

ITEM ADDENDUM

DATE: May 4, 2012

TO: MEMBERS, State Board of Education

FROM: TOM TORLAKSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Item 6 – A Conversation about the Future of Accountability in California, including the Academic Performance Index and the School Accountability Report Card.

Summary of Key Issues

At the request of State Board of Education (SBE) President Michael Kirst, WestEd convened two meetings of diverse stakeholders in early 2012 to discuss the future of accountability. Staff at the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) at WestEd provided a written summary of current data collection and reporting efforts in California, including data elements included on the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) and an overview of qualitative review processes of schools within and outside of California. That summary is included as Attachment 1.

Attachment(s)

Attachment 1: WestEd Memorandum: Background Summary of School Accountability Data in California (48 Pages)



memorandum

Date: May 2012

To: School Accountability Workgroup

From: WestEd

Re: Background for discussion on accountability reporting in California: Data currently collected

Request: Please provide a summary of data currently collected in California for accountability and school performance reporting.

Response:

For the past 12 years, California has had in place a school accountability index known as the Academic Performance Index (API), which measures year-over-year growth of schools, based upon California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). As state leaders consider ways to broaden school accountability measures, they requested that WestEd summarize data currently collected in the state that could potentially inform school performance discussions.

This memorandum summarizes current data collection and public reporting in California and notes policy considerations. We did not summarize data used for fiscal accountability, but instead per the request, focused on other school performance data.

I. Current data collection and reporting in California

This section provides an overview of several state and local data reporting efforts in California, including the Academic Performance Index (API); the School Accountability Report Card (SARC); the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS); the college matriculation rate; SAT and ACT scores; technology data; and the California English Development Test (CELDT). Unless otherwise indicated, data are aggregated at the state level. Appendix A provides further information on the data sources and types of reports.

Academic Performance Index (API)

Purpose: The API has been in place since 1999 and reflects a school's, a local education agency's, or a subgroup's performance level on California's statewide tests. Its purpose is to provide a measure of the academic performance and growth of schools. As described in the API reports' information guide (California Department of Education 2011a), the key features of the API include the following:

- The API is based on an improvement model. The API score from one year is compared to the API score from the prior year to measure improvement. Each school has an annual target, and all numerically significant subgroups at a school also have targets.
- The API requires subgroup performance accountability measures to document and address the achievement gaps that exist on statewide tests between traditionally higher- and lower-scoring student subgroups.¹
- The API is used to rank schools. A school is compared to other schools statewide and to 100 other schools that have similar student and teacher demographics (e.g., pupil ethnicity, pupil socioeconomic status, populations of English language learners and students with disabilities, fully-credentialed teachers, teachers with emergency credentials).
- Under state law, the API is currently only a school-based requirement. However, API reports are provided for local education agencies (LEAs) in order to meet federal requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

As described by the California Department of Education (2011b), the API is used for measuring academic achievement under California's Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 and for reporting federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements under ESEA. Under state requirements, a school may be eligible to become a California Distinguished School, a National Blue Ribbon School, or a Title I Academic Achievement Awards School based on its API. Alternatively, a school with a low API may be identified for participation in state intervention programs, which are designed to help the school improve its academic performance.

Data elements: The specific standardized tests used in the API calculation and the weightings of these tests vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school). The standardized tests that are included in the API are the California Standards Tests (in English language arts, mathematics, science, and

¹ California reports API scores for student subgroups who have 100 or for 50 or more students whose total population makes up 15 percent of the total student population. Subgroups include: Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Filipino, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities. (CDE, 2011a, p. 24).

history–social science), the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, and the CAHSEE. The API weights each student’s performance on these various tests to arrive at a single school score that ranges between 200 and 1,000.

School Accountability Report Card (SARC)

Purpose: In 1988, California voters passed Proposition 98, also known as the Classroom Instructional Improvement and Accountability Act, which required all public schools receiving state funding to prepare and distribute a SARC.² It declared that “[i]t is the intent of the People of California to ensure that our schools spend money where it is most needed. Therefore, this Act will require every local school board to prepare a School Accountability Report Card to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent.” The Act also added Section 8.5(e) to Article XVI of the California Constitution, requiring that “[a]ny school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school shall develop and cause to be prepared an annual audit accounting for such funds and shall adopt a School Accountability Report Card for each school.” Since 1988, a number of new laws that enumerate additional data elements to be included in the SARC have been enacted. For example, Assembly Bill 572 (effective in 1998) required that schools’ one-year dropout rates be included in the SARC. In addition, in response to the settlement agreement in the case of *Williams, et al., v. State of California, et al.*, Senate Bill 550 (effective in 2004) added additional reporting requirements relating to (1) any needed maintenance to ensure “good repair” of school facilities, (2) the number of teacher “misassignments” and “vacant teacher positions,” and (3) the availability of “sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials.”³

In general, the SARC is meant to be used to (1) help parents and the community access important information about each public school, (2) allow each school to report on its progress in achieving goals, and (3) allow the public to evaluate and compare schools using a variety of indicators.

Data elements: Currently, state law requires the SARC to contain data elements, which cover both school inputs and school outputs, in the following areas:

- Student enrollment by grade level and overall school demographic data (overall student enrollment and numbers of students in each subgroup—Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Filipino, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, two or more races, socioeconomically disadvantaged, English learners, students with disabilities)
- Class sizes (average class sizes and class distribution counts broken out by grade level and subject)
- School safety and climate (narrative on the school safety plan plus data on suspensions and expulsions)
- School facilities (narrative on conditions and planned improvements, and school facility inspection data)

² The California Department of Education provides information about the School Accountability Report Card at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/>. The information provided in this section of the brief was largely taken from this source.

³ For additional information regarding prior legislation mandating specific data to be included in the SARC, please see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/legislation.asp>.

- Teacher and staff information (teachers with full credentials, teachers teaching outside subject area of competence, courses taught by highly qualified teachers in school and in the district)
- Support staff (number of academic counselors; average number of students per academic counselor; and numbers of social/behavioral or career counselors, librarians and library staff, psychologists, social workers, nurses, speech/language/hearing specialists, and resource specialists)
- Curriculum and instruction descriptions (textbooks and materials used, whether or not they are from the most recent adoption; percent of pupils who lack textbooks and instructional materials)
- Fiscal and expenditure data (expenditures per pupil, average teacher salaries)
- Student performance data over three years (percent of students passing each of the California Standards Tests, the CAHSEE, and percent of students meeting four, five, and six physical fitness standards) compared to district and statewide data and reported by subgroup
- Accountability data (API by student subgroup, AYP by subgroup, program improvement status)
- School completion rates and postsecondary preparation (one-year dropout rate, graduation rate, percent of twelfth-grade students meeting high school graduation requirements by subgroup, narrative on career technical education (CTE) programs, numbers of students participating in CTE and percent completing CTE requirements, percent of students enrolled and percent completing certain course requirements to be eligible for admission in either the University of California system or the California State University system, and numbers of Advanced Placement courses offered and percent of students enrolled in them)
- Narrative on the number of professional development days and types of professional development offered in the most recent three-year period.

In addition to the data elements listed above, each SARC begins with a narrative describing the school. This can provide information on the mission of the school, expectations for students, opportunities for parental involvement, a description of school programs, and a message from the principal.

Some of the data elements in the SARC are provided by the California Department of Education (CDE), and some are provided locally. Currently, SARC data are not aggregated to the state level, so there is no single statewide repository containing all school submissions. However, for many indicators, school-level data could be manually aggregated to the state level by combining all of the information from the schools.

Quality: Although reporting elements are required by state statute, there is no mandated template for reports. CDE provides a SARC template, but many districts modify the organization and design of their reports, so formats vary across the state. CDE is not funded to check SARC compliance or the quality of the data reported. California Education Code Section 1240(c)(2)(J)(iii) does require that county superintendents, when visiting certain schools that have low API scores, review the accuracy of data reported on the SARC with respect to the availability of sufficient textbooks and instructional materials, as defined by Section 60119, and the safety, cleanliness, and adequacy of school facilities, including good repair, as required by Sections 17014, 17032.5, 17070.75, and 17089. Otherwise, any additional quality monitoring regarding the quality of SARC reports occurs locally or through other state groups.

Between 2006 and 2009, Public Advocates (<http://www.publicadvocates.org>) produced a series of SARC investigation and enforcement reports that sampled schools and districts across the state to determine if SARCs (1) were available and posted online, (2) reported the required information, and (3) were

translated to other languages when required.⁴ The authors found that compliance with on-time publication requirements has increased: in 2006 the compliance rate was approximately 50 percent, whereas in 2009 almost 90 percent of districts published their SARCs on time. In addition, many more districts are now complying with the requirement to translate the SARCs into multiple languages.

California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS)

Another data source that is not currently included in accountability reporting, but is reported to participating schools is data from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS). Cal-SCHLS was developed by WestEd for CDE and includes the California Healthy Kids Survey, the California School Climate Survey (for school staff), and the California School Parent Survey. Survey results are reported at the district, county, or school level (depending on the survey), but are not aggregated to the state level.

