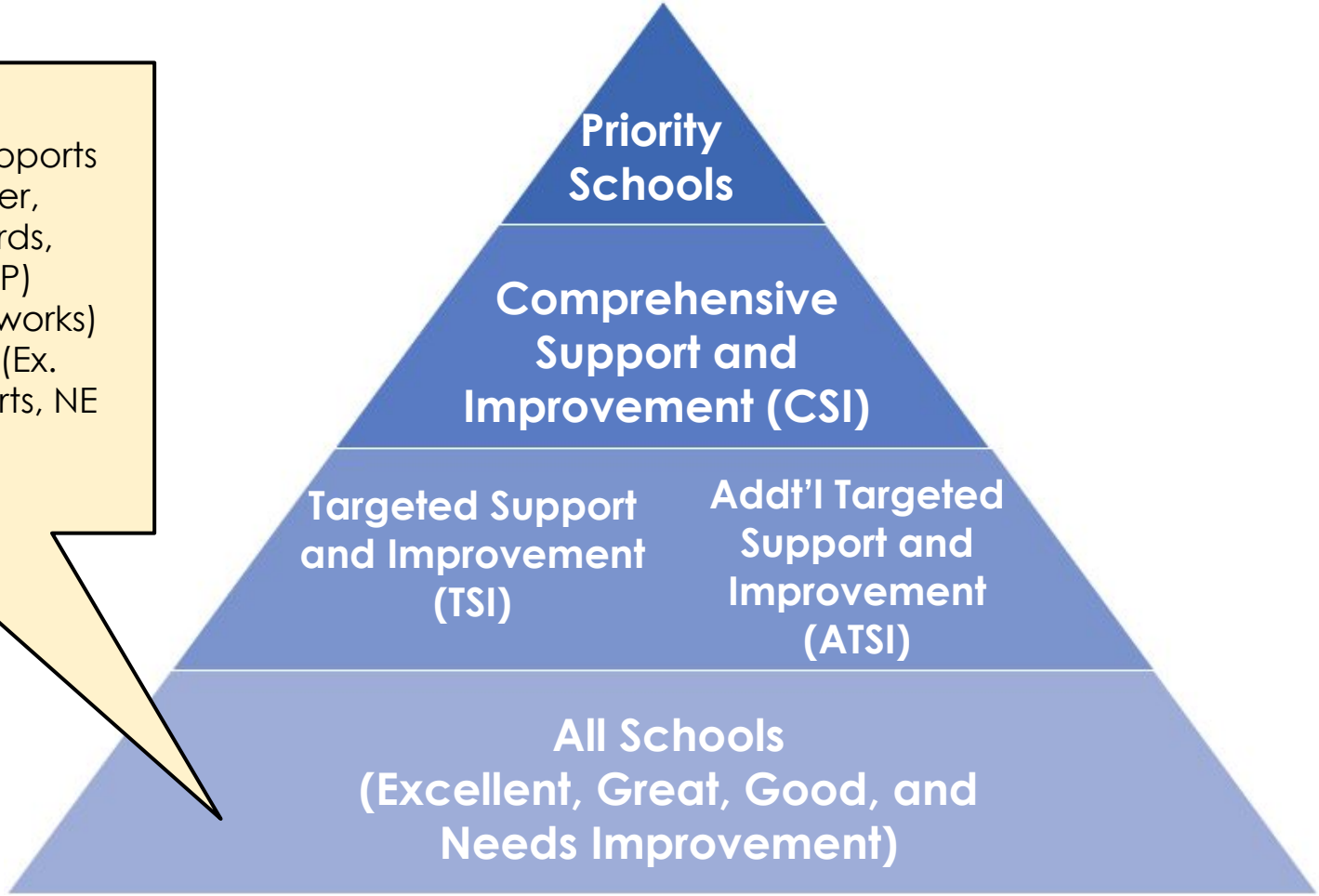


Schools identified to receive additional support to improve



- Intensification
- Differentiation
- Focus

- General, universal supports (Ex. NEMaterials Matter, content area standards, accreditation and CIP)
- Tools (Ex. NEP, Frameworks)
- Technical assistance (Ex. English learner supports, NE Help Desk)



Example Support

NEBRASKA
EVERY DAY
COUNTS!

Each year in Nebraska, almost 36,000 students are chronically absent.
This absenteeism disproportionately affects students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students. There are many steps educators can take to address chronic absence within their schools.

How does Nebraska define chronic absenteeism?
A student is chronically absent when they miss 10% of their time in membership.
Examples:
1) Blake is enrolled in his school for 50 days, and misses 5. He is chronically absent.
2) Mona misses 18 days of school out of her district's 175. She is chronically absent.
3) Cora misses 3 days of her 130 enrolled days. She is not chronically absent.

How is chronic absence different from truancy?

Truancy	Vs.	Chronic Absence
• Counts only unexcused absences • Emphasizes compliance with school rules • Relies on legal and administrative solutions		• Counts all absences: excused, unexcused, and suspensions • Emphasizes academic impact of missed days • Uses community-based, positive strategies

What resources are available to help me accurately record and report students who are chronically absent?
We know each student situation is unique. The NDE provides guidance around this topic. Search the NDE website at education.ne.gov for:
- Rule 2: Uniform System of Accounting
- ADVISER: Who Reports What
- ADVISER: Data Elements

When in doubt, contact the Nebraska Department of Education Help Desk for guidance. They can be reached at ADVISERHelp@Nebraskacloud.org or 888.285.0556.

NEBRASKA
EVERY DAY
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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Why absenteeism matters:
- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2 to 4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Absenteeism and its ill effects start early. One in 10 kindergarten and first grade students are chronically absent.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or are held back.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absence.
- Students who live in communities with high levels of poverty are four times more likely to be chronically absent than others, often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and a lack of access to healthcare.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.

