



Michelle Rhee, Chancellor

**A PRINCIPAL'S GUIDE TO CONDUCTING
A COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW**

RESTRUCTURING ACHIEVEMENT:

A Model for Improving Schools which
Continuously Fail to Make Adequate Yearly Progress.

**Office of the Chief of Schools
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Executive Summary:

In 2001, the federal government signed The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act into law in an effort to reform the overall quality of education in the United States of America. The legislation centers on the following four major principles relative to education reform 1) Strong Accountability for Results 2) More Freedom for States and Communities 3) Proven Education Methods and 4) More Choices for Parents. In an effort to implement progress around these four key principals, several major requirements have been mandated upon school districts across the country.

A major goal of the legislation also centers upon continuous improvement in the area of academic achievement. As such, a major component of the NCLB legislation centers upon a measurement known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), whereby annual achievement data is reviewed and assessed for improvement in disaggregated areas. The purpose of the AYP measurement is to serve as the basis for identifying schools and school districts where student performance is unsatisfactory and provide a system of accountability which requires schools and districts to remedy unsatisfactory performance in a timely fashion. Therefore, the NCLB has definitive measurement guidelines for those schools which do not meet AYP and are deemed as needing improvement and there are currently 5 levels of “school improvement” status.

In DCPS, there are a number of schools which are currently in each stage of “school improvement” status as per the NCLB/AYP guidelines. In addition to the first three stages, where schools are either on watch, developing a two-year school improvement plan or providing public school choice to students, there are 60 schools which are in the more severe fourth and fifth stages where staff and curriculum replacement or full restructuring must occur. There are currently 27 schools in the fifth stage of not meeting AYP, where full restructuring must occur for the 2008-2009 academic year.

The Chancellor is currently considering a number of the options for restructuring provided through NCLB guidelines. In an effort to ensure that the best opportunities to improve academic achievement in each of the 27 schools are achieved, a Quality School Review (QSR) process will be employed in early January, 2008.

The QSR is a 3 stage process which will involve intense analysis of key indicators centered on **3 primary elements which are as follows:**

1) Teaching and Learning 2) A Safe and Effective Learning Environment 3) Parent and Community Involvement.

Upon completion of the QSR review process, a comprehensive report which strategically measures progress in each of the 3 primary elements will be forwarded to the Chancellor for a final decision on which restructuring option is best suited for each particular building. In order to assist schools with the process, the following is a complete guidebook for the entire QSR process.

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS?

The Quality School Review (QSR) measures how effective a school organizes to support the development of a professional learning community focused around improving student achievement. Additionally, the QSR provides the District a systematic process by which we can:

1. Determine what is happening in schools relative to teaching and learning
2. Guide each school through a process of self-reflection
3. Develop and implement school specific-comprehensive school improvement plans based upon the identified needs of each school
4. Establish a process that leads to continuous school improvement and student achievement.

There are key questions that guide the Quality School Review Process:

- Is there a vision for the school? How is the vision communicated to the school community?
- What goals has the school set; and how does the staff use data to identify action steps that support the achievement of these goals?
- How was the school community involved in the development and implementation of their school improvement plan? Does the school community regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their school improvement plan? Does the school use the results of the evaluation to make necessary revisions to the school improvement plan?
- Does a common instructional framework guide the school's work around teaching and learning? How effectively does the school align all resources to support the instructional framework?
- Does the school community work collaboratively towards improving student achievement?
- How effectively does the school communicate the progress of students to parents and the community? How are parents and community members involved in the decision-making process?
- What policies and procedures are in place to support the development of an optimal learning environment? Are these policies and procedures fully understood and implemented?

Elements for Review

The QSR is a criteria-driven process that is based upon effective schools research. The criteria for the QSR measures topics relative to three primary elements which are essential for the implementation of effective schools.

The 3 primary elements areas are as follows:

- Teaching and Learning
- Safe and Effective Learning Environment
- Parent and Community Engagement

Each element includes multiple sub-components and performance indicators that will be measured during the QSR Process.

