NAF Quality Reviews 2026-2027

Quality Review Plan for 2026-2027

This year all NAF Quality Reviews will be conducted virtually. Virtual Quality Reviews will utilize protocols outlined in the official 2026-2027 Quality Review Guide.

Who Qualifies for a Virtual Quality Review?

Academies meeting both Academy Assessment (AA) score criteria and Distinguished thresholds may qualify to participate in a virtual Quality Review or may be vetted to move up a level without participating in a virtual Quality Review. The decision will be made based on the recency of the academy's last Quality Review, previous report findings, and other stakeholder input. Please reference the Quality Level Flowchart to determine which vetting process will be used for your academy for the 2026-2027 season.

Virtual Quality Review Visit Planning

An agenda for the review must be provided to NAF's review team at least two weeks prior to the review and should include the following components. Academies have the agency to adjust the order of focus groups to best fit their school's schedule.

10 min – **Introduction** (Academy Lead/Admin)
20 min – **Leader Focus Group** (Academy Lead/Admin, Principal and District representative)
20 min – **Teacher Focus Group** (3-5 academy teachers; may include guidance/WBL staff)
30 min – **Student Focus Group** (8-10 academy students; 4-5 seniors, 4-5 sophomore/juniors)
20 min – **Advisory Board Focus Group** (3-5 Advisory Board members)
10 min – **Debrief/Closing** (Academy Lead/Admin & other leaders selected by the academy; 4 max)

Sample Focus Group Questions

Below are sample questions that may be asked during the focus group sessions. Please see the official 2026-2027 Quality Review Guide to view the Quality Review Observation Checklist used by review teams during the visits and for additional information on what to expect after the visit has been completed.

Leaders

1. What is the value of the academy to the school?
2. What is your vision for the academy's future?
3. What are the academy's best practices?
4. What is the process students use to enroll in the academy?
5. Describe the academy's processes and activities that help students understand their postsecondary options.
6. What data points are important to you when monitoring student progress and academy growth?
7. Please provide a specific example of when you used data to help make a decision or adjust an academy practice.
8. What organizations do you participate in or interact with to represent the academy in the areas of business and workforce development?
9. What partnerships have been developed to support the academy?
10. Describe the activities or structures you use to increase academy awareness and build program support.
11. Describe the work-based learning continuum that occurs in each operating grade and how you track student participation in work-based learning.

Advisory Board

1. What is the advisory board's role within this academy?
2. Describe examples of how you help the academy accomplish its goals.
3. What are the advisory board's specific goals and objectives for this year?
4. Describe the process the advisory board uses to update its strategic plan including yearly goals.
5. How does the advisory board use data to inform its work?
6. Describe partnerships the advisory board helped to cultivate between the academy and the community that promote workforce development.
7. Describe how the advisory board is structured and how frequently it meets.
8. Do you provide supports for students and/or teachers? If yes – what are some examples?
9. How do you determine which supports to provide for students and/or teachers?
10. How is the board involved in planning and providing work-based learning activities, and what are some examples?
11. How does the board support the academy teachers' understanding of industry needs?
12. How has the board helped shape the curriculum or program of study for academy students?

Teachers

1. What are the academy's best practices?
2. Describe the academy's processes and activities that help students understand their postsecondary options.
3. Describe the process students use to choose and enroll in the academy's program of study courses.
4. How do you monitor student progress toward completing the academy's program of study?
5. Authentic project learning experiences provide innovative solutions to real-world challenges. Describe authentic project learning experiences available to academy students. How do industry professionals support these projects?
6. Describe how you use industry professionals in your classroom to enhance student learning outcomes.
7. Describe what work-based learning you've incorporated into your classroom and how that has impacted your students' career aspirations, skill development, and/or connections.

Students

1. Why did you choose to enroll in this academy?
2. What does it mean to you to be a member of this academy?
3. Do you feel a sense of belonging to this academy? If so, what does that mean to you?
4. Describe any personal connections you've made with other students or adults through your academy membership.
5. What is the process students use to enroll in the academy?
6. What has the academy done to help you understand the options you have for after high school?
7. When you graduate, what are your plans and what steps are you taking to achieve your goals?
8. Describe lessons, activities, or projects you have participated in that are related to your academy's career pathway.
9. Have you participated in any project that provided a solution to a real-world problem or challenge? If yes, can you describe the project and how long it took to complete it?
10. Were there opportunities to interact with industry professionals in your academy classes? If yes, please describe the opportunities.
11. Share any advanced courses like dual enrollment, AP, IB and/or AICE courses you have taken.
12. Have any of you earned industry certifications? If so, which certifications?
13. Describe the work-based learning activities, such as job shadows, guest speakers, or internships, you've been involved with since you entered the academy.
14. What career options have you explored through your academy?
15. Have you ever used information or skills you learned from academy experiences in other areas of your life? If yes, please give an example.