School Quality Review Protocol
2018

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Part I: Introduction

What is the SchoolWorks Quality Review?

The SchoolWorks School Quality Review (SQR) is a process that educators can use to understand and explain how well schools are working to educate students. The SQR places a team of experienced educators in a school to collect and analyze data about school performance. The length of the SQR with the Missouri Charter Public School Commission (MCPSC) will be two days. The SQR is based on a transparent, research-based set of standards – the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria (SQC) – that serve as the framework to understand the effectiveness of school practices. The SQC are used to promote understanding and dialogue between the school and the site visit team through both verbal and written feedback.

The Missouri Charter Public School Commission was established in 2012 ([RSMo 160.425](#)). Lawmakers, charter school advocates, and education reformers wanted an independent sponsoring entity with the authority to sponsor high-quality charter schools throughout Missouri. Sponsors enter into a contract with a Missouri nonprofit organization that demonstrates the ability and capacity to operate a quality independent public school. Sponsors hold these schools accountable for the performance of the school and to the conditions of the contract. Performing schools can have their contract renewed. Poor quality charter schools can be closed.

MCPSC has partnered with SchoolWorks to develop a protocol for a school quality review process aligned to MCPSC initiatives and school performance framework, as well as a reporting template that will be used to document and communicate findings of the school quality review.

What are the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria (SQC)?

The SQC consists of a set of standards used to assess critical aspects of a school's culture, organization, and academic program. SchoolWorks Quality Criteria and indicators are based on research of best educational practices, as well as on the expertise that SchoolWorks brings to the process after assessing more than 1,000 school programs since 1998. The SQC are organized into six domains: *Instruction, Students' Opportunities to Learn, Educators' Opportunities to Learn, Leadership and Governance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance*. Each domain is further defined by a set of key questions and corresponding criteria and indicators that are used to provide more specific information on variables central to each domain. See Part IV for complete a list of the SQC.

What is the purpose of an SQR?

MCPSC's SQRs serve a variety of purposes. The SQR may serve as a summative review, providing specific findings in relation to the SQC about a school at the current time, most often for accountability purposes. As such, the SQR responds to specific criteria and does not typically include recommendations for improvement. The outcome of an SQR is a comprehensive report detailing the team's findings in relation to the protocol criteria.

In addition, the SQR may serve as a formative review, assessing conditions at a school prior to improvement planning. Statements of findings are used to identify school strengths and areas for growth. Recommendations are provided to celebrate success and to be used as an initial step in identifying areas for improvement. This type of review also uses an action-planning process in which the site visit team and

the school work together to identify prioritized areas for improvement. The outcome is a prioritized action plan of next steps, including strategies, resources, and timelines to accomplish goals. The comprehensive assessment will be an evidence-based process that includes data and information gathered on academic programs and performance, school climate, finance, operations and governance, and stakeholder satisfaction, among other sources.

The SQRs may also be used to provide formative feedback to schools. Reviews may include an optional action-planning process in which the site visit team and the school work together to identify prioritized areas for improvement. The outcome is a prioritized action plan of next steps, including success measures, timelines, and champions to accomplish goals.

How does the SQR process work?

The SQR process places a team of reviewers in a school to collect and analyze data about school programs and practices. The SQR utilizes multiple sources of evidence to understand how well a school is working. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. Evidence collection begins with the review of the key documents that describe the school and its students and may include collection of data via online surveys administered to various stakeholder groups. Key documents reviewed by the site visit team prior to arrival on site include curricula and related teaching documents, professional development records, and student assessment results. This provides the team with initial information about the school's programs and the students it serves. While on site, evidence collection continues through additional document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews with key school stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the team meets daily to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance, and then communicates its progress to the school's leadership. The team listens to the school's responses and makes every effort to follow up on evidence that the school indicates the team should collect.

The site visit team uses evidence collected through these events to develop findings in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. In some reviews, these findings identify strengths and areas for growth and may also include recommendations. At the end of the visit, the team provides a brief oral report to school leadership about its findings. This verbal feedback is followed by a written report, detailing the evidence that led the team to reach its findings. The length and depth of both verbal feedback and written report depend on the type of review being conducted.

The SQR places a high value on engaging the school in understanding its own performance. The process may be described as an open, frank, professional dialog between the school and the site visit team. The professionalism of the school and team is essential in the process. Both the school and the team have clear roles and responsibilities that are designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. All team members are governed by a code of conduct. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the site visit process.

What are the general steps in the SQR process?

Pre-visit Planning and Analysis
The school prepares necessary documents. The project manager and team leader work with the school to organize the schedule for the site visit. Site visit team members review documents and record their initial questions about the school's performance according to protocol standards.

Evidence Gathering On Site
On site, the site visit team continues document reviews and conducts classroom visits and interviews with key school stakeholders.

Development of Findings
The site visit team's primary objective is to develop findings in relation to the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria. To come to consensus on a set of findings, the team works together to collate and discuss available evidence collected throughout the SQR process. In some cases, findings are organized as strengths and areas for growth, and may include recommendations.

Feedback to the School
While on site, the site visit team leader communicates with school leadership to keep the school informed of the team's progress and to seek the school's input on that progress. At the end of the SQR, the team provides an oral report of findings to the school.

Prioritization Session (see Appendix D)
As an option selected by the school leaders (at a time determined by the school and site visit team), the site visit team and school leaders engage in an action- planning process, examining the school's strengths and areas for growth. The outcome is a prioritized action plan of next steps, including strategies, success measures, and timelines to accomplish goals.

Written Report
After the site visit, the school will receive a written report that formalizes the findings discussed on site.

NOTES

Part II: Process and Results

How does the site visit team go about its work?

The site visit team is guided in its work by a code of conduct. Adherence to the code of conduct improves the quality of the site visit; schools do not provide reliable evidence under unnecessary stress. Adherence to the code of conduct also creates a frank, professional tone in which the site visit team and the school may discuss key strengths and areas for improvement.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REVIEWERS*

1. **Carry out work with integrity**.
   a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
   b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
   c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
   d. Assure confidentiality.

2. **Act in the best interests of students and staff.**
   a. Do not put students or staff in a position where they may have conflicting loyalties.
   b. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
   c. Wherever possible, work to others' convenience.
   d. Be supportive and enabling. Evidence given under undue stress is unreliable.
   e. Under no circumstances, criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
   f. Classroom visits are confidential. Classroom visits are not evaluations. Individual teachers will not be provided feedback and information will not be shared with any school personnel.
   g. Teacher interviews and focus groups are confidential. Any information reported to the site visit team will remain anonymous in both oral and written reports.
   h. Try to understand what teachers are doing and why. Be supportive.

3. **Be objective; base findings on evidence, not opinion.**
   a. An individual's perception can be evidence, especially if supported by others' observations.
   b. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, defensible, and must inform the key questions.
   c. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
   d. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on opinion or evidence. This applies, as well, to site visit team members' findings.
   e. Discussion with staff and site visit team members is part of the process to create a fair and secure evidence base from which corporate findings are made.
   f. If a given piece of evidence is not affecting students' learning or experience, it is then irrelevant.

***Acknowledgement of Massachusetts Charter School Office Site Visit Protocol and the OFSTED code of conduct.**

How does the site visit team come to consensus findings based on a collection of documents, interviews, and classroom visits?

The SQR process is built on four core components that drive the work of the site visit team throughout the site visit.

- **The process is criterion-driven.** The SQR process is built on a set of research-based criterion and indicators. Throughout the site visit, the site visit team collects evidence through document reviews, interviews, and classroom visits in relation to each of the criterion and indicators to come to findings on how well school programs and practices are serving students. The team uses the criterion and indicators during team meetings to identify trends that emerge from the evidence and to come to findings, including identification of strengths and areas for growth, if appropriate. A criterion-driven process ensures that the work of the team is grounded in research-based standards for effective practice. The protocol's criteria also serve as a basis for professional dialogue and reporting.

Figure 1: Criterion-driven

Evidence Collection
Criteria provide a lens for document review, interviews, and classroom visits.

Ratings
Criteria provide a focus for the team in discussion of evidence and development of ratings.

Reporting
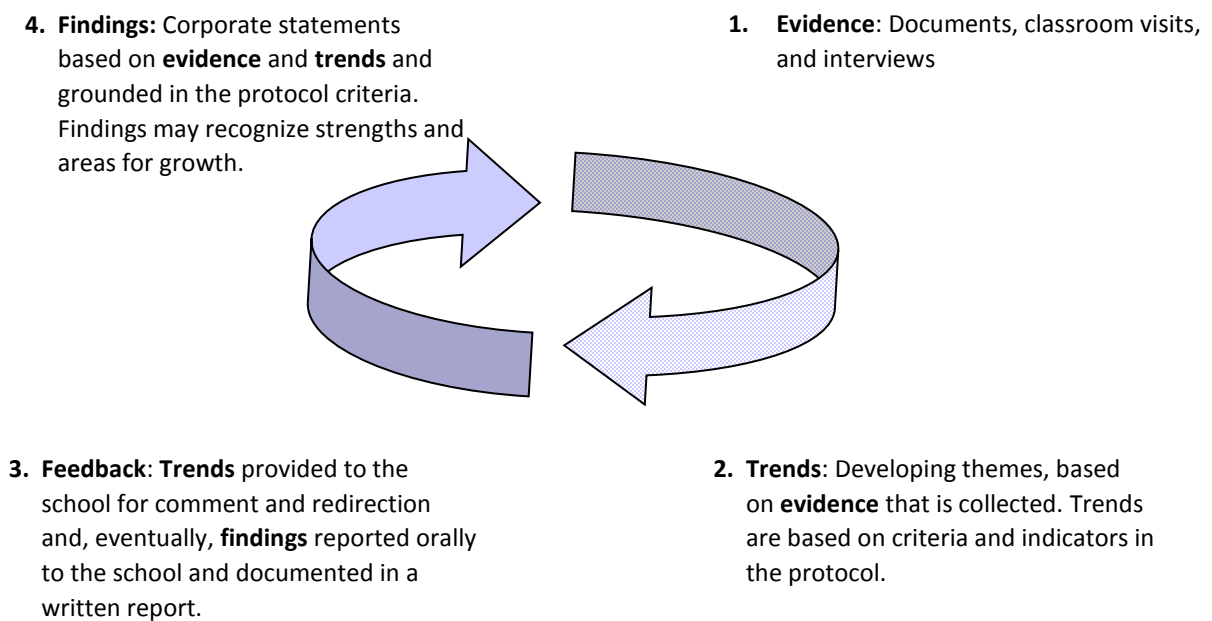Criteria provide an organizing structure for providing feedback and report writing.

