

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



## AdvancED Systems Accreditation Handbook for Catholic Schools



*"You are the light of the world."*

*The Catholic schools of the  
Archdiocese of Chicago is an  
educational system not only that  
works but is designed to  
perpetuate itself for the benefit of  
our faith communities and  
the civic order.*

Cardinal Cupich

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## Chapter 1. Introduction to Systems Accreditation

Accreditation is a process of quality assurance designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards, for its ability to effectively drive student performance, and engage schools in continuous improvement. All elementary and high schools under the governance of the Archdiocese of Chicago earned the distinction of systems accreditation in June 2015.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the work that will create the conditions for the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team to adjust to the complexities of continuous school improvement. In order to maintain accredited schools must adhere to the [AdvancED Improvement Priorities](#), meet the *AdvancED Standards for Quality*, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and perform improvement reviews in the system each academic year.

The Office of Catholic Schools is committed to helping our schools in the Systems Accreditation and continuous improvement processes. Questions about these processes can be asked to the Director of School Improvement and Catholic School Accreditation, Dr. Jorge Peña, by email ([jpena@archchicago.org](mailto:jpena@archchicago.org)) or by telephone (312-534-5289).

## Chapter 2. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Team

The Continuous Improvement Leadership Team consists of four to eight members and is led by the principal and the AdvancED Teacher-Chair (appointed by the principal). An exemplar Continuous Improvement Leadership Team consists of the principal, the AdvancED Teacher-Chair, an Assistant Principal, a counselor, a middle school teacher, an intermediate grades teacher, and a primary grade teacher.

The work of the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team will be focused on the evidence that shows continuous improvement. Time is perhaps the scarcest resource in schools; meeting at least twice a month for collaborative work on improvement is strongly recommended. Use norms during collaborative work as ground rules to conduct effective meetings.

Adopt meeting norms:

- A. *Assume positive intentions.* Take the position that everyone in the group is acting out of desire toward our shared goal of helping all students learn.
- B. *Take an inquiry stance.* Ask questions that allow insight into a colleague's point of view. Use sentence starters such as, "What led you to conclude ...?" "I'm hearing you say...is that correct?" "I'm wondering what you mean by...?" If inquiry produces knowledge, then promote a climate of asking questions.
- C. *Ground statements in evidence.* Make a conscious effort to cite data or offer evidence when explaining one's point of view. Sentence starters such as, "I notice that..." "I see..." "I saw evidence of..." can make it more likely that statements are not laced with adjectives and proclamations. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Team can support one another by asking, "What's your evidence?"
- D. *Stick to protocol.* Stay within the guidelines of using the norms during a meeting, even if it feels constraining.
- E. *Start and end on time.* This norm is important for developing the trust and respect of all team participants.

- F. *Be here now.* Stay on task and engaged in meetings. No surfing the web, checking/responding to email messages, sending text messages during meetings. The Team functions most efficiently when this is consistently honored and enforced. Great meetings are like great classrooms.

The above norms come from *Meeting Wise- making the most of collaborative time for educators* (2014) by Kathryn Parker Boudett and Elizabeth City.

***Responsibilities of the AdvancED Teacher-Chair***

1. Serving as the key point of contact between the Office of Catholic School's Director of School Improvement and Catholic School Accreditation (Dr. Jorge Peña) and the school. **Note:** The Principal is to be included in all pertinent topic/discussions related to a school's AdvancED Internal Review and improvement efforts;
2. Along with the Principal, oversees the accreditation and continuous school improvement process;
3. Organizes and facilitates the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team meetings;
4. Along with the Principal, supports stakeholders throughout the accreditation and continuous school improvement process by answering questions and providing guidance;
5. Along with the Principal, ensures that requirements of the accreditation and continuous school improvement process are met; and
6. Manages the logistics and schedule for the External Review visit.