The last year of mandatory participation in Cal-SCHLS was 2009/10.⁵

Data elements:

1. California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)

The CHKS examines student resiliency, protective factors, and risk behaviors.⁶ The CHKS also helps schools meet the current requirements of the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, as embodied in Title IV of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB requires that CDE collect data on the incidence, prevalence, age of onset, and perception of health risks and social disapproval of drug use by youth, as well as violence in schools and communities, through anonymous student and teacher surveys. The CHKS is administered in California in grades five, seven, nine, and eleven. It includes an elementary school module with 65 items; a middle school core module with 115 items, a high school core module with 133 items, and numerous supplementary modules. This self-reported information covers topics such as:

- Proportion of students eating breakfast on the day of the survey
- Proportion of students who feel close to people at school
- Proportion of students who feel like they are a part of the school
- Student perceptions about whether the teachers treat the students fairly
- Students' postsecondary aspirations
- Proportion of students who have hit or pushed other students at school
- Proportion of students who feel safe at school
- Proportion of students who have ever smoked a cigarette or drank alcohol
- Student perceptions about body image

The School Climate Index (SCI) is a school-level summary measure based on CHKS data for the categories of Supports and Engagement (45%); Violence, Victimization, & Substance Use at School

⁴ See, for instance, Public Advocates (2009).

⁵ There are, however, some schools that will administer these surveys in the current school year, such as schools participating in the Tobacco-Use Prevention Education program.

⁶ Information in this subsection is taken mainly from the CHKS website (<http://chks.wested.org/>).

(45%); and Truancy Incidents (10%). Scores range from approximately 100 to 500, with high scores representing more positive school climates; higher supports and engagement; lower levels of violence, victimization, and substance use at school; and lesser frequencies of truancy incidents.

2. California School Climate Survey (CSCS)

The CSCS is an optional online, web-based survey that school staff may complete in order to provide information about their workplace environment.⁷ CDE describes the purpose as “the survey gathers information on staff perceptions about learning and teaching conditions for both general and special education, in order to regularly inform decisions about professional development, instruction, the implementation of learning supports, and school reform. It can also be customized with additional questions to meet a school’s specific needs.”⁸ More specifically, the survey includes: 79 questions for all staff; 22 questions for staff who provide services or instruction related to health, prevention, discipline, counseling and/or safety; and 12 questions for staff who work with students with individualized education programs. It asks respondents to answer questions concerning perceptions regarding school climate, such as:

- Level of support in the school for student learning
- Amount of academic counseling
- Feelings of trust and collegiality among staff
- Focus on closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap
- School safety
- School cleanliness
- Adequacy of professional development
- Drug/alcohol usage among students
- Quality of instruction for students with disabilities

3. California School Parent Survey (CSPS)

The CSPS is a survey that parents fill out.⁹ Because the survey items on the CSPS are related to those on the CHKS and CSCS, the three surveys are meant to be used collectively to discuss parent, student, and staff perceptions on specific issues. The CSPS includes 39 questions that ask parents about their perceptions concerning topics such as:

- School supports in place
- School safety
- Communication with parents
- Student drug/alcohol usage
- School’s ability to motivate students
- School cleanliness

⁷ Information in this subsection is taken mainly from the CSCS website (<http://cscs.wested.org/>).

⁸ CDE CSCS front page (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/at/cscs.asp>).

⁹ Information in this subsection is taken mainly from <http://cspcs.wested.org/resources/cspcs.pdf>.

College matriculation rate

CDE tracked California's 2008/09 high school graduating class into postsecondary institutions using two data sources: the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). The NSC was used to track students across the country, and the CPEC was used to track students who matriculated to a postsecondary institution within California. DataQuest, which is a public online tool developed, maintained, and housed by CDE, reports the number and percentage of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions.¹⁰ Data can be disaggregated at the state, county, district, and school level. However, these data are not currently available beyond the 2008/09 graduating class.

SAT and ACT scores

CDE annually reports school averages for the critical reading, mathematics, and writing portions of the SAT test and proportions of students who scored greater than 1500 on the three subtests combined. CDE also annually reports schools' average ACT scores and proportions of students scoring at least a 21 on the ACT. The SAT and ACT data are posted on DataQuest.

Technology data

During the 2005/06 and 2006/07 school years, CDE tracked certain technology-related data elements across schools and districts, including numbers of computers that are less than 48 months old, numbers of students per computer, and numbers of classrooms with high-speed Internet connections. This information has been posted on DataQuest.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

As described on the CDE website (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/cefceldt.asp>), federal law (Title III of ESEA) and state law (Education Code Sections 313 and 60810–60812) require LEAs to administer a statewide English language proficiency test to K–12 students whose primary language is not English and to students previously identified as English learners who have not been reclassified as fluent English proficient. *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5, Section 10510, specifies CELDT as the test to be used for this purpose. CELDT results are reported at the school level on DataQuest. DataQuest reports the number and percent of students at each performance level, as well as the average scores for the listening, speaking, reading, and writing portions of the test.

II. Discussion Topics

The following questions were developed to prompt discussion as state leaders consider the potential of broadening state accountability measures and/or review processes. These are divided into two distinct but related categories: (1) system considerations and data and (2) measurement considerations.

¹⁰ DataQuest (<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>) contains information on such topics as academic achievement measures, student enrollment, student demographics, school staffing, and student conduct.

System topics

1. **What do state leaders most want to promote through a school accountability process?** Are there key performance expectations, standards, elements of quality instruction, equity values, or other factors that the state considers critical to reinforce and promote? What factors are considered less important and therefore good candidates for not being part of the accountability system?
2. **How will accountability data be used?** Will the primary goal be to use such data to inform continuous school improvement efforts? Will the data be used for rewards or sanctions of schools? Will the data be used to target additional interventions and supports in schools? How will the system be designed to ensure that certain standards of implementation and performance are met while also fostering improvement?
3. **How might a new accountability system integrate the numerous strands of data currently collected to promote cost efficiencies and foster usefulness?** How can the diverse data collections be placed under a common framework and management structure in a new accountability system? What are the opportunities and costs associated with such a restructuring?

Data and measurement topics

1. Given the answers to the system consideration questions, what measures are currently available that would be desirable to include in the state accountability system? Appendix A includes data elements that are currently reported through SARCs or other state-sponsored data collection. This may be a useful list for a beginning conversation.
2. What additional measures might be desirable to include in an accountability process?
3. Is each measure feasible to collect and report? What are the quality and/or cost implications of including particular data elements?
4. Are potential measures accurate and reliable for the purposes of accountability decisions? Leaders should consider each measure carefully and determine whether it is reliably reported and whether there are safeguards in place to ensure that the information is accurate and that it has not been manipulated in any way. In addition, new data elements should be collected and reported in a uniform manner across sites to ensure data integrity and comparability.
5. Is each measure valid for its intended use? For instance, measures of parents' perceptions about a school's ability to motivate students should have evidence of validity (i.e., that what is being reported on by parents is actually the construct that was intended to be measured).
6. Is there any way of including more locally relevant data elements so that the local validity is more apparent to the districts?
7. Will including a measure in an accountability system distort reporting and its intended use? For instance, although the original intent of gathering information on staff's perceptions of students' depression or mental health was to be able to identify and treat the problem at school sites, the quality of reporting on this issue may change when it is attached to a school accountability framework.

8. If current and potential data elements reside in more than one data system (as is currently the case), what will be done to reconcile data elements from different data silos?

References

California Department of Education. (2011a). *2010–11 Academic Performance Index reports: Information guide*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

California Department of Education. (2011b). *Overview of California's 2010–11 accountability progress reporting system*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

California Department of Education. (2011c). *SARC Template in Word*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Public Advocates. (2009). *School Accountability Report Card: 2009 investigative report*. San Francisco, CA: Author.

Appendix A: Data reporting in California

Element	Report	Who generates report?	School-level reports?	State aggregation?	Input or outcome?
School information:					
School description and mission	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Enrollment by grade and subgroup	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	I
Average class size by grade and subject	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	I
School climate:					
School safety plan	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Suspensions	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	O
Expulsions	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	O
Truancy	DataQuest	LEA	Y	Y	O
CA Healthy Kids Survey	CHKS	CDE	Y	N	I
CA School Climate Survey	CSCS	CDE	Y	N	I
CA School Parent Survey	CSPS	CDE	Y	N	I
School facilities:					
Summary and plans	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Repair status	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Teachers:					
Teachers with full credential	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Teachers without full credential	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Teacher misassignments for English learners	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Total teacher misassignments	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Vacant teacher positions	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Core academic classes taught by highly qualified teachers by school, district, and socioeconomic status	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	I
Support staff:					
Academic counselors	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
School counselors	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Library media teachers	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Library media staff	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I

Element	Report	Who generates report?	School-level reports?	State aggregation?	Input or outcome?
Psychologists	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Social workers	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Nurses	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Speech/language/hearing specialists	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Resource specialists	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Curriculum and instruction:					
Textbooks by year of adoption and subject	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Percent of students lacking own assigned copy of textbook by subject	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
School finance:					
Total expenditures per pupil	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Expenditures per pupil (supplemental/restricted)	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Expenditures per pupil (basic/restricted)	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Average teacher salary	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	I
Narrative on types of services offered	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Teacher and administrative salaries for district	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	I
Student performance (by school, district, state, subgroup):					
ELA	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
Math	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
Science	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
History–social science	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
CAHSEE ELA	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
CAHSEE math	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
Physical fitness (grades 5, 7, 9)	SARC	CDE	Y	Y	O
CELDT	CELDT	CDE	Y	Y	O
CA modified assessment	API	CDE	Y	Y	O
Accountability:					

Element	Report	Who generates report?	School-level reports?	State aggregation?	Input or outcome?
API	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
API similar schools	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
API by subgroup	SARC, API	CDE	Y	Y	O
AYP overall	SARC, AYP	CDE	Y	Y	O
AYP participation rate by subject and grade	SARC, AYP	CDE	Y	Y	O
Program improvement status	SARC, AYP	CDE	Y	Y	O
School completion and postsecondary prep:					
Dropout rate (1-year)	SARC, CALPADS	CDE	Y	Y	O
Dropout rate (4-year)	CALPADS	CDE	Y	Y	O
Dropout rate (5-year)	CALPADS	CDE	Y	Y	O
Completion of high school graduation requirements by subgroup	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	O
Career/technical education (CTE) programs offered	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
CTE participation	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	O
Percent completing CTE program and earning a diploma	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	O
Percent of CTE courses sequenced to institutions of higher education	SARC	LEA	Y	Y	I
Advanced Placement courses offered	SARC	CDE	Y	N	I
College enrollment rate	DataQuest	CDE	Y	Y	O
SAT and ACT score averages	DataQuest	CDE	Y	Y	O
Instructional planning and scheduling:					
Narrative on professional development	SARC	LEA	Y	N	I
Technology data (computers per student; Internet connections)	DataQuest	CDE	Y	Y	I



Background for discussion on accountability reporting in California: Qualitative school review processes

Part 2

memorandum

Date: May 2012

To: California State Board of Education

From: WestEd

Re: **Background for discussion on accountability reporting in California: Qualitative school review processes**

Request: Please provide a summary of current and past qualitative school review processes used in California and examples of comprehensive qualitative review processes used elsewhere.

