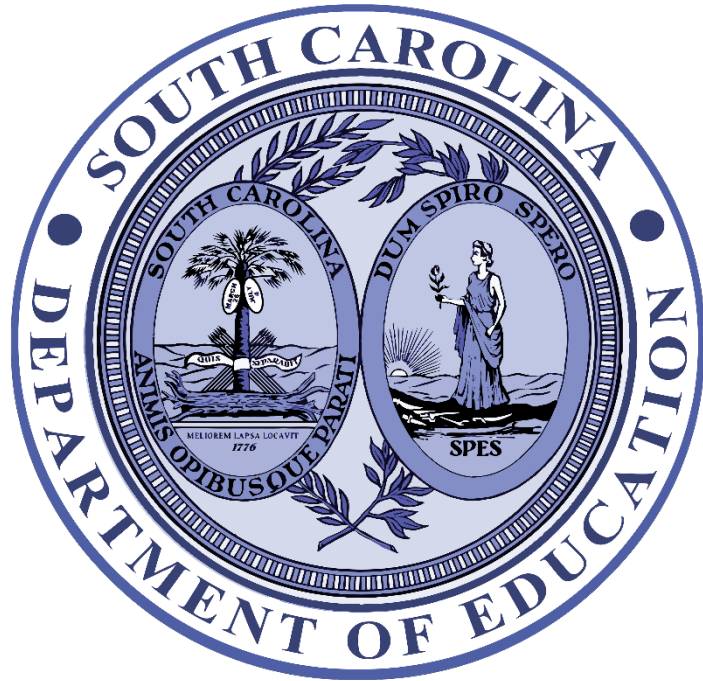


# Are your Needs Assessments Needing a Refresh??



ESSA Academy  
March 2024

Leslie Bloss, Education Associate  
Office of Federal and State Accountability

Audrey Black, Director of Federal Programs  
Richland 2 School District

Anna Brink, Director of Federal Programs  
Greenville County School District

# What is a **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**?

## Needs Assessment Process

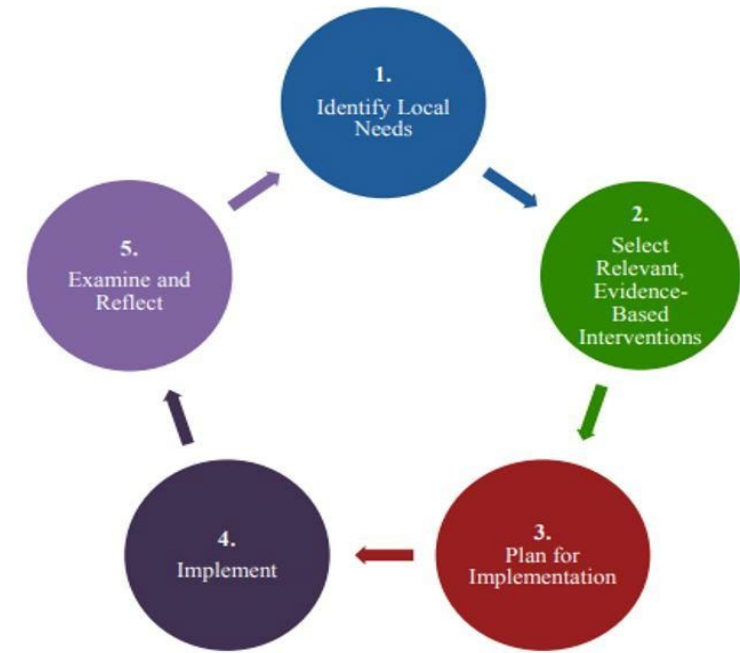
- The needs assessment process is an important **first step** in improving the effectiveness of education investments that lead to better outcomes for students.
- A needs assessment is, first and foremost, a process—a process that can help educators at all levels successfully identify, understand, and better address education challenges.
- Needs assessment is generally defined as a systematic examination of the **gap** that exists between the current state and desired state of an organization and the factors that can be attributed to this gap.



# Why Conduct a Needs Assessment?

- A comprehensive needs assessment is legislated by the **Every Student Succeeds Act**.
- An effective needs assessment helps stakeholders and system leaders understand how the pieces of a complex educational system interact. Whether that system reflects a school or a district, a needs assessment can uncover both strengths and challenges that will inform growth and improvement.
- The goal of a needs assessment is to help educators identify, understand, and **prioritize** the needs that districts and schools must address to improve performance.

Figure 1: Use of Evidence Cycle



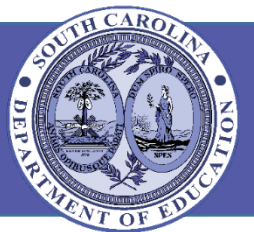
Note: figure reproduced from the U.S. Department of Education's [\*Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments\*](#).



# What is Important in a Needs Assessment?

Needs Assessment- Identify and assess key deficiencies and provide a prioritized recommendation to support improvement. An **analysis of the gap** that exists between the school's current state and the desired state.

