



## Education Team Excellence Award Criteria Guide

This guide presents each of the criteria items along with a brief discussion of each item. It is not all-inclusive and teams should ask for clarification when necessary.

The team's presentation is evaluated by the judges based upon **how well** the team demonstrates that they have addressed the criteria. Judges will decide if the team "exceeded the criteria," "met the criteria," provided evidence that was "unclear", or if the criteria item was "not covered" at all. The table below provides additional information that further clarifies the four judging options for each criteria item:

Judging Option	Score
Not Covered	Team fails to address the criteria requirement
Unclear	While some information is present, the team fails to demonstrate that their approach adequately addressed the criteria requirement.
Meets Criteria Requirement	Adequate information is presented to determine the team's approach met the criteria requirement.
Exceeds Criteria Requirement	Team's approach enables additional clarity and accuracy in their analysis, actions, and/or conclusions. Integration with other criteria items is apparent and enhances the team's overall results. Potential "Best Practice" or "Role Model" approach.

Note: Criteria items ask teams to either to "Identify" or to "Explain" something in their criteria responses.

**Identify:** In Items where teams are asked to "Identify" appropriate responses may include: lists; diagrams; flowcharts; tables, etc

**Explain:** In Items where teams are asked to "Explain" a thorough description and/or explanation of the team's approach(es) associated with the given item is required. While responses to "Explain" requirements may include a list or diagram, they must also include a thorough explanation of the applicable team approach(es).

In this guide, the word "organization" is intended to encompass a wide variety of educational service units including, but not limited to: school district, university, trade school, day care centers, community colleges, individual buildings/schools, grade level teams, departments and individual classrooms. The Education Team Excellence Award criteria can be applied to any of these types of organizations and work units and can be used to make process improvements, enhance student achievement results and share team learning to leverage performance within other units of the organization.

## **1. Project Selection**

In the Project Selection Category, teams are asked to explain several key factors related to their project's selection. *Note: The project may have been selected by the team or assigned by management.* Regardless of who selected the project, teams should clearly describe how the project was selected (be responsive to each criteria item) including any data and information used in the selection.

### **a. Explain how the project was selected.**

Teams should provide a clear summary of how the project was selected including any data and information used in the selection process. This may be an explanation of the approach, process, method, tools, etc. used by the team or the by the organization whichever is applicable.

### **b. Explain how the project supports the organization's goals, performance measures and/or strategies**

Organizational goals can vary in type and style, from organization to organization; some organizations have vision/mission statements that guide the direction of the work unit. Some have goals that may be more specific than the vision/mission statements, and still others may have very specific objectives and/or performance measures/targets related to their goals and/or strategies. Regardless of how the organization presents its high-level strategy or direction, this item is looking for the link between the team's project and those goals and/or strategies. The question the team should answer here is: "Why is this project important to the organization?"

### **c. Explain how the team identified the key stakeholders for this project.**

"Stakeholders" defines anyone who may be affected by the project. Key stakeholders may include those individuals or groups most important to the success of the team's project or those most affected by its outcomes. Key stakeholders might include internal/external customers, employees, students, parents, key suppliers, etc.. "Key stakeholders" may refer to a unique group (e.g., parents) or one or more individuals (e.g. Superintendent, Teachers). Teams should describe how they identified the key stakeholders for their particular project. A brief explanation of why each was selected may be appropriate in the team's response for this item.

### **d. Identify the key stakeholders and explain how the project may impact them.**

Teams should provide the list of the key stakeholders they identified with the approach described in their response to Item 1c. They should also explain how their project may impact the key stakeholders they identify. Key stakeholders may be impacted in many different ways by the project. The project may impact processes, products, services, procedures, or key characteristics (timeliness, grade level expectations, quantity, etc..) associated with the processes, products, and/or services affecting or impacting their key stakeholders. The team's response should demonstrate an understanding of who its key stakeholders are and how their project may impact them. Keep in mind that a team's project may have a different impact on each of its various key stakeholders or key stakeholder groups.

