

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



AdvancED Systems Accreditation Handbook for Catholic Schools 2017-2018



"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 process that can create the conditions for continuous school improvement. In order to maintain accredited the Office of Catholic Schools and schools are to adhere to the [AdvancED Improvement Priorities](#), meet the [AdvancED Performance Standards](#), engage in a process of continuous improvement, and perform improvement reviews in the system each academic year. The following is our [Theory of Action](#) and [Coherence Framework](#):

Theory of Action
IF educators.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the skills that challenged students the most, • Use research-based student-centered instruction to teach these skills, • Act and adjust based on results from assessments, • Build their knowledge, skills, and capacity to do the work of improvement, • Intentionally collaborate by sharing learning from assessments as they unfold, and • Are provided guidance and support from the Office of Catholic Schools,
THEN.....this learning will build collective skill which will improve teaching, and student achievement will increase.

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) or by telephone (312-534-5289).

Coherence Framework for Academics



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 (CILT) will be focused on the implementing and monitoring the Continuous School Improvement Plan. Time is perhaps the scarcest resource in schools; meeting at least twice a month for 45-minutes to 60- minutes for collaborative work on improvement is strongly recommended. We recommend CILT members view the webinar on effective meetings and topics for the leadership team. Click here for the [webinar](#) and [presentation](#). We also recommend adopting meeting 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 improvement efforts;
2. Along with the principal, oversees the accreditation and continuous school improvement process;

3. Assists in organizing and co-facilitating 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;
6. Manages the logistics and schedule for the *School Improvement Review*; and
7. Monitors the implementation of the Continuous School Improvement Plan.

Responsibilities of the principal

1. Supports Teacher-Chair and leads the accreditation and School Improvement Review process;
2. Supervises the school’s continuous improvement efforts;
3. Monitors the school’s continuous improvements efforts and the implementation of the Continuous School Improvement Plan; and
4. Participate in Continuous Improvement Leadership Team meetings.

Chapter 3. The Continuous Improvement Process

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

Continuous Improvement Key Tasks	Due Date
Review/Revise Demographics & Profile in ASSIST	9/22/17
Update the Executive Summary	9/22/17
Create, implement, and evaluate the Continuous School Improvement Plan: Part 1 through Part 4 column a	9/22/17
Create, implement, and evaluate the Continuous School Improvement Plan: Part 4 through Part 6	10/27/17
Complete uploading evidence into the <i>Evidence Folders</i> in Google Drive	2/16/18
Host a school improvement review (applies to identified schools)	3/1/18-3/16/18
Reflect on continuous improvement efforts using Part 7 of the Continuous School Improvement Plan	5/28/18-6/8/18

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; and we recommend [viewing the webinar](#) and [presentation](#).

Part 1- Continuous Improvement Leadership Team. Identify the members of the Continuous Improvement Team (CILT), how often the team meets, the length of time for the meetings, and the focus area (reading, math, or writing) to target for improvement.

Part 2- Reading, Math, and Writing Results. For each grade-level, enter the group's average scale score and enter the percent of students that are proficient in the subject-area 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.' When the goal type is 'Benchmark Goal' then the goal is to meet the benchmark in one year when the readiness level is "Close," and when the readiness level is "In need of support" then the goal is to meet the benchmark in two years. A 'Performance Goal' is chosen when the readiness level of a grade-level is 'Ready' or 'Exceeding;' and the goal is to target for improvement the lowest performing skills.

Part 4a- Action Plan for the Focus Area. The Action Plan for the focus area of the CSIP consists of five sections.

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](#).

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. We recommend viewing the [webinar on analyzing ACT Aspire results](#) and [presentation](#).

Part 5- Plan to Assess Progress. An assessment inventory is created by identifying multiple short-term assessments (such as classwork, quizzes, and ACT Aspire Classroom Assessments), medium-term assessments (such as Quizlets, ACT Aspire Interim Assessments, chapter/unit tests), and long-term assessments (such as ACT Aspire summative and end-of-year assessment). For each assessment type, the plan identifies who is assessed, when results are collected, what is the learning goal for the assessment, and who is responsible for collecting the results.

Part 6- Professional Development Plan. Identify the professional development opportunities that support the Continuous School Improvement Plan. Professional development opportunities can be entered throughout the academic year. When identifying professional development opportunities consider the following questions:

- a. Is the professional development intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice?
- b. Does the professional development focus on teaching and learning specific academic content?
- c. Is the professional development connected to other school initiatives?
- d. Does the professional development builds strong working relationships among teachers?