THE QSR BENCHMARKS & THE SCHOOL QUALITY RUBRIC

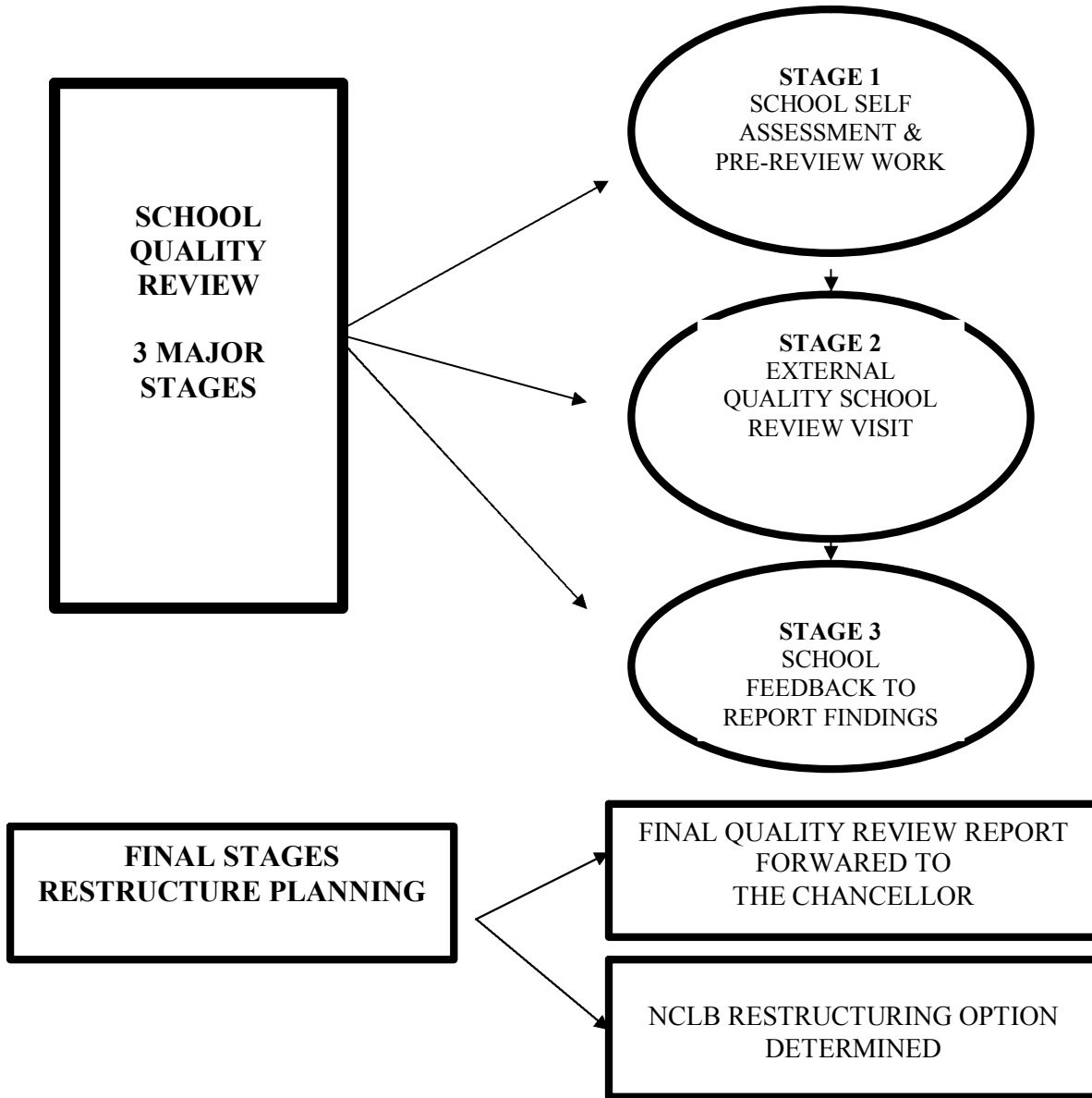
During the review process, evidence is gathered and assessed based upon a set of standards which measure a school's performance on a set of indicators in each of the 3 primary elements . In an effort to systematically measure progress within the 3 primary elements, a formal school quality rubric with a clear set of performance indicators was developed for the external QSR visit. The indicators of success tell us about a school's performance in relation to desired outcomes. Each review team will be rating the school's progress in the 3 primary elements by rating a set of indicators for each standard with one of the following ratings:

