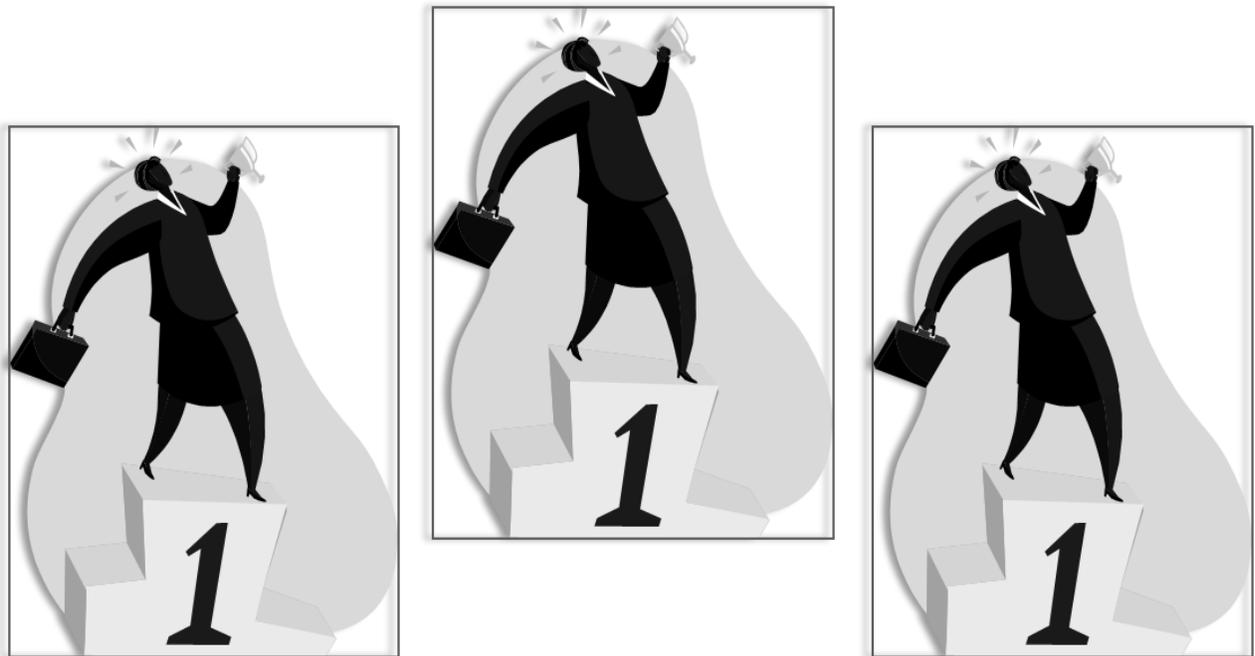# Maryland State Department of Education
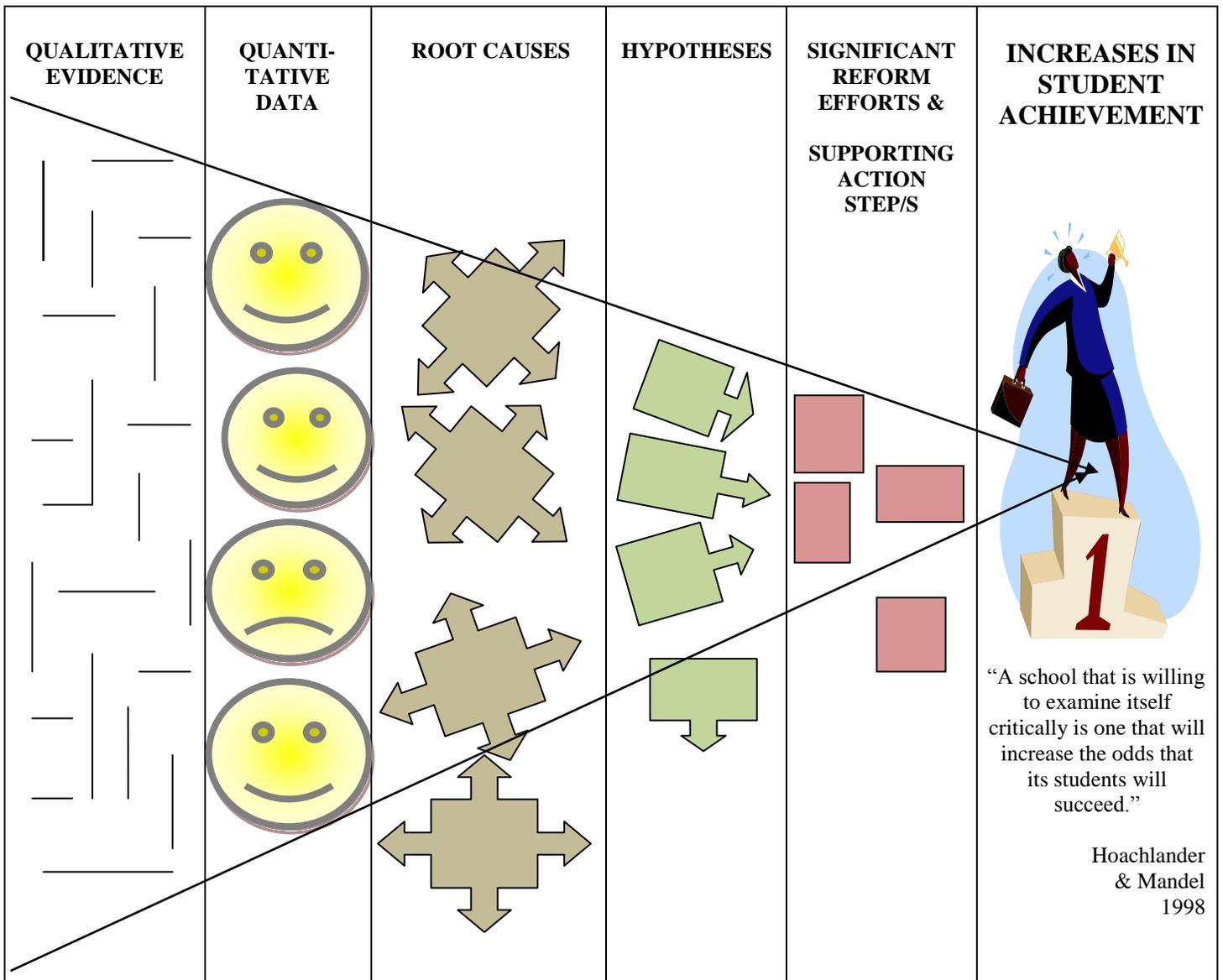
2011 - 2012 School Year

Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment

TCNA
Resource Book
September 2011

School Stakeholder Professional Judgment

QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE	QUANTI-TATIVE DATA	ROOT CAUSES	HYPOTHESES	SIGNIFICANT REFORM EFFORTS & SUPPORTING ACTION STEP/S	INCREASES IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

"A school that is willing to examine itself critically is one that will increase the odds that its students will succeed."

Hoachlander & Mandel 1998

It is only through stakeholder professional judgment, diligence, and attention to what really matters, and patience that true school improvement can occur. The Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment is dedicated to the many professionals that have gone through the process, who understand that qualitative as well as verifiable data (positive and negative) lead to the discovery of root causes. From these root causes, hypotheses are formed and reforms are developed. Alignment of this process should lead to the implementation of significant reforms that will facilitate every school's ultimate goal – to exit improvement and accelerate student performance. As Hoachlander and Mandel so brilliantly said in 1998,

"A school that is willing to examine itself critically is one that will increase the odds that its students will succeed."

Maryland State Department of Education
Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment Resource Book

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Maryland State Department of Education
Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment
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BACKGROUND

1. **What is the Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment (TCNA)?**

    The TCNA is a tool designed to provide schools with data to inform their decision making when planning for school improvement. Its primary intention is to identify, as precisely as possible, the key issues impacting student performance either negatively or positively.   Its secondary intention is to ensure that staff and the leadership team collectively agree on the recommended Significant Reform Efforts and Supporting Action Steps needed to improve student achievement.

