

Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS)

Educators, parents, and children know that the conditions at their schools affect how much learning takes place. Educational research also shows that school and classroom conditions are powerful players in achievement, and they are the conditions over which the school has the most influence and capacity to change—as opposed to home conditions, for example. Organizational assessment is a means for identifying and addressing conditions at each school in the district. We use this survey of teachers, administrators, students, parents, and other community members to develop a picture of the conditions of the school in nine areas known to impact school quality: climate; school planning, assessment and accountability; curriculum and instruction, teacher quality and evaluation; principal effectiveness and support; parent involvement; student involvement; and district support.

Survey results are then analyzed by school planning teams and faculties, with CTAC's on-site assistance, in order to understand and address perceptions about the effectiveness of the school. As planning teams work to identify root causes of underperformance, the OAS data provide a guide for where to look. An annual collection of these data also provides the school with a means of increasing the amount and impact of stakeholder involvement; and a way to document improvements in the perceptions of stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school as planners address areas of concern.

A strength of the OAS is that it is school-based—both the survey respondents and the data collection or administration of the survey. With a school-based effort, participation increases and schools feel more confidence and trust in the quality of the information collected.

The Standard Bearer Schools process uses the data from the organizational assessment survey as the major qualitative tool for probing behind the student achievement data for possible explanations and ultimately root causes. Organizational assessment data grounds school improvement efforts in the realities of each school. With this foundation, schools have the knowledge and constituency support to improve the conditions of the school that most impact student learning.