State Review Panel
School Document Review Protocol

2015-16

COLORADO
Department of Education

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Part I: Introduction

The State Review Panel (SRP, or the Panel) was created by the Education Accountability Act of 2009 to provide a critical evaluation of the state's lowest performing schools' and districts' plans for dramatic action, and provide recommendations to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education. One aspect of the SRP's work is informed by a review of documents (e.g., Unified Improvement Plan).

What is the Colorado Department of Education SRP document review?

The SRP document review is a process that panelists can use to understand and explain the extent to which schools and districts have the capacity to plan and implement the dramatic change required to exit the accountability clock (i.e., Priority Improvement, Turnaround). The SRP document review process was designed in partnership with SchoolWorks – an education consulting organization with the mission to build the capacity of educators to advance all aspects of student achievement and well-being. The SRP document review process utilizes a team of experienced educators (including educational experts from Colorado) to review publicly available and CDE-provided documents and collect evidence related to the school/district's capacity on specific criteria and indicators.

What are the Colorado district and school criteria and indicators?

The SRP document review is based on the criteria outlined in the Accountability Act of 2009. This includes determining whether:

- Leadership is adequate to implement change;
- Infrastructure is adequate to support school improvement;
- There is readiness and capacity of district, institute, or school's personnel to plan effectively and lead appropriate actions;
- There is readiness and capacity to engage productively with the assistance provided by an external partner;
- There is a likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the performance in the current management and staffing; and
- It is necessary that the district, institute, or school remain in operation.

See Part IV for a complete list of the SRP key questions and Part V for their corresponding criteria and indicators. The document review will be aligned to collect evidence in relation to these criteria.

What is the purpose of an SRP document review?

The purpose of an SRP document review is to gather evidence from key documents (e.g., Unified Improvement Plan, Performance Framework, and other publically available documents) on a school or district's program and operations in the areas outlined in the Education Accountability Act. At least one formal document review is conducted for those schools and districts on the accountability clock, and can serve as an additional piece of evidence should a school or district receive a site visit. The SRP document review is just one source of evidence that the SRP considers to better understand where improvement efforts are successful or lagging as recommendations are made to the Commissioner and State Board of Education.

What does the SRP document review entail?

The SRP conducts a document review aligned to the six key areas in the Accountability Act. Documents include those shared by the Colorado Department of Education (see Table 1 for a list of documents) and any other publically available documents to which the SRP has access (e.g., School Board meeting minutes, school and district web sites). During this formal document review, the school does not directly provide any documents to the SRP. Panelists review only the CDE-provided documents and data or that which is publicly available, then evaluate the information in alignment with the criteria set forth under each key area. Based on evidence collected during the document review, the team of panelists prepares a written report that becomes part of a larger body of evidence regarding the school's performance. The SRP will also compile any questions related to missing information that must be addressed should the school receive a site visit in the future.

TABLE 1: ITEMS TO BE SENT BY CDE TO BE REVIEWED BY STATE REVIEW PANELISTS
1. School performance framework
2. Most recent version of the school Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)
3. State Review Panel feedback forms from previous reviews
4.   Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) feedback from the Colorado Department of Education
5.   Leadership staffing chart
6. Access to data dashboard
7. TELL survey links for the school or district
8. Other information that is relevant to the document review process

All team members are governed by a code of conduct. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students are essential.

The Document Review Report

The document review team's primary objective is to come to consensus on capacity levels in relation to six key areas identified in the Education Accountability Act. To come to consensus on a set of capacity levels, the team works together to collate and discuss available evidence collected throughout the document review process. At the end of the SRP document review, a written report is developed and submitted to the Colorado Department of Education. It then becomes part of a larger body of evidence regarding the school's performance.

Part II: Process and Results

How does the document review team go about its work?

The document review team is guided in its work by a code of conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REVIEWERS*

1. **Carry out work with integrity**.
   a. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
   b. Assure confidentiality.

