# Understanding Continuous Improvement: The Needs Assessment

Rationale

In its most basic form, continuous improvement is about understanding the **current state** and formulating a plan to move to the **desired state**. The comprehensive needs assessment is a culmination of an extensive review of multiple sources of data collected over a period of time (2-3 years). It is to be conducted annually as an essential part of the continuous improvement process and precedes the development of strategic goals **(desired state).** The needs assessment requires synthesis and analysis of multiple sources of data and should reach conclusions about the **current state** of the school as well as the processes, practices and conditions that contributed to that state. The needs assessment provides the framework for **all** schools to clearly and honestly identify their most critical areas for improvement that will be addressed later in the planning process through the development of goals, objectives, strategies and activities. **As required by Section 1008 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I schools must base their program upon a thorough needs assessment.**

This simplified view of continuous improvement illustrates the components that help schools move from their current state to their desired state. The Needs Assessment is essentially the articulation of a school's current state that reflects its careful review of data and diagnostics. Once completed, the school can plot its journey towards the desired state using goals, objectives, strategies and activities.

CURRENT STATE →	• KDE Diagnostics • Data Analysis • Needs Assessment
• Goals • Objectives • Strategies →	DESIRED STATE
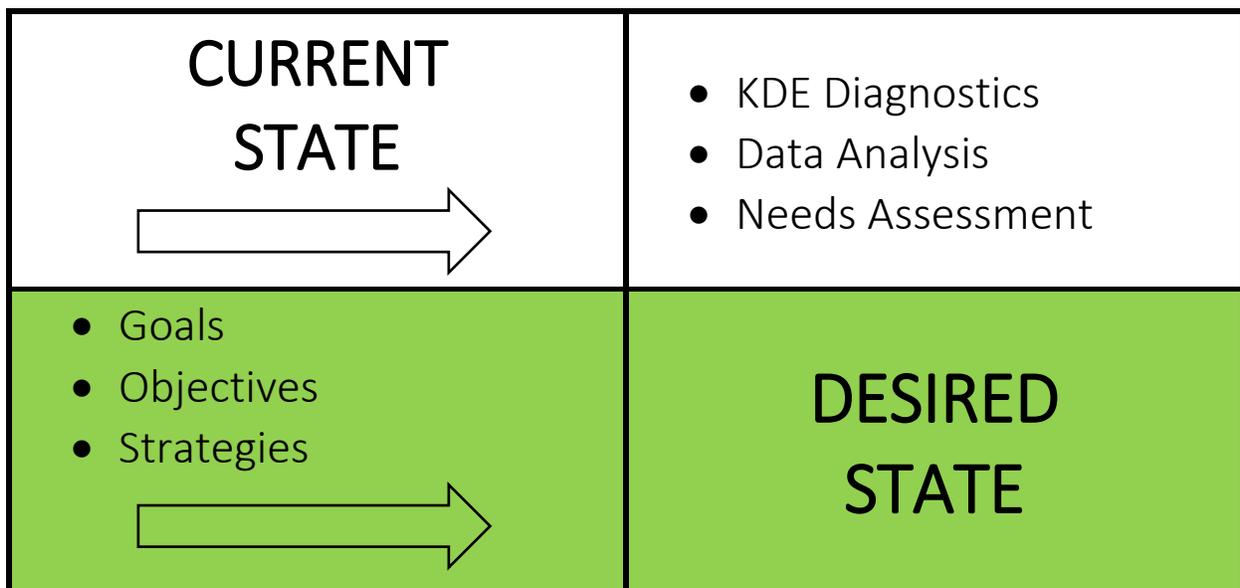
Protocol

Clearly detail the process used for reviewing, analyzing and applying data results. Include names of school/district councils, leadership teams and stakeholder groups involved. How frequently does this planning team meet and how are these meetings documented?

Current State

Plainly state the current condition using **precise numbers and percentages as revealed by past, current and multiple sources of data.** These should be stated as objective facts, based solely on data outcomes. Cite the source of data used.

Example of Current Academic State:

- 32% of non-duplicated gap students scored proficient on KPREP Reading.
- We saw a 10% increase among non-duplicated gap students in Reading from 2017 to 2018.
- 34%% of our students scored proficient in math compared to the state average of 47%.

Example of Non-Academic Current State:

- Teacher Attendance: Teacher attendance rate was 87% for the 2017 schools year – a decrease from 92% in 2016.
- The number of behavior referrals has decreased to 198 in 2017 from 276 in 2016.

Priorities/Concerns

Clearly and concisely identify areas of weakness using **precise numbers and percentages** as revealed by the analysis of academic and non-academic data points.
Example: 68% of students in non-duplicated gap scored below proficiency on KPREP test in reading as opposed to just 12% of non-gap learners.

Trends

Analyzing data trends from the previous two academic years, which academic, cultural and behavioral measures remain significant areas for improvement?

Potential Source of Problem

Which processes, practices or conditions will the school focus its resources and efforts upon in order to produce the desired changes? Note that all processes, practices and conditions can be linked to the six school improvement strategies outlined below:

[KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards](#)
[KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction](#)
[KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy](#)
[KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data](#)
[KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support](#)
[KCWP 6: Establishing Learning Culture and Environment](#)

Strengths/Leverages

Plainly state, using precise numbers and percentages, as revealed by current data, the strengths and leverages.

Example: Graduation rate has increased from 67% the last five years to its current rate of 98%.