NEBRASKA
EVERY DAY
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INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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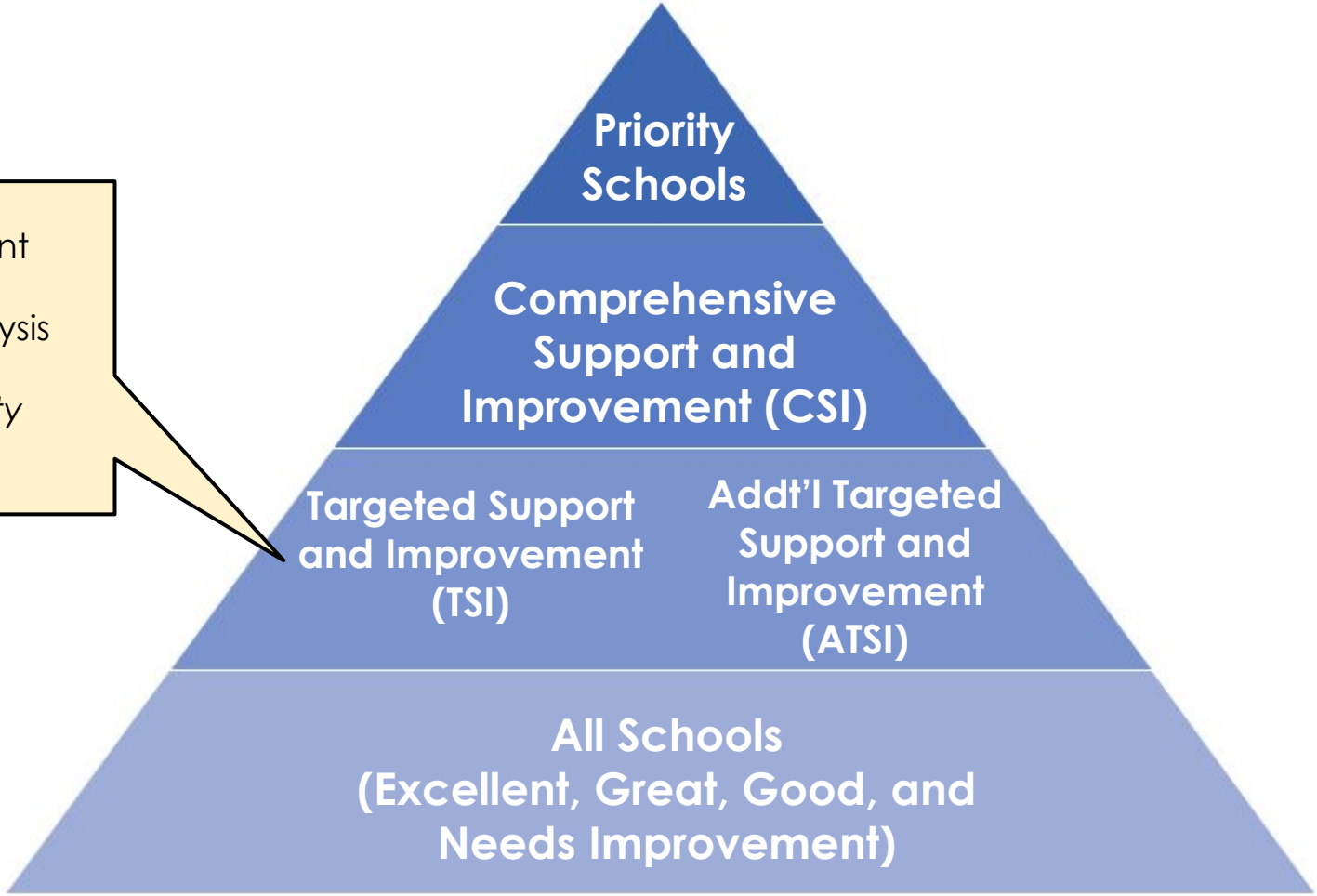
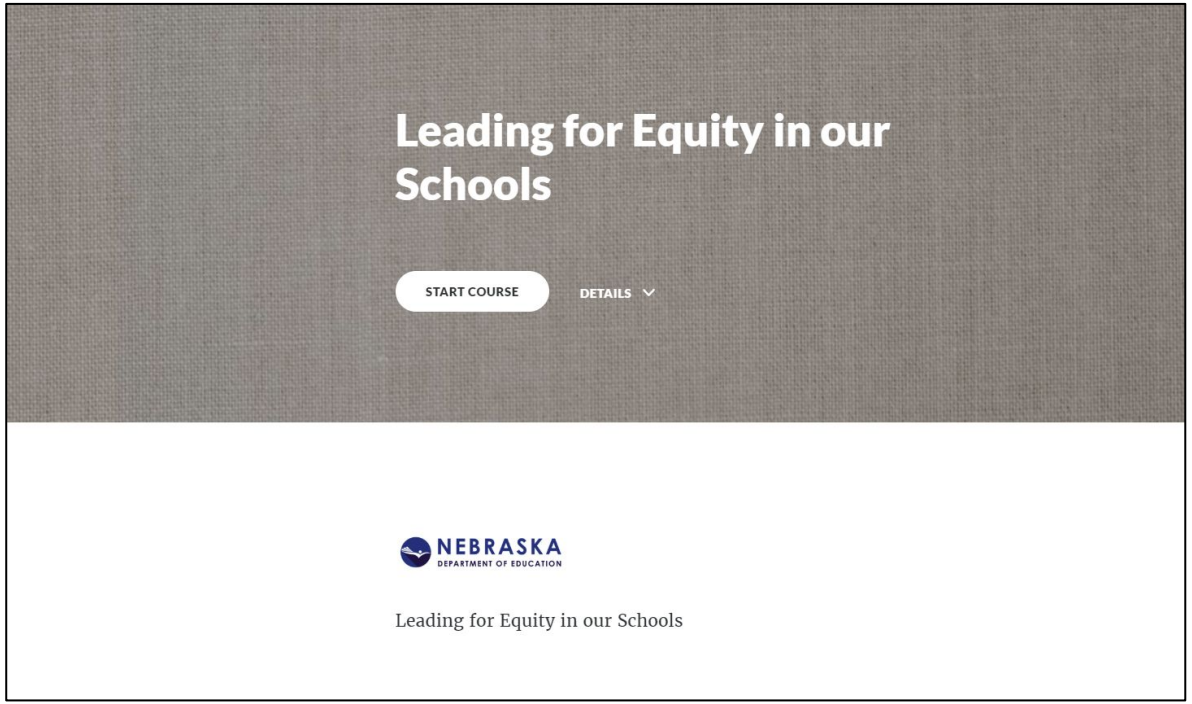
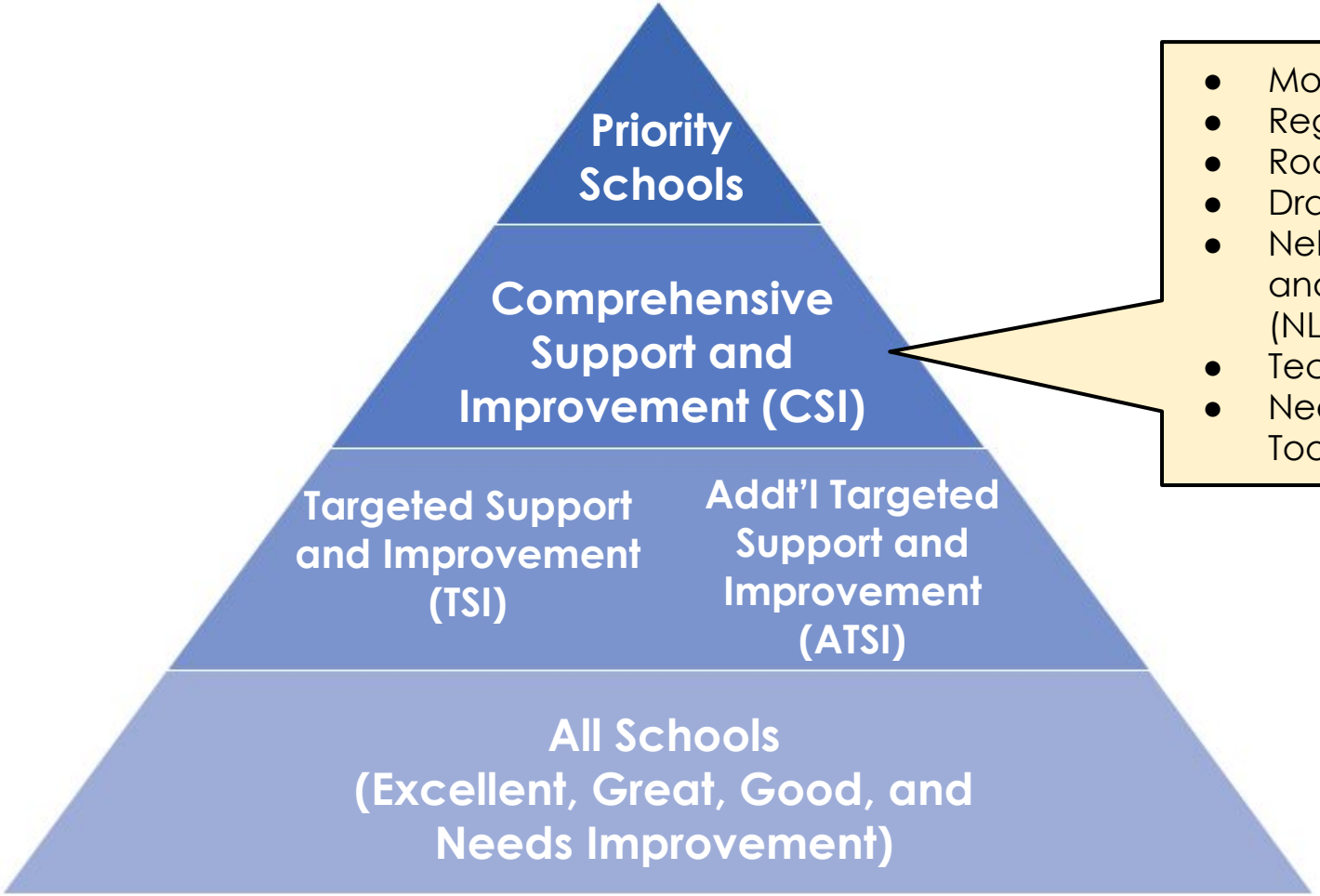
- Needs Assessment Tool
- Root cause analysis
- Equity Institute
- *Leading for Equity* Module