2. **Be objective; base capacity levels on evidence, not opinion.**
   a. Capacity levels must be fully supported by evidence, must be defensible and inform the key questions.
   b. Capacity levels must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
   c. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on opinion or evidence.
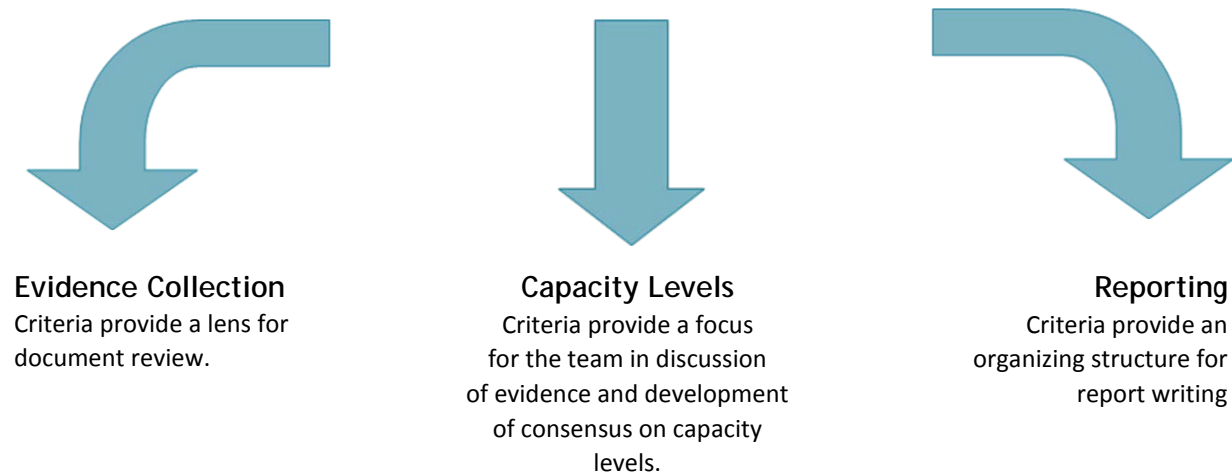   d. If a given piece of evidence is not affecting students' learning or experience, it is then irrelevant.

Acknowledgement of Massachusetts Charter School Office Site Visit Protocol and the OFSTED code of conduct.

How does the document review team come to consensus on capacity levels based on a collection of documents?

The SRP process is built on four core components that drive the work of the team throughout the document review.

- ***The process is criterion-driven.*** The SRP process is built on a set of criterion and indicators. Throughout the review, the site visit team collects evidence through a number of different qualitative and quantitative documents, in relation to each of the criterion and indicators to come to consensus on capacity levels that indicate how well school programs and practices are serving students. The site visit team uses the criterion and indicators during virtual team meetings to identify trends that emerge from the evidence and to come to consensus on capacity levels. A criterion-driven process ensures that the work of the SRP team is grounded in the standards. The protocol's criteria also serve as a basis for professional dialogue and reporting.

Figure 1: Criterion-driven

Evidence Collection
Criteria provide a lens for document review.

Capacity Levels
Criteria provide a focus for the team in discussion of evidence and development of consensus on capacity levels.

Reporting
Criteria provide an organizing structure for report writing

- ***The process is an evidence-based system.*** The capacity levels are based on evidence collected during the team's review of a number of different qualitative and quantitative documents and data. The site visit team builds a base of evidence for each capacity level that would reasonably lead any set of individuals to come to similar conclusions about the school's programs and practices, when presented with the same set of information. While the team is required to address the protocol standards and base all capacity levels on evidence, the process is not mechanical and requires some professional judgment by the site visit team.