***Responsibilities of the principal***

1. Support Teacher-Chair and leads the Accreditation and Internal Review;
2. Supervise the school's continuous improvements efforts;
3. Participate in Continuous Improvement Leadership Team meetings;
4. Approves the following written reports submitted by the school as part of the Internal Review process:
  - o Continuous School Improvement Plan,
  - o Student Performance Diagnostic,
  - o Catholic identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic (2015-2016),
  - o Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic,
  - o Self-Assessment Diagnostic,
  - o Executive Summary.

### **Chapter 3. The Internal Review**

The following table outlines the Internal Review for schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

<b>Internal Review</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Review/Revise Demographics & Profile in ASSIST	9/9/16
Update the Executive Summary	9/9/16
Create, implement, and evaluate the Continuous School Improvement Plan	10/14/16
Create the Student Performance Diagnostic	11/11/16
Update the Self-Assessment Diagnostic	2/1/17
Update the Artifact Management Tool	2/1/17
Create the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic	2/17/17
Create the Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic	2/12/16
Host a school improvement review (applies to identified schools)	2/27/17- 3/10/17

#### ***Review/Revise School Demographics and Profile Information in ASSIST***

The AdvancED ASSIST on-line platform will be used to manage and facilitate the Systems Accreditation process. The Teacher-Chair reviews and/or updates the school's demographics and profile in ASSIST. The school's principal reviews and approves any changes to the profile before it is uploaded to ASSIST. The "profile" is the name of the head of school (Principal), name of primary contact (Teacher-Chair), school website, and religious denomination. The *Update School Profile in ASSIST* in Appendix 1 shows the steps on updating the school profile.

#### ***Update the Executive Summary***

The Executive Summary is a narrative that captures the school's story. The Executive Summary contains the vision and cultural context of the institution, a summary of student performance, key information about how the school provides teaching and learning, and a discussion of challenges and opportunities are highlighted in the document. There are guiding questions that assist the school in crafting and updating each section of the Executive Summary. The *Update the Executive Summary* in Appendix 2 shows the steps on updating the Executive Summary.

#### ***Create, implement, and evaluate the Continuous School Improvement Plan***

A learning organization is one where educators continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where educators and students are continually learning how to learn together (Senge, 2006, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*). This is the essence of the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The *Create the Continuous School Improvement* in Appendix 3 shows the steps to create the CSIP.

**Part 1- Continuous Improvement Leadership Team.** Identify the members of the Continuous Improvement Team (CILT) and how often the team meets and the length of time for the meetings.

**Part 2a- Reading Results & Part 2b- Math Results.** For each grade-level, enter the group's average scale score, identify the group's readiness level, and enter the percent of students that are proficient in the reading and math strands.

**Part 3- Improvement Goals.** Each grade-level's performance on the ACT Aspire summative assessment determines if the 'goal type' is a 'Benchmark Goal' or a 'Performance Goal.' A 'Benchmark Goal' is chosen when the readiness level for a grade-level is 'Close' or 'In need of Support' because the goal is to meet the benchmark with a readiness level of 'Ready.' A 'Performance Goal' is chosen when the readiness level of a grade-level is 'Ready' or 'Exceeding.'

**Part 4a- Reading Action Plan & Part 4b- Math Action Plan.** The Action Plan of the CSIP consists of five sections. In Section A- Strand and Benchmark Identification, each grade-level's lowest performing strand is identified along with the skills associated with the strand. The reading and math strands, skills, and codes are found in the [Office of Catholic Schools Curriculum Benchmarks](#). In Section B- Instructional Practice/Strategy, high quality instructional strategies are identified to teach the lowest performing strands and skills. Section C- Student Engagement describes how students will be engaged in the learning process. Section B describes an instructional strategy, while Section C describes how students are engaged in that instructional strategy. Section D- Curricular Resources identifies the coursework, tasks, or materials that will be used to target the lowest performing strands and skills. Section E- Benchmark Assessment Timeline identifies when the skills will be assessed by the teacher; skills on the CSIP are assessed in Quarters 1, 2, or 3 or Trimesters 1 or 2 which is prior to the ACT Aspire summative assessment.

