



STATE TRANSFORMATIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

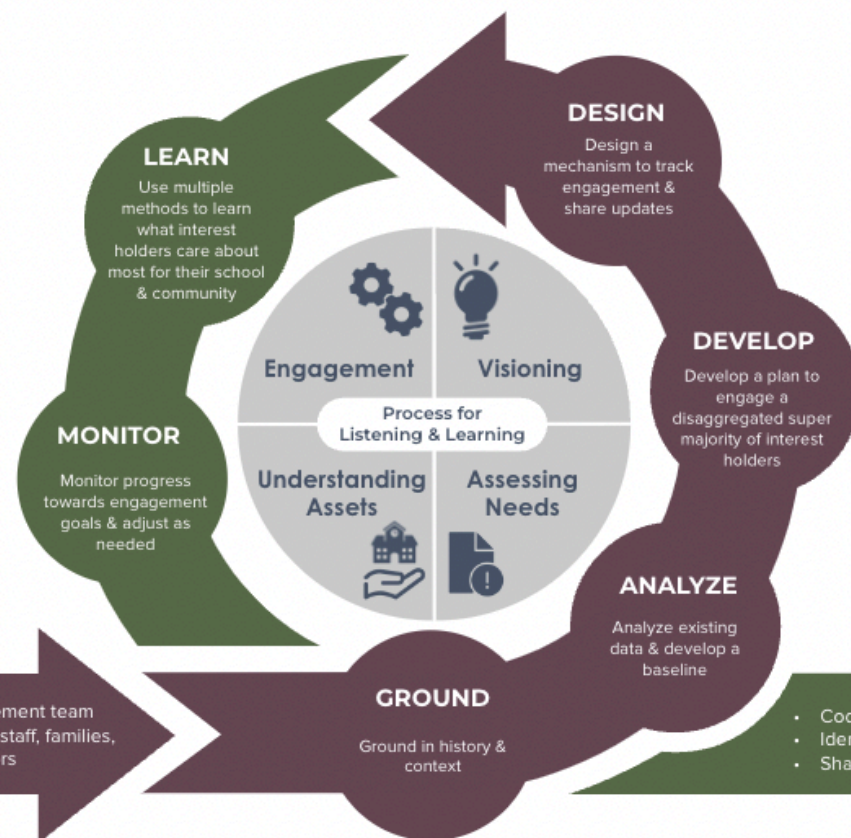
The Needs and Assets Assessment

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Needs & Assets Assessment Developing and Executing the NAA Plan

Listening, Learning &
Working Together Towards
a Shared Vision of Success



Preparing for Deep
Engagement in the
Assessment Process

- Understand the purpose
- Cultivate leaders
- Promote the work

Build & support engagement team
comprised of students, staff, families,
and community members

Building Power &
Momentum Around
Collective Priorities

- Form goal teams who use Improvement Science to address priorities
- Align Implementation Plan to SPSA

What is a Needs and Assets Assessment?

Transformational Community Schools build their work by always:

- seeing the system;
- building goals from a root cause analysis;
- developing their efforts both inside and outside the school building;
- working at the pace of relationships; and
- authentically centering equity and racial justice.

Central to this effort is a Needs and Assets Assessment (NAA) reflecting these practices. The NAA is not simply a set of surveys. It cannot be a task contracted to an outside organization. And it cannot result solely in a menu of programs and services people want. Instead, the NAA must be collaboratively developed *by, for, and with* interest holders - *students, staff, families, and community members* - for **deep engagement**, and resulting in a **transformational, shared vision** for their school and community. Executed well, it creates not only shared understanding about needs and assets of a school and community, but fosters collective responsibility and accountability for outcomes related to a shared vision of student success.

The most effective community schools aim to engage a “disaggregated supermajority” (75 to 100 percent) of students, staff, families, and community members in a transformational - not transactional - NAA process. Literature and research on systems change, such as [this](#) and [this](#), validates both depth and diversity of interest holder engagement in the NAA process. Solving complex problems requires collaborating and holding space for authentic relationship building and conversation, understanding and appreciating others’ perspectives, sharing power, and engaging in possibility thinking. To achieve this depth and diversity of engagement, engagement teams responsible for the NAA plan must employ a strong process that includes a range of listening methods that may include focus groups; large, medium, and small format meetings; one-on-one interviews; surveys; data analysis; and more.

