

Selecting a Self-Study Protocol

One Size Does Not Fit All

What will you learn from this module?



- What a “self-study protocol” is.
- Why MSA has multiple protocols.
- What your options are.
- How to chose the best option for your school.
- How to obtain the self-study template and guide.

What is a self-study protocol?

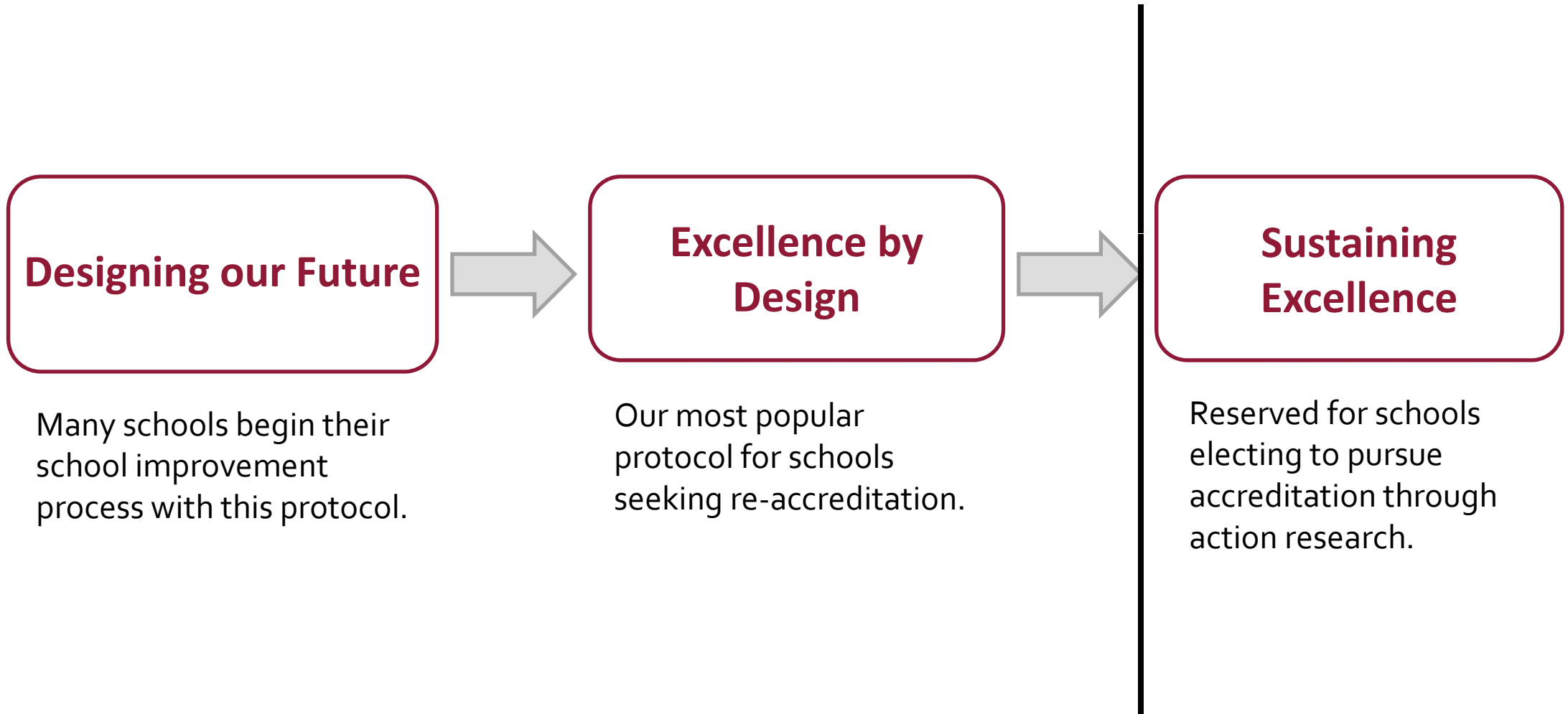
The purpose of the self-study protocol is to provide a framework and process to organize the school for continuous improvement and to achieve accreditation by the Middle States Association- Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. Each protocol includes:

- a detailed self-study guide to assist you in completing the accreditation process.
- a self-study template to be completed.

Why does MSA have multiple protocols?