Example Support





- Monthly meetings
- Regional convenings
- Root cause analysis
- Draft SMART goals
- Nebraska Leadership and Learning Network (NLLN)
- Technical assistance
- Needs Assessment Tool

Example Support

Overview of the NDE Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Tool

This document includes an OVERVIEW tab, ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS tab, SCREENER tab (optional), SELECT TENETS tab (optional), RUBRIC tab, RESULTS tab, and GLOSSARY tab.

Upon opening the Excel file, if prompted, click any of the following:
- ✓ "Enable editing"
- ✓ "Enable content"
- ✓ "Enable macros"

These must be enabled for the tool to work properly.

1. Introduction
2. What is the purpose of the CNA?
3. How can your school use the CNA? How long will it take?
4. How is the CNA organized?

**Click a topic above to automatically jump to information on that topic.*

1. Introduction

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) developed the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) based on quality education practices for student success. Because the tool aligns to AQuESTT, it articulates the expected education practices under each of the six tenets and the areas of focus supporting each tenet. When implemented fully, these education practices are intended to help your school achieve the following AQuESTT long-term outcomes.

Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success: Students have enhanced and sustained educational experiences and opportunities as a result of positive student, family, and community engagement.

Transitions: Students have quality educational opportunities that promote successful transitions between grade levels, programs, schools, postsecondary institutions, and careers.

Education Opportunities and Access: All students have access to equitable and comprehensive instructional opportunities that prepare them for postsecondary education and careers.

College, Career, and Civic Ready: Upon completion of secondary education, every student is prepared for postsecondary education, career, and civic opportunities.

Assessment: School staff effectively use assessments to measure and improve student achievement and to inform instruction.

Educator Effectiveness: Students are supported by qualified/credentialed, effective teachers and leaders throughout their learning experiences.

2. What is the purpose of the CNA?

The purpose of this tool is to help your school assess current practices, determine your areas of strength, and identify your priority needs for improvement. Because the tool defines practices for school improvement under AQuESTT, it should be an integrated, ongoing part of the continuous improvement process. Your school team can use the needs assessment results to

- examine root causes of areas in need of improvement,
- identify strategies and interventions to address root causes,
- determine action steps for implementing strategies and interventions,
- identify areas for professional learning, technical assistance, and resources to support implementation of strategies and interventions,

Overview | Administration Instructions | Rubric | Results | Glossary

STEP 5: Complete Rubric

To complete the rubric for these tenets, provide your rating for each dimension in the corresponding dropdown menu in the *Select Score Here* column. You can select N/A, if available, to show that the dimension is not relevant to your school. Cumulative average values will automatically update. Additionally, check all sources of evidence in the *List Supporting Evidence* column. The sources of evidence listed in this column are examples. If you have other sources of evidence, check the *Other* box and type those sources in the space below.

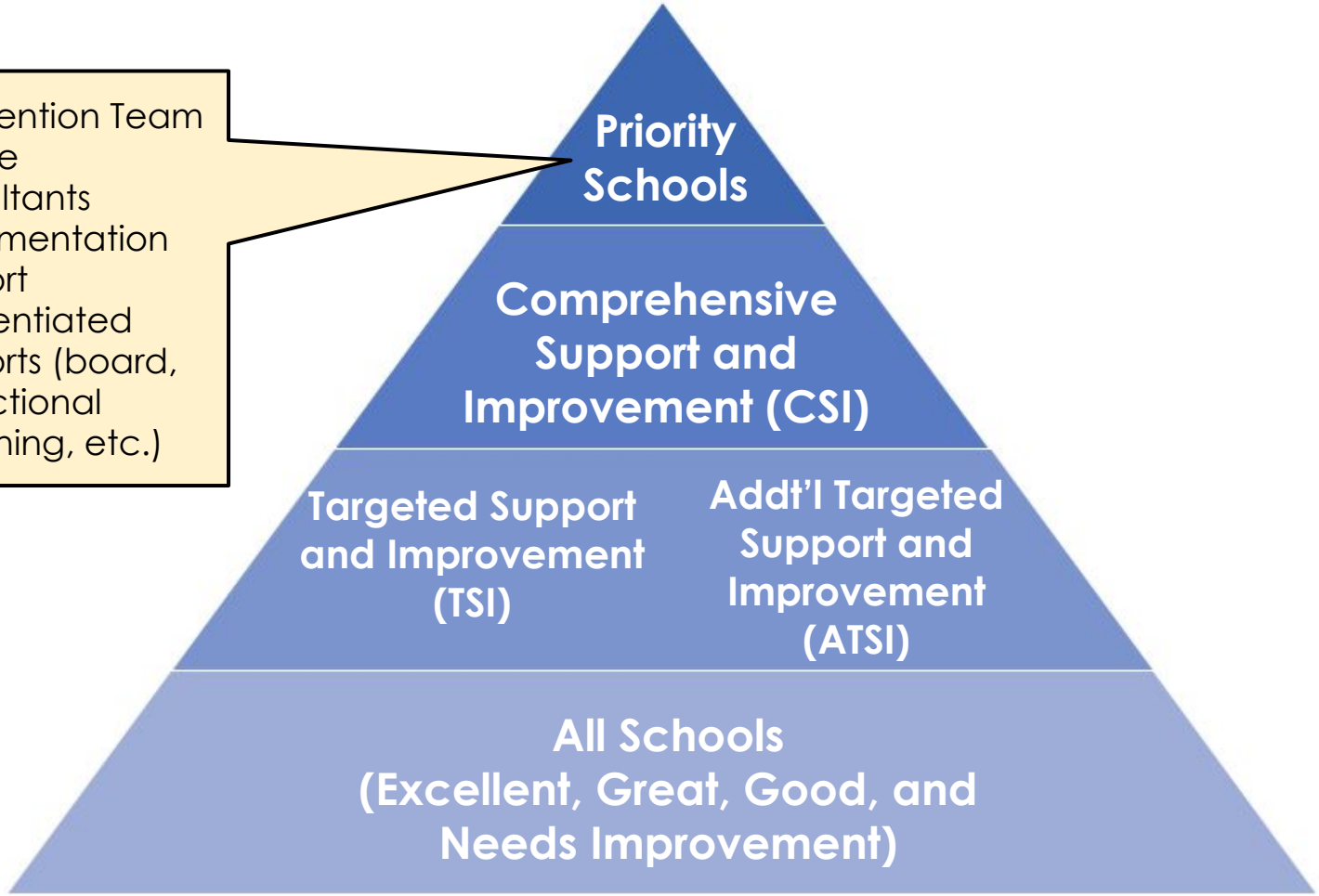
Tenet: **Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success**