- **The process is an evidence-based system.** The findings of the site visit team – which come from document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews – are based on evidence collected during the process. The team builds a base of evidence for each of its findings that would reasonably lead any set of individuals to come to similar conclusions about the school's programs and practices. Moving from evidence to findings is a cyclical process that depends on an open exchange of information between the team and the school. While the team is required to address the protocol standards and base all findings on evidence, the process is not mechanical and requires some professional judgment by the site visit team.

- *The process is iterative, repeatedly checking on and testing the quality of the findings and the evidence that supports them.* Site visit team members use a four-step process to move from pieces of evidence to findings about the school. First, the team records *evidence* by reviewing documents, conducting interviews, and visiting classrooms. The team reviews evidence to identify initial *trends* in the evidence. For example, the team would note a trend if teachers all describe the curriculum in similar ways and if this description matched the documents reviewed by the site visit team. Continuing from the example, if the team continues to collect *evidence* that supports the *trend,* a *finding* might be that teachers have a clear understanding of the school's curriculum. When possible, the team presents preliminary trends and findings to school leadership during the visit so that the school can support and/or challenge the team's analysis by presenting additional evidence. This ensures that the school has an opportunity to present additional evidence before findings are finalized. This iterative process is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: An iterative process

4. Findings: Corporate statements based on **evidence** and **trends** and grounded in the protocol criteria. Findings may recognize strengths and areas for growth.

1. Evidence: Documents, classroom visits, and interviews

3. Feedback: **Trends** provided to the school for comment and redirection and, eventually, **findings** reported orally to the school and documented in a written report.

2. Trends: Developing themes, based on **evidence** that is collected. Trends are based on criteria and indicators in the protocol.

- ***The site visit team uses its professional judgment to come to consensus on key findings.*** To be useful, the team must produce a focused report. Focusing on key strengths and areas for improvement requires discerning only what is important and merits comment. This process is called "data reduction." Within the protocol, team members use their professional judgment in a process called moderation to distill the key factors that deserve comment from the wealth of evidence available to them. This use of professional judgment is represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Moving from evidence to findings
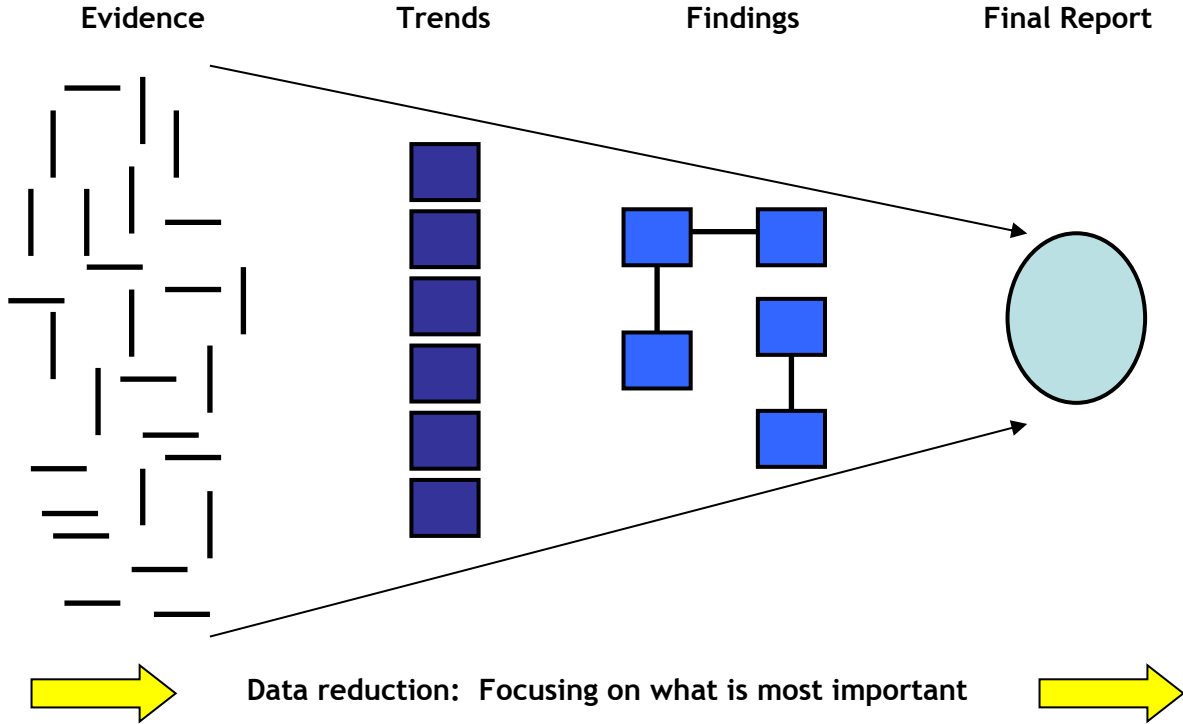
DETAILED STEPS IN THE PROCESS

How does the site visit team and the school prepare for the site visit?

Below is an overview of the responsibilities of each party. A detailed explanation is available in the following section, Roles and Responsibilities.

1. The site visit team leader (as determined by MCPSC) communicates with the school to determine site visit dates and introduces school leadership to the SQR protocol.

2. The site visit team leader works with the school to begin establishing a specific schedule for the site visit. The team leader remains available to answer any questions and to work with the school to ensure that documents needed for the SQR are available in a timely manner and that, if applicable, surveys are administered to stakeholders.

3. The site visit team leader creates a draft schedule of interviews and classroom visits, finalizes the schedule with the school's input and sends a copy of the schedule to the school and members of the team.

4. The school uses the School Task Checklist (see Appendix A) to ensure that all preparation has been completed prior to the site visit.

5. The site visit team leader sends a copy of the protocol, the schedule, classroom visit tool, interview questions, and documents for pre-visit analysis to the other team members.

What does the process look like when the site visit team is on site?

Time on site moves from a fixed structure designed to ensure good coverage of the school to a more flexible schedule that allows the team to follow up on emerging trends and findings. Since it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the evidence collected, the team requires flexibility to move about the school and observe any aspect of the school without notice. However, as a matter of courtesy and in the spirit of developing and maintaining a good working relationship, the team leader works with the school to define as much of the schedule as possible without restricting the team's ability to pursue important evidence.

On-site review and feedback

1. The site visit team reviews documents and conducts interviews and classroom visits in accordance with the visit schedule. The team meets regularly during the visit to share evidence.

2. The site visit team leader keeps the school's leadership informed of the team's progress throughout the visit, providing updates on the team's findings as they develop. This ensures that the school has every opportunity to present evidence to address the team's questions.

3. The site visit team will formulate consensus findings that respond to the key questions, criteria, and indicators in the SQR protocol. This is based on evidence provided to the team during interviews, classroom visits, and document reviews while on site.

4. At the end of the visit, a brief report of the site visit team's findings is presented verbally to school leadership. This report may be organized into strengths and areas of growth and may include recommendations or ratings, depending on the nature of the SQR.

5. On a date to be selected by the school leaders and the site visit team, the team may choose to meet with school leadership to engage in an action planning process, examining the school's strengths and areas for growth. The outcome is a prioritized action plan of next steps, including strategies, success measures, and timelines to accomplish goals.

Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule

Below is a sample visit schedule for the full visit, as well as a detail of a single day. Schedules will vary from school to school, depending on the size of the school and the number of site visit team members. The team leader will work to construct a daily schedule for the site visit, based on schedule documents and guidance provided by school leadership.

For multi-day site visits, feedback sessions with school leadership will be scheduled each morning to provide opportunity for discussion and redirection. SQRs for the MCPSC will be two days, with evidence collection scheduled throughout the day and feedback sessions with school leadership scheduled each morning to provide opportunity for discussion and redirection. There will be a verbal report out to school leadership at the end of the second day.

Sample 2 Day Site Visit Schedule		
Time	**Day 1**	**Day 2**
7:00–8:00 AM	Team arrives at school and morning meeting	
8:00–9:00 AM	Interview with School Leadership	Interview with School Leadership
9:00–11:30 AM	Classroom visits & teacher focus groups	Classroom visits &teacher focus groups
11:30–12:00 PM	Document review	Focus group with students
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; Mid-day meeting and site visit team debrief	
1:00–2:30 PM	Teacher focus group	Interview school administrators
2:30–3:00 PM	Focus group with parents	Teacher focus group
3:00– 5:00 PM	Evidence sorting and team discussion	Team deliberations
5:30-6:00	Check-in with School Leadership	Report out to School Leadership
6:00 PM	Team departs	Team departs

Sample Daily Site Visit Schedule				
Time	**Team Leader**	**Team Member #1**	**Team Member #2**	**Team Member #3**
7:00–8:00 AM	Team arrives at school and morning meeting			
8:00–9:00 AM	Interview with school leadership		Classroom visits & teacher focus groups	
9:00–11:30 AM	Classroom visits			
11:30–12:00 PM	Document review	Teacher focus group	Focus group with students	
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; Mid-day meeting and site visit team debrief			
1:00–2:30 PM	Classroom visits and teacher focus groups			
2:30–3:00 PM	Interview with school administrators	Focus group with parents		Interview with school administrators

3:00– 5:00 PM	Team debrief and moderation; evidence sorting
5:30-6:00	Report of consensus findings (and recommendations) to school leadership
6:00 PM	Site visit team departs

Prioritization Process (Optional)

At a later date (as determined by the school leaders and site visit team), the site visit team and school may work together to review the findings, explore the root causes, and prioritize the school's next steps. The purpose of the prioritization process is to assist school leaders in thinking through areas for improvement that are most important/most likely to impact student achievement and outcomes. There are several steps that are addressed during prioritization. These steps are described in further detail in Appendix D.

Sample Prioritization Day Schedule	
Time	**Site Visit Team Members**
7:00–8:30 AM	Site visit team meeting
8:30 AM-11:30 AM	Prioritization session with site visit team and school leadership
12:00 p.m.	Site visit team departs

Written Report

1. The site visit team leader or team member responsible for completing the written report gathers all notes and other key evidence that have been collected by the team during the SQR to use in drafting the report.
2. The writer develops a draft report that documents the evidence for the findings. This report provides a written record of the findings reported to school leadership orally at the end of the site visit.
3. Before it is sent to the school, all team members provide comments on the draft written report according to pre-established timelines.
4. The school reviews the draft for factual errors.
5. The report is finalized and submitted to the school.