    The TCNA process leads school staff through an analysis of the root causes underlying school performance from a teacher's perspective. The assessment begins with an analysis of curriculum, instruction, and assessment data and ends with an examination of student attendance and graduation rates. The importance of analyzing and addressing these various issues cannot be underestimated due to their significant impact each area has on student achievement.

    The Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment was first developed by Teresa Ayd Knott, Supervising Coordinator for School Performance and Mary Dagen, School Performance Specialist at the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) I-PAS/Challenge Initiative during the 2004-2005 school year. The TCNA draws upon earlier school research conducted by Drs. Ronald Thomas, Mike Hickey of Towson University and MSDE's former Director of Comprehensive Planning and School Support Dr. Thomas Rhoades' experience with school improvement and data-based decision making. A Fact Sheet on the Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment is attached along with a "glossary" of terms used throughout this resource book.

    ✓ *Refer to Attachment A: TCNA Fact Sheet*
          Attachment B: TCNA Glossary

2. **What is root cause analysis?**

    A complete root cause analysis consists of:

    - A clear definition of the issue
    - A thorough analysis of the issue supported with evidence, and
    - A specific action plan for implementing the solutions

    The TCNA is a root cause analysis that identifies both the obvious and the underlying causes of an issue. Conducted properly and without shortcuts, root cause analysis will lead to the identification of the right problem and the right solution. This analysis takes a school team through an in-depth process to drill down to the heart of the problem so that the correct significant Reform efforts and supporting action steps can be identified, implemented, and monitored.

Several attachments have been developed to assist schools through the root cause analysis process.

✓ Refer to Attachment C: Root Cause Analysis Defined
               Attachment D: Root Cause Analysis Flow Chart
               Attachment E: TCNA Process Guide & Tips
               Attachment F: TCNA Sample Activity
               Attachment G: TCNA Worksheet

3. What is the difference between a contributing factor and a root cause?

Contributing factors are separate issues that may, in combination with others, contribute to the root cause but in fact are not. It is a contributing factor if…

- The problem may have occurred even if the factor had not been present.
- The problem may reoccur as the result of the same factor if the cause is dissolved.
- Dissolution of the factor leads to similar events.

To help distinguish the difference between root cause and contributing factor, Preuss (2003) suggests that schools may discover the root cause if one or more of the following circumstances occur:

- You run into a dead end when asking what caused the proposed root cause.
- Everyone agrees that this is a root cause.
- The cause is logical and provides clarity to the problem.
- The cause is something that you can influence and control,
- If the cause is dissolved, there is a realistic hope that the problem can be reduced or prevented in the future.

4. How many TCNA Themes are there and what are their topics?

The TCNA is divided into six themes:

Theme I   Effective Delivery of Differentiated Instruction in Reading/English

Theme II   Utilizing Data to Monitor Student Learning in Reading/English

Theme III   Effective Delivery of Differentiated Instruction in Mathematics/Algebra

Theme IV   Utilizing Data to Monitor Student Learning in Mathematics/Algebra

Theme V   Student Attendance (for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress in this area)

Theme VI   Graduation Rate (for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress in this area)

Each Theme consists of one question that begins the root cause analysis. The question is accompanied by five or more "Think Abouts" to stimulate the team's conversation and provide a structure for the drill-down process.

✓ Refer to Attachment H: TCNA Theme Questions and Think Abouts.

5. **What are the Degrees of Implementation?**

For each theme, the first question posed is "To what degree do all teachers … (insert the theme Question). The facilitator brings the team to consensus as to whether the statement described is in the pre-initiation, initiation, evolving, or sustaining stage of implementation at the school. <u>Team members bring their experiences to the meetings but should answer/discuss theme questions from their perspective of how the WHOLE SCHOOL is approaching the issue.</u> It is from here that the drill down begins. The "degree" of implementation is not as critical as the conversations that follow in terms of discovering the root cause underlying the issue.