## 2. Analysis

In the Analysis Category, teams are asked to explain how they determined the potential root cause(s) associated with their project. Their explanation should include how data and information were used in the determination, what key data and information were actually used, and how the team ensured it identified the actual root cause.

### **a. Explain how the team identified the potential root cause(s).**

Teams should clearly describe the approaches, processes, methods, and/or tools they used to identify potential root causes. *Note: Teams may use a variety of formal and/or informal approaches/processes to identify their potential root causes.* If the team's organization uses a specific methodology as part of its quality process, clearly state that methodology and how it was applied to this project in identifying the potential root causes.

### **b. Explain how the team used data and information in its analysis of the potential root cause(s).**

Teams should clearly explain how they used data and information in identifying their potential root causes. Their explanation should include specific examples of how they analyzed the various data and information used and what conclusions they drew as a result of their analysis. Teams should attempt to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their analyses as appropriate.

### **c. Identify the key data and information used in the team's analysis.**

Teams should identify the key data and information used in identifying their potential root causes. Teams should include the key data and information used in their response to Item 2b and provide specific examples of the actual data and information used.

### **d. Explain how the team ensured it identified the actual root cause(s).**

At this point in the Analysis Category, teams have used their analysis of key data and information (Items 1b & 1c) to sort through the potential root causes (Identified in 2a) associated with their project. In this Item, teams should identify their root cause and explain how they ensured that it was the actual root cause.

### **3. Solution Development**

In the Solution Development Category, teams are asked to explain the approach, process, method, tools, etc. they used to identify potential solutions as well as their final solution. Teams are also asked to identify their final solution(s) and the expected benefits of that solution(s) and to provide an explanation of how they determined the expected benefits. Teams' responses should include specific examples from their project and any applicable data and information they used in their solution development.

#### **a. Explain how the team identified potential solution(s).**

Teams should provide a clear explanation, including specific examples, of the approach, process, methods, tools, etc. it used to identify the potential solutions for the actual root cause identified in Item 2d. *Note: Teams may use a variety of formal and/or informal approaches/processes to identify their potential solutions.* If their organization uses a specific methodology as part of its quality process, clearly state that methodology and how it was applied to this project in identifying the potential solutions.

#### **b. Explain how the team selected its final solution(s).**

After the team identifies the potential solutions (Item 3a), this Item asks them to explain how they selected the final solution(s). The team should clearly explain the approach, process, methods, tools, etc. it used in selecting the final solution(s). Specific examples from the team's project should be included in the explanation.

#### **c. Identify the final solution(s) and the expected benefits of the solution(s).**

Teams should identify the final solution(s) that resulted from the approach described in Item 2b. It should also identify any expected or anticipated benefits associated with the successful implementation of that solution.

#### **d. Explain how the team determined the expected benefits.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how they determined the expected or anticipated benefits identified in Item 3c. An explanation of the approach, process, method, tools, etc. the team used to determine the expected benefits, including specific examples from their project, should be included in their response.

#### 4. Solution Implementation

In the Solution Implementation Category, teams are asked to explain how they planned for and implemented the final solution(s) they identified in 3c. The Solution Implementation Category also asks for an explanation of how the team achieved buy-in for implementing its solution(s), how the team measured the results associated with implementing its solution, and how the team ensured the results would be sustained.

**a. Explain how the team planned the solution’s implementation—include how the team identified potential challenges associated with implementing its solution.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation, including specific examples from their project, of how the team planned the implementation of their solution. Their response should also include an explanation of how they identified any potential challenges associated with implementing their solution in their implementation planning.

**b. Explain how the team implemented its solution(s) and describe the process, procedure, system, and/or other changes associated with the solution.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation, including specific examples from their project, of how they actually implemented their solution. The explanation should include the key steps and/or milestones associated with the solutions implementation and a concise description of the process, system, and/or other changes made as a result of implementing the solution.

**c. Explain how the team achieved support and buy-in for its solution’s implementation—include how the team addressed challenges associated with its solution’s implementation.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation, including specific examples from their project, of how they achieved buy-in for implementing its solution. Responses should include who the team worked with to achieve buy-in and a clear explanation of how the team addressed (include specific examples) any challenges associated with implementing their solution.