NOTES

Part III: Roles and Responsibilities

In order to develop an accurate portrait of a school, all participants have key roles in preparing for, and conducting, the SQR. This section explains the roles and responsibilities of the project manager and/or site visit team leader, team members and the school. Participants should read this section carefully to learn how to prepare for the site visit.

Project Manager and/or Site Visit Team Leader

Roles and responsibilities for the project manager and/or team leader include:

1. *Modeling and enforcing the code of conduct*

   - Site visit team leaders should exhibit the highest professional standards and are responsible for ensuring that their team does so, as well.

2. *Coordination with the school*

   - Before the visit, the site visit team leader contacts the school to ensure that documents are made available in a timely manner.

   - The school is likely to have questions about the process. The team leader should serve as the school's contact person to address these questions.

   - The team leader ensures that the school has secured adequate meeting space for the team.

   - The team leader ensures that lunch will be provided (at the team's expense) each day.

3. *Coordination of materials and assignment of site visit team members*

   - Before the site visit, site visit team members are selected and provided with materials (e.g., SQR protocol, school documents) to review.

   - Once the site visit schedule has been established, the team leader assigns team members to conduct interviews and classroom visits.

4. *Facilitation and management of logistics for the site visit days*

   - Once on site, the site visit team leader is responsible for facilitating all team meetings.

   - The team leader ensures that all interviews and focus groups are attended and go smoothly and conducts a daily review of the interview schedule with school leadership and the team.

5. *Communication with the school while on site*

   - The site visit team leader is responsible for maintaining good channels of communication with the school at all times.

   - The team leader provides verbal reports to the school leadership about the team's developing findings throughout the visit.

   - The team leader takes appropriate actions to follow up on any responses to the team's findings.

   - At the end of the visit, the team leader will verbally present the team's findings to school leadership.

6. *Reporting*

   - The site visit team leader writes and/or oversees the writing of the site visit report, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence and reflects the consensus of the team.

Site Visit Team Members

Success of the visit relies heavily on site visit team members':

1. *Adherence to the code of conduct*
   - Classroom observations are not evaluations. Individual teachers will not be provided feedback and information will not be shared with any school personnel.
   - Teacher interviews and focus groups are confidential. Any information reported to the team will remain anonymous.

2. *Preparation for the site visit*
   - Site visit team members review the SQR protocol in its entirety. This is critical because the protocol guides all activities while on site.
   - Team members review documents and formulate questions for the initial team meeting prior to arriving on site.

3. *Collection of evidence*
   - Site visit team members complete the site visit schedule according to the SQR protocol and under the direction of the team leader.
   - Team members secure their evidence in notes and provide all necessary data to the team leader at each team meeting:
     - Notes and classroom visit forms are completed and organized for end-of-day meetings.
     - All notes are in order and completed in a timely manner for all meetings.

4. *Collaborating with others under the site visit team leader's direction*
   - Team members support and take direction from their team leader. They recognize that the team leader has to make executive decisions and trusts in his/her judgment.
   - Team members actively participate in team meetings and support others' efforts to reach unified findings based on evidence.

5. *Reporting*
   - Site visit team members provide feedback on the draft of the site visit report in accordance with pre-established timelines, ensuring that the report contains sufficient evidence and reflects the consensus of the team.

School and Other Supporting Organizations

To be an effective partner in the process, the school:

1. *Acts as an essential partner in the site visit process*

    - The school makes the purpose and process of the site visit team's visit clear to all faculty and staff.

    - The school welcomes the site visit team and recognizes its efforts on behalf of the school and its students.

    - The school works with the team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.

    - The school engages faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on the school's performance.

2. *Designates a meeting room*

    - The site visit team will need a meeting space during the day. The space should allow for confidential meetings and should be available to team members for the full visit.

    - To the extent possible, interviews should not be scheduled in this space but planned for elsewhere in the building.

3. *Communicates with the site visit team*

    - School leadership works collaboratively with the team leader prior to the site visit to ensure that documents are provided in a timely manner and that school staff are aware of the visit and its purposes (See Appendix A).

    - School leadership works collaboratively with the team leader during the site visit to provide any additional documents requested and to ensure the completion of surveys, if applicable.

    - School leadership maintains good communication with the team leader throughout the process, honestly expressing concerns and feedback from staff.

4. *Report feedback and review*

    - School leadership responds honestly and frankly to the site visit team's developing findings by stating the school's position and making available additional evidence to support its position, should it differ from other members of the team.

    - School leadership completes a factual review of the draft site visit report and, in accordance with pre-established timelines, provides factual feedback to the team leader.

NOTES

Part IV: Domains and Key Questions

The following key questions guide the site visit team's work in the school. All evidence is collected in response to these key questions and their respective standards. The complete list of corresponding criteria and indicators for each key question can be found in the next section, Part V.

Domain 1: Instruction

1. *Do classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning?*

2. *Is classroom instruction intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students?*

3. *Do teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts, and utilize assessment data to provide feedback to students during the lesson?*

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn

4. *Does the school identify and support students with a full range of needs?*

5. *Does the school have a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations for all students?*

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

6. *Does the school design professional development and collaborative systems to sustain a focus on instructional improvement?*

7. *Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?*

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

8. *Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning?*

9. *Do school leaders executive effectively orchestrate the school's operations?*

10. *Does the Board provide competent stewardship and oversight of the school?*

Domain 5: Financial Performance

11. *Does the school maintain a sound and sustainable financial condition?*

Domain 6: Organizational Performance

12. *Does the school have effective operational systems and structures in place?*

NOTES

Part V: SQR Criteria and Indicators

This section contains the complete list of the SchoolWorks Criteria and Indicators (SQC), 4th Edition. These criteria and indicators are used to guide evidence collection, team deliberation, and development of findings during the site visit.

Domain 1: Instruction

Dimension 1.1: Classroom Climate

Note: All indicators marked by an asterisk (*) are also supported by special education research.

Do classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning?

Criterion 1.1.1: Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students.
- Behavioral expectations, class rules, and procedures are clearly communicated to students (e.g., visuals, verbal/physical cues, written).
- Teachers provide consistent rewards for positive behavior and direct, concrete consequences for misbehavior.*
- Teachers anticipate and redirect misbehavior.*
- Students behave according to rules and expectations; disruptive behavior is minimal and does not interfere with other students' learning.*
- Classroom norms and routines support students sharing their learning and understandings, as well as making, then building from, mistakes in front of their peers.*
- The school's approach to discipline is consistent with its charter and mission.

Criterion 1.1.2: The learning environment is highly structured, and learning time is maximized through effective planning and guidance.
- Teachers are prepared for their lessons and materials are readily available.
- Teachers maximize learning time and minimize transition time.
- Teachers share an agenda of the day's class activities and/or lesson with students.
- Teachers explain task and behavioral instructions clearly and provide choices for when tasks are complete.

Criterion 1.1.3: Classroom interactions are cooperative and conducive to learning.
- Teachers are aware of, and responsive to, students' learning and emotional needs.
- Interactions between teachers and students, as well as among students, are respectful, caring, and supportive.
- Students engaged in partner or group work are collaborative and focused on learning.
- Students are held accountable for contributions to partner or group work

Dimension 1.2: Purposeful Teaching

Note: All indicators marked by an asterisk (*) are also supported by special education research.

Is classroom instruction intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students?

Criterion 1.2.1: Teachers provide students with clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction.*
- Teachers clearly communicate learning objectives aligned with the Missouri Leaning Standards.
- Teachers tie learning objectives to real-life application, larger concepts, and/or key questions.
- Learning objectives drive lesson activities.
- All students know the purpose of, and expectations for, the lesson.
- Teachers demonstrate high expectations and hold students accountable for achieving learning goals.
- Teachers communicate academic content, concepts, and procedures with depth, clarity, and accuracy.*
- Teachers make explicit how and when to use given content or procedures.*

Criterion 1.2.2: A variety of instructional strategies and materials support students' diverse needs.*
- Teachers utilize instructional methodologies that align with the educational model described in the charter.
- All students can access grade level content through multi-sensory materials and modalities (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic).*
- Students develop graphic organizers and other non-linguistic representation of academic content* (e.g., mental images, physical models, role plays, concept maps, pictographs, charts).
- Learning tasks provide students with choices and opportunities for self-directed learning.*
- Teachers utilize varied groupings (whole-class, groups, partners, 1:1) to address students' learning needs.

Criterion 1.2.3: All students are cognitively engaged in learning.*
- Students engage with teachers and peers in extended, content-focused discussions.
- Students engage with teachers and peers, or work independently, to complete the lesson activity.
- Students persevere and demonstrate stamina while engaged in the work of the lesson.
- The majority of students - rather than just the teacher and/or a few students - are engaged in the work of the lesson.

Criterion 1.2.4: Instruction requires all students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills, including problem solving and critical thinking.*
- Students are engaged in rigorous, challenging tasks that require skills such as analysis, interpretation, application, and synthesis – not just summary or recall.
- Students apply new knowledge and skills to investigate open-ended problems and situations.
- Students identify essential information from a larger body and share that information verbally or in writing.
- Teacher questions require students to look beyond what is explicitly stated in source material for answers.
- Students ask meaningful questions related to the lesson's objective and/or content.
- The majority of students - rather than just the teacher and/or a few students - are engaged in higher-order thinking.
- Students explain their thinking and build on their own and others' thoughts.
- Students evaluate and reflect on their own thinking, progress, performance, and learning approach.*

Dimension 1.3: In-class Assessment & Feedback

Note: All indicators marked by an asterisk (*) are also supported by special education research.

Do teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts, and utilize assessment data to provide feedback to students during the lesson?

Criterion 1.3.1: In-class assessment strategies reveal students' thinking about learning goals.
○ Teachers use informal assessment to gauge the majority of students' prior knowledge and understandings.
○ Teachers use formative assessments to gauge the majority of students' progress toward clear lesson, unit, and standards-based learning goals, not directions or procedures.
○ Students explain, write, or illustrate their thinking and understandings using evidence (i.e., from text, experiments, drawings, diagrams, research, data sets).
○ Students receive assessment accommodations that allow them to reveal their understandings.*

Criterion 1.3.2: Timely, frequent, specific feedback is provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts.
○ Teachers give students clear, descriptive, criterion-based feedback to at least several students.
○ Feedback tells students where they are in relation to the lesson goal(s), clarifies misunderstandings, and/or provides specific guidance regarding improvement.
○ The use of models and assessment tools (e.g., rubrics, worked examples, exemplars) focuses feedback and assessment on essential skills and knowledge.*
○ Students demonstrate awareness of their progress toward learning goals (e.g., what they understand, where confused, when not engaged).
○ Students revise their work and correct errors in response to teacher or peer feedback.*

NOTES

Dimension 2.1: Students' Learning Supports

Does the school identify and support students with a full range of needs?