Part 7- Continuous School Improvement Plan Evaluation. Improvement efforts are evaluated in May/June 2018 using the Success Analysis Protocol. The protocol helps teachers identify the success they experienced teaching the skills and using the strategies documented on the CSIP.

Implementation of the Continuous School Improvement Plan

After the Continuous Improvement Plan is created, the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team focuses on documenting the implementation and monitoring of the plan. The leadership team can answer the questions:

- How do we know teachers are teaching the skills on the CSIP?
- How do we know students are learning the skills on the CSIP?
- How do we know that the instructional strategies identified on the CSIP are working?
- How do we know teachers are making adjustments to instruction in response to the short-term and medium-term assessments results?
- How do we know students are engaged in student-centered instruction?
- How do we know the tasks teachers assign are linked to the skills on the CSIP?

Appendix XX shows a list of monthly topics for the CILT.

Manage the Evidence to Support Improvement Efforts

The evidence that shows the implementation and monitoring of the Continuous School Improvement Plan is organized in Google Drive folders created by the Office of Catholic Schools. The evidence is meant to help the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team document the practices and processes that are implemented that support the implementation and monitoring of the Continuous School Improvement Plan. The evidence helps the leadership team engage in discussions about the implementation and monitoring of the Continuous School Improvement Plan. The *Manage Evidence to Support Improvement Efforts* Appendix 6 shows the steps to upload evidence.

The following is a list of examples of evidence as documentations of improvement efforts:

- Observation notes on instruction

- Observation notes on instruction on the skills on the CSIP
- Videos/photos of students engaged in instruction
- Agendas and notes from CILT meetings
- Agendas and notes from meetings that improve teaching and learning: faculty, grade-level, professional learning community, common planning, etc.
- Samples of tasks that focus on the skills on the CSIP
- Samples of assessments that focus on the skills on the CSIP
- Samples of monitoring tools that focus on the skills on the CSIP ([student proficiency report](#), [ACT Aspire Interim Assessment monitoring tool](#), and/or progress monitoring tools that shows student learning of the skills on the CSIP)

Chapter 4. The Archdiocese of Chicago School Improvement Review

The AdvancED accreditation process requires the Archdiocese of Chicago to develop and implement an internal process whereby schools are reviewed each academic year. The Office of Catholic Schools creates School Improvement Review Teams who read the Continuous Improvement Plan, the supporting evidence, and conduct an onsite review of the school's academic improvement efforts. The School Improvement Review Teams will answer the question, what is the evidence that shows the school is engaged in authentic school improvement by implementing and monitoring the Continuous School Improvement Plan?

The onsite *School Improvement Review* consists of 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 outcome of the review is a report written by the team about their findings.