- Strengths
- Measures of Growth
- Factors Attributed to the Gap
- Priority Needs
- Variety of Stakeholders (Comprehensive Perspective)



# SCDE School Improvement Model

- School Improvement initiatives should be viewed as an organizational **strategy**, rather than an exercise in compliance.
- This improvement cycle gives districts a template for **focused** and **intentional** actions that lead to continuous improvement.
- A Needs Assessment is the first step!



# Steps to a Successful Process

- Plan
- Collect and Analyze Data
- Interpret Information
- Determine Priorities
- Connect to Implementation





# Plan

- Define the purpose and intended outcomes of the needs assessment process within the local context.
- Determine the guiding questions that the needs assessment should answer (if the needs assessment is not part of a larger project that has already identified central questions or concerns).
- Establish actions, timelines, and responsibilities for all related activities.



# Plan, cont'd

- Identify relevant stakeholders, plan for their involvement, and invite them to participate, beginning with the planning process.
  - ✓ District and School Administrators
  - ✓ Faculty and Staff
  - ✓ Parents and Family Members
  - ✓ Students (at the Secondary Level)
  - ✓ Community and Business Partners
- Articulate the content (what the needs assessment will cover), the process (how the needs assessment will be accomplished), and the presentation (what the school or district will use and how the results will be conveyed).





# Stakeholder Engagement

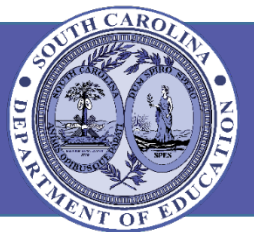
A needs assessment is a process that should be undertaken with local stakeholders rather than completed entirely by a small group of leaders or an outside entity.

- Engaging school staff, parents, a diversity of leaders, and external support during each phase of the needs assessment ensures that the planning, data collection, identified needs, and consideration of underlying causes incorporate the input of a broad knowledge base.
- By developing trust in the process, participating stakeholders are more likely to be invested in the outcomes and are actively engaged in the selection, development, and implementation of improvement plans and strategies that create lasting change.



# Collect and Analyze Data

- Data are a foundational component of any needs assessment process.
- Data collected in their “raw” form are not always useful for making decisions; often, they need to be organized in a way that is readable and useful for the stakeholders who will be involved in interpreting the data to draw conclusions and identify improvement needs.
- During this phase of the needs assessment, data are collected in various forms (qualitative, quantitative, input, output, demographic) and organized and presented for interpretation.



# Identify and Gather Data

Data sources may include but are not limited to:

- Student Demographics
- School Culture and Climate
- Academic Achievement
- College and Career Readiness
- Instructional Data
- Family and Community Engagement
- School Operations and Management
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- State and Local Assessments
- Lesson Plans and Student Work
- Curriculum and Assessment Materials
- Observations and Reports



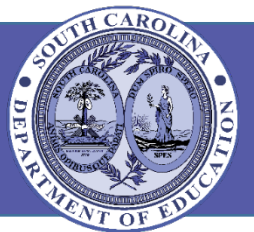
# Interpret Information

- During this phase, educators examine relevant data to create meaningful information by collaborating with multiple stakeholders to ensure that the identified needs are interpreted within the local context.
- Collaborating with stakeholders who participated in data collection and are responsible for carrying out the next steps that result from the needs assessment further ensures that data are understood within what is realistic for the local implementation of future actions.



# Interpret Information, cont'd

- To support this process, data should be organized and presented in digestible formats to facilitate the examination of trends across time and data sources.
- The data presentation and interpretation process should also support the triangulation of data points from different sources, voices, or forms of data. Triangulation produces more reliable outcomes and helps participants determine stronger themes within the data.



# Determine Priorities

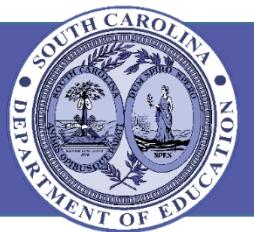
- Achieving successful outcomes from an improvement process requires directing improvement efforts toward a manageable set of priorities.
- It is likely that multiple needs or issues will emerge. Therefore, it is important to narrow this list of needs to a key set of priorities for action.
- Ensure that the priorities identified are authentic and specific to the needs assessment framework and **local context**.





# Connect to Implementation

- The final phase of the needs assessment takes the results of the needs assessment and turns those results into something actionable.
- Educators dig deeper into the prioritized needs to understand root causes or further break down the priorities so they can be connected to relevant goals and incorporated into an improvement or action plan.



# Connect to Implementation, cont'd

- Priorities are established through the process of identifying needs and interpreting their causes to drive the selection of appropriate strategies or interventions, how they will be implemented, and how improvement will be evaluated and measured along the way.
- Connecting with implementation is critical to realizing change as a result of the needs assessment process.





GREENVILLE COUNTY  
SCHOOLS  
TITLE I PROGRAMS

***Comprehensive Continuous Improvement  
through Needs Assessment***

**Dr. Anna Brink**

*Director of Federal Programs*

# COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

1. [Review School Improvement and Needs Assessment](#)
2. Determine and Review Additional Support Designation and Timelines
3. [Needs Assessment Guide](#): allows schools to customize their data, analysis, stakeholder feedback, and implementation analysis throughout the year
  - a. [Needs Assessment Template](#): this is used to submit for any federal grants, school improvement designation plans, etc.