Criterion 2.1.1: The school has formalized procedures for identifying students needing additional support and systematically monitors student progress and program effectiveness.

o The school uses a universal screening system to assess academic and behavioral strengths and challenges of all students and to identify students needing additional support.

o Educators collaborate to collect and review risk-indicator data to systematically identify students in need of targeted academic supports and plan interventions.

o The school monitors students' progress toward academic goals and uses this feedback to inform the level of students' academic support or intervention.

o Educators collaborate to collect and review risk-indicator data to identify students in need of targeted behavioral supports and plan interventions.

o The school monitors students' progress toward behavioral goals and uses this feedback to inform the level of students' behavioral support or intervention.

o The process for identifying and monitoring progress of diverse learners is transparent and understood by all stakeholders.

Criterion 2.1.2: The school's intervention system allows students to move along a continuum of services and change placements according to identified progress or needs.

o The school provides basic in-class preventions and supports to ensure academic growth and positive behavior for all students.

o The school designs or adapts its curriculum and approach to instruction to educate all students, including those with special needs.

o The school implements specific, targeted academic and behavioral supports or a variety of interventions to meet the academic and behavioral needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

o The school provides struggling students with research-based programming designed to remediate gaps in skill or content knowledge.

o The school offers students tutoring or other supplemental services provided by the school or external agencies.

o The school offers individual or small group support in test-taking, study habits, or in specific content areas using a curriculum that builds on classroom curriculum and expectations.

o Qualified support staff offer one-on-one individualized support to students over a sustained period of time.

o Students have opportunities for credit recovery and new credits through after-school, weekend, or summer programs.

Criterion 2.1.3: The school provides appropriate supports for students with special needs, particularly those students identified with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency.

o Educators collaborate to collect and review risk-indicator data to identify students with special needs and to plan appropriate interventions.

o The school implements specific, targeted academic and behavioral supports or interventions for identified special education and English language learner (ELL) students.

- o Qualified support staff deliver the supports for ELL students or students with special needs.
- o The school monitors special education and ELL students' progress toward academic and behavioral goals and uses this feedback to inform the level of students' support or intervention.
- o Teachers access external and additional services for students, as necessary, to meet the needs of all students.

Dimension 2.2: School Climate and Culture

Does the school have a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations for all students?

Criterion 2.2.1: The school holds high expectations for academic learning.
- o The school recognizes and celebrates students' academic performance.
- o Teachers set high expectations for learning and clearly convey these to students.
- o Teachers promote students' responsibility for raising their achievement and encourage their participation in learning.
- o Students report that their teachers expect them to do their best at all times.
- o Students convey that they believe it is important to do well in class.

Criterion 2.2.2: The school provides a safe and orderly learning environment that supports fulfillment of the educational goals.
- o School leaders ensure the school's physical environment is clean, orderly, and is physically and emotionally safe for students.
- o School leaders disperse responsibility for discipline; all staff regularly supervise students in school's public spaces.
- o Students and staff indicate they believe school rules are fairly and consistently enforced for all students.
- o The school disaggregates data to identify and address trends among subgroups regarding academics, behavior, and attendance; data are shared with stakeholders to drive decision making that supports measurable progress for all students and to eliminate disparities between subgroups.
- o The school has few reported incidences of physical violence, aggression, bullying, teasing, or harassment.
- o Students report that they feel safe from bullying, teasing, and harassment.
- o Students report they have friends and positive relationships with peers at school.

Criterion 2.2.3: The school provides opportunities for students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the school.
- o Programs and supports develop all students' social and emotional awareness skills.
- o The school provides opportunities for students to seek help from staff for academic or social issues.
- o The school provides opportunities for students to seek help from one another for academic or social issues.
- o The school provides opportunities for students to engage in positive social group activities (e.g., extracurricular clubs, sports teams, or community service groups).
- o Staff or community volunteers lead and organize community service activities, extracurricular groups, or other youth activities.
- o Students report that adults and peers at the school try to get to know them and care about their learning.

Criterion 2.2.4: The school engages families in support of students' learning.

o The school includes parents/guardians in cultivating a culture of high expectations for students' learning and their consistent support of students' efforts.

o The school provides opportunities for families to engage with the school (e.g., volunteering in classrooms or on committees; attendance at performances, sports events, organizational meetings) and regularly solicits their input.

o The school offers workshops and other opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about home practices that support student learning.

o Educators communicate with parents/guardians about instructional programs and students' academic progress.

o The school builds parent/guardian understanding and knowledge around assessments and key components of the educational model, their student's performance, the school's performance, as well as their district's academic performance.

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Dimension 3.1: Educators' Learning Supports

Does the school design professional development and collaborative structures to sustain a focus on instructional improvement?

Criterion 3.1.1: Professional development (PD) is designed to address school priorities, school improvement goals, and/or identified areas of need.
o   PD aligns to state standards, organizational goals, the key design elements outlined in the school's charter, school curriculum, and the school's mission.
o   PD is informed by ongoing analysis of student performance, instructional data, and educators' learning needs as informed by the school's educator evaluation system.
o   PD requires teachers to demonstrate their learned competency in a tangible and assessable way.
o   PD supports teachers in the effective use of assessments.
o   PD helps teachers translate student data into instructional changes and plans.
o   PD focuses on specific subject content.
o   PD supports teachers in the effective use of instructional materials, resources, and technology.

Criterion 3.1.2: Professional development is active, intensive, and sustained.
o   PD engages teachers in active learning (e.g., leading instruction, discussing with colleagues, observing other teachers, developing assessments).
o   PD is embedded in teachers' daily work through coaching, collaborative planning, and reflection.
o   Trained coaches and/or colleagues with instructional expertise provide coaching and support around instructional planning and lesson design, pedagogy, assessment, and student engagement.
o   PD provides follow-up sessions and ongoing support for teacher's continued learning to ensure PD practices are sustained over time.
o   PD combines workshops, conferences, and trainings with the ongoing work of educators' learning teams.
o   The school provides public schools (district and charter) in the region with access to best/promising practices and/or school's innovation.

Criterion 3.1.3: Professional development is evaluated.
o   The quality of PD delivery is regularly monitored, evaluated, and improved.
o   The effects of PD are assessed using data on teacher instruction and student achievement.

Criterion 3.1.4: Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' academic performance.
o   Educators meet frequently, during regularly scheduled uninterrupted times (e.g., staff, department, grade level meeting times) to collaborate, establish improvement goals, and make data-informed instructional decisions.
o   Educators make use of interim assessment data to inform growth projections and to determine if students are on track for meeting academic performance standards, including proficiency on State assessments.
o   Educators' collaborative meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning and academic outcomes.

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- Educators describe sharing knowledge and expertise among colleagues as essential collaborative activity for job success.
- Teachers are willing to talk about their own instructional practice, to actively pursue and accept feedback from colleagues, and to try new teaching strategies.

Criterion 3.1.5: Trained mentors provide beginning teachers with sustained, job-embedded induction.
- Mentors are carefully selected and trained by induction program leaders.
- Mentors use data and assessments to provide feedback to beginning teacher about practice.
- Mentoring interactions are ongoing and frequent with focus on conceptions of high-quality teaching, content-specific curriculum – particularly in core academic areas – and pedagogy, lesson planning, lesson observations, student learning, reflective processes, and problem solving.
- There are structures to provide mentors and teachers with adequate time for mentoring activities during the school day.
- Mentors' effectiveness is evaluated.

Dimension 3.2: Professional Working Climate

Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?

Criterion 3.2.1: Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.
- Educators convey shared vision and values about teaching and learning; they reference these to guide their instructional decision making.
- Educators convey a shared commitment to the learning of all students in the school.
- Educators convey a belief that students' learning is their collective responsibility, regardless of students' personal or home situations.
- Educators convey that it is important not to give up on any students, even if it appears that they do not want to learn.
- Educators convey commitment to, and hold each other accountable for, collaboratively established improvement goals and tasks.

Criterion 3.2.2: The school reflects a safe, trustworthy and growth-oriented professional climate.
- Educators describe non-evaluative, "blame-free" norms for sharing data and solving challenging instructional problems.
- Educators' concerns and decisions focus on students' learning and well-being (rather than on staff members' individual or competing preferences).
- Educators convey that they are willing to share and discuss their own instructional practice, seek and accept feedback, and collectively experiment with new teaching strategies.
- Educators describe colleagues and administrators as open, honest, competent, well-intentioned, caring, and reliable.

Criterion 3.2.3: School leaders create conditions that support educators' learning culture.
- School leaders model and convey well-defined beliefs about teaching and learning, and convey value for innovation, learning from mistakes, and risk-taking.
- School leaders ensure that staff and team meeting discussions are structured and facilitated to support the staff's reflective dialogue around data and instruction (e.g., attend to explicit group norms, use protocols).

- School leaders provide guidance to teacher teams (e.g., help to establish meeting routines; model and promote use of discussion protocols; ensure systematic monitoring of student progress; create focus on linking results to instruction) and ensures that teachers utilize tools and time well.
- School leaders participate in formal and informal professional learning, including their own leadership development about how to improve curriculum and instruction in a leadership context (i.e., elementary or secondary; high- or low-poverty; large or small schools).

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Dimension 4.1: Instructional Leadership

Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning?

Criterion 4.1.1: School leaders establish a vision aligned to students' long-term success and set clear goals to meet that vision.
- School leaders establish an academic vision with a relentless commitment to closing the achievement gap and preparing all students for success in college, other post-secondary training, and careers.
- School leaders convey clear, high expectations for all stakeholders.
- School leaders set and communicate clear, measurable academic goals that are aligned across the school's improvement efforts (e.g., school program, staff development, and curriculum implementation).
- School leaders ensure that the school-wide focus remains on established academic goals and school priorities.
- School leaders regularly evaluate the academic program using data to monitor progress toward goals.

Criterion 4.1.2: School leaders ensure that the school has a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum.
- School leaders ensure that the curriculum includes essential content and skills for all students to learn at each grade level and is mapped across the year with adequate instructional time allocated to teach it.
- School leaders ensure that administered assessments are high-quality and aligned to both State standards and the school's educational model.
- School leaders ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned with State standards, aligned with each other, and are aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level.
- School leaders monitor instructional plans for alignment with curriculum program (e.g., periodic review of curriculum maps, unit/lesson plans, formative assessments, classroom observations).
- School leaders ensure plans are informed by students' prior knowledge, current skills, and learning needs.
- School leaders ensure that instructional materials are selected and/or developed in accordance with a school-wide instructional framework and aligned with established curriculum standards.
- School leaders ensure the curriculum is regularly reviewed and revisions are made to ensure quality and effectiveness.
- School leaders provide meaningful feedback on the quality of lesson and/or unit plans.