**Plan 5- Plan to Assess Progress.** An assessment inventory is created by identifying the name of the assessment, the content areas the assessment measures, the measurement type (short-term measurement, medium-term measurement, or long-term measurement), the dates when the data from the assessment is collected, which students are assessed, who has access to the results, how the results are currently used, and how the results could be more effectively used.

**Plan 6- Continuous School Improvement Plan Evaluation.** Improvement efforts are evaluated in August 2017 using the results from the April 2017 ACT Aspire summative assessment. The CSIP is evaluated by answering the diagnostic questions in this part. The answers to the diagnostic questions are uploaded in the school's Google Drive folder that was created by the Office of Catholic Schools.

### ***Create the Student Performance Diagnostic***

The Student Performance Diagnostic facilitates the process of collecting and analyzing ACT Aspire results and other student performance data in order to identify areas of achievement and in need of improvement. The Student Performance Diagnostic consists of a Data Document, Evaluative Criteria, and Diagnostic Questions. The Data Document serves as a summary of the

results the school uses for decision making. The *Create the Student Performance Diagnostic* in Appendix 4 shows the steps to create the Student Performance Diagnostic.

### ***Update the Self-Assessment Diagnostic***

The Self-Assessment is a diagnostic based on the AdvancED Standards for Quality, and it is designed to facilitate the inclusive and collaborative process of internal reflection and assessment of the school's current reality. It should be used to engage staff members and stakeholders in purposeful and honest dialogue; to serve as a reflection in order to evaluate the school's adherence to the Standards and guide continuous improvement. The Self-Assessment includes the school's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the Indicators. The *Update the Self-Assessment Diagnostic* in Appendix 5 shows the steps to update the Self-Assessment.

### ***Update the Artifact Management Tool***

The evidence to support the ratings for the AdvancED Self-Assessment is organized in the Artifact Management Tool (AMT). The evidence in the AMT is designed to help the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team think about the practices and/or processes being implemented that support the ratings for each Indicator. The evidence helps the school engage in a discussion about how it is meeting the Standards and Indicators. The AMT is used to provide structure for evidence gathering by using hyperlinks within this spreadsheet. The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) has a folder in the cloud-based platform (Google Drive) for each school to manage their AMT. OCS provides the hyperlink to access the AMT. The *Update the Artifact Management Tool* in Appendix 6 shows the steps to update the AMT.

### ***Create the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic***

The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic facilitates the process of analyzing stakeholder survey data in order to identify areas of achievement as well as areas in need of improvement. The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic consists of a Data Document, Evaluative Criteria, and Diagnostic Questions. The Data Document shows a summary of the school's stakeholder feedback results. The Office of Catholic Schools generates the survey links for schools to administer. The *Create the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic* in Appendix 7 shows the steps to create the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic.

### ***Create the Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic***

The Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic is intended to summarize the school's stakeholder feedback results by facilitating the process of analyzing stakeholder feedback data in order to identify areas of achievement as well as areas in need of improvement. AdvancED Catholic identity surveys are for the following stakeholder groups: parents, students in K-12, and teachers. The Office of Catholic Schools generates the survey links for schools to administer. The *Create Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic* in Appendix 8 shows the steps to create the Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic. Note: this diagnostic was created in academic year 2015-16.

#### **Chapter 4. The Archdiocese of Chicago School Review**

The AdvancED accreditation process requires the Archdiocese of Chicago develop and implement an internal process whereby schools are reviewed each academic year. The Office of Catholic Schools creates School Improvement Review Teams whose members read diagnostics and evidence, and conduct an onsite review of the school's academic improvement efforts by observing the learning environment in classrooms and interviewing the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team. The members of the School Improvement Review Teams consist of Principals, Assistant Principals, AdvancED Teacher-Chairs, and staff from the Office of Catholic Schools. The School Improvement Review schedule is posted on the [accreditation page](#) of the OCS Resource Portal.

#### **Chapter 5. A note on checklists**

The checklists in the appendices are not intended to be comprehensive. The steps listed in the checklists are the minimum necessary steps to complete the task; additions and modifications to fit local practice are encouraged. The checklists identify any *pre-work* to perform prior to a meeting, steps to perform during *group work* when the CILT meets, and *post-group work*. There are instructions above each checklist for the CILT to follow. The *pre-work* activities are done individually by CILT members prior to the *group work* meeting. The *group work* activities are performed by the CILT or faculty. The *post-group work* activities are performed by the Teacher-Chair or Principal.