- ***The team uses its professional judgment to come to consensus on capacity levels.*** To be useful, the site visit team must produce a focused report. Focusing on key strengths and areas for improvement requires discerning only what is important and merits comment. This process is called "data reduction." In the protocol, team members use their professional judgment in a process called moderation to distill the key factors that deserve comment from the wealth of evidence available to them. This use of professional judgment is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Moving from evidence to capacity levels

Evidence	Trends	Capacity Levels	Final Report

Data reduction: Focusing on what is most important
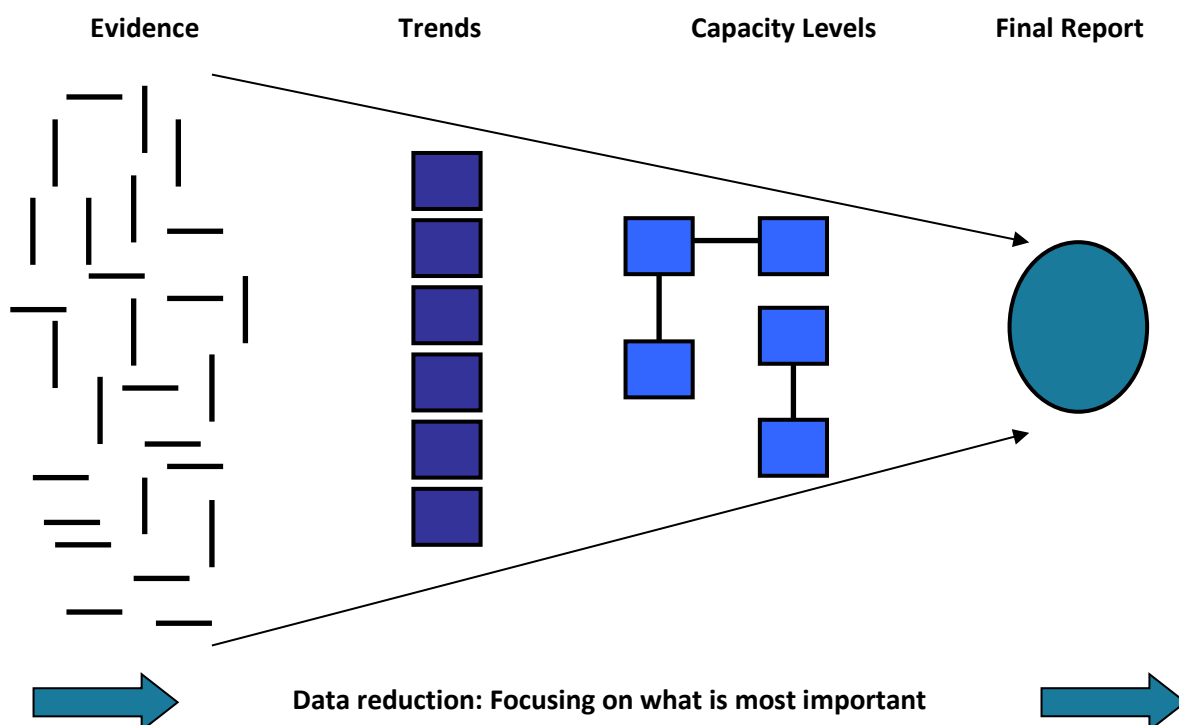
Written Report

1. The SRP develops a draft report that documents the evidence for the capacity levels. This report provides a written record of the capacity levels.
2. Before it is sent to CDE, team members provide comments on the draft written report according to pre-established timelines.
3. The report is finalized and submitted to the Colorado Department of Education; it then becomes part of a larger body of evidence regarding the school's performance.

Team Members

Success of the visit relies heavily on team members':

1. *Adherence to the code of conduct*

   - All work aligned with the SRP document review is confidential.

2. *Collection of evidence*

   - Team members secure their evidence in notes and provide all necessary data to the project manager.

4. *Collaborating with others*

   - Team members actively participate in team meetings and support others' efforts to reach unified capacity levels based on evidence.

5. *Reporting*

   - Team members provide feedback on the draft of the document review report in accordance with pre-established timelines, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence and reflects the consensus of the team.

Part III: State Review Panel Key Questions

The following key questions reflect the required components of review as outlined in the Education Accountability Act of 2009. These key questions guide the team's work reviewing the school or district. All evidence is collected in response to these key questions and their respective standards. The complete list of corresponding criteria and indicators for each key question can be found in the next section, Part IV.