- 1- **Does Not Meet Standards**
(Unsatisfactory, unsound, not yet implemented)
- 2- **Partially Meets Standards**
(Limited, beginning to implement)
- 3- **Meets Standards**
(Functioning, routine, system-wide, established)
- 4- **Exceeds Standards**
(Exemplary, integrated, systemic, sustained over time)

Schools in the restructuring process will be rated on standards in the 3 primary elements of **1) Teaching and Learning 2) Safe and Effective Learning Environment and 3) Parent and Community Involvement**. Each element contains multiple quality statements. Under each quality statement are a number of indicators. The goal is that each school "meet" or "exceed" the standard. The rubric represents a standardized and sustainable method to measure a school's performance in relation to desired outcomes in the 3 primary elements.

During the QSR site visit, each of the QSR review team members will utilize the same School Quality Rubric to measure the school's performance in the related primary elements. In each of the 3 elements, there are a series of quality statements which seek to summarize several performance indicators which collaboratively describe the tasks necessary to "meet" or "exceed" the particular standard.

Mapping the School Review Process:



Proposed Timeline

| Date | |
|---|---|
| Week of November 26 th | Principal Meeting |
| Week of December 3 rd | LSRT Meetings |
| Week of December 10 th | Community Meetings |
| Week of Dec. 10 th -Jan. 4 th | STAGE 1: School Self Assessments <i>(Due Jan. 4th)</i> |
| December 18, 2007 | Principal Orientation |
| January 4, 2008 | LSRT & Principal Preparation Meeting |
| January 9-22, 2008 | STAGE 2: External QSR Visits |
| January 22-30, 2008 | STAGE 3: School Feedback |
| Week of February 4, 2008 | Recommendations forwarded to the Chancellor |
| Mid February | NCLB Restructuring option determined by Chancellor |

Stages of School Review Process: A Detailed Review

The School Review Process involves three distinct stages:

STAGE 1: THE SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT & PRE-REVIEW WORK

A critical component of the QSR process is to give the faculty, staff, students, parents and members of the community an opportunity to reflect on the current state of their school. The School Self-Assessment (SSA) affords such self-reflection and lends valuable insight in terms of measuring how all key stakeholders view progress relative to the 3 elements. In addition to the SSA, other major steps such as gathering data, orienting staff and setting a schedule also take place during this stage to prepare for the External QSR Visit.

The key tasks during this stage are as follows:

- **School Self-Assessment-** The School Self-Assessment provides an opportunity for members of the school community to self-determine how effective the school organizes to provide all students high quality learning experiences.
- **Pre-Visit Analysis-** Each school will prepare and submit documents/evidence related to each of the elements. The review team will use the information provided to gain a better understanding as to where the school is in meeting the standard for element.
- **Gathering Data-** The team will review data relative to each schools academic performance, demographics, and other pertinent information that will provide the review team critical insight into the school's potential to impact student achievement.
- **Quality Review Orientation-** On December 18, 2007, DCPS will hold an orientation around the review process. The session will provide principals with a step by step explanation of the Quality Review Process, an overview of the elements, review preparation required, and answer any outstanding questions or concerns.