✓ *Refer to Attachment I: TCNA Degrees of Implementation*

6. **What are Significant Reform Efforts?**

For every root cause that is uncovered through the analysis, team members are asked to align it to one of the following seven Significant Reform Efforts:

1. Attendance
2. Data Utilization
3. Graduation
4. Mathematics/Algebra
5. Reading/English
6. School Culture & Climate
7. School Structure

These Significant Reform Efforts must then be paired with <u>up to three</u> Supporting Action Steps derived from any of the categories presented in Attachment J. These combined Significant Reform Efforts and their Supporting Action Steps will be known collectively as the **Reforms.**

✓ *Refer to Attachment J: Significant Reform Efforts and Supporting Action Steps*

BENEFITS

7. **How does the completion of the TCNA benefit a school?**

Schools that have completed earlier versions of this assessment have reported that the process gave them a better understanding of faculty perceptions regarding their ability to implement State instructional standards and expectations.

Other reported benefits and outcomes include enhancing a school's capacity to:

a) strengthen relationships among staff and encourage open and honest vertical and horizontal teamwork
b) identify root causes within a school's control that underlie poor academic performance

c) build a school wide consensus on possible solutions and action steps that will inform and drive school improvement activities and professional development, and

d) engender staff willingness to support and embrace the results of the Assessment and implement the Reforms for school improvement.

8. What are the benefits of conducting the TCNA to the LEA?

Primarily, the process provides a summary of trends and needs of schools in improvement. The TCNA exposes commonalities, in terms of school needs, across LEAs and opens avenues of communication in support of resource allocation, professional development needs, and stakeholder accountability.

PARTICIPANTS

9. Who should participate in the Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment?

All instructional staff (teachers, paraprofessionals, resource teachers, instructional mentors and coaches, department chairpersons, etc.) may be involved in this analysis, as appropriate.

The **School Project Leader** oversees the implementation of the entire TCNA process. School administrators may act in the capacity of a School Project Leader. **TCNA Facilitators** are selected to lead each of the teams needed for the Assessment. In order to promote impartiality and open, honest conversations, it is best if TCNA facilitators are not school or central office personnel that have evaluative responsibilities over the individuals on their teams.

TCNA Teams may consist of a mix of instructional staff by content, grade levels, years of teaching experience, number of years in the school building, special education, English Language Learners (ELL), resource personnel, and paraprofessionals, as appropriate.

✓ *Refer to Attachment K: TCNA Team Member Invitation.*

10. How are staff members divided into TCNA Teams?

The School Project Leader, in consultation with the Principal, determines the distribution of instructional staff across TCNA teams. A TCNA Team Membership Chart has been created to assist in distributing facilitators and staff across teams. The number of teams is determined by the number of Themes to be analyzed. The number of people on each team will depend on the total number of faculty and staff in the school. Teams can be combined as needed. Smaller schools will have fewer teams. Larger schools can have one or more teams completing the same theme(s).

✓ *Refer to Attachment L: TCNA Team Membership Chart.*

11. May any school participate in the TCNA and do all Themes need to be completed?

Schools in Alert/Local Attention and in Years 1 and 2 of school improvement, in consultation with their LEA, may select to conduct the TCNA at any time. Schools in Year 3 (Corrective Action) in both the Comprehensive and Focused Needs Pathways are expected to administer the TCNA prior

to entering into the 4th year of school improvement (Restructuring Planning). The chart on the next page outlines when the TCNA should be completed.

Schools in Year 4 (Restructuring Planning) in both the Comprehensive and Focused Needs Pathways must revisit the results of the TCNA completed the previous year. This information is part of a school's comprehensive needs analysis and is needed for presentation to the State Board of Education. Schools in Year 5 (Restructuring Implementation) in both the Comprehensive and Focused Needs Pathways, wishing to change their State Board approved alternative governance option, are required to complete the TCNA and all other requirements for Alternative Governance.