The purpose of the checklists is to give the CILT opportunities to adapt according to their expertise and experience. The checklists are designed for CILT members to talk to one another for collaborative work and prompt them to function better as a team.

## Appendix 1: Update School Profile in ASSIST

### Review Demographics



### Update Demographics

*Principal performs these steps.*

*If the demographics need to be updated, then Principal performs these steps.*

- 1a. If Principal is new to the school: Use the Access Code to create an account and log into ASSIST.
- 1b. If Principal is returning: log into ASSIST.
- 2. Click on the Profile tab.
- 3. Review the Demographics tab.

- 1. In the Profile tab, in Demographics, click on *Update Demographics*.
- 2. Click on blue Manage Demographics link and make any changes to the demographics.
- 3. Click on the Save button at the bottom of the page.
- 4. Close the window.
- 5. Refresh Demographics page in ASSIST to view changes.

## Appendix 2: Update the Executive Summary

Individual Pre-work



Group work



Post group work

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team or faculty prepare for collaborative work by performing the steps below.

Continuous Improvement Leadership Team or faculty updates the Executive Summary.

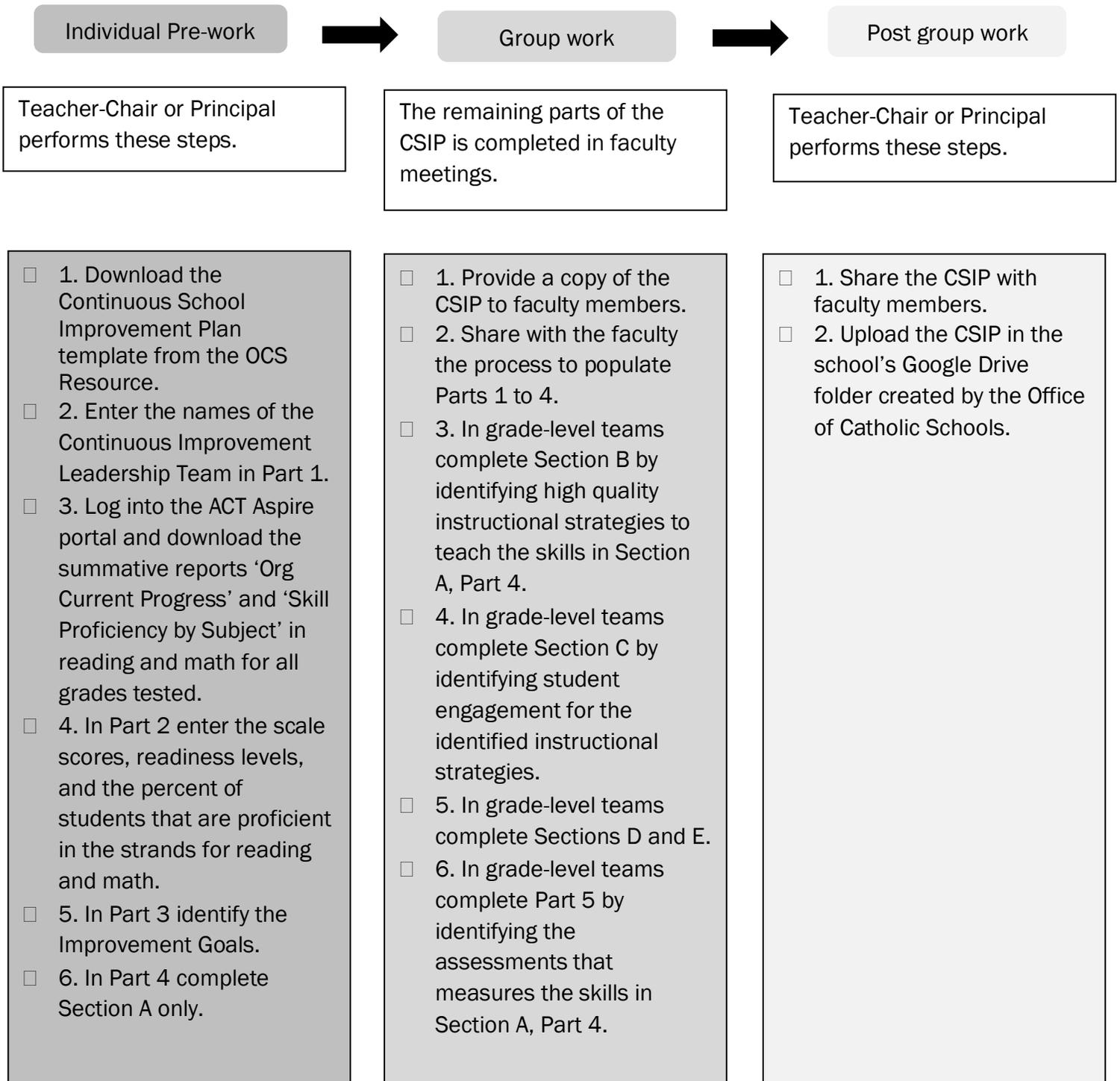
Teacher-Chair or Principal performs these steps.