**d. Explain how the team measured the results of its project (include applicable measures, data, information, etc.) and how it ensured the results will be sustained.**

*Note: The project’s actual results are reported in Item 6a. This Item is asking the team to explain how they planned on measuring the effectiveness of their solution*

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how they measured the results of their project--including specific examples of the applicable measures, data, information, etc., from their project. The response should also include an explanation of how the team ensured (specific actions, plans, etc.) the results could and would be sustained.

## **5. Team Effectiveness**

In the Team Effectiveness Category, teams are asked to explain how their team members were selected and prepared to participate in the improvement project. The Team Effectiveness Category also asks teams to explain how they ensured all team members contributed throughout the project as well as how the team managed their performance to ensure they were an effective team.

### **a. Explain how team members were selected.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how the team's members were actually selected. The response should also include a brief explanation of why the various team members were selected--what skills, knowledge, qualifications, etc. led to their selection to the team.

### **b. Explain how the team members were prepared to participate in the project.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how the team's members were prepared to participate in the project. Their response may include any specific training (process improvement, tools, team dynamics, etc.), teambuilding, etc. the team received prior to or during the improvement project.

### **c. Explain how the team ensured all team members contributed throughout the project.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation (including specific examples from their project) of how the team ensured its members could and did contribute throughout the project. This response may include the use of team norms & management tools/techniques, ensuring availability for team meetings, special accommodations, etc.. Responses should also include examples of specific roles, tasks, and/or responsibilities of the various team members throughout the project.

### **d. Explain how the team managed its performance to ensure it was effective as a team.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation (including specific examples) of how the team managed its performance through the lifecycle of the project to ensure it was an effective team. The team's response should include an explanation of how the team capitalized on the skills and knowledge of its individual members as they carried out their roles and responsibilities in the project. Responses should also include, how team members shared data and information throughout the project, how they ensured effective communication within the team, and how the team managed its performance with respect to project deadlines/deliverables/milestones.

## **6. Results, Knowledge Sharing, & Application**

In the Results, Knowledge Sharing, and Application Category, teams are asked to describe the actual results of their project—tangible and less tangible—and how those results support their organization’s overarching strategy and direction. Teams are also asked to explain how, and with whom, they shared the results of their project to promote organizational knowledge sharing and learning.

### **a. Describe the results achieved—tangible and less-tangible.**

Identify the actual results attributable to the implementation of the team’s solution(s). Tangible results include those results represented by improvements in specific measures or metrics—% proficient, cycle time, attendance, cost, grades, participation, etc. Less tangible results may include those that may not easily be linked to a specific measure or measurement, but might be demonstrated through improvements in a variety of related indicators—morale, developing professional work environment, employee/student/parent satisfaction, etc. Teams should describe the indicators they used to identify their less tangible results and what led them to believe their project led to an improvement in any indicators they might present. Teams should present their results in order to clearly demonstrate the performance before and after their improvement project and attempt to demonstrate a causal relationship between their improvement project and the actual results.

### **b. Explain how the results achieved impacted the organization’s goals, performance measures and/or strategies.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how the results presented by the team in Item 6a impact the organizational-level goals, performance measures, and/or strategies the team identified in Item 1b. Teams should attempt to demonstrate how the results they achieved had a positive impact on the organization-level performance indicators (goals, objectives, strategies, etc.) that were used in the selection of their project (Category 1).

### **c. Explain how the results of the project were shared—Include who they were shared with.**

Teams should provide a clear explanation of how the team shared the results of their project and who they were shared with. Teams should provide specific examples in their responses. The results may have been shared inside and outside the organization through a variety of methods/approaches.

### **d. The team will also be judged on clarity of application and effective use of charts/graphs.**

The team will be scored on the organization, clarity, and overall effectiveness of its presentation. Effective use of any audio/visual aids, charts, graphs, and any other presentation aids and/or techniques will also be considered in this Item. It is important to note that the judges will assess how clearly and effectively the team communicated the story of its project with respect to the Education Team Excellence Criteria requirements.