- We recognize that one size does not fit all. Our diverse membership is comprised of schools of all sizes, types, locations, grade levels, and stages of development.
- Our protocols are designed to meet the needs of each school considering its unique qualities.
- MSA protocols reflect a developmental sequence to ensure that every school benefits from the accreditation process.

What are the Protocol Options for Schools?



What do the protocols have in common?

Each of the protocols:

- Begins with a review of the school's Foundation Documents [Mission, Beliefs, Profile of Graduates].
- Requires a self-assessment of the MSA Standards for Accreditation.
- Includes some level of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment review.
- Results in a Plan for Growth and Improvement [Objectives and Action Plans].

Designing Our Future (DOF)

- Recommended for schools seeking accreditation for the first time or schools that have recently gone through major changes such as a merger, addition of grades, or change in educational program.
- Primarily focused on growing and improving the school's overall capacity to produce the level of student performance desired and expected by its community of stakeholders.
- The self-study template is organized around descriptive summaries that address the work of the school in specific topic areas. Each descriptive summary includes the gathering of information and data relevant to the topic and the Standards for Accreditation that are relevant to the topic.
- The self-study includes a full review of all curricular areas, assessment strategies, and instructional models.

Excellence by Design (ExBD)

- Typically recommended for schools that have been previously accredited and are seeking re-accreditation, or schools with a documented history of continuous school improvement and prior experience with strategic planning.
- The protocol uses strategic planning as a vehicle for establishing objectives for growth and improvement in student performance and in the school's organizational capacity to affect that growth.
- The self-study template assumes familiarity with the MSA Standards and the school improvement process.
- The self-study includes a review of specific curricular areas, assessment strategies, and instructional models related to the school's selected improvement objectives.

Sustaining Excellence (SE)

- Reserved for schools with a culture of continuous improvement who are approved by MSA staff to pursue the maintenance of their accreditation through action research.
- The protocol uses action research as the vehicle for growth and improvement in a selected area, contributing knowledge on the topic to the broader educational community.
- The self-study includes an application process, confirmation of adherence to the MSA Standards, and a colloquium where the school presents publicly the results of its action research.

Accreditation for Systems of Schools

Did you know?

- Groups of schools can go through the accreditation process together as a system using the protocol *Achieving Excellence System-Wide*.
- This protocol places the focus of improvement at the central office level for quality control and system-wide improvement in student performance.
- The process requires one comprehensive system self-study that includes information about and input from each school in the system.

For more information about Systems Accreditation contact your MSA Accreditation Officer.

Selection of Protocol

- If your school is seeking re-accreditation you will receive a Protocol Options Form approximately 2 years before your next team visit which outlines all current options for self-study.
- If your school is seeking accreditation for the first time you will receive a Protocol Options Form with your formal offer of candidacy status.
- At this time you will review your options and consult with your MSA Accreditation Officer.

Factors to Consider

- History/maturity of your school
- Familiarity with school improvement planning
- History of accreditation
- Effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Level of student performance
- What your school is hoping to get out of the accreditation process

You don't need to answer these questions alone. Your protocol decision should be made in consultation with your MSA Accreditation Officer.

Ready to make a decision?

- Return your completed Protocol Options form to MSA.
- Download the self-study template and guide for the protocol you have selected from the MSA website in the Accreditation Resources section.

*Please note, protocols are updated periodically so it is important you do not download materials until it is time to begin self-study. This will ensure you have the most current materials. You should use the version dated for the year you begin self-study. Subsequent changes will not affect you.



- Use your Accreditation Officer as a resource. They will help you determine which approach is best for your school.
- More information about each protocol option can be found on the MSA website. A brief *Introduction* booklet is available for each protocol.
- Choosing the right protocol for your school ensures the best outcome.

Summary

The purpose of this module was to prepare you to select the best self-study protocol for your school.

At this point you should understand:

- Your self-study protocol options
- How to select the best option and register your protocol choice with MSA
- How to obtain the appropriate self-study guide and template

**The full sequence of training modules are available at
www.msa-cess.org**

Starting the Accreditation Process

Steps to Accreditation

Selection of Protocol

Getting Started

Foundation Documents

Self Assessment of Standards

Self Assessment of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments

Improvement Planning – Objectives

Improvement Planning – Action Plans

Preparing and Hosting a Visiting Team

After the Visit