Response:

For the past 12 years, California has had in place a school accountability index known as the Academic Performance Index (API), which measures year-over-year growth of schools, based upon California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). As state leaders consider ways to broaden school accountability measures to possibly include a statewide qualitative component, they requested that WestEd summarize current and past qualitative review processes and rubrics used in California and examples of comprehensive qualitative review processes used elsewhere.

This memorandum contains four sections addressing these requests. The first section provides information on school and district site visit tools or systems currently in use or previously used statewide in California. The second section offers descriptions of review systems in use in New York City, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Sacramento, based on qualitative interviews with staff in these locations. The third section describes charter school renewal processes used in Colorado, Massachusetts, and New York. A final section notes discussion topics for state leaders. Appendices provide further detail on elements of review rubrics, our interview protocol, and examples of review rubrics.

Themes

Several themes emerged in multiple ways in the review systems examined for this memo:

1. It is challenging to develop a manageable set of review dimensions in which reviewers can be trained to review schools in reliable ways.
2. Several interviewees suggested that reviews alone do not lead to school improvement; they stressed the importance of follow-up visits to check on progress.
3. Review costs were difficult to determine, and compare, across reviews. Some systems have reviews built into existing structures and positions, but all required some dedicated funding for quality reviews.
4. Officials stressed the importance of examining district support factors when reviewing schools and making recommendations for improvement.

I. California school/district qualitative reviews

Over time, California has had several qualitative school review processes in place for the purposes of accountability (Program Quality Reviews for elementary schools, Academic Audits, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation reviews), technical assistance (school and district improvement processes), and recognition (the California School Recognition Program/Distinguished Schools Program). Appendix A1 includes a summary table of the domains of the school/district review rubrics.

Accountability reviews

California's early review processes (Program Quality Reviews and Academic Audits) focused primarily on instructional quality. No evaluation of these review processes could be found.

Program Quality Review (PQR)

Purpose: The purpose of a PQR, which was used for several years starting in the 1980s, was to improve the quality of curriculum and instruction. It was designed for judging the effects of an elementary school's curriculum, instructional methods, and improvement strategies on elementary students; guiding the development of planned assistance; and providing a model for the school's own self-study process.

Data elements and process: Program Quality Review for Elementary Schools: Process, Criteria and Self-Study (California State Department of Education 1987) contained criteria for excellence in 12 areas: language arts; mathematics; science; history–social science; visual and performing arts; physical education; schoolwide effectiveness; special needs; learning environment; staff development; leadership; and program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Additionally, a guide was used by schools in conducting a self-study (see Appendix C for rubric). Review teams worked with schools to develop an assistance plan for improving the instructional program. In a formal program review, the review team included individuals from outside the district; alternatively, a review team may have included school staff and parents who wished to conduct an informal self-study. The formal review took place over several

days, during which the review team gathered information about the school via observation, interviews, and document review. These data were then compared with the quality criteria.

A small group of five to seven representatives from the school, designated by the principal to be “key planners,” assisted the school community and reviewers in all aspects of review, including serving as leads in the self-study process. The key planners also provided active leadership in the school’s implementation of the improvement plans after the review team left. The review consisted of a review preparation meeting with the school’s key planners; classroom visits; group interviews; ongoing discussions with the principal and key planners; ongoing meeting with the review team; and the development of a Report of Findings with the principal and key planners.

California Academic Audit (CAA)

Purpose: For two years, the California Department of Education (CDE) sponsored week-long academic audits in schools that had not made adequate yearly progress for four years. The purpose of these audits was to examine the systemic barriers to student achievement that existed at the school, site, and district levels. Originally named the Scholastic Audit for the 2001/02 school year, the process was revised and renamed the California Academic Audit (CAA) for 2002/03. During that school year, CDE contracted with the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center and the Northern California Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestEd to conduct the CAAs in collaboration with CDE. The centers were asked to recruit people to serve on audit teams, train team members in the CAA, and conduct the audits (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association 2003).

Process: Teams with six to ten members were selected based upon their in-depth knowledge of state content standards, school reform issues, and curriculum and instructional practices, and their school and/or district leadership experience. Audit team members received four days of training (with a manual and process designed by CDE) prior to the audit. The audit focused on four areas: 1) school and district leadership; 2) curriculum, instruction, and professional development; 3) classroom and school assessments; and 4) school culture, climate, and communication. The onsite investigation lasted a week, with all team members present during the entire process. On the Sunday prior to the visit, team members prepared for the audit by analyzing school achievement and demographic data. The team leads also informed their teams of any meetings that had occurred with site and district leadership representatives before the audit. During the audit, team members collected evidence through classroom observations, interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. They synthesized the evidence using the Audit Tool, a matrix based upon the four audit areas, to develop a preliminary Report of Findings. At the end of the audit, the audit team presented an Oral Exit Report of Findings, which became the basis for the final report for school personnel and district leaders. Following the onsite investigation, the CDE developed the Report of Findings with the assistance of the CAA team. The Report of Findings and Recommendations for Corrective Action, including timelines for implementing the recommendations, was sent to the district superintendent. The superintendent and staff then met with CDE leadership to discuss next steps. When negotiations were complete, a Joint Intervention Agreement became a legal document that was publicly presented to the school board and signed by the superintendent and served as the basis for CDE’s quarterly monitoring visits to the school and district.

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation review

Purpose: WASC, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization funded entirely by membership fees, is one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States. WASC accreditation has a dual purpose; ensuring the provision of high-quality learning opportunities and demonstrating that schools prioritize continual self-improvement. WASC accreditation is not required by law; however, nearly all of the public and private high schools in California are WASC-accredited. This may be because the University of California (UC) requires high schools to be accredited by WASC (or to be an initial candidate for WASC accreditation) if the schools' courses are to be used to meet certain eligibility requirements for admission to either the UC system or the California State University system. In contrast, very few middle and elementary schools are WASC-accredited (about 3 percent and 1 percent, respectively).

Process and data elements: Through the standards-based Focus on Learning guide (ACS WASC 2011), which was jointly developed by WASC and CDE, a school fulfills the requirements for accreditation and forms the basis for the Single Plan for Pupil Achievement through use of a single set of curriculum-driven criteria (see Appendix C for rubric). The Focus on Learning self-study process is organized to support ongoing school improvement efforts in all areas. Every six years, the school conducts an in-depth self-study to examine overall progress since the last self-study and to examine the effectiveness of its current program, based on WASC criteria. This results in a written summary of findings supported by evidence, and the development of an updated schoolwide action plan for the subsequent three to five years. The accreditation team members (volunteer reviewers) are experienced professional educators, including classroom teachers, administrators, college professors, and school board members. They are selected on the basis of their expertise and the type of school being evaluated. Team members are required to participate in WASC-conducted training workshops. The team spends three and one-half days at the school. The visiting team and the school's leadership team compare findings. The resulting discussion and written findings assist the school in refining the schoolwide action plan with respect to the expected schoolwide learning results and the WASC/CDE criteria.

Technical assistance reviews

In the mid-2000s, CDE overhauled its review processes to focus more squarely on state standards, assessment results, and aligned instructional materials. To guide this process, CDE identified nine Essential Program Components (EPCs) that it believes to be associated with improved student learning:

1. Use of standards-based, State Board of Education (SBE)–adopted (K–8) or standards-aligned (9–12) reading/language arts and mathematics instructional materials, including intensive interventions and English language development materials
2. Implementation of instructional minutes for basic core reading/language arts and mathematics programs, intensive intervention, and strategic support courses, as well as additional instructional time for structured English language development at all grade levels
3. Use of an annual district instructional/assessment pacing guide for grades K–8 and high school
4. Instructional materials based on professional development and ongoing targeted professional development and support for instructional leaders to ensure the full implementation of the district-adopted program and the EPCs

5. Fully credentialed, highly qualified teachers, per the requirements of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and professional development on standards-aligned/SBE-adopted instructional materials
6. Implementation of ongoing instructional assistance and support for reading/language arts, English language development, and mathematics teachers through the use of content experts, specialists, and instructional coaches
7. Implementation of a student achievement monitoring system that provides timely data from common formative, curriculum-embedded, and summative assessments for teachers and principals to use to monitor ongoing student progress, identify student needs, inform instruction, and determine effectiveness of instructional practices and implementation of the adopted programs
8. Implementation of monthly structured teacher collaboration for all reading/language arts, English language development, and mathematics teachers by grade level (K–8) and common course and department levels (9–12), facilitated by the principal
9. Implementation of fiscal support aligned to full implementation of the EPCs (California Department of Education 2011a).