Key Questions

1. *Is school leadership adequate to implement change to improve results?*

2. *Is the school infrastructure adequate to support school improvement?*

3. *Is there readiness and apparent capacity of school personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate action to improve student academic performance?*

4. *Is there readiness and apparent capacity to engage productively with, and benefit from, the assistance provided by an external partner?*

5. *Is there a likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the performance within the current management structure and staffing?*

6. *Is there a necessity that the school remain in operation to serve students?*

Notes

Part IV: State Review Panel Criteria and Indicators

This section contains the complete list of the CDE State Review Panel Criteria and Indicators. These criteria and indicators are used to guide evidence collection, team deliberation, and development of capacity levels during the document review.

Key Question 1: Leadership

Is school leadership adequate to implement change to improve results?

Criterion 1.1.: Leadership acts as a change agent to drive dramatic achievement gains.
- Leadership communicates a relentless commitment to the school turnaround.
- Leadership makes data-driven changes to the academic program and organization to promote dramatic achievement gains.
- Leadership conveys clear expectations for performance for all stakeholders, including leadership, teachers, students, and partners.
- School leaders distribute leadership responsibilities to appropriate individuals or groups.

Criterion 1.2: Leadership establishes clear, targeted and measurable goals designed to promote student performance.
- Leadership communicates clear and focused goals that are understood by all staff.
- Educators understand their responsibilities for achieving goals.
- Leadership maintains school-wide focus on achieving established goals.
- Leadership allocates resources in alignment with goals and critical needs.
- Leadership has established systems to measure and report interim results toward goals.

Criterion 1.3.: Leadership analyzes data to identify and address high priority challenges, and to adjust implementation of the action plan.
- Leadership communicates data trends and issues, ensures timely access to data, and models and facilitates data use.
- Leadership openly shares results and holds staff accountable for results and effective use of data.
- Leadership first concentrates on a limited number of priorities to achieve early, visible wins.
- There is regular progress monitoring of performance and implementation data and, as appropriate, results lead to elimination of tactics that do not work.
- Benchmarks are used to assess progress toward goals; goals are adjusted as progress is made.
- Data on progress toward goals drives organizational and instructional decision making

Criterion 1.4.: Leadership establishes high expectations for student learning and behavior.

- The school holds high expectations for academic learning.
- Educators set high expectations for learning and clearly convey these to students.
- Educators convey that students are responsible for raising their performance and encourage their participation in learning.
- The school provides a safe environment to support students' learning and, in the case of a virtual school, ensures that students' interactions between and among themselves and school staff are respectful and supportive.
- Leadership ensures that school's physical environment is clean, orderly, and safe.

Is the infrastructure adequate to support school improvement?

I.   *Organizational Infrastructure and Sustainability*

Criterion 2.1: The district leads intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the academic program and the sustainability of the organization.

- The district/superintendent ensures ongoing leadership development for emerging and current school leaders with a focus on building leadership capacity to lead turnaround efforts and sustain improvement.
- The district/superintendent provides adequate oversight in schools' work to deliver the curriculum, monitors instruction on a regular basis, and provides adequate support and feedback to principals to improve instruction.
- The district provides adequate systems by which to capture and store data, report it to schools, and make it accessible for instructional staff to utilize.

Criterion 2.2: School leadership has a strong focus on recruiting and retaining talent; creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff who can drive dramatic student gains; evaluates all staff; and dismisses those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.

- Leadership has created and/or implemented an organizational and staffing structure that will drive dramatic student gains.
- Leadership recruits and hires teachers with commitment to, and competence in, the school's philosophy, design, and instructional framework (e.g., trained and experienced with curriculum, certified/licensed to teach, qualified to teach subject area).
- Trained mentors provide beginning teachers with sustained, job-embedded induction.
- Leadership ensures the evaluation of all staff, and dismisses those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.
- Leadership provides teachers with active, intense, and sustained professional development (PD), including guidance on data analysis and instructional practice, aligned to school improvement efforts.
  - PD is informed by ongoing analysis of student performance, instructional data, and educators' learning needs.
  - PD requires teachers to demonstrate their learned competency in a tangible and assessable way.
  - PD engages teachers in active learning (e.g., leading instruction, discussing with colleagues, observing other teachers, developing assessments) and provides follow-up sessions and ongoing support for teachers' continued learning.
  - The quality of professional development delivery is regularly monitored, evaluated, and improved.

