FAQ - Engaging in the Work of Continuous Improvement

**What does it mean to be accredited? What is the Accreditation Review Council and the State Board of Education looking for in our documentation?**

* The definitions for Accreditation are as follows:
	+ **Accredited**- the system is in good standing (compliance) with the State Board, and they have provided conclusive evidence of growth in student performance. In addition, the system has provided conclusive evidence of an intentional, quality growth process.
	+ **Conditionally Accredited**- the system is in good standing (compliance) with the State Board, and either the system did not provide conclusive evidence of growth in student performance or was unable to provide conclusive evidence of an intentional, quality growth process.
	+ **Not Accredited**- one of two things: the system is not in good standing (compliance) with the State Board, or the system did not provide conclusive evidence of growth in student performance; and the system was unable to provide conclusive evidence of an intentional, quality growth process.
* The ARC currently reviews three documents when reviewing each system for an accreditation recommendation. They review the Year 5 System Report, the Year 5 OVT Report, and the most recent District Accountability Report. If there are questions or concerns regarding the documentation, the ARC Review team will look through any relevant artifacts uploaded by the system. It is not standard practice for the ARC to review reports from the System or OVT from years 1-4.
* In order to learn more about the lens through which the ARC evaluates each system, you can review the [Accreditation Criteria](https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/TLA/Accreditation/Accreditation%20Criteria%20-%20Finalr16.pdf?ver=2019-12-18-153701-107) that are currently in use by the ARC.

**What should a quality, intentional growth process include?**

* In order to enter the Kansas Education System Accreditation Process, each system must be in compliance with the State Board and have in place the 8 Foundational Structures. You can learn more about the [Foundational Structures here](https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Teacher-Licensure-TL/KESA/Resources/Foundational-Structures).
* When talking about the process, we are talking about more than the improvement cycle. While that is at the center of what drives ‘process’, we also consider the Foundational Structures to be a part of your process in addition to the [Qualitative State Board Outcomes](https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/Communications-and-Recognition-Programs/Vision-Kansans-Can/Kansans-Can-Star-Recognition): Individual Plans of Study, Social Emotional Learning, Kindergarten Readiness, and Civic Engagement.

**How do you articulate your work? What story should you be telling about your work?**

* When articulating your story regarding your continuous improvement work, it is important that you include the following components:
	+ Explanation of your data and analysis gathered through your needs assessment process;
	+ Goals that are aligned with your data and address the needs you determined in your needs assessment process;
	+ An action plan that employs research-based/evidence-based strategies that are aligned with your goals and the data you are attempting to move;
	+ Measures and protocols for monitoring your progress and an evaluation of your progress and responses based on the data.

**How do you determine if your selected strategies are high quality?**

* In Kansas, we define ‘evidence based’ as being:

 “Any concept or strategy that is derived from or informed by objective evidence that demonstrates a statistically significant effect – most commonly, educational research or metrics of school, teacher, and student performance.”

You can review all resources around evidence-based practices [here](https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Announcements-Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Best-Practices).

* On the evidence-based practices page from KSDE, you will find links to many research sites. Two to note include What Works Clearinghouse and Wise Ways. For schools working with KLN (Kansas Learning Network), using Wise Ways is required. As you engage in selecting strategies, it is important that you connect your improvement work into one coherent plan. Using the prescribed research site is one way to ensure alignment and coherence across your improvement work.
* As important as ensuring that your strategies are high quality, is ensuring that your strategies align with your needs and goals. When we talk about alignment, we mean that your data, goal, strategy, and measures are aligned. Your data analysis informed and influenced your goal, your goal influenced your strategies, your strategies are research-based/evidence-based and connected to your goal, and you have a mechanism for measuring each strategy and its impact on your goal and data.
* An additional resource you might consider using when weighing a strategy for impact and resource implications is the [Strategy Analysis](https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Communications/KC_School_Redesign/Strategy%20Report.pdf?ver=2022-06-29-081754-587) template provided to Redesign Schools in Kansas.

**What is ‘QFIC’? Why is it important? How can I learn more?**

* QFIC stands for: Quality, Fidelity, Intensity, and Consistency. These four terms are defined as follows:
	+ **Quality** - with a high degree of skill, excellence, or effectiveness
	+ **Fidelity** - in accordance with the core components; based on findings and/or guidance
	+ **Intensity** - time; focus and commitment to providing recommended exposure
	+ **Consistency** - in the same way over time, maintain standards for quality, fidelity, and intensity
* As you move into strategy implementation and strategy analysis, you will want to ensure that implementation of your strategies is not marginal (i.e. happening in pockets) but rather consistently being utilized with the predetermined levels of quality, fidelity, and intensity.
* Establishing the quality, fidelity, and intensity of your strategies before implementation will allow for clarity and consistency amongst essential stakeholders. These established criteria will also be necessary when engaging in strategy analysis to determine why a strategy is effective or ineffective.
* To learn more about strategy implementation and ensuring QFIC, you can reach out to any of the following entities: KSDE Accreditation and Design Team, USA-KS, KASB, Educational Service Centers, and KS-MTSS.

**What are the *4 Disciplines of Execution* (McChesney, et. al. 2016)? Why are they important? How can I learn more?**

* Turning a plan into results/outcomes requires intentional and supported execution. This key piece of execution is often overlooked in the planning process. The 4 Disciplines of Execution provide hard and fast rules all teams should follow to ensure that the determined work is clear, supported, and effective. The four disciplines are:
	+ **Focus** - Establish your Wildly Important Goals (WIGs)
	+ **Leverage** - Determine and Act on your Lead Measures (strategies)
	+ **Engagement** - Keep a Compelling Scoreboard (real-time data)
	+ **Accountability** - Create a Cadence of Accountability
* Disciplines 3 (keeping score) and 4 (accountability) are the two that are most essential but most often overlooked. To learn more about execution, you can visit the official [website](https://www.franklincovey.com/the-4-disciplines/), or you can view training [videos](https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/Communications-and-Recognition-Programs/Vision-Kansans-Can/Kansans-Can-School-Redesign-Project/Mercury-7/Video-Discussions) created by the Kansans Can School Redesign Team.