RICHLAND  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
TWO

# Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Audrey Black  
Director of Federal and  
State Programs

SCATA  
October 2023



# Objectives

Title I Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Title II Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Title IV Comprehensive Needs Assessment



# Start with Strategic Plan

- Title I should support the strategies and action steps outlined in the school's strategic plan
- The Title I CNA goes beyond the current expectations of our strategic plans' needs assessments



# Title I Comprehensive Schoolwide Plan

- The CNA is incorporated into the Title I Comprehensive Schoolwide Plan
- All school's follow one of two templates.
- This template was modified from a technical assistance template



# Template Sections

- Schoolwide Planning Team
- **Data & Analysis**
- **Areas of prioritized need**
- Migrant Student Section
- Dissemination of results for Title I
- Title I Schoolwide Reform Strategies
- **Activities addressing areas of prioritized need**
- Title I Schoolwide Program Budget
- Title I Principal Attestations/Assurances

# Data & Analysis

- *Must* be the most current data available
- *Must* Address ELA & mathematics
- *Must* include data and analysis disaggregated by subgroups
- *Encouraged* to include science, social studies, social-emotional supports, and culture and climate
- *May* include other data that addresses needs that support core subjects, social-emotional learning/wellness, and culture and climate
  - i.e. leadership, attendance, magnet program data, behavior

# Data & Analysis (cont.)

- Data Analysis Protocol
  - [SCDE Data Analysis and Planning Protocol](#)
  - [Richland Two Data Analysis and Planning Protocol](#)



# Areas of prioritized need

- Identified Need
- Data Upon Which the Identified Need Is Based
- Use of Title I to Address the Identified Need
- Citations for Scientifically Based Research of Title I Funded Activities



# Activities addressing areas of prioritized need

- Schoolwide Reform Strategy
- Activity (include staff development)
- Use of Funds
- Activity Costs
- Budget Codes (optional)
- Evaluation Metrics



# Title I Comprehensive Needs Assessment

- [Template](#)
- [Exemplar 1](#) Polo Road Elementary School
- [Exemplar 2](#) Forest Lake Elementary School



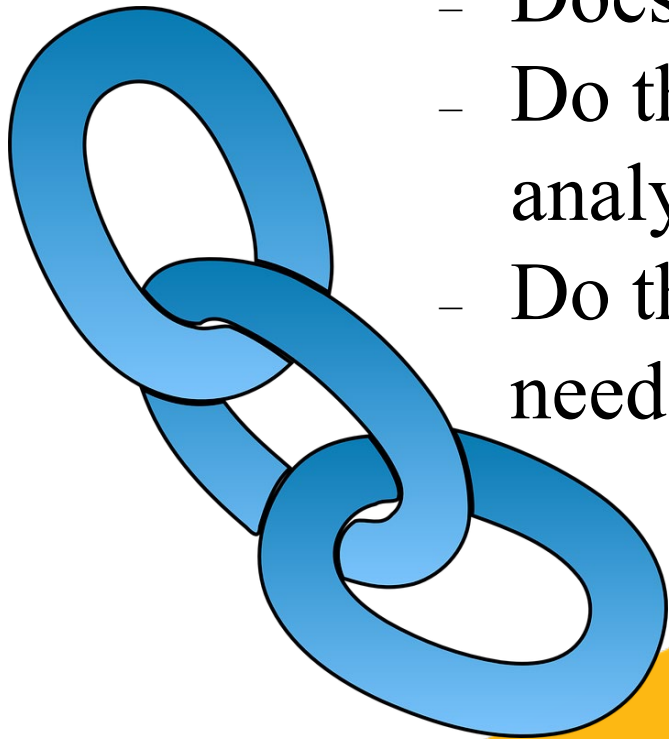
# Comprehensive Needs Assessment Supports

- School's are encouraged to hold monthly Title I meetings with stakeholders
- All new Title I principals participate in Title I New Principal trainings
- Schools are encouraged to seek support and guidance from the Office of Federal and State Programs when developing their CNAs and Comprehensive Schoolwide Plans



# Comprehensive Needs Assessment Supports (cont.)

- After plans are submitted to the OFS, they are reviewed.
  - Does the plan include all of the required components?
  - Do the areas of prioritized need link back to the needs analysis?
  - Do the activities link back to the areas of prioritized need?



# CNA's for Other Titles

- [Title II](#)
- [Title IV](#)







# What is my program manager looking for?

- All served schools represented
- A wide variety of stakeholders involved
- Analyzed and interpreted data
- Goals based on the data
- Planned items to help meet the goals using Title I
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your planned items?



# Contact Information

## SCDE

Leslie Bloss

[lbloss@ed.sc.gov](mailto:lbloss@ed.sc.gov)

803-734-6037

## Greenville

Anna Brink

[abrink@greenville.k12.sc.us](mailto:abrink@greenville.k12.sc.us)

864-355-3197

## Richland 2

Audrey Brady Black

[mblack@richland2.org](mailto:mblack@richland2.org)

803-738-3262