- 1. Review the latest version of the Executive Summary.
- 2. Document any new information for part 1- Description of school.
- 3. Document any new information for part 2- School purpose.
- 4. Document any new information for part 3- Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.
- 5. Document any new information for part 4- Additional information.

- 1. Discuss the new information for part 1- Description of school.
- 2. Discuss the new information for part 2- School purpose.
- 3. Discuss the new information for part 3- Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.
- 4. Discuss the new information for part 4- Additional information.
- 5. Teacher-Chair documents all new information for each part of the Executive Summary.

- 1. Revise the Executive Summary with new information.
- 2. Principal reviews and approves diagnostic.
- 3. Log into ASSIST and Click on the “Diagnostics & Surveys” tab.
- 4. Click the “Start Diagnostic” button.
- 5. Click on the “Choose a Template” drop-down arrow and select “Executive Summary.”
- 6. Type a description, such as 2016-2017.
- 7. Click on the blue “Start” button.
- 8. Copy and paste the responses for each of the Executive Summary.
- 9. Click on the blue “Complete” button after Part 4.
- 10. Click on the PDF button and save a copy.

## Appendix 3: Create the Continuous School Improvement Plan



## Appendix 4: Create the Student Performance Diagnostic

Individual Pre-work



Group work



Post group work

Teacher-Chair performs these steps.

- 1. Download the Data Document template from the OCS Resource Portal.
- 2. Write a description for 'Assessment Quality' and 'Test Administration.'
- 3. For 'Quality of Learning' create a table or visual display of the ACT Aspire results for reading and math: scale scores, readiness level, and percent of students proficient in each strand in tested grades.
- 4. For 'Equity of Learning' create a table or visual display of the percent of boys and girls that are proficient in reading and math.
- 5. Share the Data Document with the principal and schedule a faculty meeting to analyze the Data Document and answer the Diagnostic Questions.

Data Document is analyzed and Diagnostic Questions are answered by faculty in grade-level teams.