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

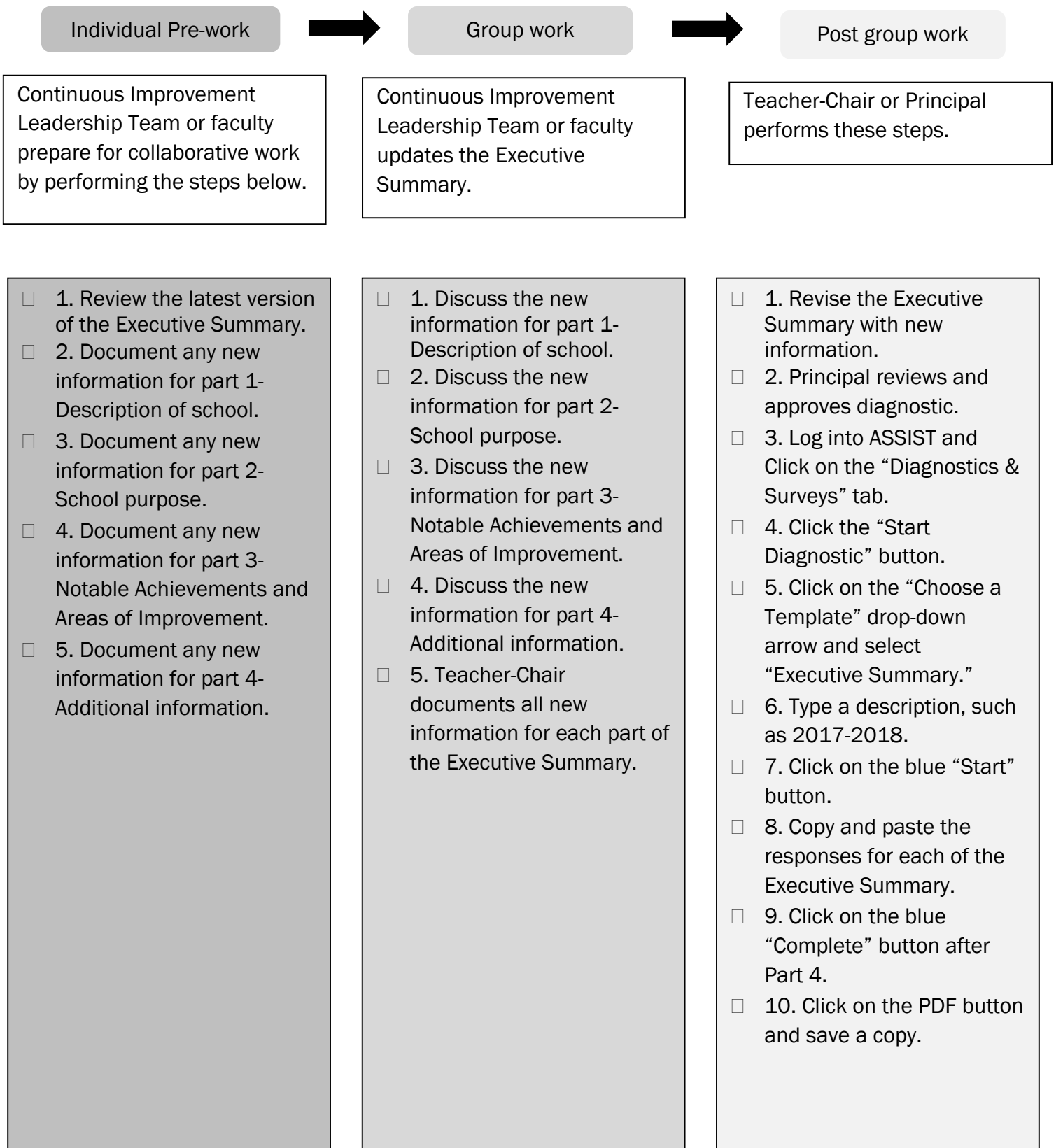
Principal performs these steps.

