

**Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
Statewide System of Support
Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S)**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S)?

The Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S) is designed to assist schools, districts, and the state in identifying the needs of schools that have been designated as “In Need of Improvement” (INOI) with the intent to prioritize the types of technical assistance a school will need in order to improve. The NCCAT-S was developed in response to the 2009 Nevada Legislature’s Senate Bill (SB) 389. The purpose of the NCCAT-S is to provide an in-depth analysis of the school in three key categories—Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership.

2. What content is covered in the NCCAT-S?

The NCCAT-S examines three research-based essential categories related to school success. Those three categories are: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership. Each category consists of several indicators and each indicator is measured by a group of elements.

3. What is the purpose of the NCCAT-S?

Conducting the NCCAT-S is a required Corrective Action for Nevada schools that have been designated as INOI for 3 years. The purpose is to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and needs, as well as strengths in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership at the school. Once the NCCAT-S is conducted and completed, the information gained through the audit will be used to develop a Restructuring Plan (Title I schools) or a Turnaround Plan (Non-Title I schools), as applicable, the following year if the school enters year 4 of improvement. The results will also provide NDE with information on which to base the provision of differentiated consequences or sanctions should the school enter year 4 of improvement.

4. Which schools must conduct the NCCAT-S?

For the 2009/10 school year, the NCCAT-S must be conducted with all schools identified as INOI Year 3 and beyond, since these schools are subject to the accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This includes Title I and Non-Title I Schools as well as district and state-sponsored Charter Schools. For the 2009/10 school year, Nevada has schools INOI in years 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 that must conduct the NCCAT-S. Starting with the 2010/11 school year, the NCCAT-S will be

conducted only with all schools INOI year 3, and those schools INOI beyond year 3 will only update the NCCAT-S as determined appropriate by the school, district, and state.

5. Who is responsible for conducting the NCCAT-S?

According to SB 389, the board of trustees of the school district is required to ensure that the Audit is conducted. Conducting the NCCAT-S can take on many forms and it is expected that the district will engage and collaborate with the school community throughout the audit process. In the case of charter schools, it is the responsibility of the governing body of the charter school (state or district sponsored) to ensure that the NCCAT-S is conducted. It is recommended that this is done collaboratively with the charter school staff members as well as school district leadership when appropriate.

6. What is the school’s role in the NCCAT-S?

Ideally, the school has an active role throughout the entire process. Schools should assist with the collection and analysis of the data as well as in the determinations of scores for each element. It is critical to develop an awareness of the school’s status among the school’s staff, and by participating in the audit activities, school staff will have the opportunity to be an active part of the improvement planning process.

7. How will the NCCAT-S benefit the school?

The NCCAT-S is designed to provide a detailed and in-depth picture of the school in three critical categories – Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, and Leadership. Indicators under each category are rated with the assistance of elements that define each indicator. Once elements are rated, districts and schools will use this information to identify priorities that need to be addressed. This focused information will benefit the school and district in planning for the school’s Restructuring or Turnaround efforts.

8. When is a school required to write School Improvement, Restructuring, or Turnaround Plans?

All schools must develop a school improvement plan annually. In addition, when the school enters the status of INOI year 4, the district is required to develop a district-level plan to improve the academic achievement of students at that school. If a school is a Title I school, the district develops a Restructuring plan in accordance with Title I requirements. If a school is a non-Title I school, the district develops a Turnaround plan for the school in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) requirements. If the school moves to INOI year 5, the district must ensure the implementation of the Restructuring or Turnaround plan that was developed during year 4. In year 5, Restructuring and Turnaround plans will replace the school improvement plans. Just like the school improvement plan, the Restructuring and Turnaround plans must be refreshed each year.

9. How are the results of NCCAT-S used?

Once the NCCAT-S is completed, districts are required to develop a Restructuring plan or Turnaround plan for the school based on the results of the NCCAT-S if the school enters year 4 INOI. The results may also be used to develop or revise a school improvement plan. The results of the NCCAT-S must be reported on the prescribed summary form to the NDE; the form is available online and in the User's Guide. The NDE will implement a differentiated system of support based on the outcome of the NCCAT-S that will be carried out by districts in consultation with school staff. The NDE will monitor the implementation of all Restructuring and Turnaround plans in accordance with the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).

10. What is the role of School Support Team Leaders (SSTLs) with regard to the NCCAT-S?

During the 2009/10 school year, the SSTLs, in collaboration with schools and school districts may assist in conducting the NCCAT-S. This will be in addition to other assigned SSTL responsibilities. School district leadership will set the expectations for how a given SSTL will engage in the implementation of the NCCAT-S for a given school.

11. What are the requirements for Restructuring/Turnaround Plans?

General requirements for Restructuring or Turnaround plans as prescribed by NRS 385 include:

- Results of the comprehensive audit
- Measurable goals and objectives for making AYP
- Specific action steps
- A timeline for completion of the plan

The specific criteria for Restructuring Plan are prescribed by NRS 385.376. The NDE is in the process of collaborating with stakeholders to develop specific criteria for Turnaround plans, which are anticipated to be finalized by February 2010.

12. How will the results of the NCCAT-S influence instruction?

By conducting the NCCAT-S, the instructional staff at the school will learn about the issues related to curriculum and instruction. For instance, the NCCAT-S may inform the staff about whether the curriculum is aligned to state standards or whether all students are being taught grade-level content. The data collected during the audit

will assist the school in identifying gaps in instruction and curriculum and will also reveal areas of strength. In addition, the results of the NCCAT-S will be used to develop Restructuring or Turnaround plans, which may include objectives and action steps to improve instructional practices and student achievement.

13. What technical assistance is available to schools?

Throughout the process, the district must provide continuous technical assistance to the school. Technical assistance may include assistance in:

- Analyzing state assessment data and student work
- Identifying and implementing professional development
- Analyzing and revising the school budget

The NDE has developed a user's guide, that includes all the necessary tools to conduct the NCCAT-S. In addition, the NDE has charged School Support Team Leaders (SSTLs) with the responsibility to assist schools and districts in conducting the NCCAT-S for the 2009/10 school year as discussed in FAQ #10.

14. What is the timeline to complete the NCCAT-S?

Districts are required to conduct the NCCAT-S for all schools that are in INOI year 3. It is recommended that the audit team be identified no later than September of each school year. The team should finalize the scoring of the rubric by May and submit the results and summary reports of the audit to the NDE by June. Once a school goes into year 4 of in need of improvement status, the district in collaboration with the school, must develop a Restructuring or Turnaround plan based on the outcome of the NCCAT-S. If the school moves to year 5 of in need of improvement, the Restructuring or Turnaround Plan must be implemented. It should be noted that for the 2009/10 school year, districts must conduct the NCCAT-S for all schools that are in need of improvement year 3 and beyond, as described in FAQ #8.

15. How can more information about the NCCAT-S be obtained?

The User's Guide and all NCAAT-S Tools are available on the NDE website:

http://www.doe.nv.gov/SI_NCCAT.htm

Most questions can and should be answered by administrators at the school district level who have responsibility for providing leadership for school improvement efforts.

The designated contacts at the NDE are: Janie Lowe (jlowe@doe.nv.gov) and/or Kulwadee Axtell (kaxtell@doe.nv.gov).