  ✓ *Refer to Attachment W: Differentiated Accountability*

12. How do school-based administrators participate in the TCNA?

School-based administrators set the tone for the TCNA process by creating an environment of urgency to the entire school community for meaningful change impacting student achievement. School-based administrators should not actively participate on teams in order to preserve the confidentiality of the discussions.

13. Are parents and community stakeholders involved in the TCNA?

Parents and community stakeholders should not participate as TCNA team members, but they should be made aware of the TCNA and should participate in school improvement planning and implementation activities. All stakeholders should have the opportunity to hear the principal's "State of the School Address" in whatever forum is most appropriate.

TCNA ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

14. How much time will it take for each TCNA team to complete their work?

In order to allow for meaningful discussion, TCNA teams are encouraged to set aside approximately two+ hours for each Theme meeting. Additional time will be needed for school wide consensus. MSDE recommends that the entire TCNA process be completed over a period of one month with different teams engaging simultaneously in their analyses. It is not expected that each team would complete all Themes. Generally, each team completes one Theme unless the size of the school would indicate otherwise. The TCNA Administration Sequence chart on the next page may be used as a guide for planning. Of course, schools must also allow time for preparation, data gathering, and other administrative details.

15. When should the TCNA be conducted?

The earlier a school engages in the TCNA the more valuable the results will be to the school improvement planning process. The optimal time to conduct the TCNA is during the spring of Year 2 in school improvement. Otherwise it should be conducted in the fall of the year of corrective action through November so results may be reported back to MSDE prior to the end of the calendar year. The chart on the next page outlines the connection between the TCNA and Differentiated Accountability.

NCLB Status	Differentiated Accountability Descriptors	MSDE Differentiated Accountability Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment Triggers	
		"All Students or 3+ subgroups not making AYP"	(a) 2 subgroups, (b) 3 subgroups with a small double count, or (c) 100% Special Education
		Developing Comprehensive Needs School	Developing Focused Needs Schools
Year 1	Schools beginning their <u>first</u> year in this pathway. (*These schools have not made AYP for two consecutive years.*)	**Optional**	**Optional**
Year 2	Schools beginning their <u>second consecutive</u> year in this pathway without making AYP.	**Optional**	**Optional - The optimal time to conduct the TCNA and to inform the school improvement planning process.**
Year 3	Schools beginning their <u>third consecutive</u> year in this pathway without making AYP.	**Schools are required to administer TCNA Themes 1-2 as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**	**Schools are required to administer TCNA Themes in content areas of concern, as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**
Year 4 **Planning for Restructuring**	Schools beginning their <u>fourth consecutive</u> year in this pathway without making AYP.	**As part of the Alternative Governance process, schools MUST revisit or administer TCNA Themes 1-2 as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**	**As part of the Alternative Governance process, schools MUST revisit or administer TCNA Themes in the content areas of concern, as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**
Year 5 **Implementing Restructuring**	Schools beginning their <u>fifth consecutive</u> year in this pathway without making AYP.	**As part of changing a State Board approved Alternative Governance plan, schools MUST administer TCNA Themes 1-2, as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**	**As part of changing an approved Alternative Governance plan, schools MUST administer TCNA in content areas of concern, as well as attendance and graduation, as needed.**

16. What is involved in the administration of the TCNA?

The administration of the TCNA is broken down into eight steps. Each of the eight Steps identified are detailed in Attachment M - "Steps for Completing the TCNA".