STAGE 2: EXTERNAL SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW SITE VISIT

The next major step of the QSR process involves an external QSR site visit. The site visits will occur between January 9- 22, 2008 and will be a one day- all day event. A full schedule with individual dates will be revealed at a Principal Preparation Meeting on December 18, 2007 coordinated by the Office of the Chief of Schools. The external QSR team will consist of 9-11 people, including a lead reviewer, internal and external educators, a parent, student, community and Washington Teachers Union (WTU) representative. A sample schedule for the day long site visit is as follows:

Sample Schedule of Events of External QSR Visit:

| TIME | PLANNED ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION | LOCATION |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 8:00 – 8:30 | Arrive: Meet with Principal & Staff | Office |
| 8:30 | Class Visits throughout the day | Full building |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | Focus Group: Parents | Rm. 103 |
| 10:45 – 11:30 | Focus Group: Staff | Rm. 104 |
| 11:30 – 12:15 | Focus Group: Students | Rm. 103 |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | Lunch | Conference Rm. |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | Data Review/ Observe Grade Level on Subject Area Planning Meeting | Conference Rm. |
| 1:30 – 2:00 | Review Curriculum Plans or Local School Plan | Conference Rm. |
| 2:00 – 2:45 | Collect Additional Data including Student Work | Conference Rm. |
| 2:45 – 3:15 | Meeting with LSRT | Rm. 105 |
| 3:15 – 3:30 | Observe end of school day | Full building |
| 3:15 – 4:00 | Additional evidence gathering | Conference Rm. |
| 4:00 – 4:30 | Final meeting with Principal and Select Staff if required | Conference Rm. |

External QSR Visit Planned Activity Details:

- **Class Visits: will focus on student engagement, instructional practice, and student work.**
 - **The classroom visits** will be a combination of classes selected by both the principal and External QSR review team. A schedule which clearly shows classes, room numbers, instructor information and class start and end times should be provided to the review team. The review team will visit multiple classes and spend anywhere between 5-20 minutes in each class.
 - Please select teachers that represent your school. Different subject areas, different grades, different levels of experience, etc.
 - The review team will only talk to students and teachers if the opportunity presents itself. For example; if the teacher is doing group work and the students are working in small groups and the teacher is going from table to table to talk to the students, then the reviewer may ask a student or the teacher a question relating to the work.
 - The review team will not give feedback to the teacher and is primarily interested in gauging the level of instruction being provided.
 - The principal may choose to shadow any members of the review team

- The review team will look for evidence of themes/skill sets being taught. For example, if you are working on writing across the curriculum, the reviewer will look for evidence of the writing.
- **Focus Group Meetings: The principal should plan to arrange the following meetings as part of the QSR visit schedule.**
 - ***Focus Group with Staff- 45 minutes***
 - The teachers/staff will meet as a group with the reviewer. Remember to provide coverage if a teacher doesn't have a common prep/planning time as the other teachers.
 - The principal *is not* present at this meeting.
 - Choose 8-10 teachers that represent your school. Different levels of experience, subject areas, grades, etc.
 - The review team will be looking to assess whether there is a sound evidence of efficient school management and leadership and evidence of a clear vision mission embodied by all staff.
 - **You are encouraged to include WTU chapter leader in this meeting.** If s/he is not able to meet at that time, the WTU chapter leader may request to meet with the review team separately at a different time.
 - ***Focus Group with Parents- 45 minutes***
 - The parents will meet as a group with the review team.
 - The principal *is not* present at this meeting.
 - In collaboration with the LSRT, please select 8-10 parents that represent your school and plan to provide a translator if necessary. Please involve members of any current parent organizations which are currently active in the building.
 - The review team will be looking to assess the current level of parental involvement in the school's activities and how much opportunity exists for the parents to support the school's mission and improve achievement.
 - ***Focus Group with Students- 45 minutes***
 - Please select 8-10 students to meet as a group with the review team.
 - Select students that best represent the overall student population and avoid selecting only members of student government. The student group should also represent each of the respective grade levels present in the building.
 - Provide a translator if necessary (possibly another student).
 - Please notify parents that their child has been selected participate in the focus group.
 - As the primary stakeholder, the review team will be looking to assess student input relative to each of the 3 elements (Teaching

and Learning, Safe and Effective Learning Environment and Parent and Community Involvement).