Long-Term Outcome: Student, family, and community engagement enhances educational experiences and opportunities.

Dimension	Rate Each Dimension 4	3	2	1	Select Score Here	List Supporting Evidence (Check all that apply)	Area of Focus Average Score (Optimal = 4)
Area of Focus: **School culture and climate**							
Vision and mission of learning	School leaders have developed a vision and mission of learning collaboratively with staff and the community using quantitative and qualitative data to inform the process. School leaders *regularly* communicate the vision and mission to local stakeholders (community-based organizations, local school board, family members, etc.) to inform decisions that align with local school improvement goals.	School leaders have developed a vision and mission of learning with some stakeholders, using some data. School leaders *occasionally* communicate the vision and mission to local stakeholders (community-based organizations, local school board, family members, etc.) to inform decisions that align with local school improvement goals.	School leaders have developed a vision and mission of learning in isolation, with little or no data. School leaders *rarely* communicate the vision and mission to local stakeholders (community-based organizations, local school board, family members, etc.) to inform decisions that align with local school improvement goals.	There is no vision or mission of learning.	4	☑ Written vision, mission and core belief statements ☐ Notes/minutes from stakeholder, Leadership Team & staff meetings ☐ Evidence of vision, mission and core beliefs posted in office areas, classrooms, ☐ Staff and stakeholder surveys ☐ Other (enter below):	3.2
School culture and climate plan	School leaders and staff *fully implement* a comprehensive plan for building a school culture and climate conducive to learning based on collaboration, agalitarianism, student voice, and collegiality.	School leaders and staff *partially implement* a comprehensive plan for building a school culture and climate conducive to learning.	School leaders are developing plans for building a school culture and climate conducive to learning. No plans have been implemented.	The school has no clear plan for building a school culture and climate conducive to learning.	4	☐ PLC notes showing inclusive practices and building culture through conversations ☑ Progress reports of all students ☐ Communication- points of pride/newsletters ☑ Observations between teachers & students ☑ Celebrations of learning/attendance/ growth/behavior ☑ LEA identifies resources that provide guidance on school environment LEA uses an evidence-based model to ☑ intentionally promote mutual respect among all stakeholders ☐ Other (enter below):	
Safety and security plan	School leaders and staff *fully implement* a safety and security plan with *clearly and consistently* communicated schoolwide expectations for creating a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment. The plan addresses physical, emotional, social, and academic safety.	School leaders and staff *partially implement* a safety and security plan with *some* communication of expectations for creating a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment.	School leaders and staff are *developing* a safety and security plan for creating a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment.	The school lacks a safety and security plan.	4	☑ Procedures and plans relative to emergency preparedness ☑ List of school environment resources ☑ Written school health policies and procedures Documentation of comprehensive support ☐ services, including health and social services, that are available to students and their ☑ Documentation of information outreach to families	

Overview | Administration Instructions | Rubric | Results | Glossary

- Intervention Team
- On-site consultants
- Implementation support
- Differentiated supports (board, instructional coaching, etc.)



Example Support

Diagnostic review

- Comprehensive
- Led by external team
- Highlights success and opportunities for improvement

AQuESTT for Nebraska

2019-2020

Priority School Progress Plans

Nebraska Department of Education

From a System of Support to Skills and Strategies

Understanding the Problem Better

To better tailor supports, the schools we serve and the NDE must understand potential root causes for their problems. This is true for all schools across all levels of supports.

To engage in a root cause analysis we will…

- Identify a **learner-centered problem.**
- Discuss the **Ladder of Inference.**
- Engage in a root cause analysis through either a **Five Whys Protocol** or a **Fishbone Diagram.**
- Share ways the root cause analysis **changed our thinking**.

From a Learner-Centered Problem to a Problem of Practice

Priority Area	This year our instructional focus is about ensuring students are postsecondary and career ready.
Learner-Centered Problem	After triangulating data, we notice students are not meeting benchmark in mathematics as measured by the ACT.
Problem of Practice	After a root cause analysis, we realized that students are not meeting benchmarks because our school team has not been providing appropriate opportunities for rigorous learning in mathematics.