Criterion 2.3: School leadership ensures that the school has sound financial and operational systems and processes.

- School leadership ensures that the organizational structure supports essential school functions, and that roles and responsibilities of all individuals at the school are clear.
- School leadership has established effective means of communicating with school staff.
- School leadership ensures that the school meets all compliance requirements and deadlines set by the state, including the submission of school improvement plans, financial statements, school audit, calendar, and student attendance.
- School leadership effectively manages the school budget and cash flow, and there is a plan for long-term financial sustainability.
- The school leadership effectively manages operations (e.g., food services, transportation, school facilities).

II. *Instruction*

Criterion 2.4: School leadership provides effective instructional leadership.

- School leaders ensure that the school implements a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum.
  - School leaders ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned with state standards, aligned with each other, and coordinated both within and across grade levels.
  - School leaders ensure that instructional materials are selected and/or developed in accordance with a school-wide instructional framework and aligned with established curriculum standards.
  - School leaders ensure the curriculum is periodically reviewed and revisions are made accordingly.
- School leaders provide meaningful feedback on teachers' instructional planning and practice.
  - Leaders regularly provide meaningful feedback on instructional planning.
  - Leaders regularly observe instruction and provide meaningful, timely feedback that helps teachers improve their practice.
- School leaders provide conditions that support a school-wide data culture.
  - Teachers have easy access to varied, current, and accurate student and instructional data.
  - Teachers are provided time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data and use tools that help them act on results.
  - School leaders ensure that all teachers receive professional development in data use (e.g., how to access, read, and interpret a range of data reports; frame questions for inquiry; analyze data, assessment literacy, use data tools and resources).

Is there readiness and apparent capacity of school personnel to plan effectively and lead the implementation of appropriate action to improve student academic performance?

Criterion 3.1: Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.

- Educators convey shared vision and values about teaching and learning and reference these to guide their instructional decision making.
- Educators convey a shared commitment to the learning of all students in the school.
- Educators convey a belief that students' learning is their collective responsibility, regardless of students' personal or home situations.
- Educators convey that it is important not to give up on any students, even if it appears that they do not want to learn.
- Educators convey commitment to, and hold each other accountable for, collaboratively established improvement goals and tasks.

Criterion 3.2: The school has established conditions that support educators' learning culture.

- Communications among all stakeholder groups are constructive, supportive and respectful.
- Communications between leadership and staff are fluid, frequent, and open.
- School leaders model and convey well-defined beliefs about teaching and learning, and convey value for innovation, learning from mistakes, and risk-taking.
- School leaders ensure that staff and team meeting discussions are structured and facilitated to support the staff's reflective dialogue around data and instruction (e.g., attend to explicit group norms, use protocols).
- School leaders provide guidance to teacher teams (e.g., help to establish meeting routines; model and promote use of discussion protocols; ensure systematic monitoring of student progress; create focus on linking results to instruction) and ensures that teachers utilize tools and time well.
- School leaders participate in formal and informal professional learning, including their own leadership development about how to improve curriculum and instruction in a leadership context (i.e., elementary or secondary; high- or low-poverty; large or small schools).

Criterion 3.3: Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress.

- Educators meet frequently, during regularly scheduled, uninterrupted times (e.g., staff, department, grade level meeting times) to collaborate, establish improvement goals, and make data-informed instructional decisions.
- Educators' collaborative meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning and achievement.
- Educators describe sharing knowledge and expertise among colleagues as essential collaborative activity for job success.

- Teachers are willing to talk about their own instructional practice, to actively pursue and accept feedback from colleagues, and to try new teaching strategies.
- The school has created a performance-driven classroom culture in which teachers effectively use data to make decisions about daily instruction and the organization of students.