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

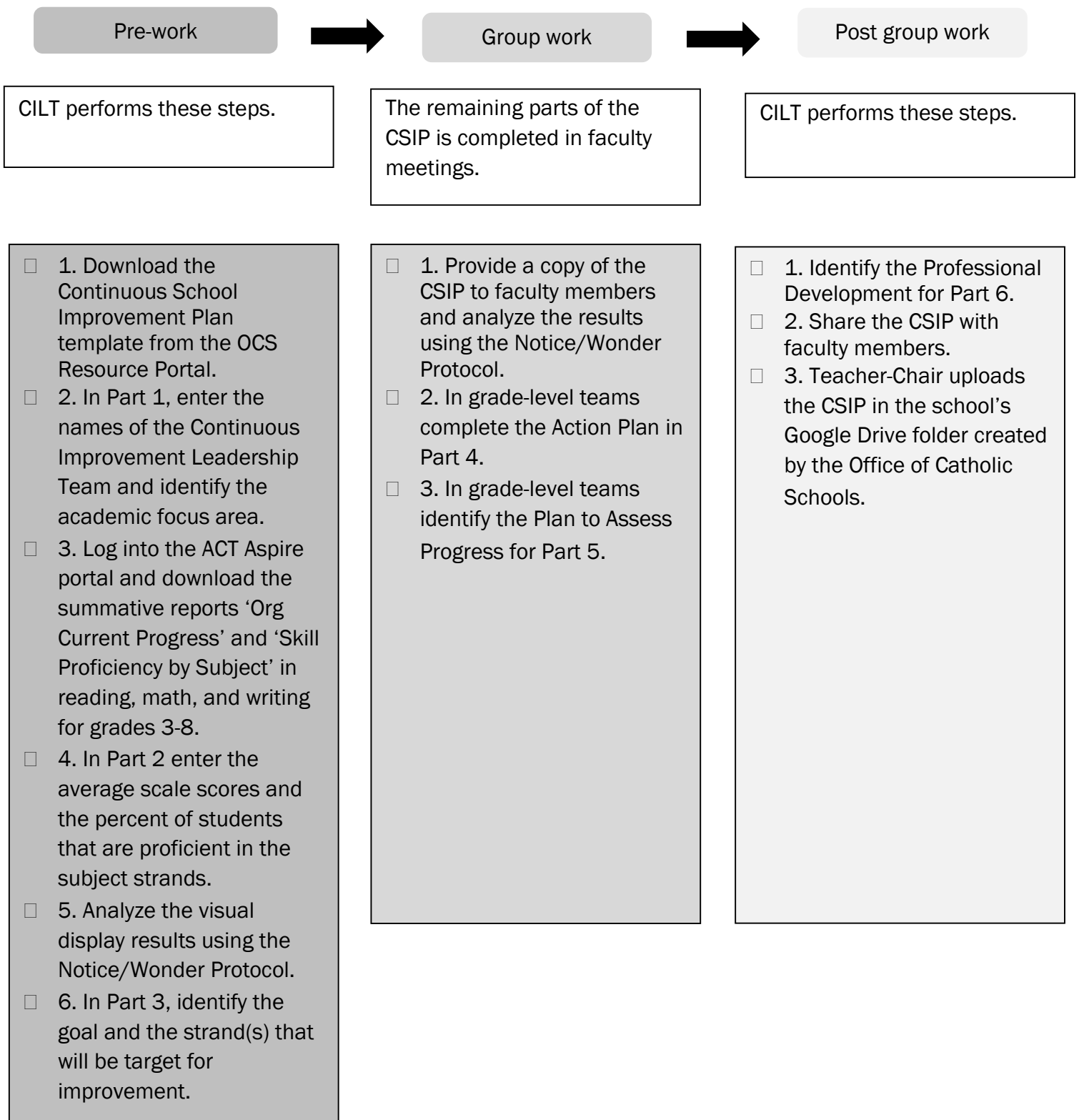
- 1a. If Principal is new to the school: Use the Access Code to create an account and log into ASSIST.
- 1b. If Principal is returning: log into ASSIST.
- 2. Click on the Profile tab.
- 3. Review the Demographics tab.

- 1. In the Profile tab, in Demographics, click on *Update Demographics*.
- 2. Click on blue Manage Demographics link, then click on the Contacts tab. Review the contact information.
- 3. Send an email to accountsupdate@advanc-ed.org by identifying the changes that need to be made.
- 4. AdvancEd will make the changes. Check the Profile page in ASSIST a couple of weeks after sending the email message.