At this end of the NAA process, there should be a clear set of priorities, stemming from a common aspirational vision and encompassing all pillars of community school implementation, that interest-holders are motivated and supported to address together. Once priorities are identified, school sites develop goal teams, where interest holders continue to come together to learn more deeply about and then innovate on what matters most to them collectively.

These activities enable a strong NAA process by allowing sites to leverage existing assets - such as leaders, partners, and structures - to accelerate listening, learning, and relationship building. Therefore, they should be completed first.

- [Team Mapping](#): What is the purpose and composition of existing teams? How are decisions made?
- [Leadership Identification](#): Who are current and potential student, staff, family and community leaders who could serve on emerging community school leadership teams?
- [Resource Mapping](#): What are the partnerships and assets - those people, programs, practices, and supports - that exist in and around the school and community?

Developing the Needs and Assets Assessment Plan

The NAA is an inclusive, systematic process for listening to and learning from students, staff, families, and community members about what they love about their school and community and what their vision is for their school and community. Developing an actionable plan is essential to successfully engage all interest-holder groups in the NAA and to provide a more accurate assessment of their experiences. Below are recommended planning steps:

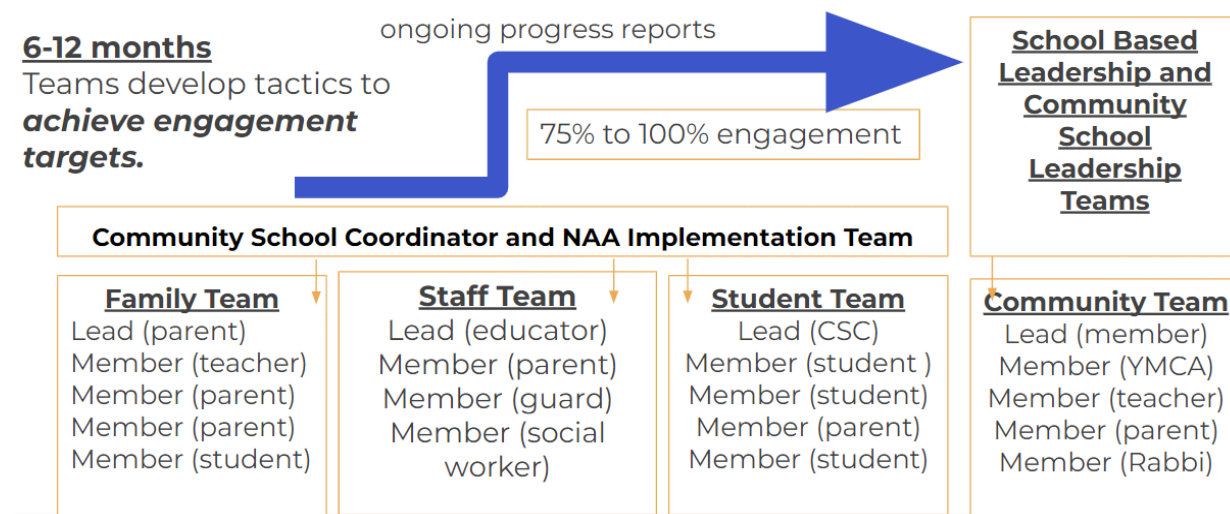
Process	Purpose	Focus Question	Potential Tools/Strategies
Step 1: Grounding in History and Context	Review the history, identity, and socio-cultural context of the community to better understand how broader historical and social forces have shaped the current reality	What is the history of the school and community? What efforts similar to the community school transformation strategy have been attempted in the past?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral History Interviews • Storytelling • Researching Local Neighborhood Association Archives • Analysis of Census Data, Current and Historical • Other Local Strategies
Step 2: Analyzing Existing Data	Review and synthesize themes from academic and community data sources to gain insight into the school and community's current state.	What are indicators of short- and long-term success, and how do we measure and track those? What does existing data tell us about our school and community? What questions do the data surface for us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDE Baseline Data Analysis (attendance rates, academic and behavior indicators, etc.) • Additional Analysis of Existing Quantitative Data (Community Quality of Life Indicators, etc.) • Current SPSA Goals and Measures
	Review and analyze data from existing student support activities to understand current access and impact	What student supports are well utilized? Generate impact? Where are there current gaps between what support exists and what supports might be needed? What do we need to know about improving access and impact of student supports?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Child Supports Inventory