✓ *Refer to Attachment M: Steps for Completing the TCNA.*

TCNA Administration Sequence Chart

Steps	Actions	Participants	Allotted Time
Step I	TCNA Introduction and Training Meeting	MSDE/LEA Principal School Project Leaders Facilitators	4 hours
Step II	State of the School Address	Principal Entire Faculty Facilitators	1 hour
Step III	1st Team Meeting – Introduction and Understanding the Process	TCNA Facilitators Team Members	30 minutes per team
Step IV	2nd Team Meeting – Drill Down Begins, Contributing Factors identified, Root Cause is Determined, and Recommendations are made to school leadership.	TCNA Facilitators Team Members	2 hours per team
Step V	Planning for the Future – School wide Prioritizing of Proposed Reforms	Entire Faculty	30 minutes
Step VI	Finalizing Significant Reform Efforts	School Leadership Team LEA	1 hour
Step VII	Inclusion of Reforms into the School Improvement Plan	School Leadership Team LEA	2 hours
Step VIII	Return Materials to MSDE	School Project Leader	1 hour

17. How does the TCNA ensure the identified contributing factors are valid?

Once the contributing factors have been identified, each of them must pass three Validity Test questions. These questions are:

1. Q-Question: Does the contributing factor address the original theme question?
2. D-Data: Does the data support the contributing factor? Refer supporting data.
3. C-Control: Is the contributing factor within the school's control?

If a contributing factor **does not pass all three** Validity Test questions, it must be eliminated.

✓ *Refer to Attachment X: Validity Test*

18. How are the results of the TCNA used?

The TCNA is one part of a school's improvement analysis. Each instrument that is used identifies specific aspects of the school that should be considered as the school updates its school improvement plan. The results of the TCNA, in combination with the results of the comprehensive needs assessment and the Climate Survey are used to inform the planning processes. The results of the TCNA will be documented in the Corrective Action Report. If a school continues in school

improvement after its year of Corrective Action, the results will also be included in the Alternative Governance Proposal that is presented to MSDE and eventually to the State Board of Education.

The results of the TCNA should inform a school's existing school improvement plans in terms of changes that should be made within three months, six months, and/or by the beginning of the next school year.

19. Is the TCNA completed anonymously and who in the school has access to the results?

The TCNA is completed in a group setting. No names are attached to the discussion or statements made during the process. School-based administrators, team facilitators and all staff members will have access to the TCNA Reform recommendations developed by each team. In this way, the whole school develops ownership of the implementation of the Reforms that are considered most impactful to student achievement.
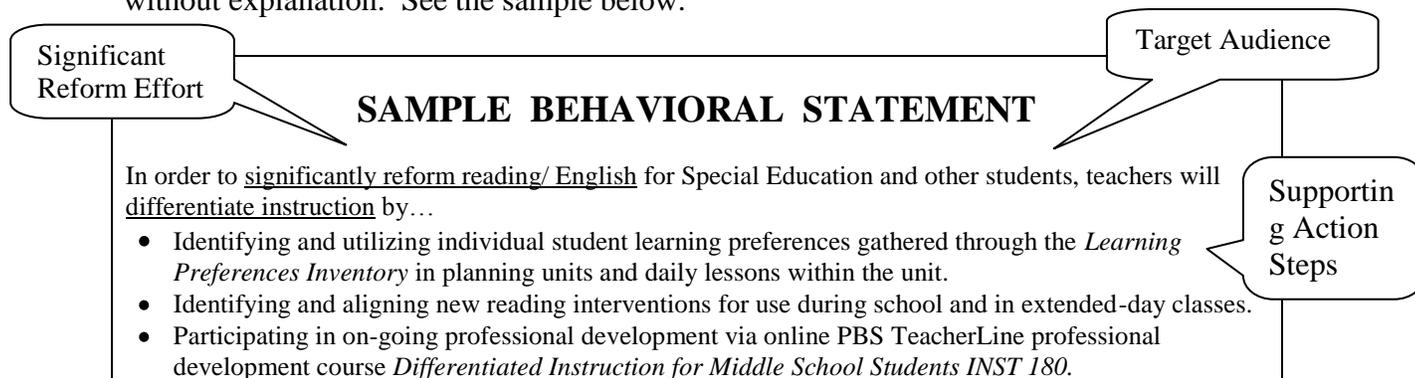
20. What data should be available for TCNA team meetings and who is responsible for gathering needed data?

Suggested data are outlined in MSDE's School Improvement Data Sets list. School Project Leaders are responsible for gathering pertinent data and having it available for distribution to TCNA facilitators and team members prior to the first team meeting.

