

### Commendations and Recommendations:

- Any indicator below Compliance must have a Recommendation.
- Any Critical Indicator below Compliance must have a Major Recommendation.
- Level 4s are likely have a commendation (Exceeds Compliance).
- Make sure the commendations and recommendations don't conflict.
- All commendations and recommendations are written in complete sentences and have two parts:
  - Begin with one statement (1-2 sentences) stating what is expected or being commended.
    - Commendation statements are one or two sentences stating what is above average at the school.
    - Recommendation statements must start with an action verb. (See verb list for suggestions.)
    - Do not use verbs like "continue," "consider," or "should." If you can't find something stronger to say, don't put it in. It is possible that the school should "review" or "revise" rather than "consider" if there is a concern but not a specific action you can recommend.
  - The second part (a separate paragraph) is the description. It contains the evidence and rationale; giving the people, context, and reason why this is commendable or of concern.
  - The description can include comments like "As noted in the school's self-study..." "As identified by the school..." If these are goals the school identifies, please add that in the description.
  - Check for consistency between the statement and the description below it.
  - Do not label the parts as "statement" or "description."
  - Format coms or recs in **bold font** if they end up as a major commendation or recommendation or contributing to one that is combined.
- Don't be prescriptive in recommendations. Keep the wording close to the wording in the indicator. Don't prescribe that they purchase something, hire someone, or adopt a specific program, even if that IS their preferred solution to the problem. Focus on the result the indicator points to. Make it substantive.
- Make sure that the focus is on school improvement. Even if the recommendation comes from a deficiency perspective, put it in terms of being on the path of improvement.
- If there are no commendations or recommendations, just leave them blank.

**Tip: Edit your work in WORD. Copy the final version to the e-platform.**

### Evidence:

- Put 2-3 key sources in parentheses at the end of the description. Separate items of the same type with commas, and items of different types with semicolons. Example: (interviews with faculty, students, and staff; parent/student handbook) These do not need to be capitalized unless they are proper nouns.
- The evidence listed should support the statement in the commendations and recommendations. Some reports are too thin in terms of evidence, meaning that the conclusion that is drawn could not have been derived from that evidence. (Ex. Sometimes it looks like surveys or interviews were used and yet they are not listed as evidence.)
- Do not editorialize in the evidence section. That is only for evidence to be listed.
- Evidence needs to be specific. "Documentation" or "Interviews" is not specific enough. What document? (Sept. board mtg. minutes) What groups of people did you interview? (student and parent Interviews)

### Narrative Sections:

- Standard narratives:
  - Include some context in the narrative for the major commendations and recommendations and the regular commendations and recommendations if they are not self-explanatory.
  - If the same content is addressed (a com and rec), make sure it is not conflicting.

- Summarize important facts in the introductory sections from the school's self-study and include those in the team report School Profile sections. Do not assume the reader will see the school's self-study. Be sure to include the mission statement in one of the profile sections.

#### **Conclusion Summary:**

- Include a brief comment about key standards in the Conclusion Summary. While not all the coms and recs will be mentioned, comment on a few key concepts to give the majors some context.
- Note the themes that emerged over the visit, throughout the school, or campus level. These should include general trends, even if not all positive. These will also be shared in the Exit PowerPoint.

#### **Good practice:**

- Do most of your work in WORD, then copy and paste to the e-platform. Then, look over the report AFTER it has been inserted into the e-platform and been converted to a pdf. The e-platform may throw off spacing, may replace a special character, etc. Not all punctuation transfers well.
- If you call something by one name in one area of the report, be consistent throughout.
- If the e-platform is printing extra white space in the PDF, check for "dead space" or extra Enters. You will want to backspace from the bottom to the last line of text.

#### **Proper Formatting:**

- Edit for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.
- For acronyms, spell them out the first time, put the acronym in parentheses (like the school name) then use the acronym through the report. Do not use apostrophes when you make them plural. (MKs, ESOs)
- Use bullets for lists unless numbering is important, no double spacing between lists.
- Use one line of space between paragraphs, no indentations.
- Justify content to the left.
- Use two spaces between periods.
- Use a comma after the next-to-last item in a series (He had many cows, pigs, and dogs.)
- Use personal pronouns as little as possible.
- Only use capital letters for proper nouns, even when listing evidence. Do not capitalize general positions like superintendent. Capitalize only when used as a title. (Superintendent Johnson) Do not capitalize "school" unless in a title. Do not capitalize adjectives such as biblical or scriptural but do capitalize Bible. Capitalized words: Internet, the Web, Wi-Fi, CD, and PowerPoint. Not capitalized: e-mail, online, webinar.
- When in doubt about hyphens, look them up in Webster's Dictionary. For example, "a well-built roof" is correct but "a roof is well built" is also correct. Why? The first one combines words to be used as an adjective. Hyphens are tricky. Use the dictionary! (Hyphenate in-service, self-assessment, and self-study)
- Use numerals for numbers 10 and over. Do not begin a sentence with a numeral.
- Form the possessives of nouns ending in s by adding only an apostrophe. (Jesus' coat)
- Use active voice whenever possible. Try to write sentences in a way that states who took what action. "The athletic association disqualified the school from participating..." is active and it identifies who took what action. A passive sentence may read, "The school was no longer in the athletic league..."
- End punctuation goes inside quotes. (George called, "Is anybody home?")
- Italicize most publications like book titles. Put quotes around short items like articles.
- Word usage -- Use "insure" when speaking of insurance. Use "ensure" when conveying "to make sure, certain." The word "data" is plural. Avoid using "datum" or "data are" if possible. "Farther" is for distance.
- Time periods -- AM and PM is correct. Only capitalize Spring 2015 when it is referring to a specific term only (like Spring Term 2015). Use spring of 2015 when it is more general.

**Make sure at least two people have edited the final report BEFORE it is submitted for review.**