Criterion 3.4: Staff members demonstrate the capacity to implement appropriate action to support student achievement and school improvement.

- Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to make adjustments to the organization of students in the classroom, pace of instruction, or content being taught.
- Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to identify students in need of remediation or acceleration, and assign students to appropriate supports.
- Qualified staff deliver instruction and provide the necessary supports for ELL students or students with special needs.
- Leaders involve faculty and staff in planning and implementation of school policies.
- Leaders provide opportunities for faculty and staff to make or provide input on important decisions.

Criterion 3.5: The school engages the community and families in support of students' learning school improvement efforts.

- The school includes parents/guardians in cultivating a culture of high expectations for students' learning and their consistent support of students' efforts.
- The school invites family participation in school activities (e.g., volunteering in classrooms or on committees; attendance at performances, sports events, organizational meetings) and regularly solicits their input.
- The school offers workshops and other opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about home practices that support student learning.
- Educators communicate with parents/guardians about instructional programs and students' progress.

Key Question 4: Partnerships

Is there readiness and apparent capacity to engage productively with, and benefit from, the assistance provided by an external partner?

Criterion 4.1: The school collaborates effectively with existing external partners.

- The school seeks expertise from external partners, as appropriate (i.e., for professional development, direct support for students).
- The school ensures that roles and responsibilities of existing partners are clear.
- There are designated school personnel to coordinate and manage partnerships.

Criterion 4.2: The school leverages existing partnerships to support of student learning.

- The school maximizes existing partners' efforts in support of improvement efforts.
- All externally provided professional development is aligned to improvement efforts.

Criterion 4.3: Leadership is responsive to feedback.

- Leadership seeks feedback on improvement plans.
- Leadership seeks feedback from key stakeholders
- Leadership integrates feedback into future improvement efforts.

Is there a likelihood of positive returns on state investments of assistance and support to improve the performance within the current management structure and staffing?

Criterion 5.1: Leadership monitors the return on investment of specific improvement initiatives, and uses that data to inform decision making.

- Leadership identifies turnaround strategies and implements programs/initiatives designed to improve student performance.
- Leadership assesses the cost and impact (effect on student achievement and number of students served) of each program/initiative to determine its academic return on investment.
- Leadership makes decisions regarding continuation or discontinuation of programs/initiatives based on this analysis.
- Leadership establishes systems and structures to support regular and ongoing monitoring.

Criterion 5.2: Leadership has demonstrated an ability to produce positive returns on state investment and uses resources effectively.

- Programs and initiatives are designed to support turnaround efforts and have demonstrated results.
- Leadership seeks resources aligned to its improvement efforts and programs/initiatives with high academic return on investment.
- Any additional resources received (i.e., specialized grant funding) are aligned, strategic, and showing evidence of results.
- Leadership treats resources flexibly, and implements focused improvement efforts with a focus on early wins.

Criterion 5.3: Students demonstrate academic progress over time.

- Students demonstrate progress on internal measures linked with the school's promotion or exit standards.
- The performance of student subgroups on state assessments demonstrates that the school is making progress toward eliminating achievement gaps.
- Students meet proficiency and grade-level targets across subjects and grade levels on norm-referenced benchmark assessments and state assessments.
- Matched cohorts of students who score proficient or advanced (or equivalent) on state assessments maintain or improve performance levels across continuous enrollment years.
- The percentage of all students performing at proficient or advanced (or equivalent) on state assessments increases over time.
- Students demonstrate academic growth as measured by value-added or state growth percentile measures.
- Students demonstrate progress toward attaining expected knowledge and skills as measured by interim assessments.

Key Question 6: Need to Serve Students

Is there a necessity that the school remain in operation to serve students?

Criterion 6.1: The school is mission-driven and its mission and vision meet a unique need.