- **Review of Curriculum Plans, Data, and other School Documentation.**
 - Please prepare to provide the review team with curriculum plans for entire academic year for each subject area and grade level.
 - Please be prepared to provide the review team with evidence of planning across the entire school and that planning evolves around the school mission and vision.
 - The review team will be looking to assess evidence of collaboration between classes, across subject areas and/or interdisciplinary work between subject areas. For example, many schools integrate the arts into literacy or social studies. Please be prepared to provide evidence of such.
 - The review team will be looking to assess that there is evidence of a connection between what happens from one grade to another.
 - Provide the reviewer with curriculum plans or other activities that are unique to your school.

- **Final Feedback Session with LSRT and Principal**
 - Please make sure that your LSRT is informed and ready to meet with the review team. There will be an opportunity for feedback and discussion with the review team relative to the events of visit.
 - The review team will schedule a date to provide feedback to LSRT and staff.

STAGE 3: FEEDBACK TO REPORT FINDINGS- Major Tasks

- The comprehensive **Quality School Review Report** will be drafted upon completion of the SSA and the external QSR. The final report will include:
 - Summary of the school's overall performance
 - Scores for each quality statement and an overall score for the entire element

The Quality Review Report will be forwarded to each principal and the respective superintendent prior to forwarding to the Chancellor. There will be an opportunity for the school administration to review and correct any discrepancies in the report prior to forwarding the final report to the Chancellor.

STAGES 4 & 5- CHANCELLOR REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE PLANNING

The Quality Review Report will be forwarded to the Chancellor *no later than the week of February 4, 2008*. The Chancellor will use the information provided by the review team and all other pertinent data and information to determine the school improvement option to be implemented for a given school. There will be a meeting with the administration of each school to discuss the proposed plans for restructuring.

The 5 NCLB Restructuring Options include:

1. **Option 1:** Chartering- Under this option, the district closes a school and reopens it as a public charter school that students can attend by choice.
2. **Option 2:** Zero-Based Staffing or Partial Reconstitution- Under this option, the entire staff is replaced or only a small number of the existent staff will remain.
3. **Option 3:** Contracting- Under this option, the district closes a school and reopens it as a school managed by an outside entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, such as an education management organization (EMO). The district chooses the EMO to operate the school and monitors this group's performance. The district can cancel the contract if the school does not improve student achievement. As with charter schools, contract schools has tremendous flexibility relative policies and practices.
4. **Option 4:** State Takeovers- Under this option, the state takes over oversight of the school.
5. **Option 5:** Other Major Restructuring: The fifth and final NCLB option is choosing another form of major restructuring. This does not include continued incremental change. Instead, NCLB language specifically calls for fundamental reforms in governance with "substantial promise of enabling the school to make AYP."

