NCStar Quick Reference for School Improvement Teams

Topic	Notes
School Improvement Planning	Review School Improvement Guidance Document found at www.ncstar.weebly.com
NCStar Access	www.indistar.org 5 ways of accessing the NCStar portal: • Principal & Process Manager (shared access) • District (allows for coaching comments) • Leadership (School Improvement Team members) • Guest (Staff, Parents, Board Members, etc) • NCDPI For specifics on what each access point is able to view in the system please refer to the Access Levels document found at www.ncstar.weebly.com/docs
School Improvement Team Membership	Team members can be added under School Team in the Navigation Toolbar. Please remember to keep this updated since emails do go out to the members. Team members are also visible to the public through the Summary Report under "guest" access (contact information is not visible). Make sure you have parent representation on the team. A best practice for the school team is that all teacher members should be clarified with position role/title. (ex. 3rd grade teacher, biology teacher)
Assessing of the 12 KEY Indicators	Refer to question #1 in FAQ document also found at www.ncstar.weebly.com Since many of the 105 indicators could be considered prerequisites some schools are assessing more than the minimum required 12 Key indicators. A best practice is for a school improvement team to read and "unpack" the WiseWays document for each indicator before assessing. It is important that every individual in the school improvement team has a good understanding of the research on the effective practice so that the team has a common vision for what is expected.
Any indicator at Full Implementation	As soon as you inform NCStar that an indicator/objective is at "full implementation", it will ask you for evidence. The evidence will typically be in the form of documents/spreadsheets/pdfs and you may upload them in the "Document Upload" on the school's dashboard page directly under the school's name. A best practice is to create folders for each of the indicators you are working on. For example, folder A204 will contain evidences regarding the creation of Instructional Units that at least guide the instruction of math, reading, science, & social studies.

LEA specific Indicators (Example B101 and B102)	The LEA is required to provide the information to the school so the school can include district information in their comprehensive plan. Examples of evidence could include: documents that have the names and titles of district representatives on the district support and improvement team, document with meeting dates, policies on hiring principals, etc
Evidence Location for B103	When it comes to this indicator, the evidence will not be found in the Document Uploads section since NCStar has a special location under the Navigation Toolbar titled Team Agendas & Minutes. The reason for this is space since Document Upload currently has a 175 file capacity. Remember that anytime you link to a Google Doc, Google Form, or Google Sheet – it does not go against this 175 file capacity in Document Upload.
LEA/School Indicators (Example C201 & C304)	The purpose of these indicators is for both LEA/School to work together and determine the best possible course of action for that specific school.
ASSESS – "Describe current level of development"	This description should provide the reader with a clear picture of what the school is doing now. A best practice is to type the year since your plan in NCStar will be an ongoing living document and the "assess" stage is simply the beginning of this map you are creating to reach full implementation. For example, "In 2016 our school….."
CREATE – "How it will look when fully met"	This is where schools should be including the goal and it should have a degree of measurability. Remember when you are determining your ultimate goal for the indicator/objective, that goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. With regards to the "time" component – there is no reason why you cannot choose 2018, 2019, or even 2020 as the completion date for a particular indicator/objective (see monitoring below).
MONITOR - Achieving Full Implementation	Every school is different and it is not expected that all schools reach full implementation with the same number of indicators at the end of each year. In fact, some schools might take 1, 2, or even 3 years to achieve 'full implementation' status with a particular indicator. Our recommendation is that schools aim at taking 3-8 indicators per year from 'limited development' to 'full implementation'. Ultimately, districts set the expectations for their schools based on the specific needs found within each district.

Team Agendas & Minutes	NCStar keeps track of your meetings. The minimum requirement for NCStar users is to record 2 meetings a month in the system. A meeting will not be counted by NCStar unless minutes are taken and saved. Meeting information is found in the Team Agendas/Minutes on the Navigation Toolbar. If you have a preferred template to use for your agendas or minutes, please feel free to simply link to that particular document in any of the text boxes. The Worksheets section found on the Navigation Toolbar contains valuable resources that might be helpful in your meetings. Several schools send the Assess or Plan worksheets as a 'word doc' to team members prior to meetings. In addition, you can find all the WiseWays (WW) documents in the Worksheets section.
"Task Development"	Every objective (indicator in the plan that has been assessed as limited or no development) should contain at least one task. However, one task is the minimum (refer to question #2 in the FAQ document) and will typically not lead to full implementation of the objective. When it comes to school improvement planning in NCStar, the more tasks the easier it will be to manage the work that must happen to reach a determined goal. In addition, the clearer the steps are to that specific goal – the higher the chances to sustain a practice even when a school has a leadership change or a high turnover rate in staff. Tasks such as - "Monthly newsletters will be sent by grade level teams to inform parents/guardians of strategies/practices to assist their children at home" - should be broken down by grade level into multiple tasks. This will add a level of accountability and allows the school improvement team to truly monitor the work of each grade level team individually. Ongoing/Recurring Tasks - A recurring task should have the date set for the end of the year, the SIT should be monitoring the task until it is an embedded process, system or structure at the school. In other words, recurring tasks should not be marked as "completed" until the school improvement team feels comfortable that it is now a systemic practice that will continue to occur successfully without the need for supervision. Professional development or training tasks should lead to multiple tasks since what is most important is the fidelity of implementation on what was learned. In other words, if a staff is participating in some type of "poverty workshop" or a "reaching all learners training", the plan should also inform on how administration will ensure that the knowledge acquired is transferred into classroom instruction. A best practice is to attempt to write tasks as action/impact. For example, "Math department will meet weekly to analyze student and aggregated classroom data in order to adapt instruction to meet the learning needs of every child"
Archiving / Submitting Plans	NCStar is about following a true continuous improvement cycle and constantly growing/adjusting the Comprehensive Plan. The only way to keep a date-stamped permanent copy of a plan is by pressing the 'submit' buttons found in the Main Dashboard under the tab called Submit Forms/Reports. We highly recommend you archive plans twice a year (Fall & Spring).