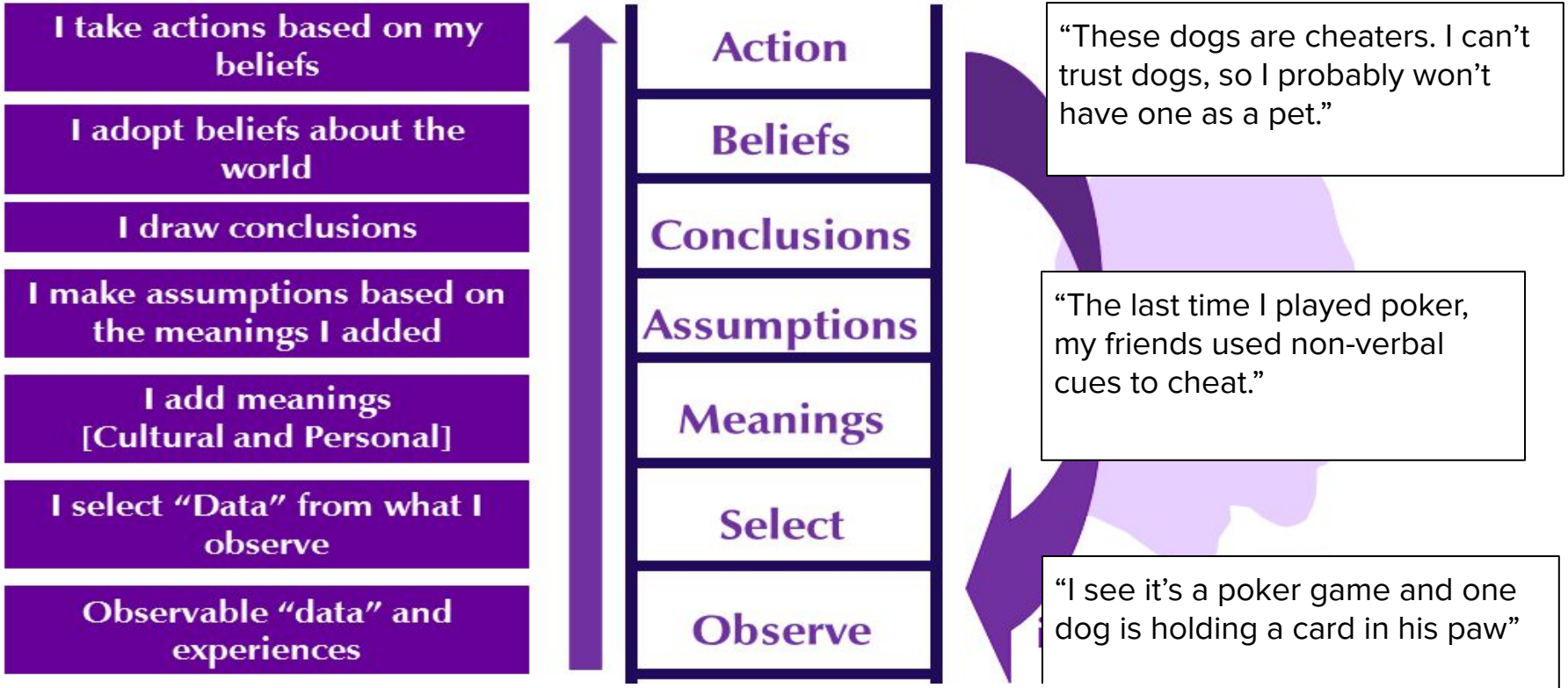
Identify a Learner-Centered Problem

Using the data at your fingertips, and the knowledge of your students and school, identify a **priority area** and a **learner-centered problem.**

Think - Pair - Share

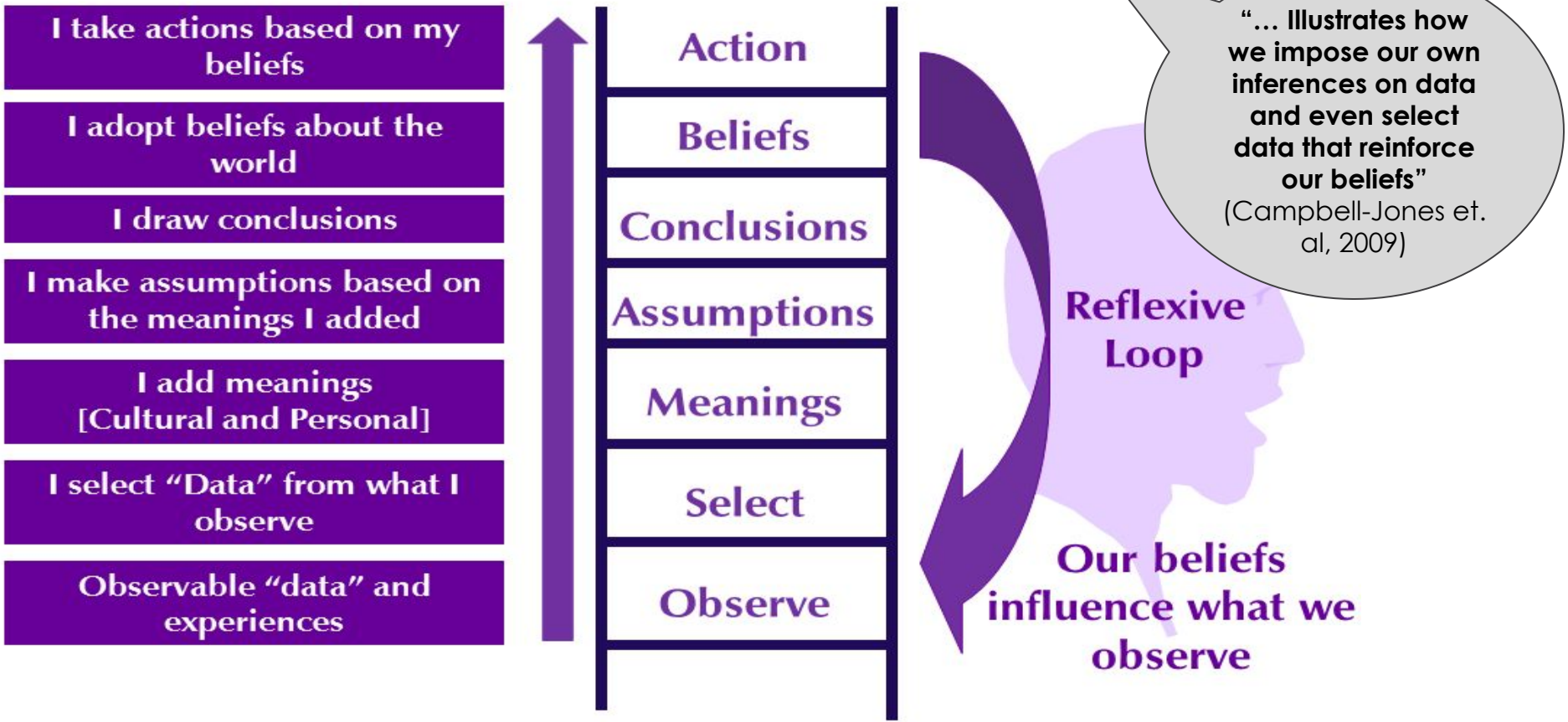
"This dog is skeptical about the other players!"
"This dog is pretty confident."
"This dog is a cheater!"