Step 3: Planning for Engagement	Maximize participation among all stakeholder groups, including historically excluded and harder-to-reach populations	How do we define our community? How do we engage every member of the community in the community school transformation process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenings • Informal Gatherings and Dinners • Community Dialogues • Focus Groups • Rallies • Community Awareness Festivals • Meetings • Surveys • One-on-Ones • Other Local Strategies
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Planning for Engagement - Creating Team Structures:

In step three above, a teaming structure - representative of all interest holder groups - is created to develop and enact a robust NAA process. Each school's structure may look different; some have one centralized NAA team and others have more diffuse engagement teams executing various aspects of the NAA who then report back to the community school coordinator (if hired) or other designated leadership team. Regardless of the structure, it is important that your teams are representative of all interest holders and that their engagement efforts are coordinated and connected.

Below is an example of the latter structure wherein multiple engagement teams who are dedicated to students, staff, family, and community member engagement, all report back to an overarching shared leadership team or structure.



Once a structure is created, diverse interest holders are recruited to collaboratively plan and execute the NAA. Previous team mapping and leadership identification activities can be leveraged to identify potential engagement team members who are both excited to meaningfully contribute to the NAA process and who have the time to implement the engagement plan. Consideration should be given to what training and support team members need to feel

comfortable and confident planning and executing various aspects of the NAA process. The [NAA Team Structure, Recruitment, and Roster Template](#) can be used to populate details of the community school's NAA team.

Planning for Engagement - Developing the Plan:

Kick Off Meeting. It is recommended that your school host a NAA Kick Off Meeting with engagement team members to build the NAA plan. This meeting is the first in a series of regular team meetings to check in on progress toward engagement and listenings, provide support and encouragement, and course correct, if needed. It should be designed and facilitated in such a way that team members make meaning of what they are about to do together as well as define what success looks like to them. This [planning checklist](#) can help ensure a productive NAA Kick Off Meeting. Suggested agenda/action items include:

- Identify the purpose of the NAA
- Establish team norms and a way of work
- Review existing data to avoid duplicative efforts and to determine what else you need to know.
- Set specific engagement goals that will lead to 75 to 100% engagement of students, staff, families, and community members
- Develop an engagement plan that includes various avenues of engagement as well as multiple listening methods that are tailored to each interest holder group

Needs and Assets Assessment Plan. Often referred to as a Listening Project or Listening Campaign, the NAA is more than a set of simple surveys; instead, it is a robust and dynamic set of interlinking processes that happen simultaneously. Building on the steps mentioned above (from mapping to analyzing baseline data), the NAA involves additional processes - visioning, understanding assets, and assessing needs - that are facilitated through a lens of relationship building, trust, and shared power.

To reach a disaggregated supermajority of students, staff, families, and community members with processes, NAA Engagement Teams should develop an actionable plan using this [NAA Engagement Plan Template](#). As part of planning, teams should create a timeline with milestones for implementation as well as schedule regular check-ins to monitor progress towards engagement goals. Often, teams find it helpful to “tier” their NAA Engagement Plan into rounds of outreach and listening based on progress toward goals for each interest group.

Questions. A community school NAA should include, at minimum, three key questions: 1) What do interest holders love about their school?; 2) What is their vision for the school?; and 3) What does their school need to achieve their vision?

The NAA Team co-develops additional NAA questions based on local wonderings derived from their analysis of existing data. When looking at baseline data, teams should consider not just what they are seeing, but what they still need to learn; NAA questions should not be duplicative of previously collected data and should be designed to reveal new insights. Further, teams should craft questions addressing all the pillars and learning conditions that comprise the [California Community Schools Framework](#). This will ensure that investigations extend beyond the felt needs of basics such as food, housing, and case management.

This [bank of questions](#) provides examples that teams may wish to adapt and use for their NAA.