The School Assistance and Intervention Team and District Assistance and Intervention Team processes are based on these nine EPCs and include review components.

School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT)

Purpose: From 1999 to 2009, the California Education Code provided for a state-sanctioned review process carried out by SAITs for schools that had received funding from the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) and had not exited II/USP status, and for schools that had received funding from the High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP) and had not exited HPSGP status. (Other interventions were possible, as well. For example, the school could be closed or reorganized, or parents could apply to the SBE for the school to become a charter school.) The SAIT process is no longer used.

Process: SAITs were composed of education professionals representing expertise in language arts, mathematics, school leadership, and working with English learners. SAITs worked with school and district leaders to provide immediate intervention and support to bring about rapid and significant improvement in student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics. The process involved collaboration between the district, the school, and the SAIT. At the start of the process, a district entered into a contract with an approved SAIT, and a District/School Liaison Team (DSLST) was created. The DSLST included district personnel, school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders. Working with the DSLST, the SAIT provider then completed an Academic Program Survey (APS) (see more on the APS below). The SAIT met with the DSLST to verify and discuss APS results, completed a report describing the existing level of implementation of each of the nine EPCs, and with the DSLST, developed an action plan. The SAIT produced a Report of Findings and Corrective Actions and worked with the school and district to help implement corrective actions, monitoring progress and conducting regularly-scheduled site visits. Finally, the progress was presented to the local board of education at regularly scheduled meetings. The SAIT, district and DSLST were also responsible for providing or brokering the supports necessary for the school to fully implement the EPCs.

SAIT reviewers were trained in several ways over the years. During the first few years of the program, CDE held statewide trainings for all SAIT providers. CDE staff worked with the California Comprehensive Center (CA CC) and county office staff to develop updates that included SAIT regulations, scenarios of SAIT schools, sample SAIT recommendations and how to write them, and an in-depth review of the APS. Expert SAIT providers from county offices and other agencies presented at these trainings. SAIT providers received copies of all materials.

In the last several years of the program, when the number of SAIT providers was smaller, the CA CC worked with CDE staff to develop online training for new providers. They invited experienced SAIT providers to present sessions on various topics relevant to SAIT and established a professional learning community for SAIT providers, holding several meetings each year to discuss successes, challenges, and strategies for working with SAIT schools and districts. Additionally, they conducted online discussions and posted resources in an online filing system.

SAIT sites received funds based on a per-student formula, and the amounts varied by year and program. The amounts that providers charged also varied.

Quality: Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates (2008) conducted an evaluation of the SAIT process and found that English language arts and mathematics growth rates for the overall group of SAIT schools exceeded the average growth rates of California's decile 1–5 schools¹¹ and for all California schools. Implementation of the EPCs in the study's state-monitored schools was positively related to improved instruction and increased student learning, as measured by API and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) data. The majority of site-visit participants felt that SAIT had improved their school and that SAIT providers had a positive impact on the implementation of the EPCs as well as on principal capacity and district support. The evaluation report contains many other findings on the relationship between SAIT and academic achievement, the role of the EPCs in SAIT, school-level implementation, and district support.

District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT)

Purpose: The DAIT process was designed to improve student outcomes through a structured process that focuses on building instructional, programmatic, and policy coherence within a school district. Soon after the pilot program began in 2007, the State Board of Education voted to make DAIT the state's technical assistance program for school districts entering corrective action, an official designation for districts that do not make adequate yearly progress for four consecutive years.

Process: Districts receive funding to engage an approved provider. The amount of funding is based on the individual providers' proposals. Through the DAIT process, districts and their DAIT providers (generally teams of four to six individuals from county offices of education or a private provider) complete a comprehensive needs assessment to identify, prioritize, and implement actions that have the potential to bring about improvements in district and school operations. The improvements focus on the seven DAIT

¹¹ On the API Base reports, schools are ranked in ten categories of equal size, called deciles, from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). A school's statewide rank compares that school to other schools of the same type (elementary, middle, high) in the entire state. A school's statewide rank is the decile where that school's API Base falls compared with the Base APIs of the other schools statewide of the same school type.

areas: 1) governance and leadership; 2) alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 3) data systems; 4) achievement monitoring; 5) alignment of human and fiscal resources with district goals; 6) meaningful parent and community involvement; and 7) targeted professional development for teachers and administrators. The DAIT team and the district also examine student achievement data and assess the district's current work and any initiatives that show promise. Then, the district and provider analyze the results of the needs assessment to identify high-priority needs and create an action plan to address these needs. The DAIT team is then responsible for providing support to the district to implement the action plan.

DAIT review teams (usually four to six people) include a broad stakeholder group.

Quality: An evaluation by SRI International (2009) examined DAIT efforts to build the capacity of schools, districts, and county offices of education, toward the ultimate goal of improved student achievement. Both the case study and survey data showed suggest that the DAIT process is increasing district capacity through concentrated, high quality assistance from trained education experts. The evaluation also found that school districts that required more support in specific areas, such as curriculum and staff capacity building (e.g., developing training programs or supports for teachers to improve their instruction), had lower-than-expected student outcomes (this study, however, was not an experimental study, so it uncovered relationships rather than causes). Researchers also found that county offices of education have limited capacity to offer additional district-level support, even when there is a need. The lack of highly trained staff with enough time to dedicate to this work is a major barrier toward efforts to expand DAIT support.

Data elements: CDE developed several tools to support SAIT and DAIT review processes (California Department of Education 2011) (see Appendix C for rubrics). These tools include the Academic Program Survey (APS) at the school level and the following district-level tools: the District Assistance Survey (DAS), the English Learner Subgroup Self Assessment (ELSSA), and the Inventory of Services and Supports (ISS) for students with disabilities. These self-assessment tools were required for SAIT and are required for DAIT. CDE strongly encourages their use in any underperforming school or LEA and by its support providers, in conjunction with student achievement data, to inform collaborative school and district planning. SAIT and DAIT providers assist districts and schools in completing and interpreting these reviews, though follow-up visits are not required. Data from the tools are used to inform local efforts and are not aggregated at the state level.

The APS is designed to help a school analyze the extent to which it is providing a coherent instructional program to support improved student achievement. It is completed by the principal, teachers, parents, other stakeholders, and any external support providers working with the school. Ideally, the responses to an APS are discussed by those completing the survey, as well as with site/district staff. The APS is organized into three grade-span specific surveys and measures the presence of the nine EPCs associated with improved student learning. As EPC implementation levels are identified, the school and district determine needed actions for alignment with the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and dedicate resources to the SPSA's full implementation.

While the APS determines the level of implementation of each of the nine EPCs, the DAS is designed to help an LEA assess district-level structures and supports for school improvement. The survey is organized around seven broad areas of district work: governance; alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments to state standards; fiscal operations; parent and community involvement; human resources;

data systems/data analysis/ongoing monitoring; and professional development. In the DAS, each standard is accompanied by a “full implementation” statement to assist in gauging its level of implementation. Unlike the APS, which ascribes four distinct levels of implementation to each standard, the DAS examines each standard along a broad continuum and includes three levels of implementation: full, partial (defined as “in progress”), and minimal. The district superintendent, district administrators, site principals, teacher leaders, representatives of the teachers’ association, parents, and community members complete the survey.

The ELSSA and the ISS address the unique needs of English Learners and students with disabilities (SWDs) and build upon the APS and DAS findings. The ELSSA serves as a district-level tool for LEAs to analyze outcomes and program services for English learners while preparing LEA plans and addenda to meet requirements under Title I and Title III, including the development of Title III Year 4 Action Plan Needs Assessments, Title III Year 2 Improvement Plan Addenda, and Title I Program Improvement plans related to the English learner student group. The ELSSA measures the level and quality of services provided to ELs and on the progress of these students in meeting achievement goals. The ELSSA helps LEAs focus on the attainment of linguistic and academic standards for English learner students as well as the identification of issues regarding English learner instructional programs.

Similarly, the ISS for Students with Disabilities is designed to help districts examine their policies, procedures, and practices to gain a deeper understanding of the learning needs of students with disabilities (SWDs). The tool measures services and supports for SWDs and is designed to provide a framework that will enhance and deepen the district leadership team’s understandings about this student group.

Recognition reviews

California School Recognition Program/Distinguished Schools Program

Purpose: Created in 1985 and redesigned in 1990 to become an integral part of California’s accountability system, the California School Recognition Program (CSRP), also known as the Distinguished Schools Program, identifies and honors schools that have demonstrated educational excellence for all students and progress in narrowing the achievement gap (California Department of Education 2011b). Schools must meet a variety of eligibility criteria including designated federal and state accountability measures based on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Academic Performance Index (API) requirements. The program awards schools that are in the upper half of the statewide distribution of API scores; have met API growth targets and federal adequate yearly progress requirements; are narrowing the achievement gap; and are implementing the priorities of state and federal accountability programs. The schools identified serve as models of achievement for other schools. Elementary and secondary schools are recognized in alternate years.

Process: Schools are selected based on the submission of an application, including a comprehensive description of two of the school’s successful signature practices, and an application review. Applications are reviewed for completeness by teams of educators from across the state, under the direction of CDE. Each school whose application is deemed complete receives a site visit by a team of educators to validate the full implementation of the submitted practices. The evaluators visit classrooms and interview stakeholder groups, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. The

site visits are conducted as a collaborative effort between CDE and county superintendents of schools (although counties pay for the visits). Schools selected for recognition are honored as Distinguished Schools at an award ceremony where the State Superintendent of Public Instruction presents each school with a Distinguished School plaque and flag. The event and awards are funded by donations from many corporations and statewide educational organizations.