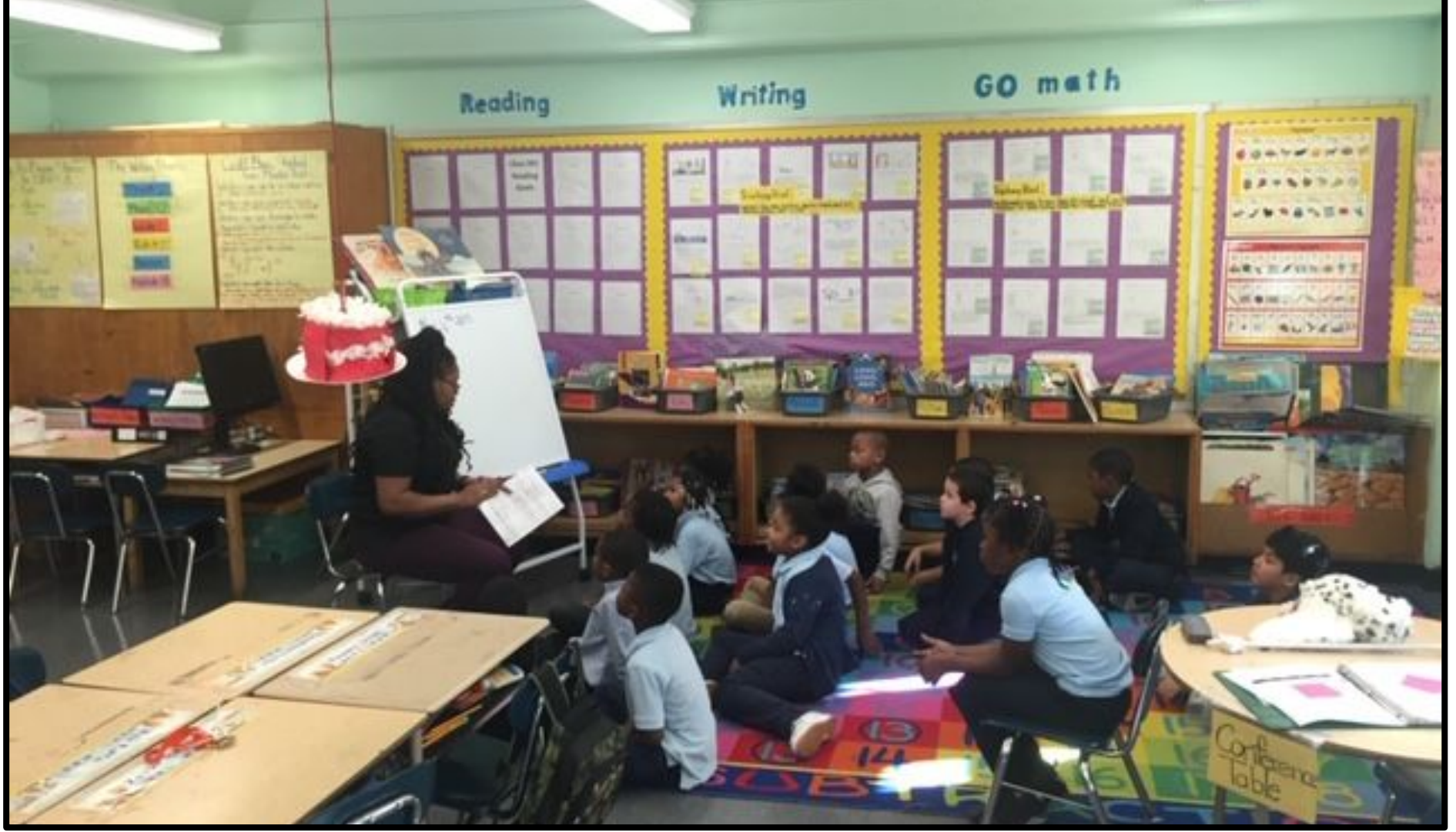
The Ladder of Inference



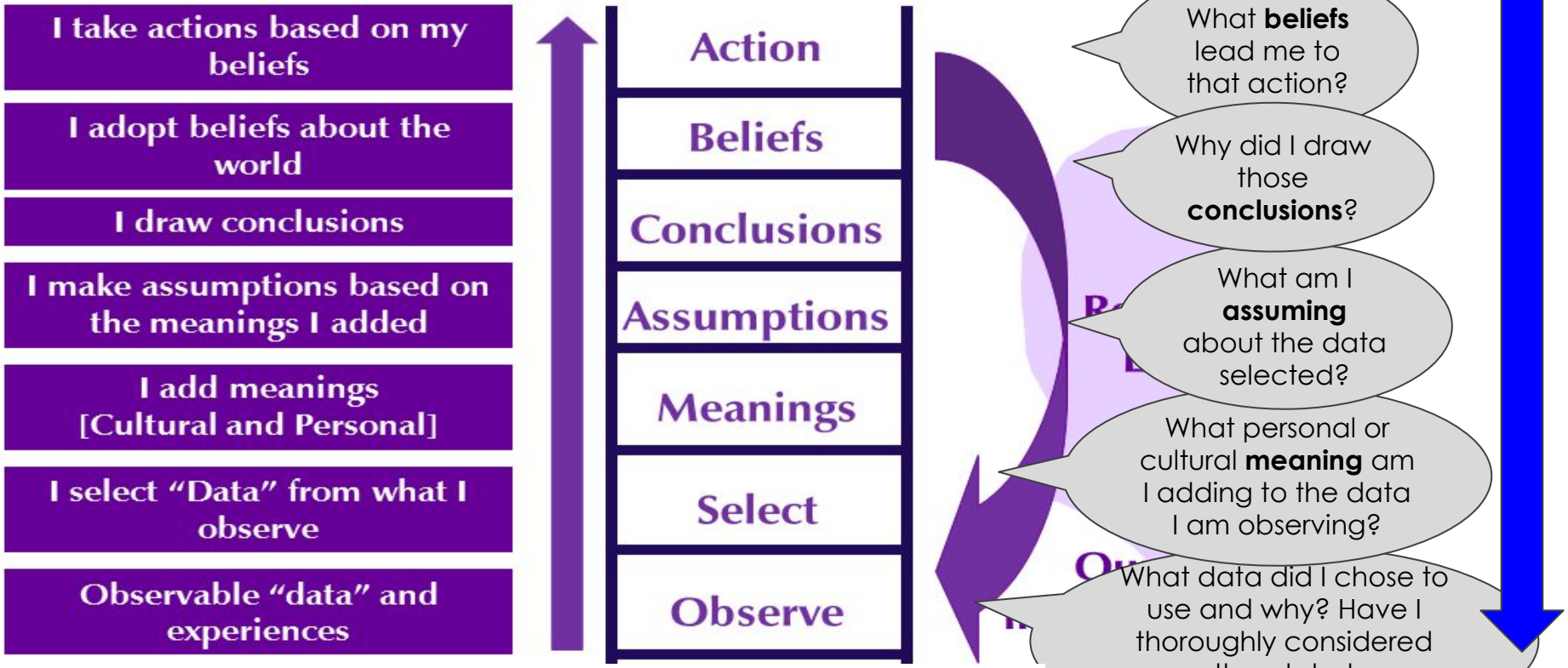
Going "up the ladder"

The Ladder of Inference




Reading
Writing
GO math
Conference Table

The Ladder of Inferenc



Going "down the ladder"

Problem: In our middle school (6-8th grade), a large percentage of our students have consistently struggled to meet proficiency benchmarks in math based on multiple sources of data.		
Symptom: 95% of all students fall below proficiency on NSCAS (on-track and CCR benchmark).	**Symptom:** While 95% of students are below proficiency, even greater gaps exist between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.	**Symptom:** During fall testing, 70% of all students show a decrease in RIT scores as shown on MAP math interim assessment.