Engagement Avenues and Listening Methods. Given its ambitious yet necessary reach, the NAA Engagement Plan should outline multiple avenues of engagement - those places and opportunities to meaningfully engage folks - that teams plan to leverage as well as specific listening methods they will employ, tailored to each interest group. Consideration should be given to languages spoken, accessibility, and other needs to ensure maximum and equitable participation. Below are examples of specific listening methods that teams may include in their NAA Engagement Plan:

- One-on-One Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Group Meetings
- Community Dialogues
- Data Walks
- Observations
- Visioning Exercises
- Informal Gatherings and Dinners
- Artistic Expression

Many NAA Engagement Teams quickly learn that a survey's utility is often limited; it doesn't typically provide the richness or depth of input they are seeking from interest holders and it doesn't activate relational trust. Given these limitations, teams should consider elevating engagement methods, particularly one-on-one interviews, that allow for authentic conversations and invite shared commitment. This [one-on-one interview guide](#) walks teams through preparing for, conducting, and following up on these conversations.

Examples From the Field:

- Student leadership is highlighted in this [video](#) about Farmdale Elementary's needs and assets assessment.
- This [Engagement and Data Plan from Las Cruces, NM](#) is an example of a plan that includes broad engagement goals and strategies as well as methods tailored to specific groups.
- Hear directly from the field in this collection of workshop recordings that highlight effective practices and lessons learned around deep interest-holder engagement in the needs and assets assessment process:
 - [Hillsborough, FL](#)
 - [Los Angeles, CA](#)
 - [Durham, NC](#)
 - [NEA Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

Additional Reading, Tools, Protocols, and Guides for Developing a NAA Plan:

- Community Schools Forward's [Theory of Action](#) and [Outcomes and Indicators](#) resources can help teams think in terms of impact areas as well as short- and long-term indicators that they may wish to more deeply understand through the NAA.
- This [protocol](#) and related [video](#) from the Right Question Institute, in partnership with NEA and the Brown School of Public Health, offers a protocol - using participants' own questions - for productive home-school dialogue and decision-making that has practical application to the NAA process.
- This [article](#) explores the power of good questions to inform good design.

Executing the Needs and Assets Assessment Plan

Avenues and Methods for Authentic Listening and Engagement:

As NAA Engagement Teams execute their engagement plan and begin to analyze preliminary data, they will likely find that some of their planned avenues for engagement and listening methods were more effective at reaching interest holders than others. Ongoing check-ins allow teams to assess whether they should adopt, adapt or abandon strategies and to co-develop new approaches to achieving their engagement goals. Many teams use a [monthly work plan](#) or something similar to break their engagement goals into manageable pieces as well as to capture their learning and next steps.

Sharing across community school sites who are immersed in similarly robust NAAs has the potential to accelerate learning as schools adopt new ways of engaging and collaborating with their interest holders. Community schools who have met their 75 to 100% engagement goal for students, staff, families, and community members often attribute their success to strategy and teamwork. They leverage their understanding of the assets held by individual members of the school community (languages spoken, relationships held, etc.) and maps of existing/new opportunities to connect with folks to reach nearly all of their interest holders. The examples below represent their insight:

Field-Generated Engagement and Listening Ideas	
Students	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lunch Bunch” focus groups • Visioning group art project during house meetings • Student council/house leaders lead one-on-one interviews with peers • “What’s Up Fridays” morning announcement to share NAA updates and invite continued sharing via homeroom structure • Student ambassadors who welcome new students and conduct one-one-one interviews, particularly for schools with high mobility rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Listening Stations” at all school/community events • “Listening Campaign” as a parent-led, leadership development project as part of an existing support (such as MALDEF Parent School Partnership Program) • Weekly Parent Link (email/text) with Listening Project updates and how to participate • Host interviews/focus groups in places where families reside • Phone banking (“call list” by home language, existing relationships, etc.)
Staff	Community Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group visioning activity during pre-planning • Focus groups during team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood walks/canvassing • Neighborhood association or concerned citizen meetings

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Take and Talk” lunches hosted by union partners in faculty lounges• Breakfast for Bus Drivers (focus group with breakfast following drop off)• SWOT analysis during faculty meetings• Comp time and other forms of compensation for afterhours interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coffee Talks• Community Dinners• Church outreach
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Collecting and Organizing Listening Data:

To achieve a goal of engaging a disaggregated supermajority of interest holders, NAA engagement teams need to design a mechanism to track who exactly has been engaged. The approach to tracking engagement varies widely by school, but many use spreadsheets that include rosters of students and their families, staff, and community members. Analyzing engagement data can help teams to understand whose voices have not yet been heard and to tailor listening methods to reach those interest holders.