II. Examples of comprehensive school/district qualitative review systems from around the nation

A recent report (Jerald 2012) highlighted four sites with school review systems in place. The authors of this memo reviewed public information on these systems and conducted brief interviews with one to three officials from state education agencies and school districts that are currently (or were recently) maintaining a system of school quality inspections: New York City, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Sacramento City, CA. The purpose was to learn from them, for example, how schools and reviewers get selected in the system, how reviewers are trained, how the reports are used, how the systems are funded, and the lessons learned from implementation (see Appendix B for the protocol used in these interviews). Appendix A2 includes a summary table of the domains measured in the school review rubrics.

New York City Department of Education Quality Review

Purpose: The goal of the Quality Review process of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) is to provide actionable next steps for improvement among reviewed schools, in partnership with the district's school support networks. Now in its third year, the process is designed to look beyond a school's quantitative performance statistics to ensure that the school is engaged in effective practices to accelerate learning; the focus is on the coherence of a school's systems, measuring how well the school is organized to meet the needs of its students and adults, as well as monitoring and improving its instructional and assessment practices.

Process: The Quality Review is a two- to three-day site visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the evaluator visits classrooms, talks with school leaders, and uses a rubric (see Appendix C) to assess how well the school is organized. According to NYCDOE officials, the process allows the reviewer to develop a well-rounded perspective on the ways in which schools use information about outcomes to guide teaching, set goals for improvement, and make adjustments (e.g., to the curriculum and/or the use of resources at the school). Approximately 500 New York City schools receive Quality Review visits each year, and the review results are posted online.

Schools meeting at least one of the following criteria were scheduled to have a formal Quality Review in 2011/12:

- Received a Quality Review rating of "Underdeveloped" in 2010/11;
- Received a poor Quantitative Progress Report (a grade of F or D, or third consecutive C) in 2010/11;
- In the 10th percentile or below of Quantitative Progress Report performance;
- In its third year of existence and did not have a formal Quality Review in 2010/11;
- Identified as Persistently Lowest Achieving by the New York State Education Department;
- Not reviewed since 2007/08; and/or

- Chosen from a lottery of local schools that have not had a review since 2008/09 (schools in the lottery that do not receive a 2011/12 review will receive one in 2012/13).

NYCDOE employs six Quality Directors. Each oversees 12 to 15 reviewers. The reviewers include district superintendents and senior instructional experts as well as consultants (all former NYCDOE school principals). According to respondents, grouping reviewers under Quality Directors has greatly improved the process because it has helped align and calibrate scoring practices, built trusting relationships, and increased accountability among reviewers. All reviewers receive training five times per year in order to build a shared understanding of the review rubric and to develop norms. Reviewers are assigned to schools based upon grade-level preferences and local district and geographical considerations (e.g., no reviewer may evaluate a school in a local district in which he or she has worked, to avoid potential conflicts of interest).

The Quality Review program is funded at about \$500,000 per year, to review about 500 schools per year, with no funding from grants or categorical monies. Consultants are paid \$2,000 per review, while the reviews are built into the job descriptions for local superintendents, who are required to conduct 10 reviews per year.

Quality/Early lessons: The use of the Quality Review results depends on each school and its current activities and priorities within its school network (a separate school support structure in which 20 to 30 principals work together). Three years after the introduction of the Quality Review process, NYCDOE is still working on getting an accurate appraisal of how the reports are used, but its intent is to use the reviews as a school improvement tool.

The three NYCDOE officials who were interviewed for this brief were in agreement with the feedback they shared. First, the district's Quality Review rubric is dense and complicated, and NYCDOE plans to cut its 20 indicators down to 10, focusing primarily on quality of teaching across classrooms, instructional feedback from principals, and targeting of resources, and somewhat de-emphasizing the use of data. Also, scheduling of site reviews to fit into local superintendents' calendars has been a logistical challenge. NYCDOE staff also stressed the importance of training in which reviewers can role-play and model difficult conversations, to prepare them for such interactions in the field.

There has not been a quantitative evaluation of the Quality Review process in New York City.

Ohio School Improvement Diagnostic Reviews (SIDRs)

Purpose: The purpose of Ohio's SIDR is to provide a benchmark of school practices and to align observed evidence to School Improvement Grant (SIG) proposals. Originally, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) planned more review work with districts, but its focus has shifted to individual low-performing schools, given recent Race to the Top and SIG funding.

Data elements: There are approximately 120 items on Ohio's SIDR rubric, which targets adult behaviors and environments at the school. On each item, reviewers rate the school on flexibility and quality and their impact on student engagement.

Process: The state's 24-member group of reviewers is composed of ODE staff members and selected contractors. Most of the contractors are retired master teachers, superintendents, or professors. To apply to the reviewer group, potential reviewers submit a resume and credentials and compile a portfolio and notebook of past achievements. They are given data from a school and asked to answer a series of questions and present sample data and findings to a team. They must also view a series of classroom observation videos and write about what they see. Once selected by ODE, reviewers participate in trainings to examine various school activities, discuss different practices with a speaker, calibrate ratings, and write reports. As in New York City, geographical considerations play into reviewer assignments (ideally minimizing travel costs); also, reviewers cannot have had any previous contact with the district or school being reviewed.

Site visits last for one and one-half days and include a building tour, classroom observations, interviews with site administrators and teachers, and a review of documents. For the site visit, the school principal is expected to gather documents for review, give the review team open access to the building, schedule interviews, and set aside a meeting room for the review team. Teachers are expected to attend a brief introductory meeting, provide a chair at the back of the classroom for reviewers' 20-to-30-minute observations, make lesson plans available, and participate in interviews. Administrator interviews focus on such issues as the school's interventions and learning supports, decision-making and flexibility, assessment, classroom observation, professional development, parental supports, and frequency of data review by staff. Teacher interviews explore planning time with other teachers, lesson planning considerations, ways to ensure that all students are learning, use of student data, engaging parents, teacher involvement in school decisions, and recent professional development experiences. Parents are asked how they learn about the school's academic and behavioral expectations, special programs, and enrichment opportunities, and how the school might improve.

After the completion of onsite data collection, the School Diagnostic Team (SDT) (a team of three reviewers) convenes to develop a consensus view on specific items. Building from this discussion, the team writes the final report and shares it with school leaders within a few weeks. In the past, the SDT gave the report to state support personnel, who then worked with the district to figure out how to implement and prioritize changes and identify professional development opportunities. This school year, because of early warning designation schools and Race to the Top, the Ohio Network for Innovation and Improvement office at ODE will visit schools during the third, sixth, and twelfth months after the reviewers' visit for follow-up, and schools will provide documentation and progress on what they have done. The SIDR coordinator we spoke to shared that when no one followed up on the reports, their findings often remain unused.

The reports contain information on how a school was rated, on a 0-to-5 scale, on 120 items that measure the frequency of behaviors seen at the site and how they affect student engagement. The ratings are put in an online tool that generates different types of graphs. From those graphs, the reviewers write a diagnostic summary report. One side of each report page contains observations of areas to be commended and areas needing improvement. The other side contains strategies and action steps aligned with the school's current improvement plan. (In Ohio, all schools are required to complete an online comprehensive and continuous improvement plan in order to receive federal and state funding.)

Ohio's SIDR system is funded entirely by Title I funds. The approximate expense for the review of the eight schools within a district and the district office is \$35,000. This amount includes reviewer time for travel and preparation, visits, finalizing reports, and one debrief meeting, and does not include school preparation costs. Travel is a large part of the cost because reviewers live all over the state. The state uses technology, including webinars, to save on costs. For example, the state does presentations before reviewers go out to the school, and team members in different locations communicate with each other using SharePoint, Skype, and Google Docs.

Quality/Early lessons: State officials noted that through this process they have learned the importance of collaboration and communication to build a common language and shared understandings. Aligning professional development to student needs identified via statewide assessment results has been key as well. State officials also noted that significant preparation time is needed prior to visits.

An evaluation conducted by RMC Research Corporation (2011) found that, although Ohio's reviews tend to be conducted with fidelity, pressure to carry out increasing numbers of reviews is taxing the limits of the system and hindering its ability to provide timely and useful information to schools and districts. The evaluation also highlighted a need to ensure consistency across reviews and to improve the way data are collected to provide sufficient evidence to support review findings. Stakeholders in schools and districts felt that reviewers need to do a better job familiarizing themselves with existing improvement efforts and then aligning review recommendations to those efforts. In general, the results of the reviews are being incorporated into school and district plans, but timeliness and the alignment of review findings with school/district improvement efforts are key considerations for the state moving forward.

Rhode Island School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

Purpose: In 1997, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) launched the SALT initiative to improve practices in individual classrooms. As part of the initiative, site visits (which were funded until 2009) sought to generate more authentic and legitimate information about school performance.

Process: The state contracted with Catalpa, Ltd., to provide RIDE with key resources for the design, management, and quality control of the SALT visits. The state first focused on Title I schools; eventually, 90 percent of the state's schools were visited.

The review teams were chaired by district employees who were placed on leave for two years and provided with intensive training, including seminars and ongoing professional development every two months. Chairs then trained reviewers on the logistics of the reviews and the review protocol (see Appendix C for rubric). The majority of the review teams had to be composed of practicing teachers. Each team also had to include a practicing school principal. As in other review systems, no reviewer could be from the district in which the school was located. Rhode Island selectively matched reviewers to the learning needs or population of the school.

The goal of the week-long school visits was to assess the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Primarily through classroom visits, the reviewers noted what the school was doing well, recommended ways the school could improve its teaching and learning, and recommended how the school district and RIDE could best assist the school.