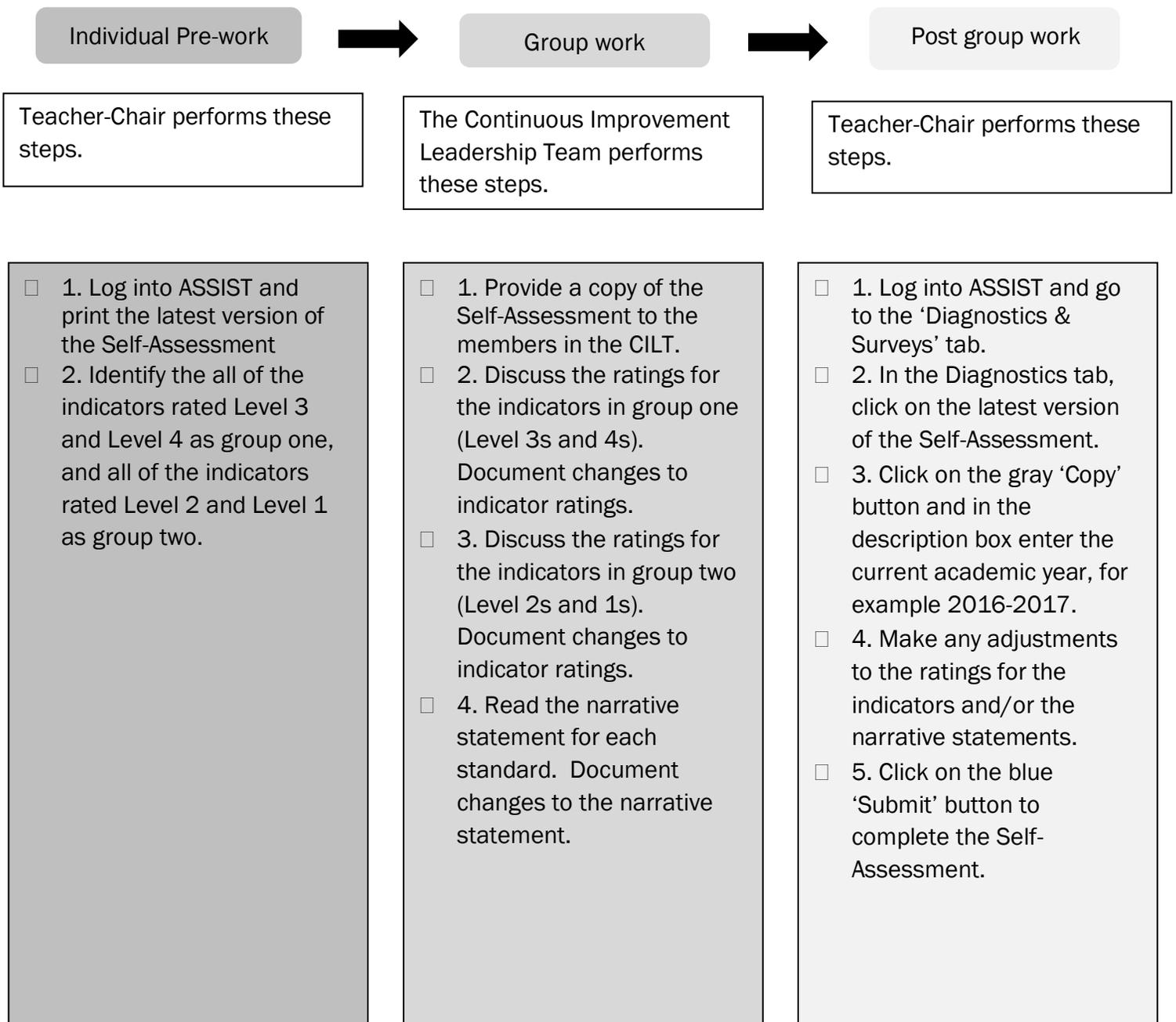
- 1. Provide a copy of the Data Document, Evaluative Criteria, and Diagnostic Questions to teachers.
- 2. In grade-level teams, provide specific and descriptive statements on what the data shows for Quality and Equity of Learning for the grades represented in grade-level teams.
- 3. In grade-level teams, provide answers to the Diagnostic Questions for the grades represented in grade-level teams.
- 4. Come together as large group to answer the Evaluative Criteria.

Teacher-Chair performs these steps.