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Why? All students do not have the opportunity to engage in rigorous math learning experiences.		
Why? Our math teachers are not teaching to the same rigor that the standards require.		
Why? Our teachers do not yet have the requisite knowledge and skill to adequately and consistently teach to the standards.		
Why? Our school has not had a consistent focus on what is effective and rigorous math instruction.		
Why? We have not invested in the training and support our teachers need to align math content standards, instructional materials, and differentiate instruction.		

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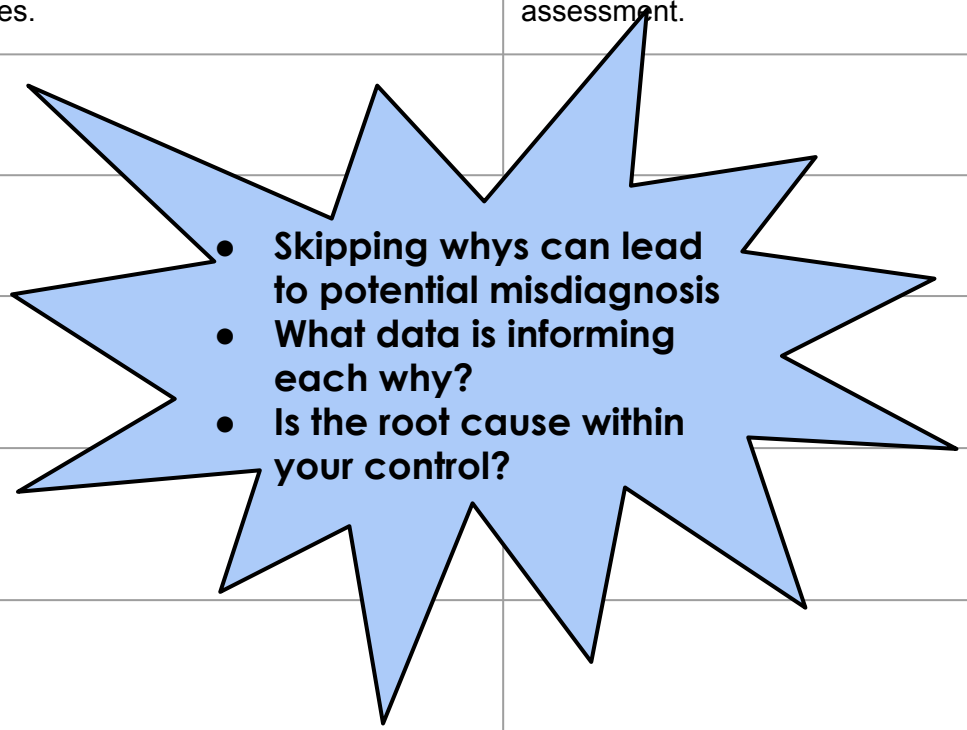
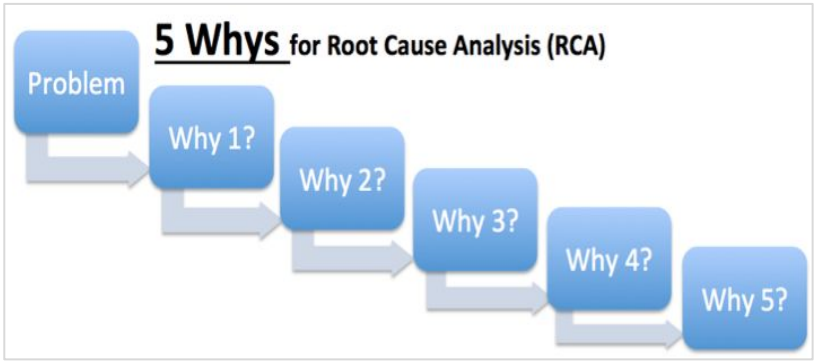
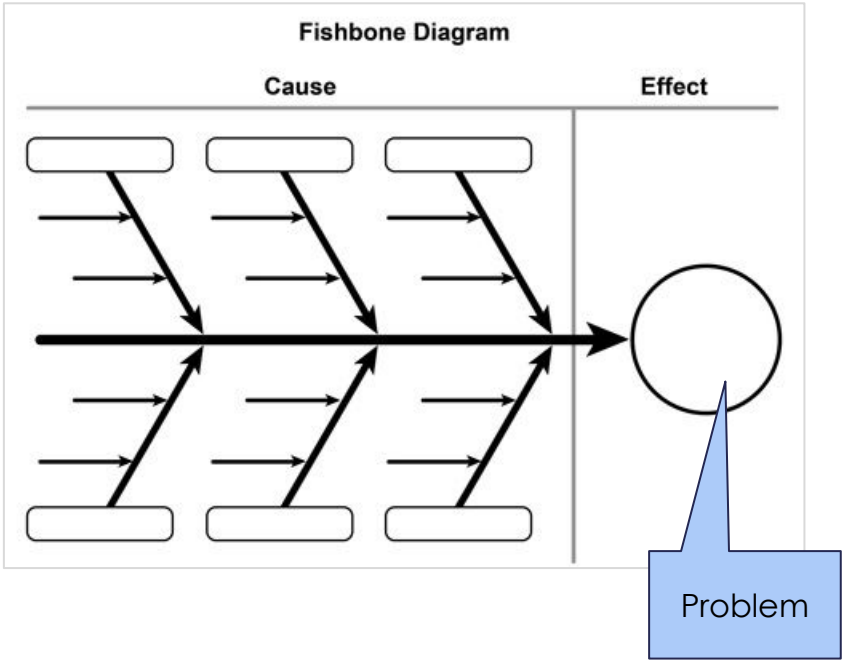