Criterion 4.1.3: School leaders ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.
- School leaders ensure that school staff have a common understanding of high-quality instruction for all students.
- School leaders regularly observe the quality of instruction to ensure that instruction mirror the school's common practices for high-quality instruction for all students.
- School leaders provide regular, meaningful, and timely feedback that helps teachers improve their instructional practice.

- o School leaders hold teachers accountable for applying feedback to their practice.
- o Educators indicate that school leaders model high-quality instruction.
- o Educators convey that school leaders have sufficient knowledge of content/subjects and how they are taught effectively.

Criterion 4.1.4: School leaders provide conditions that support a school-wide data culture.
- o Teachers have easy access to current and accurate student and instructional data from multiple sources, including (but not limited to) State assessment data.
- o School leaders ensure that teachers employ a regular cycle of interim assessments to gather data on student performance.
- o Teachers are provided time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data and use tools that help them act on results.
- o School leaders ensure that all teachers receive PD in data use (e.g., how to access, read, and interpret a range of data reports; frame questions for inquiry; analyze data, assessment literacy, and use data tools and resources).
- o Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to adjust the organization of students in the classroom, pace of instruction, or content being taught.
- o Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to identify students in need of remediation or acceleration and assign students to appropriate supports.
- o The school uses the results of a data-based program or self-evaluation to inform the special education and English language learner programs to improve instructional strategies and ensure that the needs of students are met.

Dimension 4.2: Organizational Leadership

Do the school leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations?

Criterion 4.2.1: School leaders lead intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the school's program and the sustainability of the organization.
- o Clear systems, structures, and procedures guide daily routines and school programs.
- o Systems, structures, and procedures are aligned to a clearly-defined mission, organizational vision, and set of goals, are continually monitored, and are adjusted to ensure effectiveness.
- o School leaders target resources (e.g., funding, materials, time, staff) toward the school's instructional framework and goals, with adjustments made in accordance with needs of student population; treat resources flexibly; avoid diffuse, scattered allocation of resources for improvement.
- o School leaders diagnose problems before implementing solutions.
- o School leaders distribute leadership responsibilities to appropriate individuals or groups.
- o School leaders ensure ongoing leadership development for emerging and current school leaders and has developed a plan for leadership succession.

Criterion 4.2.2: School leaders ensure effective communication and inclusive, transparent decision making across the organization.
- o Communications among all stakeholder groups are constructive, supportive, and respectful.
- o Communications between leadership and staff are fluid, frequent, and open.
- o The school leader involves faculty and staff in planning and implementation of school policies.

- o The school leader provides opportunities for faculty and staff to make, or provide input on, important decisions.

Criterion 4.2.3: School leaders create and implement systems to recruit and retain effective teachers and staff who can drive dramatic student gains.
- o School leaders leverage a pipeline for teacher recruitment that includes partnerships with higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations (as well as other sources) to identify a diverse set of candidates.
- o School leaders recruit and hire teachers with commitment to, and competence in, the school's philosophy, design, and instructional framework (e.g., trained and experienced with curriculum, certified/ licensed to teach, qualified to teach a subject area).
- o School leaders use multiple measures to assess each candidate's alignment with the skills required for the position, as well as core beliefs held by the school community.
- o School leaders acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of teachers and other staff members.
- o The school implements strategies to promote teacher retention and development.
- o The school has a succession plan and structures to recruit and retain high-quality talent in a competitive environment.
- o The school has strategies and career pathways to keep effective teachers engaged in, and committed to, their work.

Criterion 4.2.4: School leaders evaluate all staff and dismiss those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.
- o School leaders develop and implement a formal process of teacher evaluation and ensure the evaluation of all staff members.
- o School leaders conduct constructive, reflective, growth-oriented educator supervision/evaluation conferences, based on multiple data sources, and connect conferences to district and school priorities, professional development, and student learning.
- o School leaders use supervision and evaluation processes to identify and address persistently low-performing staff members.
- o School leaders dismiss those staff members who do not meet professional standards and expectations.

Criterion 4.2.5: School leaders ensure that the school has established sound financial and operational systems and processes.
- o School leaders ensure that the organizational structure supports essential school functions, and that roles and responsibilities of all individuals at the school are clear.
- o School leaders have established effective means of communicating with school staff.
- o School leaders ensure that the school meets all compliance requirements and deadlines set by the authorizer and the State, including the submission of annual reports, school improvement plans, financial statements, school audit, calendar, and student attendance.
- o School leaders effectively manage the school budget and cash flow, and there is a plan for long-term financial sustainability in alignment to school priorities and mission.
- o The school effectively manages operations, including food services, transportation, and school facilities.

Dimension 4.3: Governance

Does the Board provide competent and appropriate governance to ensure the success and sustainability of the school?

Criterion 4.3.1: The Board provides strong oversight over the effectiveness of the academic program.
- The Board describes priorities that are aligned with the school's mission and focus on preparing all students for success in college, other post-secondary training, and careers.
- The Board conveys appropriate knowledge of academic performance of the full range of students in the school.
- The Board conveys appropriate knowledge of the behavioral performance of students in the school.
- The Board describes school progress against accountability goals and strategic priorities based on a regular, data-based benchmarking process.
- The Board's membership includes appropriate instructional expertise to provide oversight of the academic program.
- The Board has systems and structures that ensure questioning, scrutiny, and deliberation regarding academic performance, and monitors leadership efforts to address performance gaps.

Criterion 4.3.2: The Board provides strong financial oversight.
- The Board maintains and monitors complete and accurate financial records and, as well, ensures annual independent audit/review.
- The Board reviews and approves annual budget and regularly monitors actual performance against the budget.
- The Board ensures that a significant portion of the budget is allocated to priority programs that advance its mission and goals; also, sufficient resources are allocated for effective administration.
- The Board establishes clear, written policies for paying/reimbursing expenses to those conducting school business.
- The Board's membership includes appropriate financial expertise to provide oversight of the school's finances.
- The Board has systems and structures that ensure questioning, scrutiny, and deliberation regarding financial performance, and monitors leadership efforts to ensure financial health.

Criterion 4.3.3: The Board ensures legal compliance and public disclosure.
- The Board members are active and engaged in fulfilling their legal responsibilities and obligations to the school, including (but not limited to) following the Sunshine Laws, following the Board's bylaws, and approving appropriate school policies to ensure compliance with requirements.
- The Board ensures compliance with all local, State, and federal laws and reporting requirements.
- The Board makes information about governance, finances, programs, activities, impact publicly available.
- The Board upholds formal code of ethics with all Board, staff, and volunteers.
- The Board adheres to conflicts of interest, "whistleblower," document retention policies and procedures, assesses the need for liability insurance, and files annually with the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Criterion 4.3.4: The Board maintains effective governance practices (rather than management) to ensure organizational viability, including the systematic selection and oversight of the school leaders.

o The Board systematically recruits, supports, assesses the school leaders; provides performance incentives and rewards (e.g., ensures leader professional development, meaningful feedback, and criterion-based evaluation); engages in succession planning for school leadership.

o The Board engages in strategic planning with the school leaders when conditions support the likelihood of productive results (e.g., not during organizational crisis, when lacking support from key leaders or capacity to implement).

o The Board maintains clear and regular communications within the Board, with the school leaders, and with stakeholders.

o The Board ensures questioning, scrutiny, and deliberation of school policies, budgets, and practices in alignment with the mission and vision.

o The Board establishes productive partnership with the school leaders while clearly differentiating governance from management; school leaders hold responsibility for the day-to-day school operations.

o The Board establishes productive, active partnerships with political and business leaders.

o The Board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting, and regularly monitoring, progress relative to goals/priorities.

o The Board engages in periodic self-assessment and reflects on its role when frequent school leadership turnover occurs.

o The Board's membership reflects the necessary set of professional skills and expertise to ensure organizational viability.

o The Board engages in succession planning.

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Domain 5: Financial Performance

Dimension 5.1: Financial Health and Sustainability

Does the school maintain a sound and sustainable financial condition?

Criterion 5.1.1: The school demonstrates near-term financial health.

o The school's current ratio (ratio of short-term assets to short-term liabilities) demonstrates the school's ability to pay its financial obligations over the next 12 months.

o The school's unrestricted days of cash-on-hand indicates that the school could operate without receiving additional funding for X/# days.

o The school's enrollment variance (actual vs. budgeted enrollment) demonstrates an ability to hit per-pupil revenue targets.

o The school's debt default indicates the school is meeting its debt obligations or covenants.

o The school makes available to the public financial and audit reports, including posting to the school's website.

o The school's independent financial audit reflects an unqualified opinion with no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, and no repeat findings for the most recently completed fiscal year. The school has appropriately addressed any findings from the independent financial audit in a timely manner.

Criterion 5.1.2: The school demonstrates financial stability.

o The school's total margin, comparing the school's revenues to its expenses, indicates the school operated at surplus in a given time period.

o The school's debt-to-asset ratio (total assets/total liabilities) demonstrates solvency.

o The school's cash flow indicates the trend in the school's cash balance over a period of time.

o The school's debt-service coverage ratio indicates a school's ability to cover its debt obligations in the current year (ability to pay off short-term loans).

o The school maintains a minimum 3% fund balance.

o The school has identified financial risks and developed contingency plans.

o The school's average annual fundraising need is consistent with, or below, that of prior years.

o The school has secured philanthropic resources.

Criterion 5.1.3: The school has sound financial management practices.

o School leaders and Board members regularly review and understand the income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow projections, and understand their fiduciary responsibilities.

o Financial reports prepared for school leaders and Board members clearly present current and future financial health and can be used to drive decision making.

o The school manages its budget such that minimum variances exist between actual financial results and the Board-approved budget.

o The school anticipates cash flow requirements by routinely projecting forward monthly cash flow and related cash-on-hand. There are contingency plans to promptly address cash flow challenges.

o The school has an updated, long-term financial model used to make data-driven decisions that contribute to academic success for all students.

o The school has developed, and follows, documented internal control policies, including those procedures surrounding treasury and procurement processes.