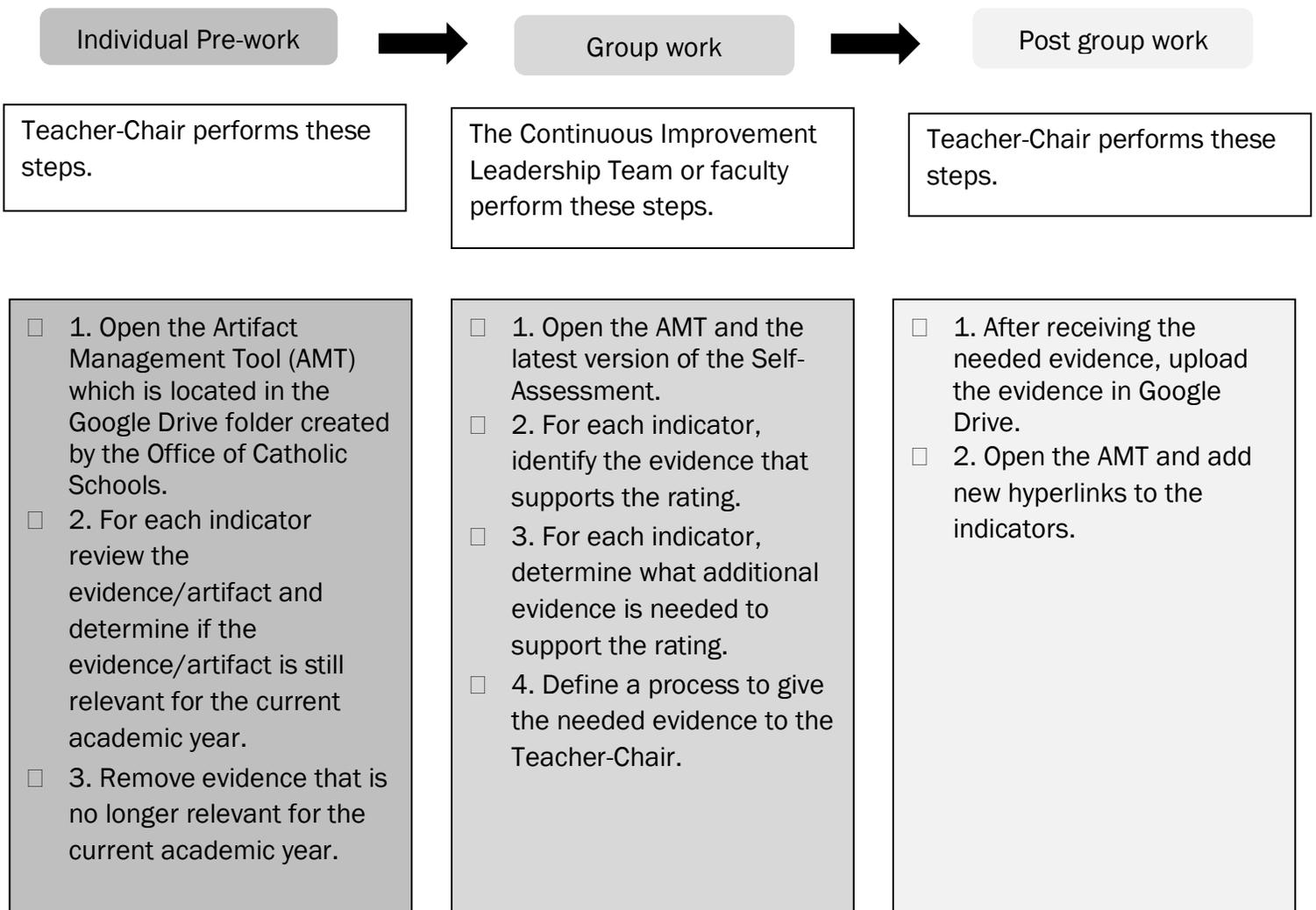
- 1. In the Data Document below each table/visual display, type the specific and descriptive statements.
- 2. Type the answers to the Diagnostic Questions.
- 3. Log into ASSIST and go to the 'Diagnostics & Surveys' tab.
- 4. In the Diagnostics tab click 'Start' and choose the template 'Student Performance Diagnostic'
- 5. Upload the Data Document.
- 6. Choose the levels for the Evaluative Criteria.
- 7. Copy/paste the answers to the Diagnostic Questions.
- 8. Click on the blue 'Submit' button.