In addition to tracking engagement, NAA engagement teams need to create a system for collecting and organizing listening data. Like tracking engagement, this can vary by school but often uses electronic tools such as Google forms to collect data in one central place. This benefits teams where multiple people are responsible for entering listening data and allows for easy exporting for coding and analysis activities.

Care should be given to maintain confidentiality of interest holders participating in the NAA. Public-facing information is typically limited to progress towards engagement goals as well as emerging trends in qualitative and quantitative data; in both instances, data has been aggregated and anonymized to protect individuals' privacy. However, it is important that this information be shared publicly - through visual displays, announcements, etc - at regular intervals to promote awareness of the community school strategy and encourage broad engagement in the NAA.

Progress Monitoring and Problem Solving During the NAA:

When a challenge in reaching 75-100% stakeholder engagement emerges, teams should consider addressing it using a proven approach to problem solving such as improvement science. This [guide](#) walks teams through the steps of an improvement project: 1) launching the project and team; 2) defining the problem; 3) focusing the project by setting specific and measurable goals and generating change ideas; 4) running Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles; and 5) consolidating learning and determining next steps. Teams may use this [Improvement Project Organizer template](#) to document their problem solving process and learning.

Producing a Findings Report

Making Sense of Data:

Coding and analyzing data. A robust NAA includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Most are familiar with quantitative data - information that can be measured and assigned a numerical value. Surveys, particularly those using closed-ended responses such as rating scales or multi-choice responses, are often quantitative data collection tools. Qualitative data, however, is non-numerical information such as words, descriptions, or ideas/concepts; the data collected from listening methods, such as transcripts from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, community meetings, or visioning exercises, are examples of qualitative data. Making sense of such data requires a step-by-step plan and, if working as a team, that everyone is trained to ensure systematic analysis.

At the core of this work is data coding, which is simply the process of creating and assigning labels to categorize qualitative data. Sometimes, it will be easy to assign labels based on a predetermined set of codes as these are typically derived from research or best practices in community schools. However, new codes will likely need to be created to fully capture the unique and rich responses of interest holders. Coding is done line-by-line through the entire data set, so creating and referencing a list of codes helps with consistency.

Coding is then used to derive themes or patterns of responses as the start of the analysis process. Through the data coding and categorization process, it is likely that some themes will already start to emerge. However, those themes should be identified and clearly articulated in order to draw meaning from the data.

Identifying and categorizing collective priorities. Schools and communities likely have many things to improve before they can realize their vision. Unfortunately, there often isn't the capacity to work on all of those things at once. The decision on where to focus first should be rooted in what matters most - collectively - to interest holders.

To be confident in these choices, NAA engagement teams should first reflect on and discuss the data. They should use themes to identify priorities for each interest holder group as well as consult with potential leaders within each group who are passionate about these priorities, and then look across groups to identify common or related themes.

Categorizing themes based on community school pillars and interrogating where input is most concentrated is also a powerful exercise. Ideally, priorities will be balanced across pillars. This will support long-term transformation rooted in the assets of the community rather than a deficit-based, reactive, and service-provision model of community schools.

From this list, teams then make informed decisions about their community school's collective priorities. The priority matrix (below) can help teams narrow and rank their collective priorities based on resources and potential impact.

Strategy Prioritization Criteria

		Potential for Impact	
		Low	High
Resource Intensiveness (Time, Effort, Money)	High	-4- Lowest Priority (Stay away, unless there's some compelling reason to do this!)	-2- High Priority (May only be able to do 1 or 2 per year)
	Low	-3- Medium Priority (Great for short-term wins – don't do too many of these because impact is low)	-1- Highest Priority (Do these first – unfortunately, they are rare)

Creating a Findings Report:

The NAA process, findings, and recommended next steps should be summarized and compiled into a findings report that can be tailored to various audiences. A findings report serves multiple purposes including, but not limited to providing direction to goal teams and the problem solving process; helping create shared understanding and commitment; and supporting reporting requirements.