Criterion 5.1.4: The school has implemented systems and procedures to ensure sound financial management practices.

o The school's organizational structure is appropriately designed and aligned to provide the services outlined in the performance contract.
o The school has an annual budgeting process that incorporates educational priorities and clearly defines roles and responsibilities, deliverables, and timelines.
o The school's cash balances are monitored and projected forward, with a contingency plan in place.
o The school has a comprehensive fundraising plan for current and future fiscal years; the school has historically met fundraising targets.
o The school's multi-year financial plan is accompanied by assumptions related to all key drivers and accounting for school growth, as well as programs and services required to support targeted outcomes.
o The school regularly runs scenarios and projects a range of outcomes to inform decisions. It continually adjusts school priorities based on assessment of external market changes and performance against the existing financial plan and updates the plan to reflect adjustments.
o The school's Board and leadership are aligned on a definition of sustainability.

Domain 6: Organizational Performance

Dimension 6.1 Operational Systems and Structures

Does the school have effective operational systems and structures in place?

Criterion 6.1.1: The school's operations support the smooth running of its programs, via strong systems for maintaining compliance.

- There are systems to manage all applicable compliance and reporting requirements.
- The school is in compliance with all applicable State and federal, local, and private reporting agencies, as well as with all contracts that it has signed, including its charter contract.
- The school maintains compliance with education program terms, including implementation of the education program as defined in its current charter contract, applicable education requirements, protecting the rights of students with disabilities, and protecting the rights of English language learner (ELL) students.
- The school maintains compliance with financial management and oversight requirements.
- The school follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval (EDGAR).
- The school complies with governance and reporting requirements, including Board of Directors' attendance at meetings, holding management accountable, and complying with reporting requirements.
- The school complies with student, employee rights and requirements, including protecting the rights of all students, not only reaching, but also accurately reporting, attendance rates, meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements, respecting employee rights, and completing required background checks.
- The school complies with school environment requirements; including facilities and transportation, health and safety, and handling information appropriately.
- The school complies with all other obligations, including food service and parent engagement surveys.
- The school has documented employment policies and has taken measures (i.e., consulted with a local employment attorney) to ensure that these policies align with federal laws and any regulations that are unique to the State.

Criterion 6.1.2: The school has implemented plans and systems that ensure effective and efficient operations.

- The school's staffing model includes defined roles and responsibilities for all operations functions.
- The school's staffing model for business operations reflects thoughtfulness and organization around all operational functions, resulting in effective and efficient fulfillment of all duties.
- The school's business office has clear and efficient systems and procedures that maximize time and efficiency; these systems are documented and communicated to schools and their staff.
- Major service providers (food service, transportation, custodial, maintenance) are being managed in a manner that supports the overall effectiveness of the school program and minimizes the financial burden on the school.

Criterion 6.1.3: The Network provides valuable and effective operational support.

- The Network has a system for regularly collecting feedback from school staff around operations and uses feedback to inform decision making.
- The Network provides supports to the school in planning for and managing risk, including;

- The development of an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan on which all staff are trained
- The inventory of all business property and equipment
- The appropriate insurance coverage, given charter requirements and unique hazards facing the school community
- The installment of anti-virus software; regular back-up and off-site storage of computer records
- The Network provides supports to the schools related to technology, including:
  - Infrastructure development and purchasing
  - Implementation and trouble-shooting
  - Technology training
  - Security
  - Website development and maintenance
  - Data collection and reporting needs
  - System security and back-up
- The Network has adopted and implemented a student information system that allows its schools to store, report, share, and analyze student data; the Network has identified a trained system administrator to provide leadership in this area.

Criterion 6.1.4: The school successfully supports student recruitment efforts and effectively builds community relationships that marshal support for its work.
- The school has a student enrollment/recruitment strategy that enables ongoing growth/sustainability.
- The school implements marketing strategies to reach all families, particularly those with limited information of their educational options.
- The school successfully recruits sufficient scholars to fill open seats.
- The school has outreach efforts to involve and build support among the broader community.
- The school understands and seeks to influence positively its reputation among the broader community.
- The school adheres to lottery, enrollment and admissions policies and plans that comply with statute.

Criterion 6.1.5: The facilities meet the needs of schools and are financially viable.
- The school provides valuable and effective facilities support to the students.
- Current facilities meet the needs of the school(s).
- The current facilities are financially viable; there is no evidence that facility costs are placing a burden on school operations or budget.
- The school has a comprehensive and viable facilities management plan.
- The school is in compliance with facility management regulations and processes.
- The school has a viable maintenance plan for each facility.

Appendix A: School Task Checklist

The School Task Checklist can be used by the school to prepare for the SQR. It includes key tasks that the school leader should complete prior to the site visit, including the list of materials the site visit team is requesting prior to the visit and upon arrival on site. The following task list is an example and may be modified and sent separately to a school in advance of the visit.

	ITEMS TO BE SENT TO THE SITE VISIT TEAM LEADER BEFORE THE SQR	
Scheduling	1. Roster of ALL staff, including grade levels and subject areas taught	
	2. Master schedule for all staff, including periods/times teaching and room numbers	
	3. A list of teacher preparation times or "free" periods (if not included in the roster or master schedule)	
	4. School bell schedule	
General	1. School handbooks (staff, student, family)	
	2. The school improvement plan / strategic plan	
	ITEMS TO BE PREPARED BEFORE THE SQR	
	1. Faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purpose	
	2. Stakeholder surveys administered (if applicable)	
	3. Private meeting space for site visit team secured & copies of the school map provided	
	4. Delivery menus available for team to select lunch (Site visit team will pay for its own lunch.)	
	ITEMS AVAILABLE THE FIRST DAY OF THE SQR *(May be electronically accessible)*	
Instruction	1. Sample curricular documents that link standards to school/classroom instructional practices (e.g., scope and sequence, pacing guides, textbooks) from varied grade levels and subject areas	
	2. Sample lesson plans from different grade levels and subject areas	
	3. Samples of student work (e.g., HW, quizzes, projects) from a variety of grade levels/subject areas	
	4. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to classroom **instruction**.	
Students' Opportunities to Learn	5. Description of the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) or Response to Intervention (RtI) system;	
	6. RtI meeting minutes or agendas and sample student intervention plans	
	7. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to **students' opportunities to learn**.	
Educators' Opportunities to Learn	8. Professional development (PD) calendar and sample PD documents	
	9. Agendas and minutes from collaborative planning or grade level team meetings	
	10. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to **educators' opportunities to learn**.	
Leadership & Governance	11. Sample completed teacher evaluations and informal observation/feedback forms (WITHOUT names)	
	12. Agendas and minutes from leadership team or other staff meetings	
	13. Board meeting minutes, agenda, and bylaws	
	14. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to **leadership and governance**	

Financial	15. Most recent year's financial audit	
	16. Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR)	
Organiza-- tional	17. Network's organizational chart	
	18. Contract between Network and School	

Frequently-asked questions from school leaders

1. *What do we tell staff about the visit?*
   Staff should know the purpose of the visit and their role within the visit. A first step in communicating these things might be distributing the Introduction and Process and Results sections (Parts I & II) of the SQR protocol.

2. *Space is very tight in our building. We do not have a conference room that can house the team.*
   The site visit team is made up of educators who understand space constraints. They respect the need to protect instructional space and will adapt to what you can offer. Please focus on trying to provide a space with privacy.

3. *How much flexibility do we have in adapting the example schedule?*
   The site visit team recognizes that each school is unique and that the process needs to be adapted. The team has specific tasks that must be completed during the visit. However, the team leader will work collaboratively with school leadership to create a schedule that minimizes disruptions to the typical school day.

Appendix B: Classroom Visit Tool and Guidance

What is the purpose of the classroom visit tool?

The purpose of the classroom visit tool is threefold:

1. To enable observers to easily identify practices and summarize their evidence base and, therefore, establish findings that characterize classroom practices across the school;

2. To supply the report writer with quantifiable ratings across classes observed that are supported by documented pieces of evidence; and,

3. To gather qualitative evidence about classroom practices that provides additional evidence to inform the site visit team's findings.

The information collected from classroom visits provides the site visit team an additional source of information that can be used to better understand school practices and to support the team's findings.

Frequently-asked questions about classroom visits

1. *How does the site visit team select the classrooms that will be visited?*
   Classroom visits will be selected on the basis of the school's master schedule and the size of the site visit team. In larger schools, representative classes will be selected to reflect a range of teacher experience, a variety of subject areas, the range of grades served at the school, and special services or program classes as they reflect the school's mission. The site visit schedule is developed by the site visit team leader with input from school leadership.

2. *What is the length of a classroom visit?*
   It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Most visits will be planned and scheduled, but unplanned visits may occur. Unplanned visits may be shorter in duration.

3. *What do teachers need to do to prepare for the classroom visit?*
   Teachers need not do anything to prepare for a classroom visit. Classes should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. The site visit team is composed of education professionals who understand that behavior in the classroom may be unpredictable. The SQR seeks to establish trends across the school, not to assess isolated incidents in a single classroom.

4. *Should teachers expect to interact with the classroom visitor?*
   The intent of the classroom visit is to cause as minimal disruption to daily classroom practices as possible. Teaching staff does not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work and/or classroom postings, if appropriate.

5. *Do teachers receive feedback from the classroom visitor?*
   The site visit team seeks to identify trends across the school, not to provide information on the effectiveness of specific classroom practices or individual teachers. Team members will NOT provide feedback to individual teachers nor will they provide feedback on individual teachers to school leadership. Class visits are NOT teacher evaluations. They will not be shared with individual teachers or any other school personnel. They are intended to provide information to the site visit team about the implementation of the academic program, the availability of resources, and any additional evidence that demonstrates aspects of school practices and operations.

6. *Should the classroom visitor expect to see all of the indicators on the classroom visit tool in a single classroom?*
   The classroom visit tool is aligned with the indicators in the SQC that reflect a range of effective practices. It is not expected that the classroom visitor would see all of these indicators. The tool serves as a resource for the site visit team to identify and explain practices that are characteristic of each individual school.