APPENDICES

QUALITY SCHOOL REVIEW: FLOWCHART OF TASKS

| <u>STAGE 1: SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT & PRE SITE VISIT REVIEW WORK</u> | <u>STAGE 2: EXTERNAL SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW VISIT</u> | <u>STAGE 3: SCHOOL FEEDBACK TO REPORT FINDINGS</u> |
|---|--|--|
| <i>MAJOR STEPS</i> ↓ ↓ | <i>MAJOR STEPS</i> | <i>MAJOR STEPS</i> |
| 1. Administer the “Restructuring Feedback Form/School Self-Assessment” to all staff and select parents and community members. | 1. Orientation for External SQR site visitation team. | 1. The External SQR review team will summarize findings in a comprehensive report which will be forwarded to each building principal. |
| 2. “Restructuring Feedback Form” is due to the Chief of Schools by January 4, 2007 . 3. Pre-Visit Analysis- Gather documents/evidence related to each of the 3 elements. 4. Gather Data- Begin to assemble data fact sheets: academic performance, demographics and other pertinent information. 5. Quality Review Orientation – (December 18 th , 2007) | 2. Additional Pre-Visitation Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify classrooms for visitation • Identify locations for focus groups meetings. • Prepare data reports (achievement scores etc, attendance) • Identify parents, students, staff and community members for focus groups. (<i>Be sure to inform parents of students who are involved.</i>) | 2. Final QSR report with recommendations will be forwarded to the office of the Chancellor. |
| 6. Meet or connect with QSR Visit Team & Team Leader prior to day of site visit. 7. Finalize a Meeting Date & Schedule of Events for visit | 3. School Visit- Intensive full day onsite visit. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Classroom visits b. Site tour c. Focus Group Meetings (Parents, Staff, Community Members & Students) d. Data & Curriculum Planning Review e. Observe rudimentary procedures (lunch, dismissal etc.) f. Meeting LSRT | 3. The Chancellor’s office will recommend the most effective restructuring option for each respective building. 4. The Chancellor’s office will provide each school support based upon findings |

SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT (SSA)

Restructuring Feedback Form

School: _____

Your school is going through a planning process for school improvement. Please complete the following form to provide your feedback on the school's strengths and challenges. This information will help with the planning process.

| Please rate your school's performance in the following areas: | Does Not Meet Standards | Partially Meets Standards | Meets Standards | Exceeds Standards |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| TEACHING AND LEARNING | | | | |
| The school uses effective instructional practices and creates a collaborative school climate to improve student learning. | | | | |
| The school utilizes effective strategies for engaging students in challenging learning experiences in which they are required to synthesize many sources of information. | | | | |
| School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to drive instruction and whole school improvement. | | | | |
| The classroom environment fosters positive social interaction, active engagement, and meaningful dialogue between students. | | | | |
| The school has a comprehensive professional development plan which seeks to continuously broaden the knowledge of all staff in an effort to improve student achievement and whole school improvement. | | | | |
| The school strategically uses instructional resources to enhance learning, current curriculum and improve achievement. | | | | |
| SAFE AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT | | | | |
| The principal is the instructional leader who shares leadership with the rest of the staff. All staff collaborate to strengthen the instructional programs and monitor progress of students. | | | | |
| The overall school atmosphere is orderly, purposeful, business-like and free from the threat of physical harm. | | | | |
| The school has a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability. | | | | |
| The school exhibits a climate of expectation in which the staff believes & demonstrates that all students can attain mastery of essential school skills and that they, the staff, have the capability to help all students do so. | | | | |
| The school strategically utilizes community resources and business partners to leverage additional support in an effort to achieve increased student achievement and whole school improvement. | | | | |
| The school has established a collaborative learning environment whereby leadership roles are shared among staff which fosters common goal planning and mutual respect. | | | | |
| PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | | | | |
| The school communicates effectively with the community to establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders such as families, students, faculty and other community members. | | | | |
| The school has activities and programs which allow the members of the respective community an opportunity to support the school's mission and improve academic achievement. | | | | |
| The school has activities and programs which allow the parents to | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| understand and support the school's mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve the mission. | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|

Grade your school in the following areas:

| | A | B | C | D | F |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching and Learning | | | | | |
| Creating a safe and effective learning environment | | | | | |
| Parent and community engagement | | | | | |

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| This school would improve through... | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Leadership change | | | | |
| Staffing change | | | | |
| Stronger community partnerships | | | | |
| Support from external experts | | | | |
| Outside control over the school | | | | |
| Other (<i>please specify</i>): | | | | |

1. What are your school's strengths?

2. What are the major challenges for your school?

3. What changes would lead to the most improvement at your school?

4. Do you have any additional comments?

THE QUALITY SCHOOL REVIEW BENCHMARKS & SCHOOL QUALITY RUBRIC

The QSR process seeks to evaluate a school's progress in the following 3 Primary Elements:

- 1. Teaching and Learning**
- 2. Safe and Effective Learning Environment**
- 3. Parent and Community Involvement**

In an effort to create a standardized and sustainable method to measure a school's performance in relation to desired outcomes in the 3 primary elements, a set of quality statements/ standards have been established and incorporated into a measurement rubric.