While each findings report will be unique to each community school, they often contain topics such as:

- **Executive Summary**
- **Introduction** including the purpose, goals, and objectives of the NAA
- Co-constructed, aspirational **vision** of interest holders
- Summary of **needs** and **assets**, organized by listening method/interest group
- **Methodology** used including the “scope” or extent of those methods and “depth” of the analysis
- **Gap-analysis** to determine whether/where additional listening and listening might be warranted
- **Conclusion** including a list of **collective priorities** and **recommendations** for next steps
- **Appreciations** for the school community at large and for members of the NAA engagement team
- **Appendix** including supporting data, tools and instruments, etc.

Actionability is important; therefore, accessibility and ease-of understanding should be key considerations when drafting the findings report. NAA engagement teams should assess whether the report needs to be translated to accommodate interest holders' home languages. Additionally, they should use clear, succinct language - including bullet points, when appropriate - to make the report more readable. Visualizing data through well-designed charts and graphs that enhance understanding is another strategy to consider.

Sharing Results:

Given its utility to promote awareness and invite deeper engagement around collective priorities, NAA engagement teams should create a plan to disseminate customized findings reports to

interest holder groups as well as to the broader community. Communicating about the NAA can occur any number of ways including through presentations, on websites and via other communication channels. When reporting out, it should be clear how the information will guide decisions and actions moving forward and that, through listening, there is now a greater understanding about what interest holders care about most.

Treating the findings report as a simple communication tool, however, is a missed opportunity. The NAA is a process of interest holders developing knowledge together. It necessitates building trust and sharing power between students, staff, families, and community members. Ensuring that everyone sees themselves as integral to the shared story being created helps build the momentum necessary to create transformational change.

Telling community schools stories in a compelling way takes practice. Remember:

- **It is a shared story.** Students, staff, families, and community members should be engaged in both creating and sharing reports/presentations with the public.
- **Customize stories to each audience.** Consider who needs to hear/see this story and why, as well as what format is most suitable for them.
- **Don't bury the lead.** Start with the headline - an accomplishment or great thing that has happened. Follow this by what was done and why, what was learned, and what comes next. Uplift the collective effort it took to make this happen.
- **Design for impact.** Include photos, visuals, quotes, and/or anecdotes to enrich the story. Refine verbal stories to highlight key messages within a few minutes.

Examples From the Field:

- Hoover Elementary (San Diego Unified) disseminates all of NAA-related information - from goals, process, and findings from each interest-holder group - on their detailed Listening Project [webpage](#).
- These field-generated artifacts demonstrate what compiling and sharing NAA data can look like in real life.
 - [Lakewood Elementary's Listening Project Data](#)
 - [Lakewood Elementary's Action Planning from Identified Priorities](#)

Additional Reading, Tools, Protocols, and Guides for Producing a Findings Report:

- This [slide deck](#) and [video recording](#) from community schools in Las Cruces, New Mexico explain how to code and analyze NAA data in more detail.
- This [essay](#) explores the intersection between the priorities that are most popular with interest holders, the issues that are most impactful, and the concerns that drive the school and community towards educational and social justice.
- This [blog post](#) as well as [this one](#) offer simple tips and recommendations for displaying data to increase emphasis and impact.
- This NEA [Storytelling Workshop](#) uplifts the importance of storytelling, offers examples from the field, and explains how to tell your community school story using this [template](#).

Continued Listening and Learning

Aligning NAA Findings with the Community School Plan/SPSA:

This guidance is forthcoming.

Building Power and Momentum Around the Vision and Collective Priorities:

People act on the things that they care about most. By deeply engaging a supermajority of students, staff, families, and community members in the NAA, community schools build collective knowledge of hopes, dreams, and needs. They also harness the energy and passion of interest holders in the process of making positive change aligned with their vision and in support of student success and wellbeing.

The mindsets and overall approach seeded during the NAA - centering the voices of interest holders, building relational trust, collaboration and sharing power, and continuous learning and reflection - are maintained throughout a community school's transformation process. Listening to learn becomes a "way of work" in community schools; ongoing one-on-one interviews and meetings are used to inform direct action and the work of newly-formed goal teams who use improvement science methods to address priority areas identified through the NAA.





The flowchart below illustrates how the NAA connects to and supports strong, systematic problem solving. Teams can use this planning guide (resource is forthcoming) to articulate collective priorities emerging from the NAA, begin to develop goals and action steps for impact, and as a framework to track progress. An additional deep dive resource to support community schools' understanding of improvement science is forthcoming.