School: _____ Date: _____ Subject: _____ Grade Level: _____

Number of Students: _____ Number of Adults: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Observer's Initials: _____

Directions: Note whether the indicator in bold type has been observed or not observed by circling the correct option. For example:

Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students. (1.1.1)	(Observed)	Not Observed

Supportive Classroom Climate		
1. **Behavioral expectations** are clear and understood by students. (1.1.1)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
2. **Learning environment** is highly structured and learning time is maximized through effective planning and guidance. (1.1.2)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
3. **Classroom interactions** are cooperative and conducive to learning. (1.1.3)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
Purposeful Teaching		
4. Teachers provide students with **clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction.** (1.2.1)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence: *Learning goal(s) or objective(s):*		

5. **A variety of instructional strategies and materials** support students' diverse needs and align with the school's mission and programmatic priorities. (1.2.2)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
6. All students are **cognitively engaged in learning.** (1.2.3)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
7. Instruction requires all students to use and develop **higher-order thinking skills.** (1.2.4)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
Assessment and Feedback		
8. **In-class assessment strategies** reveal students' thinking about learning goals. (1.3.1)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		
9. **Timely, frequent, specific feedback** is provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts. (1.3.2)	Observed	Not Observed
Evidence:		

Additional Notes:

Appendix C: Interview Guidance and Worksheets

During the SQR, a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information about the school. Interview data, similar to classroom visits, are intended to provide information about the implementation of the school's program and operations. The site visit team leader, with guidance from school leadership, will work to establish a schedule that is appropriate for the school. Depending on the purpose of the SQR and the school's structure, the number and length of interviews conducted varies. The following are examples only.

SCHOOL-WIDE INTERVIEWS		
Interviews/ focus groups	**Description**	**Approximate Time Needed**
Governance / oversight focus group	This interview is conducted with a representative group of the school's governing body, or oversight body, if applicable. This might include a Charter School Board or district leadership.	**1 hour**
School Leadership focus group	School leadership includes the principal and key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director and/or lead teachers). In addition to an interview, school leadership may be asked to provide further guidance and insight throughout the visit. Feedback on the team's preliminary findings will be presented to school leadership at the end of the site visit.	**1-hour** focus group each day **30-45-minute** feedback session
Network focus group	For schools operated by a CMO or EMO, a focus group will be conducted with key members of the management organization on topics pertinent to the role the organization plays in the management of the school. These individuals are also invited to participate in feedback sessions.	**1-hour** focus group **30-45-minute** feedback session
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically by **grade level,** make up focus groups. In some cases, the team may request a focus group meeting with teaching assistants, aides or other personnel to discuss their roles in the delivery of the academic program at the school. The team makes an effort to speak to as many of the school's teaching staff as possible.	**45 minutes** (When possible, scheduled during common prep periods.)
Specialist focus group	Interviews with specialists are conducted. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning (e.g., the school's special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, guidance counselors and other relevant staff).	**45 minutes**
Student focus group	A selection of **four**-to-**eight** students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff. Students are asked to bring a piece of recent work to share with the focus group leader.	**30 minutes**
Parent focus group	A representative group of **four**-to-**eight** parents, whose children have a range of academic needs, have attended the school for various lengths of time and who have a range of participation experiences with the school.	**30-45 minutes** (If possible, scheduled around dismissal)

What is the purpose of the interview worksheet?

Interview worksheets are provided to:

1. Enable the interviewer to easily identify questions consistent with the criteria and indicators in the SQR protocol, in order to gather appropriate evidence;

2. Ensure uniformity across interviews conducted; and

3. Provide multiple sources of evidence to support the site visit team's findings.

The interview worksheet provides a template for the site visit team to use during interviews and focus groups. This ensures that questions are being asked in accordance with the SQR protocol and that all team members are asking uniform questions. While on site, the team may develop additional, school-specific interview questions that are based on the team leader's judgment of what must be learned to come to findings on the protocol's key questions.

An interview worksheet exists for each type of focus group (e.g., school leadership, teachers, parents) who the site visit team will interview while on site. Interview questions might look slightly different; interviews conducted with school leadership might include slightly different content than what the team would ask teachers or parents. In addition, question delivery might vary slightly.

How do I use the interview worksheet?

The interview worksheets contain possible interview questions. The column on the left may be used to check the most relevant questions. The right column may be used to insert any additional questions that the site visit team, during team meetings, decides are important to ask in order to gather the required evidence. Interview notes are recorded by the site visit team for use during team deliberations and to provide the report writer with a record of interviews to ensure a sound and accurate evidence base.

Principal/School Leader Interview Guide

Domain 1: Instruction	School-specific questions
1. Is there a school-wide approach to behavior management that we will observe in the classrooms? ❑ Behavioral expectations ❑ Learning time maximized ❑ Classroom interactions and organization	
2. What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms? ❑ Clear learning goals and objectives ❑ Instructional strategies and materials ❑ Lesson structure ❑ Differentiation ❑ Components of the school's curriculum ❑ Alignment to educational model within charter ❑ Student collaboration/peer work ❑ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher order thinking, problem solving and critical thinking	
3. How do teachers assess students' mastery of skills and content during lessons? ❑ Formative assessments/checks for understanding ❑ Feedback to students	
Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
4. How does the school identify and support students with a full range of needs? ❑ Process for identification of students needing academic and behavioral supports (Response to Intervention/universal screening, child study/student support teams) ❑ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ❑ Approach to monitoring progress ❑ Services for students with a wide range of needs, including handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, students that are homeless, students at risk of dropping out, students in crisis, and students who require intensive assistance ❑ Use of disaggregated data	

5.	In what other ways does the school support student learning? ❏ Safe and supportive learning environment (physical and emotional safety) ❏ High expectations ❏ Use of disaggregate data to identify and address trends ❏ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ❏ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ❏ Family engagement in support of students' learning ❏ Celebration of students' success and growth	
Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn		**School-specific questions**
6.	Describe the school's approach to professional development (PD). ❏ Aligned to state standards, organizational goals and key design elements in charter, school curriculum, and mission. ❏ Focus of PD and how it was identified ❏ Structure, frequency, and content of PD (active, intensive, sustained, follow-up) ❏ Evaluation and evidence of effectiveness ❏ Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (mentors, teams, structures, follow-up) ❏ Use of data, including interim to inform growth projections and make necessary modifications ❏ Role of school leaders in facilitating/supporting teacher collaboration ❏ Trained (and evaluated) mentors to provide sustained, job-embedded instruction	
7.	Describe the professional working climate in the building. ❏ Shared mindsets and beliefs ❏ Collective responsibility ❏ Growth-oriented focus; shared commitments and beliefs ❏ Value for innovation, learning from mistakes and risk taking ❏ Relationship among staff/between staff and administrators	
Domain 4: Leadership & Governance		**School-specific questions**
8.	In what ways do you monitor and work to continuously improve teaching and learning? ❏ Academic vision, goals, and progress-monitoring ❏ Coherent, comprehensive and aligned curriculum ❏ High-quality assessments ❏ Feedback to teachers on planning documents and instruction (frequency, content, consistency) ❏ School-wide data culture	
9.	What assessments does the school administer, and what is the purpose of each assessment? ❏ Type and frequency ❏ How school leaders use the data (strategic, impact on programs, transparency)	

	How teachers are expected to access and use the data (systems, structures, time allocated)	
10.	How do you ensure effective operations at the school? ❑ Systems, structures, and routines ❑ Targeting resources (school budgeting process and spending priorities, staffing, and deployment of human resources) ❑ Adjusting resources to meet needs of student population ❑ Communication and decision-making processes and structures ❑ Leadership pipeline and succession planning ❑ Recruitment, hiring, and retention of high-quality teachers ❑ Supervision and evaluation processes ❑ Financial and operational systems and processes: clear roles and responsibilities	
13.	Describe how the Board oversees the school (governance rather than management). ❑ Mission-aligned priorities ❑ Focus on preparing all students for success in college, other post-secondary training, and careers ❑ Systems and structures to receive information about the academic program; expertise to understand its meaning ❑ Systems and structures to receive information about the school's finances, and financial expertise ❑ Legal compliance: responsibilities and obligations ❑ Recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of school leaders ❑ Ongoing communication ❑ Strategic planning	
Domain 5: Financial Performance		**School-specific questions**
14.	What indicators demonstrate the school is financially sound and sustainable? ❑ Near-term financial health ❑ Financial stability ❑ Financial management practices ❑ Systems and procedures	
Domain 6: Organizational Performance		**School-specific questions**
15.	What systems and structures are in place to ensure effective operations? ❑ Compliance reporting and management ❑ Staffing model ❑ Management of service providers ❑ Feedback collection to inform decision making	

Teacher Focus Group Guide / Specialist Focus Group Guide

Domain 1: Instruction	School-specific questions
1. Is there a school-wide approach to behavior management that we will observe in the classrooms? ❑ Behavioral expectations ❑ Learning time maximized ❑ Classroom interactions and organization	
2. What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms? ❑ Clear learning goals and objectives ❑ Instructional strategies and materials ❑ Lesson structure ❑ Differentiation ❑ Components of the school's curriculum ❑ Alignment to educational model ❑ Student collaboration/peer work ❑ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher-order thinking, problem solving and critical thinking	
3. How do teachers assess students' mastery of skills and content during lessons? ❑ Formative assessments/checks for understanding ❑ Feedback to students	
Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
4. How does the school identify and support students with a full range of needs? ❑ Process for identification of students needing academic and behavioral supports (Response to Intervention/universal screening, child study/student support teams) ❑ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ❑ Approach to monitoring progress ❑ Services for students with a wide range of needs, including handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, students that are homeless, students at risk of dropping out, students in crisis, and students who require intensive assistance	

| 5. | In what other ways does the school support student learning?
❑ Safe and supportive learning environment (physical and emotional safety)
❑ High expectations
❑ Use of disaggregate data to identify and address trends
❑ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills
❑ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults
❑ Family engagement in support of students' learning
❑ Celebration of students' success and growth | |

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn	**School-specific questions**
6.	Describe the school's approach to professional development (PD). ❑ Aligned to State standards, organizational goals and key design elements in charter ❑ Focus of PD and how it was identified ❑ Structure, frequency, and content of PD (active, intensive, sustained, follow-up) ❑ Evaluation and evidence of effectiveness ❑ Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (mentors, teams, structures, follow-up) ❑ Use of interim data to inform growth projections and make necessary modifications ❑ Role of school leaders in facilitating/supporting teacher collaboration ❑ Trained (and evaluated) mentors to provide sustained, job-embedded instruction	
7.	Describe the professional working climate in the building. ❑ Shared mindsets and beliefs ❑ Collective responsibility ❑ Growth-oriented focus; shared commitments and beliefs ❑ Value for innovation, learning from mistakes and risk taking ❑ Relationship among staff/between staff and administrators ❑ Data driven	

Domain 4: Leadership & Governance	**School-specific questions**
8.	In what ways do school leaders monitor and work to continuously improve teaching and learning? ❑ Academic vision, goals, and progress-monitoring ❑ Coherent, comprehensive and aligned curriculum ❑ High-quality assessments ❑ Feedback to teachers on planning documents and instruction (frequency, content, consistency) ❑ School-wide data culture	
9.	What assessments does the school administer, and what is the purpose of each assessment? ❑ Type and frequency ❑ How school leaders use the data (strategic, impact on programs, transparency)	