During the QSR site visit, each of the QSR review team will utilize the same School Quality Rubric to measure a school's performance in the related primary elements. In each of the 3 elements, there are a series of quality statements which seek to summarize several performance indicators which collaboratively describe the tasks necessary to "meet" or "exceed" the particular standard.

The 4 distinct scoring categories are as follows:

- 1. Does Not Meet Standards**
(Unsatisfactory, unsound, not yet implemented)
- 2. Partially Meets Standards**
(Limited, beginning to implement)
- 3. Meets Standards**
(Functioning, routine, system-wide, established)
- 4. Exceeds Standards**
(Exemplary, integrated, systemic, sustained over time)

Each member of the review team will evaluate each school in terms of their performance or adherence to the standards outlined within the various quality statements. An overall score will be recorded for each quality statement within the 3 primary elements. Additionally, there will be an overall score for each of the 3 primary elements. In providing feedback and scoring for each of the quality statements, the reviewer will be asked to provide evidence, commendations and recommendations. This is critical to the feedback component in Stage 3, as clear evidence can be cited and reviewed by both the review team and the school administration. **An example a Quality Statement and scoring is as follows:**

Sample of a full set of standards and the accompanying scoring rubric:

| PRIMARY ELEMENT 3: Parent and Community Involvement | | Does Not Meet 1 | Partially Meets 2 | Meets 3 | Exceeds 4 |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Quality Statement 3.3 | <p>School Support for Parent Involvement: The school has activities and programs which allow the parents to understand and support the school's mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve the mission.</p> | <p>Planning of school-wide, grade, and classroom activities rarely takes into account the resources, needs and availability of parents.</p> <p>Classroom, grade, and school-wide activities rarely involve parents.</p> <p>Using a variety of strategies, the school provides little to no outreach to parents.</p> <p>There are little to no opportunities for parents to participate with teachers in mutual information-sharing.</p> | <p>Planning of school-wide grade, and classroom activities occasionally takes into account the resources, needs and availability of parents.</p> <p>Classroom, grade, and school-wide activities occasionally involve parents.</p> <p>Using a variety of strategies, the school provides occasional outreach to parents.</p> <p>There are occasional opportunities for parents to participate with teachers in mutual information-sharing.</p> | <p>Planning of school-wide grade, and classroom activities consistently takes into account the resources, needs and availability of parents.</p> <p>Classroom, grade, and school-wide activities consistently involve parents.</p> <p>Using a variety of strategies, the school provides consistent outreach to parents.</p> <p>There are consistent opportunities for parents to participate with teachers in mutual information-sharing.</p> | <p>Planning of school-wide grade, and classroom activities consistently takes into account the resources, needs and availability of parents. Such planning has been sustainable over time.</p> <p>Classroom, grade, and school-wide activities consistently involve parents and has been sustainable over time.</p> <p>Using a variety of strategies, the school provides consistent outreach to parents which have been sustainable over time.</p> <p>There are consistent opportunities for parents to participate with teachers in mutual information-sharing which have been sustainable over time.</p> |

SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

| Quality Statement: 3.3 | Sample Evidence | Explanation/ Comments | Commendations & Concerns | Recommendations |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| <p><i>School Support for Parent Involvement:</i> The school has activities and programs which allow the parents to understand and support the school's mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve the mission.</p> <p>Benchmark Score:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>1- Does Not Meet 2- Partially Meets 3- Meets 4- Exceeds</p> | <p>How do you know?</p> | | <p>Commendations/Strengths:</p> <p>Issues and Concerns:</p> | |