- All stakeholders share an understanding of, and commitment to, the mission and vision.
- School programs reflect the mission and vision.
- The mission and vision guide decisions about teaching and learning.
- The mission and vision meet the needs of an identified student population.
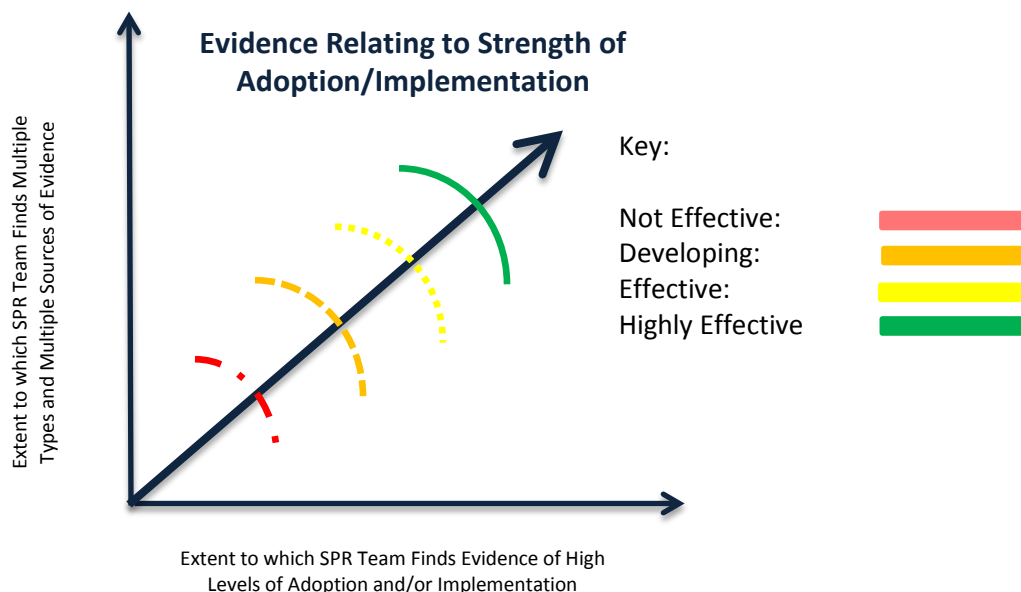
Criterion 6.2: There are no other viable options for enrolled students that will likely lead to better outcomes.

- There are limited other school options available (e.g., online, charter, district).
- The school serves an isolated and/or remote community.
- Closure would have a significant negative impact on the community.
- Comparison schools do not promote better student outcomes.

Notes

Part V: Capacity Level Rubric

The document review team will use the following guidance to select a capacity level for each key question. Note that the quality standard for each capacity level is based on the extent to which the team finds multiple types[1] and multiple sources[2] of evidence related to the adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system AND the extent to which the team finds evidence of high levels of adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system.

Evidence Relating to Strength of Adoption/Implementation

(Vertical axis label: Extent to which SPR Team Finds Multiple Types and Multiple Sources of Evidence)

(Horizontal axis label: Extent to which SPR Team Finds Evidence of High Levels of Adoption and/or Implementation)

Key:

Not Effective:	▬
Developing:	▬
Effective:	▬
Highly Effective	▬

Capacity Level	Quality Standard
Not Effective	Evidence indicates that the key question is not a practice or system that has been adopted and/or implemented at the school or district, or that the level of adoption/implementation does not improve the school or district effectiveness.
Developing	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that is developing at the school or district, but that it has not yet been implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's or district's effectiveness, OR that the impact of the key action on the effectiveness of the school or district cannot yet be determined.
Effective	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that has been adopted at the school or district, and is implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's or district's effectiveness.
Highly Effective	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that has been fully adopted at the school or district, and is implemented at a level that has had a demonstrably positive impact on school or district effectiveness.

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[1] "Multiple types of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from two or more of the following: document review, stakeholder focus groups and/or interviews; and classroom observations.

[2] "Multiple sources of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from three or more stakeholder focus groups and/or interviews; two or more documents; and/or evidence that a descriptor was documented in 75% or more of lessons observed at the time of the visit.