Initially, SALT was funded with Title I funds and money from the schools themselves. The state later fully funded the program to between \$500,000 and \$1 million annually. This amount included money for substitute teachers and principals as well as professional development.

Quality/Early lessons: According to the review official interviewed for this brief, the impacts of the reports on schools were “more complicated than [the] system allowed.” After the report was finalized, the chair of a different review team would spend three days (over several weeks) at the school, working with administrative teams and then with the whole faculty to understand the report and change the school improvement plan based on the report. But longer term impacts were difficult to gauge.

The official also emphasized that having a rigorous protocol, such as the one developed by Catalpa, was essential for producing meaningful reports that were comparable from school to school. In an internal evaluation of the SALT visits (Catalpa, Ltd. 2001), 82 percent of respondents reported that being on a SALT review team was the most powerful professional development experience they had ever had.

Sacramento City School Quality Reviews (SQRs)

Purpose: The Sacramento City Unified School District in Sacramento, California, began implementing SQRs in 2009. The purpose of the SQRs is to help school leadership determine needs, examine the nature and causes of those needs, and set priorities for action that ultimately lead to a meaningful school plan with benchmarks. The SQRs provide critical tools to help schools build on their successes and build the capacity to engage in a program of continuous quality improvement.

Process: First, turnaround schools are prioritized for review. Fifteen such schools were reviewed in 2009/10, and 30 more schools were added in 2010/11. Forty-five schools are planned to be reviewed by the end of 2011/12. School review teams (two to three individuals) include principals, central office administrators, parents, and community partners. Principals and assistant principals are required to participate in the process as part of their job descriptions (similar to the review process in New York City). The first-year training for reviewers includes getting an overview of the process to understand the rubric and criteria and then accompanying a round of reviews as an observer. In their second year, reviewers receive intensive training in writing reviews. Cambridge Ltd. is currently a co-lead of this effort; the district will assume full responsibility next year.

Reviewers spend two or three days in each school, observing classrooms and interviewing teachers, staff and parents. They grade the school on a total of 49 standards (see Appendix C for rubric). The final review is shared with principals, who can then share it with their leadership team, faculty, staff, and parents. The review is not posted online; it is seen as a “growth instrument” for the school community. It is used to craft the school development and improvement plan. Specifically, reviewers identify one to three action areas for the school to focus on, which helps establish and maintain the link between review findings and the school plan. A co-lead reviewer meets with the principal to talk through the review and help him or her develop the action areas. Then, school leaders (often in collaboration with staff and families) decide how to spend the school’s resources and whether to seek particular support from the central office in order to address those goals.

The reviews are funded via a combination of categorical funds, grant funding, and funds from other sources. The district contracted with Cambridge Ltd. to learn about and refine the process, develop the

rubric, and train reviewers. Once all reviewers are trained, costs also include some coordination time from the central office. (No costs are associated with reviewers' time, since all reviewers are district employees whose job descriptions include participating in reviews.)

Quality/Early lessons: A district official interviewed noted that one of the district's biggest lessons learned was the importance of collaboration and buy-in at the school level. The district spent half a year developing its own tool, with which all stakeholders were satisfied. Members of the school community, including parents and students, took part in this process. Principals and teachers were especially engaged in making sure that the rubric fit with the district's culture and work environment. It is hoped that this buy-in will help schools begin to improve. The rubric is refined annually to meet the needs of principals who will use the information. According to the district official interviewed, many principals state that the review process is "some of the best professional development [they] have ever been involved in."

The district reportedly found value in getting principals to visit other sites and observe classrooms and instructional practices that they can then bring back to their schools. The district official noted that such work builds collaboration and gets people out of their daily routines and work environments. Furthermore, the district official noted that, even if the reviews are not as positive in an area as principals would like, principals receive information better when it comes from a colleague than from an external reviewer, a consultant, or a central office staffer: "Having colleagues who walk in your shoes tell you something is not working or [that you should] think about doing it a different way is a little easier to take and seems to have more meaning for [principals]."

The interviewee also noted that no official evaluation has yet been conducted of the SQR process in Sacramento.

III. Examples of comprehensive charter school renewal processes

The following states were selected based on WestEd's experiences leading the Charter Schools Program (CSP) Monitoring Project. Research was done on state websites to identify specific charter school monitoring and renewal policies, procedures, and documents.

Colorado Charter School Support Initiative (CSSI)

Purpose: The Colorado Department of Education does not function as a statewide authorizer; however, in its capacity as a grantee of a federal CSP grant, the state's Schools of Choice Unit regularly monitors subgrantees and other charter schools for quality and effectiveness. As a result of these monitoring efforts, LEAs that choose to authorize charter schools have begun to use the state's monitoring reports in their own reauthorizing decisions. Included in the state's monitoring efforts is the CSSI, which is intended as a self-improvement tool for charter schools.

Data elements: The CSSI provides schools with a comprehensive review of strengths and weaknesses across 11 standards of school performance. The first 9 standards are pulled directly from the state's existing efforts to monitor underperforming Title I schools and include topics related to academic performance, learning environment, and organizational effectiveness. Standards 10 and 11 were added to include specific governance and management criteria for charter schools.

Colorado CSSI Standards for School Improvement	
1: Academic Performance—Curriculum (6 indicators)	7: Organizational Effectiveness—Leadership (8 indicators)
2: Academic Performance—Classroom Evaluation/Assessment (7 indicators)	8: Organizational Effectiveness—Organization Structure and Resources (6 indicators)
3: Academic Performance—Instruction (7 indicators)	9: Organizational Effectiveness—Comprehensive and Effective Planning (10 indicators)
4: Learning Environment—School Culture (11 indicators)	10: Strong Board Governance—Quality Leadership (10 indicators)
5: Learning Environment—Student, Family, and Community Support (3 indicators)	11: Sound Fiscal Management (8 indicators)
6: Learning Environment—Professional Growth, Development, and Evaluation (6 indicators)	

The state has produced a rubric that lists each of the standards and the related indicators for quick reference (Colorado Department of Education n.d.[b]). The state has also produced a resource handbook that lists the definitions; the research base with specific references, resources, and links; and a step-by-step process to address each indicator (Colorado Department of Education n.d.[a]). The step-by-step process provides a sequence of activities for the school leadership to implement. For example, the process to address an indicator under the Academic Performance—Classroom Evaluation/Assessment standard states that school leaders need to 1) define what students are expected to learn; 2) translate expectations into assessments; and 3) give students clear and timely feedback. The handbook is provided to school sites before the individual monitoring visits so that schools can adequately prepare.

Process: CSSI monitoring typically occurs during a school's second or third year of operation, before charter renewal and with enough time to make operational changes as needed. The state selects 12 to 15 CSP subgrantee schools in their second year of operation for monitoring. Schools that are not current CSP subgrantees can apply for CSSI monitoring as well; the state typically selects two to three non-subgrantee sites for CSSI monitoring. For CSP subgrantees, the state uses grant funds to fund the monitoring visits. Non-subgrantee schools that apply for the monitoring must cover the costs themselves.

The CSSI uses a team of approximately 25 trained consultants to conduct 15 to 20 annual monitoring visits. Consultants are selected based on their previous (or current) experience, with demonstrated success working in charter schools or on charter governing boards. The state trains all of the consultants on the evaluation rubric and related tools and conducts annual professional development with consultants. The initial training is for three days, and subsequent annual professional development is for a day and a half. Individual consultants are typically paid \$1,700 to conduct three visits and write the related reports. Two consultants serve as team leads and are paid \$2,700 to participate in 7 to 10 visits each. Visit costs vary depending on the size of the school, as shown in the following table.

School Size (student population)	Team Size (number of CSSI monitors)	Visit Cost
250 or fewer	5	\$10,800
250–500	6	\$12,500
500–750	7	\$14,200
750+	8	\$15,900

After the CSSI monitoring visits, the CSSI team prepares a detailed report that rates the school as “exemplary,” “fully functioning,” “limited development,” or “little to no development” on each of several specific indicators, and includes recommendations for the school site. The CSSI team leader also provides the school site with professional contacts or research to support school improvement needs.

Though intended for school improvement, many local authorizers are starting to use the CSSI monitoring reports in their renewal procedures. The Charter School Institute (CSI)—a statewide authorizer in Colorado—uses the CSSI monitoring reports as a reference in its monitoring and renewal procedures. In the third year of a charter, a CSI-authorized charter school will report back to the CSI with any changes it has made as a result of the CSSI monitoring. In the fourth year of a charter, the CSI will conduct its own monitoring of the site as a follow-up to the state’s recommendations in the CSSI report.

Massachusetts Renewal Benchmarks

Process: When a Massachusetts charter school applies to renew its charter every five years, the state’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracts with an independent renewal inspection organization to conduct a detailed review of the school’s performance during the charter period (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2012). The renewal inspection organization (often a consulting group such as SchoolWorks or RMC Research) then assembles a team of specialists (sometimes including ESE staffers) with relevant expertise—for example, an understanding of the legal, fiscal, and programmatic requirements for state charter schools—to conduct the two-to-three-day renewal inspection site visit and prepare a renewal inspection report. Onsite activities during the site visit include interviews with school administrators; classroom observations (scheduled “to ensure coverage of all grades and core subjects”); and focus groups including the charter board, teachers, students, and parents. According to state guidance, the inspection team “is free to visit classrooms selected by the team, without advance notice to the school or the classroom teachers. Each classroom observation should span a minimum time period of 20 minutes and some observations should span full class periods, including transitions. The team should observe either 30 classrooms or 66 percent of all classrooms, whichever is the smaller number.” The renewal inspection team then drafts and submits its final report to the school and the state Charter School Office. Other sources of evidence considered by ESE in the charter renewal decision include the school’s performance on state exams (including the school’s Student Growth Percentile results); other site visits conducted to assess the school’s special education and English learner programs; the school’s compliance with state and federal requirements (e.g., teacher qualifications); and the school’s enrollment and waitlist history.