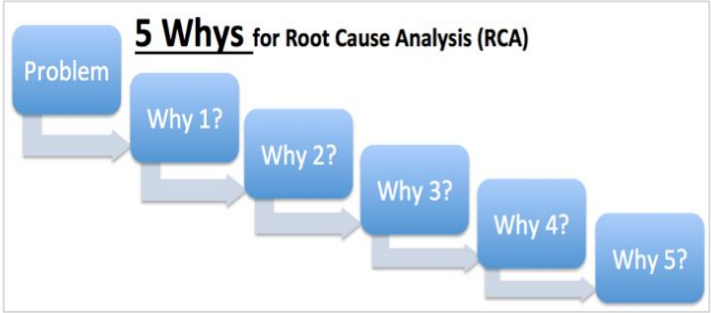
Root Cause Analysis

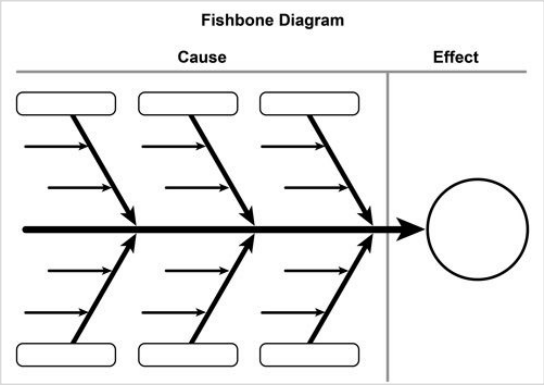




Perform a Root Cause Analysis

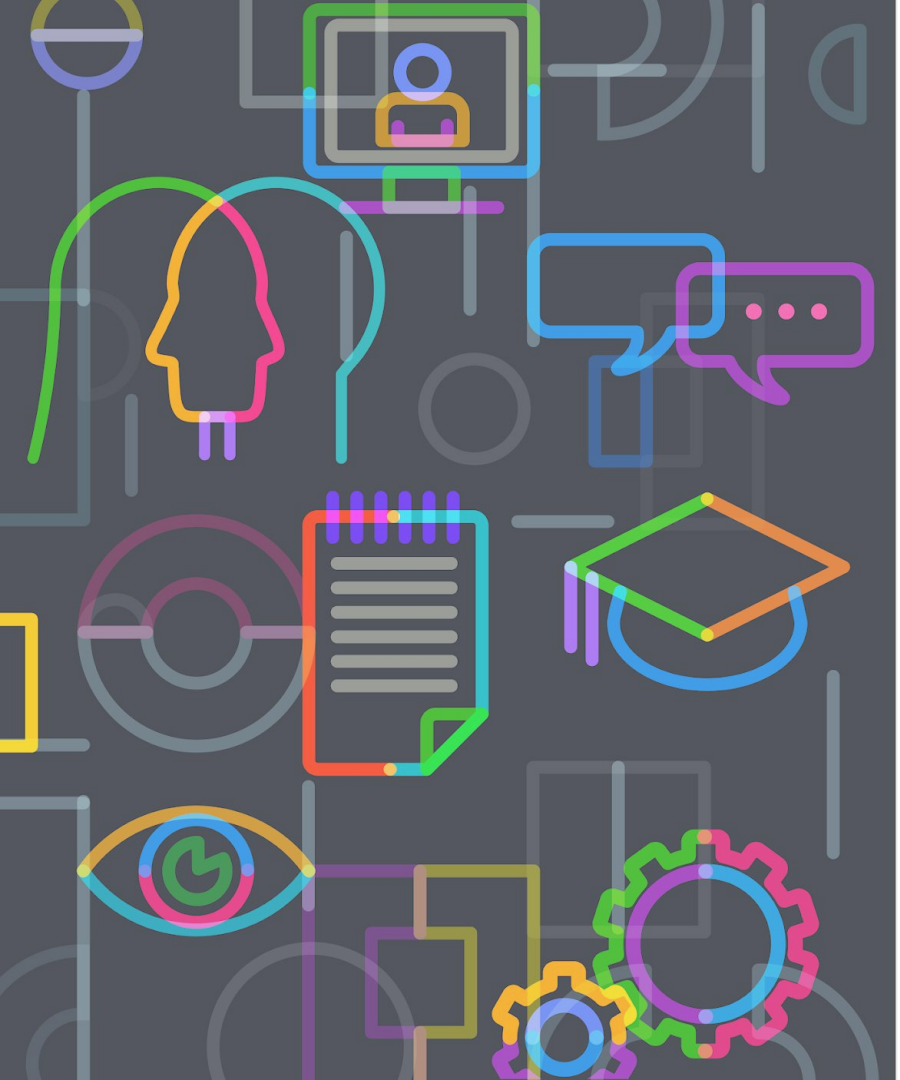
- Use the Five Whys Protocol or Fishbone Diagram
- Identify a potential root cause
- Share with a partner





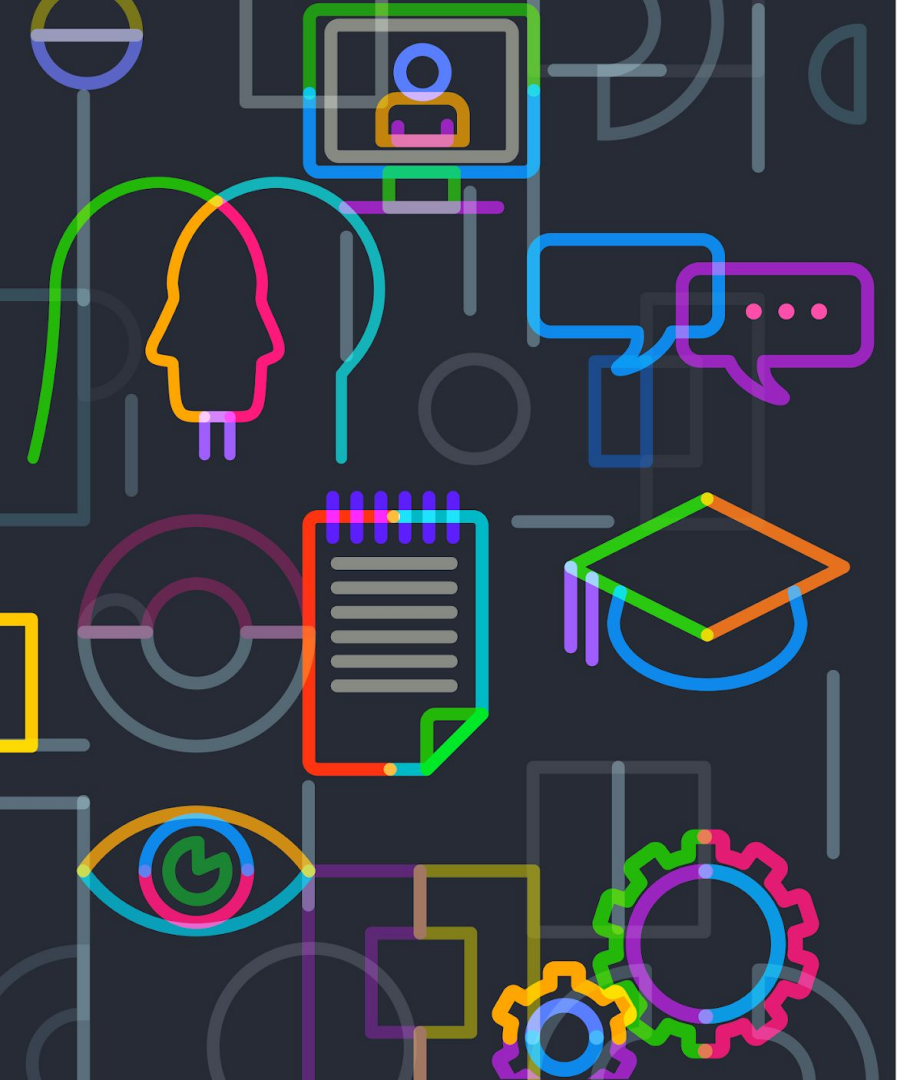
Discussion

- What did this process reveal to you?
- How did this process help you see the problem differently?
- How does having a deeper understanding of potential root causes help you identify targeted interventions?



Additional Resources

- Protocols:
  - *National School Reform Faculty* https://nsrfharmony.org/protocols/
  - *School Reform Initiative* https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/
- Data tools/briefs/resources:
  - *Data Quality Campaign* https://dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/
- Root Cause Analysis
  - Toyota Welding Robot 5-why → 17-why https://www.thinkreliability.com/toyota-welding-robot-5-why/
  - Magnolia Consulting, Fishbone Diagram https://magnoliaconsulting.org/tools/



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