Resources: faculty meeting agenda [#1](#) and [#2](#)

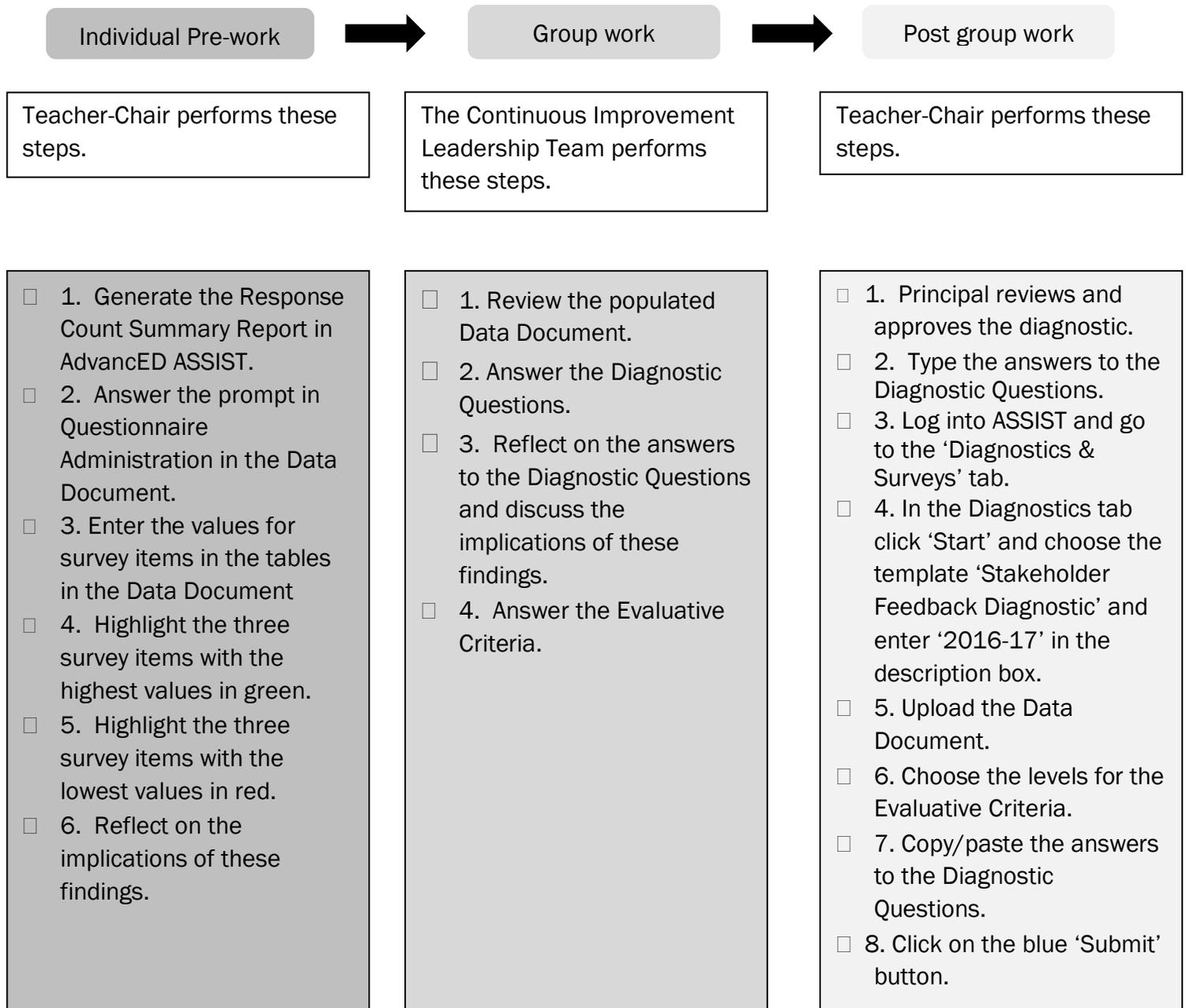
## Appendix 5: Update the Self-Assessment Diagnostic



## Appendix 6: Update the Artifact Management Tool



## Appendix 7: Create the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic



## Appendix 8: Create Catholic Identity Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