✓ *Refer to Attachment N: School Improvement Data Sets*

21. What level of detail should be included in Team Recommendations?

Reform recommendations should be written as "behavioral statements". Recommendations should directly address the theme question with enough specificity so that the Reform can be understood without explanation. See the sample below.

Significant Reform Effort

Target Audience

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL STATEMENT

Supporting Action Steps

In order to <u>significantly reform reading/ English</u> for Special Education and other students, teachers will <u>differentiate instruction</u> by…
- Identifying and utilizing individual student learning preferences gathered through the *Learning Preferences Inventory* in planning units and daily lessons within the unit.
- Identifying and aligning new reading interventions for use during school and in extended-day classes.
- Participating in on-going professional development via online PBS TeacherLine professional development course *Differentiated Instruction for Middle School Students INST 180.*

22. What happens after teams complete their work?

Once the work of the individual TCNA Team is completed, the TCNA facilitators return the completed *TCNA Worksheets* (Attachment G) to the School Project Leader. These results are then compiled into the *TCNA Summary Sheet* (Attachment O) and shared with the entire staff. School staff will then prioritize each of the proposed Reforms from across the six Themes, based upon their potential impact on student achievement (with #1 being the top priority).

The prioritized reforms are resubmitted to the School Project Leader to share with the school administration and with central office personnel. Taking into account school and LEA roles, responsibilities, and fiscal and human resources, up to three Reforms and supporting action steps are collaboratively agreed upon and form the basis of the school's improvement plan. The final selected Reforms should be redistributed school wide on the *TCNA Selected Reforms Sheet* (Attachment P). The *TCNA Selected Reforms* are also a component in the required Corrective Action Report.

✓ *Refer to Attachment O: TCNA Root Cause Summary Sheet*
      Attachment P: TCNA Selected Reforms

23. How should a school integrate the TCNA Reform recommendations into its school improvement plan?

Once the priority reforms are identified and approved, the principal, central office personnel, school leadership team, staff, parents, etc. should collaboratively review the school's improvement plan to determine when the newly identified Reforms should be implemented. The school improvement plan should be amended to reflect the results of the TCNA and other needs analysis, as appropriate and feasible.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

24. What issues should be discussed by the principal during the State of the School Address?

The purpose of the "State of the School Address" is for the principal to establish constructive expectations for the TCNA process and how it will positively impact the school. The principal should give a history of the school that includes academic trend data, demographics, school improvement supports provided by the LEA, NCLB requirements, and past professional development opportunities. The principal should introduce the TCNA and outline the why, what, who, and when it will take place. The benefits to the school and how the TCNA fits into the entire school improvement planning process should also be emphasized. Its implementation is an opportunity for staff to share their input and develop solutions to school needs.

✓ *Refer to Attachment Q: State of the School Address – Principal's Suggested Talking Points*
      Attachment R: State of the School Address Evaluation

25. What are the roles and responsibilities of TCNA participants?

The chart on the last page of this booklet outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of the various participants in the TCNA. Additional details on the meetings, attendees, timelines, agendas, materials, and processes can be found in the Attachment section.

✓ *Refer to Attachment S – Seven Norms of Collaboration*
      Attachment T – Team Meetings 1 & 2 Process Agendas and Sign-in Sheets
      Attachment U – TCNA Team Member Evaluation

26. What ground rules guide TCNA Team Meetings?

TCNA team meetings work under the following team ground rules:

TCNA Facilitator: Facilitates while expressing little opinion
Keeps the discussion on the assigned theme(s) and question(s)
Gives all team members equal opportunity to be heard
Does not allow one person or view to dominate the discussion
Keeps the discussion focused only on issues the school can control
Guards against jumping to solutions too early in the TCNA process

TCNA Team Members: Engage in the TCNA process professionally
Communicate ideas/opinions with reasons
Consider what other people have to say
Compromise as necessary to reach consensus
Contribute to solutions and recommendations

It may be helpful to TCNA teams to review and incorporate into the process the "Seven Norms of Collaboration".