Ultimately, the inspection team's report summarizes its findings regarding the school's performance relative to its accountability plan and the state's charter school performance criteria: *faithfulness to charter* (i.e., mission and vision, governance structure, and academic program), *academic success* (i.e., curriculum, instruction, internal and external assessments, classroom and school environment, professional climate), and *organizational viability* (i.e., enrollment, facilities, solvency, stability, fiscal oversight, and family engagement and satisfaction).

Data elements: Examples of documents provided to the inspection team prior to and/or during the visit include the following:

- A current organizational chart
- A current list of teachers employed at the school, indicating subject area, full-time or part-time status, years of teaching experience, years employed at the school, and highly qualified status
- All student, parent, and staff handbooks
- Strategic plans or other planning documents
- Enrollment by grade and student subgroup
- Class schedules, identifying teacher, subject, and location during the visit
- Curricular documents and materials
- Summaries of external and internal assessment data
- Performance evaluations of the head(s) of school and all other school staff

New York Renewal Benchmarks

Purpose: Both the New York Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) serve as authorizers in New York. The State Education Department (SED) serves on behalf of the Board of Regents to carry out all related monitoring and oversight activities. SED and SUNY work closely to ensure that their monitoring and renewal policies are parallel.

Data elements: New York state law requires that a charter renewal application include the following components:

1. A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter
2. A detailed financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school, and that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private
3. Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school, including charter school report cards and certified financial statements
4. Indications of parent and student satisfaction

Process: The following subsections describe each authorizing organization's practices regarding charter school monitoring and renewal.

State Education Department (SED)

SED's Charter Schools Office (CSO) regularly monitors all Board of Regents-authorized charter schools across three topic areas: academic performance, organizational/fiscal performance, and faithfulness to

charter. For nearly all charter schools, the CSO conducts full program evaluation site visits in Year 3 (midterm visit) and Year 5 (renewal visit) and “check-in” visits in Year 1 and Year 2. Desk audits (to verify evidence that the school submits) are also regularly conducted. The specific timing of the desk audits depends on federal and state statute as well as an individual school’s ability to meet its goals and objectives. Most of these visits are staffed by SED staff, though the state may use an independent organization as needed (New York State Education Department 2011c, pp. 3–7).

Full program evaluation visits typically last one day and include two to four monitors. To minimize costs, the CSO typically uses regional staff to conduct visits (e.g., New York City-based SED staff conduct visits to charter schools in New York City). While onsite, the monitoring teams review documentation and conduct a variety of focus groups with school leadership, teachers, students, families, and governing boards (New York State Education Department 2011a). Half-day, informal “check-in” visits are organized around the same guiding principles as the full program evaluation visits; however, they typically only include classroom observations, focus groups with school leadership and staff (New York State Education Department 2011d). SED does not list a specific protocol for these visits. Available documentation did not indicate the costs of these monitoring activities.

Each Board of Regents-authorized charter school is required to submit a charter renewal application no later than six months prior to the end of its charter term (New York State Education Department 2011b). As indicated in the following table, the renewal application requires each charter school to provide extensive documentation on whether the school is an academic success and educationally sound; organizationally viable and fiscally sound; and faithful to the terms of its charter and adhering to applicable state laws and regulations. The application also requires the school to describe its future plans.

SED Application Requirements for Charter Renewal			
(Note: The State has developed standards for each non-bolded element below.)			
Is the school an academic success and able to operate in an educationally sound manner?	Is the school organizationally viable and able to operate in a fiscally sound manner?	Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter and has it adhered to applicable laws and regulations?	Should the school’s charter be renewed and what are its plans for the term of the future charter?
Academic Performance Goals	Organizational Performance Goals	Charter-Specific Performance Goals	Key Structural Elements of the Charter
Curriculum	Financial Performance Goals	Mission and Key Design Elements	Academic Program
Instruction	Organizational Capacity	Admissions and Enrollment	Organizational Viability and Fiscal Soundness
Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making	Board Oversight and Governance	Legal Compliance	
Climate, Culture, and Safety	School Leadership		
Professional Development	Solvency and Stability		
	Internal Controls		
	Financial Reporting		
	Facilities		
	Parent/Family and Student Satisfaction		

Renewal applications are reviewed by the CSO to ensure clarity and completeness. As previously noted, the CSO (or related parties) then conducts a renewal site visit in Year 5 to collect corroborating evidence regarding the school's effectiveness according to existing parameters. The CSO prepares a renewal site visit report summarizing findings relative to the school's performance and to standards outlined in the renewal application guidelines (New York State Education Department 2011b). Schools may respond to a renewal site visit report as they please. Subsequently, the CSO staff makes renewal recommendations to the Board of Regents, based on the school's renewal application, the renewal site visit report, and any additional documentation. The Board of Regents then votes on whether to grant or deny a renewal request.

Available documentation did not indicate the outcomes of these efforts. SED does not publish the renewal reports online.

SUNY

SUNY, through its Charter Schools Institute (CSI), also serves as a statewide authorizer in New York. CSI conducts formal monitoring visits at least three times over the course of a charter contract and at least once during subsequent charter terms. During these visits, CSI collects information on effectiveness in teaching and learning, climate, facilities, and fidelity to the charter, in addition to the school's own goals as they are laid out in individual accountability plans.¹² Schools are required to submit a variety of documents before the monitoring visits. While onsite, the CSI team reviews additional documentation; interviews school leaders, teachers, charter management organization staff, and governing board members; and conducts classroom observations (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York 2011b). Site visit reports are also published on SUNY's website (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York 2011d).

Renewal visits are conducted in the fall of the last year of a school's charter. The purpose of the renewal visits is to assess the quality of the charter school at the time of application for renewal. Renewal reports are then used as key evidence in the renewal decisions (in addition to a school's renewal application, elements of which are described below). Renewal site visits typically include interviews with parents, students, teachers, administrators, and governing board members; document reviews related to curriculum, pedagogy, internal assessments, board governance, and legal compliance; and classroom observations. The scope and duration of a renewal visit depends on whether the school is applying for an initial or subsequent renewal (i.e., initial renewal visits are more substantial than subsequent renewal visits). Renewal visits can last from 1 to 4 days depending on the type of renewal visit and other, unspecified school factors. To facilitate the visits, charter schools are required to indicate and provide evidence for areas of strength and areas for improvement related to the renewal benchmarks (described in the following table). While onsite, the CSI team then follows up on the school's previously submitted self-assessment (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York 2011c). Available documentation did not indicate the cost of these monitoring visits.

SUNY's application for charter renewal (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York 2011a) includes several questions and benchmarks. As shown in the following table, each benchmark lists several elements that charter schools must document or demonstrate.

¹² Each SUNY-authorized school is required to submit an accountability plan (i.e., a performance contract) to the authorizer to outline key performance goals and objectives (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York 2010).

SUNY Charter Renewal Questions and Benchmarks			
(Note: The State has developed benchmarks in each non-bolded area below.)			
Is the school an academic success?	Is the school an effective, viable organization?	Is the school fiscally sound?	If the school’s charter is renewed, what are its plans for the term of the next charter period? Are they reasonable, feasible, and achievable?
Academic Accountability Plan Goals	Mission and Key Design Elements	Budget and Long-Range Planning	Charter Renewal Exhibits
Assessment Data	Parents and Students	Internal Controls	Plans for Educational Program
Curriculum	Organizational Capacity	Financial Reporting	Plans for Board Oversight and Governance
Pedagogy	Board Oversight	Financial Condition	Fiscal and Facility Plans
Instructional Leadership	Governance		
At-Risk Students	Legal Requirements		
Student Order and Discipline			
Professional Development			

SUNY-authorized charter schools are required to submit a renewal application just prior to the start of the last year of the charter contract. CSI staff review the charter application, as well as any data and records from previous monitoring efforts or required reporting. As previously mentioned, CSI conducts a comprehensive site visit at the time of the renewal application. All renewal visits and decisions are documented through renewal reports. SUNY lists all of its renewal reports (including nonrenewals) on its website (Charter Schools Institute, The State University of New York n.d.).

IV. Discussion Topics

As state leaders consider the potential of broadening state accountability measures and/or review processes, it may be beneficial to discuss issues such as those raised below.

System considerations

1. **What do state leaders most want to promote through a school accountability and/or review process?** Are there key performance expectations, standards, elements of quality instruction, equity values, or other factors that the state considers critical to reinforce and promote? What factors are considered less important and therefore good candidates for not being part of the accountability system?

2. **How will accountability or review data be used?** Will the primary goal be to use such data to inform continuous school improvement efforts? Will the data be used for rewards or sanctions of schools? Will the data be used to target additional interventions and supports in schools? How will the system be designed to ensure that certain standards of implementation and performance are met while also fostering improvement?
3. **What should be the relationship between the data regularly collected in an accountability system and the conduct of quality reviews?** For example, how might the data be used to select schools for review? To what extent should data provide focus for the reviews and benchmark improvements? How can the reviews best serve to contextualize the data?
4. **How might a new accountability system integrate the numerous strands of data currently collected to promote cost efficiencies and foster usefulness?** How can the diverse data collections be placed under a common framework and management structure in a new accountability system? What are the opportunities and costs associated with such a restructuring?