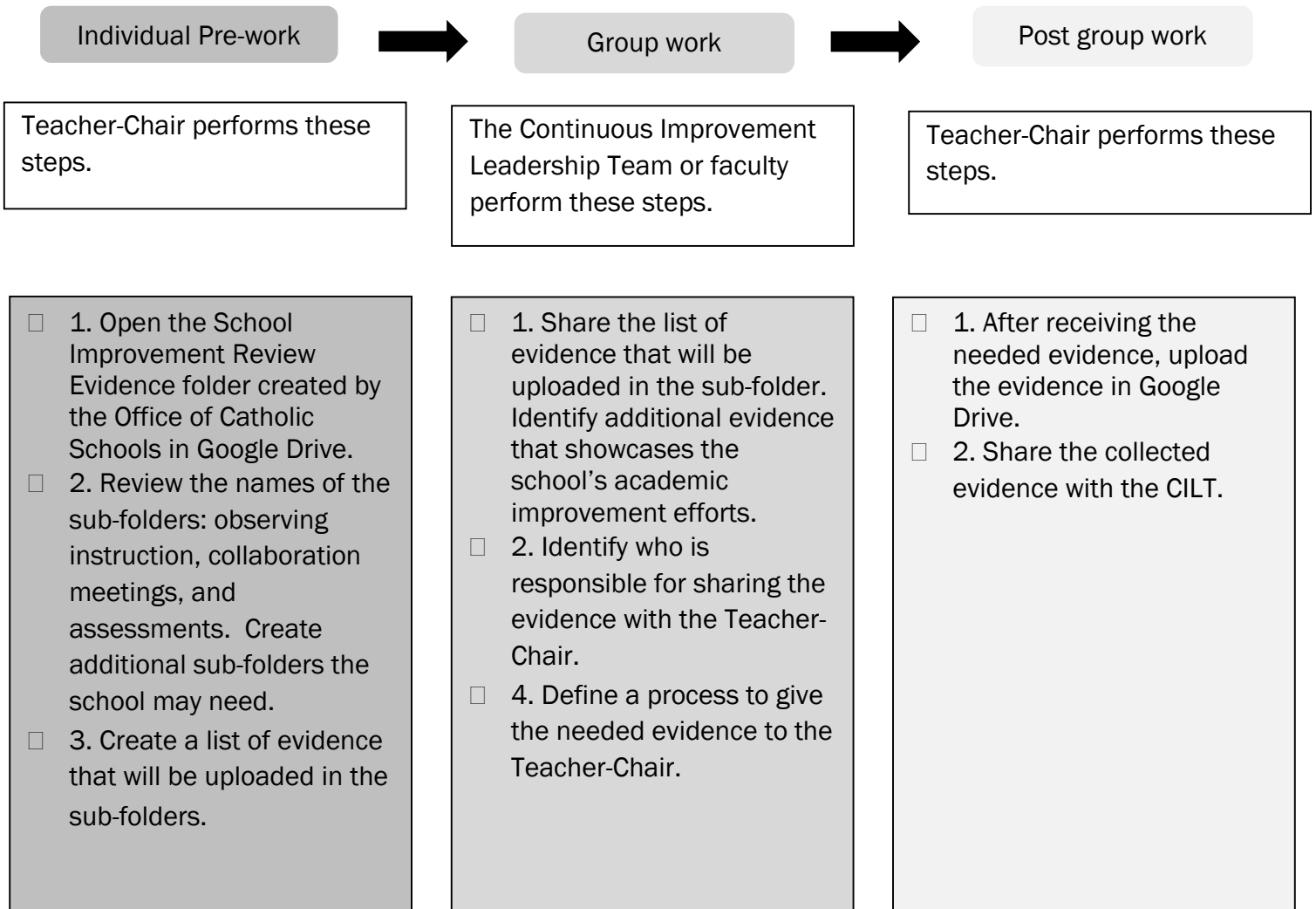
Appendix 2: Update the Executive Summary



Appendix 3: Create the Continuous School Improvement Plan



Appendix 4: Manage Evidence to Support Improvement Efforts



Appendix 5: Sample Topics for the Continuous Improvement Leadership Team

Month	Sample Topics
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the skills in part 4 of the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) Identify a process to determine student learning of the skills on the CSIP Review articles/videos on instructional strategies to support the CSIP
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the CSIP Action Plan in part 4, the Plan to Assess Progress in part 5, and the Professional Development plan in part 6 Create a schedule to administer the ACT Aspire Interim #1 assessment Identify when short-term assessments will be collected and when will faculty/grade-level teams/PLCs will analyze these results
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the results from the ACT Aspire Interim #1 assessment Analyze ACT Aspire Interim #1 results with faculty/grade-level teams/PLCs with an emphasis on the skills identified on the CSIP and compare these findings with short-term assessment results Create a schedule to perform classroom observations of teachers using the instructional strategies identified on the CSIP
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a schedule for ACT Aspire Interim #2 assessment Debrief classroom observations the instructional strategies identified on the CSIP
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the results from the ACT Aspire Interim #2 assessment Analyze ACT Aspire Interim #2 results with faculty/grade-level teams/PLCs with an emphasis on the skills identified on the CSIP and compare these findings with short-term assessment results Identify the types of adjustments and interventions needed for student learning Perform a formative assessment of the CSIP
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a schedule to perform classroom observations of teachers using the instructional strategies identified on the CSIP Debrief classroom observations the instructional strategies identified on the CSIP Create a schedule for ACT Aspire Interim #3 assessment
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the results from the ACT Aspire Interim #3 assessment Analyze ACT Aspire Interim #3 results with faculty/grade-level teams/PLCs with an emphasis on the skills identified on the CSIP Compare results from Interims #1 and #2 to #3 Identify the types of adjustments to instruction and interventions needed for student learning Create a schedule for ACT Aspire Summative test administration
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Plus/Delta Protocol, assess what worked well and what to change for next year's ACT Aspire summative test administration Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development opportunities participated by the faculty
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the CSIP Evaluation Protocol in Part 7 of the CSIP Facilitate the CSIP Evaluation with faculty/grade-level teams
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the reflections from the CSIP evaluation Identify participants for the workshop on interpreting and analyzing ACT Aspire 2018 results. The workshops will be held the last week of July and the first week of August. There two types of workshops: novice and experienced.