Examples From the Field:

- This [Community School plan](#) from a community school in Durham, NC is an example of strategic planning based on identified priorities. Student success is centered in this plan that includes both process and outcome measures.

Additional NAA Resources and Readings

Tools, Protocols, and Guides	
	<p>With a focus on building racially-just, relationship-centered community schools, the California Partnership for the Future of Learning uplifts multiple perspectives for engaging in a thorough and inclusive needs and assets assessment. Their website offers a repository of resources including a Listening Campaign case study and tools as well as a panel discussion and slide deck that features the systems, structures, and practices that thriving community schools have used to launch an effective change process.</p>
	<p>This Needs Assessment Toolkit from The National Center for Community Schools, Children's Aid Society offers a brief, user-friendly list of some of the key tasks, tips, and tools for understanding a community school's needs.</p>
	<p>A robust needs and assets assessment designed to deeply engage and learn from students, families, school staff, and community members is key to transformational change. To support school teams in engaging 75-100 percent of all interest holders, NEA compiled this comprehensive resource that includes detailed guidance on how to collaboratively develop a plan for and successfully execute a needs and assets assessment, tools and templates, and questions to support reflection and learning.</p>
	<p>Parent Teacher Home Visits is an evidence-based practice for building authentic home-school partnerships centered on shared hopes and dreams. The bank of trust and mutual understanding created through these relational home visits can be drawn upon as school communities engage in transformative change.</p>
	<p>The Community Tool Box is a service of the Center for Community Health and Development at The University of Kansas. It provides comprehensive toolkits to help people work together to build stronger and healthier communities including Assessing Community Needs and Resources.</p>

Policy and Research	
 <p>LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE Research. Action. Impact.</p>	<p>Learning Policy Institute conducts and translates critical research on community schools to support strong implementation of the strategy including this seminal research report on the efficacy of the community school strategy for equitable school improvement and recent deep dive case study into Oakland's Districtwide Community School Initiative.</p>
 <p>UCLA Center for Community Schooling</p>	<p>A publication of the UCLA Center for Community Schooling, UCLA Community School Journal is a multi-media, open access journal to inform the collective struggle for democracy, justice and public education. It has four main features: school cases, teacher scholarship, youth research, and policy ABCs.</p>
 <p>RAND CORPORATION</p>	<p>This Rand Research Report outlines findings from an evaluation to assess impact from New York City's Community School Initiative and offers recommendations to others developing similar initiatives.</p>
 <p>StanfordSOCIAL INNOVATIONReview <i>Informing and inspiring leaders of social change</i></p>	<p>This article from Stanford Social Innovation Review explores the importance of systems leaders in bringing forth collective leadership. They have the ability to "see the system," foster deep reflection to build trust and nurture creative courage, and shift from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.</p>

Glossary

Needs and Assets Assessment: A systematic, inclusive process that informs, shapes, and gives life to the community school strategy by deeply engaging students, staff, families, and communities members in developing a shared vision, identifying collective priorities, and understanding needs and assets of the school and community.

Interest Holders: Those members of the school and community who are impacted by the actions and outcomes of the school including students, staff, families, and community members.

Engagement Teams: Diverse teams of interest-holders responsible for developing and executing engagement plans specific to student, staff, family, and community member groups. Members of engagement teams are often identified and recruited through the team mapping and leadership identification processes.

Disaggregated Supermajority: In the context of the NAA, 75 to 100% engagement from student, staff, family, and community member groups, then disaggregated to ensure that focal students and others who have often been left out of decision making or who are most affected contribute to the vision. Achieving a disaggregated supermajority helps better see the entire system as well as identifies pockets of interest and excitement that can be leveraged.

Goal Teams: Teams of interest holders working together on structured improvement projects. Goal Teams are deliberately composed to ensure diverse expertise and experiences within a system.

Avenues of Engagement: Anywhere you can engage interest-holders and listen. For example, student council meetings might be an avenue for engaging students while a community fair might be an avenue for families or community members. Mapping resources are often helpful in identifying potential avenues of engagement.

Improvement Science: A disciplined approach that guides practitioners to define problems, understand how the system produces the problems, identify changes to rectify the problems, test the efficacy of those changes, and spread the changes, if the change is in fact an improvement (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). One of the tools of improvement science is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycle which allows for rapid, small-scale testing that can be used to inform and accelerate system improvements.