✓ *Refer to Attachment S: Seven Norms of Collaboration*

27. What materials are available to assist in the facilitation of the TCNA?

Electronic copies of all attachments have been sent to the LEA Alternative Governance Coordinators.

28. What materials must be returned to MSDE?

Attachments G (TCNA Worksheet) and V (School Evaluation Summary) must be completed and submitted electronically to MSDE by the School Project Leader.

NOTE:

This year's updates to the Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment (TCNA) were written by Teresa Ayd Knott MA, Supervising Coordinator for School Performance. Special thanks to Katie Bettis, Peggy Carroll, Carol Crouse and Carol Hepler of the Division of Student, Family, and School Support for their assistance and outstanding support. The refinements made to the TCNA could not have been possible without the continued feedback received from local Alternative Governance Coordinators and school staffs who conducted the TCNA during the 2010-2011 school year. In total, the TCNA has been administered 188 times over a seven year period in 18 LEAs throughout the State of Maryland.

We truly appreciate all feedback and guidance on how to refine this school improvement tool.

September 1, 2011

TEACHER CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Roles And Responsibilities of TCNA Participants

Principal	School Project Leader	Facilitator/s	Team Member/s	AG Coordinator/LEA
• Attend MSDE TCNA Introduction and Training Meeting; • Designate a School Project Leader and identify team members; • Establish the value and significance of the TCNA process to the school & faculty in terms of what it can control; • Present a State of the School Address which should include but not be limited to MSDE School Profile data, results of the comprehensive needs assessment and the climate survey; • Confirm the feasibility for including the TCNA Reforms in the school's improvement plan with central office personnel; • Present FINAL TCNA results to the entire faculty.	• Attend MSDE TCNA Introduction and Training Meeting; • Develop a TCNA administration timeline; • Organize school teams; • Identify recorders for each team. • Attend the State of the School Address; • Ensure appropriate data sets are available and distributed to team facilitators; • Assemble Team Packets; • Transfer information from all Themes' TCNA Worksheets (*Attachment G)* onto TCNA Root Cause Summary Sheet *(Attachment O)* • Distribute TCNA Root Cause Summary Sheet *(Attachment O)* sheet for school wide voting and prioritization; • Tally and compile TCNA results for principal; • Sent Attachment G (TCNA Worksheet) and Attachment V (School Evaluation Summary) electronically to MSDE.	• Attend MSDE TCNA Introduction and Training Meeting • Attend the State of the School Address • Become familiar with appropriate school data related assigned Theme/s • Arrange for needed technology and meeting materials • Facilitate the 1st and 2nd TCNA team meetings. • Keep the team meetings on task; • Limit the conversation to root causes; • Steer the team away from placing blame; • Keep the team from arriving at solutions too early in the drill down process; • Document supporting data; • Ensure that ground rules are adhered to and timelines are honored. • Submit TCNA Worksheet *(Attachment G)* recommendations to School Project Leader. • Submit Team Member Evaluations (Attachment U) to the School Project Leader.	• Attend the State of the School Address; • Understand the TCNA process; • Become familiar with appropriate school data related to assigned Theme; • Adhere to team meeting ground rules during discussions; • Drill down sufficiently to ensure that the root causes are uncovered; • Identify evidence; • Develop specific quality Reform recommendations; • Agree by consensus; • Vote (prioritize) on up to three Reforms the school should implement; and • Complete the TCNA Team Meeting Evaluation (Attachment U)	• Identify schools that must administer the TCNA. • Provide background and logistical information to facilitators prior to MSDE training. • Attend TCNA Introduction and Training Meeting • Assign TCNA facilitators to schools • Attend the State of the School Address • Advise the school on the availability of human, material, and fiscal resources. • Collaborate throughout the TCNA process with School Project Leaders, facilitators, and school leaderships. • Collaborate with LEA and school leadership to gain final approval for the implementation of identified Reforms.

2011-2012

TEACHER
CAPACITY
NEEDS
ASSESSMENT

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