Data and measurement considerations

1. **Given the answers to the system consideration questions, what measures are currently available that would be desirable to include in the state accountability system?** Appendix A includes some dimensions that are used in school review and charter renewal processes and that may serve as a springboard for discussion.
2. **Which additional measures might be desirable to include in a review process?**
3. **Is each measure feasible to collect and report?** What are the quality and/or cost implications of including particular data elements?

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Appendix A1. Domains of school/district review rubrics in California

	Current CDE tools used in district reviews in California				Past CDE review processes		Independent accreditation	Recognition reviews
Domain (remove line)	Academic Program Survey	District Assistance Survey	English Learner Subgroup Self-Assessment	Inventory of Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities	Academic Audit	Program Quality Review	Western Association of Schools and Colleges	California Distinguished Schools Program
Quality teaching and learning		X (standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment)		X (standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment)	X	X (regular assessment)	X	
Curriculum aligned with standards		X (standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment)		X (standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment)	X	X (academic focus; rigorous content; coordinated curriculum)	X	
Instructional practices						X	X	
Instructional time	X					X		
Lesson pacing guide	X							
Leadership, management, and accountability		X (governance and leadership)		X (governance and leadership)	X	X	X (governance, leadership, and staff)	
Vision and purpose							X	
School climate/culture					X	X	X	X

	Current CDE tools used in district reviews in California				Past CDE review processes		Independent accreditation	Recognition reviews
Domain (remove line)	Academic Program Survey	District Assistance Survey	English Learner Subgroup Self-Assessment	Inventory of Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities	Academic Audit	Program Quality Review	Western Association of Schools and Colleges	California Distinguished Schools Program
Partnership with parents and community		X		X		X	X	
Professional development	X	X		X	X	X		X
Data systems	X (student achieve monitoring system)	X (data systems/ data analysis/ ongoing monitoring)		X (data systems/data analysis/ongoing monitoring)				X (data-driven decision making)
Human resources		X		X			X	
Fiscal operations and supports	X	X		X				
Program planning, implementation, and evaluation					X (classroom & school assessments)	X		
English learners			X		X			
Special needs students				X		X		
Other								Small learning communities; health

	Current CDE tools used in district reviews in California				Past CDE review processes		Independent accreditation	Recognition reviews
Domain (remove line)	Academic Program Survey	District Assistance Survey	English Learner Subgroup Self-Assessment	Inventory of Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities	Academic Audit	Program Quality Review	Western Association of Schools and Colleges	California Distinguished Schools Program
								supports; social/emotional/behavioral supports

Appendix A2. Domains of other comprehensive school review system rubrics

Domain	New York City Department of Education Quality Review	Ohio School Diagnostic Reviews	Rhode Island SALT	Sacramento School Quality Reviews
Quality teaching and learning	X		X	X
Curriculum aligned with standards	X	X		X
Instructional practices		X	X	
Instructional time				
Lesson pacing guide				
Leadership, management, and accountability		X		X
Vision and purpose				
School climate/culture	X	X	X	
Partnership with parents and community	X			X
Professional development	X	X		
Data systems	X	X (data-driven decisions)		
Human resources				
Fiscal operations and supports				
ELs	X			
Special-needs students	X			

Appendix A3. Domains of charter review or renewal rubrics

Domain	Colorado CSSI	Massachusetts Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SED Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SUNY CSI Renewal Benchmarks
Quality teaching and learning	X (Academic Performance—Classroom Evaluation/Assessment)	X (Academic Program; MCAS Performance; MCAS Growth; AYP; Coordinated Program Review)	X (Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making)	X (Academic Accountability Plan Goals; Pedagogy)
Curriculum aligned with standards	X (Academic Performance—Curriculum)	X (Curriculum)	X (Curriculum)	X (Curriculum)
Instructional practices	X (Academic Performance—Instruction)	X (Instruction)	X (Instruction)	X (Instructional Leadership)
Instructional time	X (Academic Performance—Instruction)	X (Instruction)	X (Instruction)	
Lesson pacing guide				
Leadership, management, and accountability	X (Organizational Effectiveness—Leadership; Organizational Effectiveness—Organization Structure and Resources; Strong Board Governance—Quality Leadership)	X (Governance; Leadership; Contractual Relationships; Assessment and Instructional Decision Making; Board Accountability; Decision Making and Communication; Board Oversight; School Leadership; Organizational Planning)	X (Organizational Performance Goals; School Leadership; Board Oversight and Governance; Organizational Capacity)	X (Organizational Capacity; Board Oversight; Governance)
Vision and purpose		X (Mission, Vision, and Educational Philosophy)	X (Mission and Key Design Elements)	X (Mission and Key Design Elements)
School climate/culture	X (Learning	X (Classroom and School	X (Climate, Culture, and	X (Student Order and

Domain	Colorado CSSI	Massachusetts Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SED Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SUNY CSI Renewal Benchmarks
	Environment—School Culture)	Environment)	Safety)	Discipline)
Partnership with parents and community	X (Learning Environment—Student, Family, and Community Support)	X (Family Engagement)	X (Parent/Family and Student Satisfaction)	
Professional development	X (Learning Environment—Professional Growth, Development, and Evaluation)	X (Professional Climate)	X (Professional Development)	X (Professional Development)
Data systems				X (Assessment Data)
Human resources		X (Employee Qualifications)		
Fiscal operations and supports	X (Sound Fiscal Management)	X (Solvency and Stability; Fiscal Oversight)	X (Financial Performance Goals; Financial Reporting; Internal Controls; Solvency and Stability; Facilities)	X (Budget and Long-Range Planning; Internal Controls; Financial Reporting; Financial Condition)
English learners		X (Diverse Learners)		X (At-Risk Students)
Special-needs students		X (Diverse Learners)		X (At-Risk Students)
Other	X (Organizational Effectiveness—Comprehensive and Effective Planning)	X (External Assessment of Student Achievement; Internal Assessment of Student Achievement; Program Evaluation; Enrollment; Roles and Responsibilities; Safety;	X (Charter-Specific Performance Goals; Admissions and Enrollment; Legal Compliance; Academic Performance Goals; Key Structural Elements of the	X (Parents and Students; Legal Requirements; Charter Renewal Exhibits; Plans for Educational Program; Plans for Board Oversight and Governance)

Domain	Colorado CSSI	Massachusetts Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SED Renewal Benchmarks	New York—SUNY CSI Renewal Benchmarks
		Facilities; Dissemination)	Charter; Academic Program; Organizational Viability and Fiscal Soundness)	

Appendix B. Protocol for interviewing staff about comprehensive school review systems

Researchers interviewed officials to confirm what they had read and learned more about these qualitative review systems, to inform a potential statewide system in California. For example, they sought information on how schools and reviewers get selected in the system, how reviewers are trained, how the reports are used, how the systems are funded, and the lessons learned from implementation.

INTRODUCTION

I'm _____, working with WestEd in San Francisco. As you know, we're assisting a state working group in California that's composed of representatives from the State Board of Education, the Governor's Office, and the State Department of Education. This group is looking into possible revisions to the statewide school accountability system, and specifically wants to learn more about the potential costs and benefits of instituting a system of school reviews similar to XXX.

We've reviewed the materials available on the web, specifically the XXX. At this point we'd like to ask you some targeted questions based on what we've read, particularly about system logistics and the lessons you've learned from implementation. The interview should last no more than 30 minutes.

- Before we start, though, we'd like to be able to use your name(s) in case California officials want to contact you with follow-up questions. Is this OK with you?
- Also, is it OK with you if I record our conversation (purely for note taking)?

QUESTIONS

1. From what we've read, the purpose of the reviews is to XXX. Are we right about that?
2. Our next questions focus on the reviewers and review sites.
 - a. How are/were the review sites selected?
 - b. Can you confirm how the chairs and team members are selected?
(*Probe*) What does the selection process involve? What criteria are used?
 - c. What does the training, before the visit, look like?
 - d. What are the specific costs involved? (*Get specific amounts if possible.*)
3. We'd like to ask about how information from reviews gets used. Is there follow-up from the review team?
 - a. How does this follow-up work?
 - b. Are there follow-up activities that work particularly well?
4. Our final questions relate to outcomes and the lessons you've learned from implementation.
 - a. What would you say are the most important lessons you've learned?
 - b. Was there an evaluation of the process?
5. Has there been any indication that school-based actions and practice, or student achievement, changed and improved as a result of the process?
6. Do you have any other final thoughts or comments that you would like to share with us? Was there anything else we should have asked about?

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix C. Rubrics

Below are links to the publicly available rubrics used in the school/district review and charter school renewal systems referenced in this memo.

Program Quality Review: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED289248.pdf>

Western Association of Schools and Colleges:

http://www.acswasc.org/pdf_cde/WASC_CDE_Charter_rubrics.pdf

California Technical Assistance Reviews (SAIT and DAIT):

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/stateassesspi.asp>

California Distinguished Schools Program: see “Application Package” at

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/proginfo.asp>

New York City Department of Education Quality Review:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/7EEB3889-6DC1-4867-9EC6-D684ADC31DD8/0/201112QRRubricwheader.pdf>

Ohio School Improvement Diagnostic Review: see “Diagnostic Indicators of Effective Practice” at

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=586>

Rhode Island School Accountability for Learning and Teaching:

<http://www.catalpa.org/PDF/SALT%20Protocol%209%2011%2006.pdf>

Sacramento School Quality Review: <http://toped.svefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/API-Alt-SacCityRubric-SQU011711.pdf>

Colorado Charter School Support Initiative:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/CSSI_9+2.pdf

Massachusetts Renewal Benchmark: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/guides/protocol.pdf>

New York State Education Department Renewal Benchmarks:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/fullsitevisitprotocolmarch2011.pdf>

State University of New York Renewal Benchmarks:

<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm>