	❑ How teachers are expected to access and use the data (systems, structures, time allocated)	
10.	How does the school leader ensure effective operations at the school? ❑ Systems, structures, and routines ❑ Targeting resources (school budgeting process and spending priorities, staffing, and deployment of human resources) ❑ Adjusting resources to meet needs of student population ❑ Communication and decision-making processes and structures ❑ Leadership pipeline and succession planning ❑ Recruitment, hiring, and retention of high-quality teachers ❑ Supervision and evaluation processes ❑ Financial and operational systems and processes: clear roles and responsibilities	

Network Members' Interview Guide

Domain 1: Instruction	School-specific questions
1. Is there a school-wide approach to behavior management that we will observe in the classrooms? ❑ Behavioral expectations ❑ Maximize learning time ❑ Classroom interactions and organization ❑ Non-negotiables set by Network	
2. What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms? ❑ Clear learning goals and objectives ❑ Instructional strategies and materials ❑ Lesson structure ❑ Differentiation ❑ Components of the school's curriculum ❑ Alignment to educational model ❑ Student collaboration/peer work ❑ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher-order thinking, problem solving/critical thinking ❑ Non-negotiables set by Network	

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
3. How does the school identify and support students with a full range of needs? ❑ Process for identification of students needing academic and behavioral supports (Response to Intervention/universal screening, child study/student support teams) ❑ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ❑ Approach to monitoring progress ❑ Services for students with a wide range of needs, including handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, students that are homeless, students at risk of dropping out, students in crisis, and students who require intensive assistance?	
4. In what other ways does the school support student learning? ❑ Safe and supportive learning environment (physical and emotional safety) ❑ High expectations ❑ Use of disaggregate data to identify and address trends ❑ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ❑ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ❑ Family engagement in support of students' learning ❑ Celebration of students' success and growth	

Network Members' Interview Guide

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
5. Describe the school's approach to professional development (PD). ❑ Aligned to state standards, organizational goals and key design elements in charter ❑ Focus of PD and how it was identified ❑ Structure, frequency, and content of PD (active, intensive, sustained, follow-up) ❑ Evaluation and evidence of effectiveness ❑ Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (mentors, teams, structures, follow-up) ❑ Use of interim data to inform growth projections and make necessary modifications ❑ Role of school leaders in facilitating/supporting teacher collaboration ❑ Trained mentors to provide sustained, job-embedded instruction	
6. Describe the professional working climate in the building. ❑ Shared mindsets and beliefs ❑ Collective responsibility ❑ Growth-oriented focus; shared commitments and beliefs ❑ Value for innovation, learning from mistakes and risk taking ❑ Relationship among staff/between staff and administrators	

Domain 4: Leadership & Governance	School-specific questions
7. Describe how the board works with the Network to oversee the school. ❑ Information they receive about the academic program, and expertise to understand information ❑ Information they receive about the school's finances, and financial expertise ❑ Communication with school board and its members ❑ Recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of chief executive ❑ Strategic plan	
8. In what ways does the Network monitor and work to continuously improve the academic program? ❑ Academic vision, goals, and progress-monitoring ❑ Review of curriculum and curriculum revisions ❑ Role in providing feedback to teachers on planning documents and instruction (frequency, content, consistency) ❑ Analysis of data and determining next steps (school improvement plans) ❑ Supervision and evaluation processes ❑ Process for recruiting and hiring teachers and support provided by Network	
9. What assessments does the school administer, and what is the purpose of each assessment? ❑ Frequency ❑ How the Network uses the data	

☐ Supports put in place by the Network to facilitate use of data (protocols, templates) ☐ How school leaders use the data ☐ How teachers are expected to access and use the data		
Domain 5: Financial Performance		**School-specific questions**
10. Is the school financially sound and sustainable? ☐ Near-term health ☐ Financial stability ☐ Financial management practices ☐ Systems and procedures		
Domain 6: Organizational Performance		**School-specific questions**
11. What operational systems and structures do you provide to the school? ☐ Collecting and using feedback for decision making ☐ Planning and managing risk ☐ Technology-related supports ☐ Student information system		
12. Can you describe ways in which school resources are targeted toward improving student learning and achievement? ☐ School budgeting process (Network participation) ☐ Spending priorities ☐ Staffing and deployment of human resources (sufficient staff to support students, use of paraprofessionals) ☐ Recruitment, hiring, and retention of staff ☐ Supervision and evaluation processes ☐ Opportunities for staff leadership development		

Governance Focus Group Guide

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
1. Describe the measures the school board has put in place to ensure the safety of students and school staff. ❑ Investment in security personnel or equipment ❑ Training for staff and students	
Domain 4: Leadership & Governance	**School-specific questions**
2. Describe how the board oversees the school. ❑ Mission aligned priorities; focus on preparing all students for success in college, other post-secondary training, and careers ❑ Governance practices rather than management ❑ Information they receive about the academic program, and expertise to understand its meaning ❑ Information they receive about the school's finances, and financial expertise ❑ Communication with school leader and/or Network ❑ Recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of chief executive ❑ Oversight of contract with Network ❑ Strategic plan	
3. How do you ensure effective operations at the school? ❑ School budgeting process ❑ Spending priorities ❑ Staffing and deployment of human resources ❑ Systems and structures	
4. What measures have you put in place to ensure the sustainability of the school? ❑ School leadership pipeline ❑ Financial viability ❑ Facilities ❑ Self-assessment of governing practices and outcome	
Domain 5: Financial Performance	**School-specific questions**
5. What indicators demonstrate the school is financially sound and sustainable? ❑ Near-term financial health ❑ Financial stability ❑ Financial management practices ❑ Systems and procedures	
Domain 6: Organizational Performance	**School-specific questions**

6.	What systems and structures are in place to ensure effective operations? ❑ Compliance reporting and management ❑ Staffing model ❑ Management of service providers ❑ Feedback collection to inform decision making	

Parent Focus Group Guide

Domain 1: Instruction	School-specific questions
1. What are the school's expectations for students when they are in class? (behavior and academics) ❑ Consistency across teachers, grade levels ❑ Communication of expectations to students and their families	
2. How do teachers know where students are struggling and what they are doing well? ❑ Assessments ❑ Feedback to students	

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	School-specific questions
3. How does the school support students with a full range of needs? ❑ School's process for identification of students needing academic or behavioral supports (Response to Intervention/universal screening, child study/student support teams) ❑ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ❑ School's approach to monitoring progress ❑ Services for students with a wide range of needs, including handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, students that are homeless, students at risk of dropping out, students in crisis, and students who require intensive assistance	
4. In what other ways does the school support student learning? ❑ Celebration of students' (academic) accomplishments ❑ Family engagement (workshops, opportunities to share home practices to support student learning, parent volunteerism, PTOs) ❑ Build understanding and knowledge re: assessments, educational components ❑ Safe and caring environment (physical and emotional safety across classrooms, hallways, parking lots, etc.) ❑ Hold and communicate high expectations ❑ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ❑ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ❑ Extracurricular activities (clubs, sports)	

Student Focus Group Guide

Domain 1: Instruction	School-specific questions
1. How is the school preparing you for long term success: success in college, other post-secondary training and careers? Provide an example. Do you ever/Have you ever: ❑ Complete an extended (3-to-5-page) research paper ❑ Read non-fiction materials ❑ Take notes while the teacher gives you a presentation or a lot of information ❑ Conduct science experiments and analysis of data ❑ Work on challenging math concepts (fundamentals of algebra, geometry) ❑ Take a second language ❑ Practice time management skills ❑ Create to-do lists, set goals, etc. ❑ Use computers to complete your assignments ❑ Work on assignments that require considerable out of class preparation ❑ Learn about college admissions process, tuition/financial aid ❑ Learn career/technical skills (vocational opportunities)	
2. What are the expectations while you are in class? ❑ High expectations (behavior and academic) for all students ❑ Learning time is maximized ❑ Consistency across the school ❑ Communication of expectations ❑ Rewards for good behavior	
3. What kinds of activities do you usually do in class? Describe a typical lesson in: ❑ Reading/Writing/Math/Science/Social studies ❑ Challenging ❑ Critical thinking; higher order thinking and problem solving ❑ Engaging; tied to real life application ❑ Work collaboratively ❑ Specific strategies used by teachers	
4. How do teachers know how you are doing in class? How do you know how you are doing at this school? ❑ Report cards ❑ Progress reports ❑ Assessments (standardized and teacher created) ❑ Rubrics	

❑ Feedback from teachers or peers: timely, frequent ❑ Chances to correct/revise work and show improvement	
Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	**School-specific questions**
5. What types of support does the school offer students who need extra help? ❑ Identifying students in need/accessing extra help ❑ Out of school academic services (tutoring) ❑ In-school academic services/supports ❑ Opportunities for credit recovery during summer or weekend programs ❑ Services for students with a wide range of needs, including handicapped and disadvantaged learners through those who are academically advanced, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, students that are homeless, students at risk of dropping out, students in crisis, and students who require intensive assistance	
6. Does the school offer any programs aimed at helping students develop social skills? ❑ Violence/anger management programs ❑ Community service ❑ Mentoring programs ❑ Boys'/girls' groups ❑ Clubs and extracurricular activities ❑ Sports ❑ Student governance/student council	
7. How does the school celebrate your accomplishments? ❑ Award ceremonies ❑ Announcements ❑ Rewards/trips ❑ National (Junior) Honor Society	
8. Is this school a safe place to learn? ❑ How does the school work to make sure that students are safe? ❑ Security personnel or equipment ❑ Training/workshops ❑ Bullying, teasing and harassment ❑ Rules fairly and consistently enforced ❑ Positive relationships with peers and adults	
9. How does the school involve your families? ❑ Workshops for parents	

| | ❑ Opportunities to volunteer
❑ Attendance at ceremonies, community meetings
❑ Parent/Teacher Organizations
❑ Ongoing communication | |

Appendix D: Prioritization

Prioritizing Findings: Introduction

The purpose of the prioritization process is to assist school leaders in thinking through areas for improvement that are most important/most likely to impact student achievement and outcomes and should be addressed first.

The prioritization process with MCPSC is optional. It occurs at a time determined by the school leaders and the site visit team lead and/or members. It should include key members of the school's leadership, in addition to members of the site visit team.

The following pages are intended to provide the school an overview of the prioritization process, as well as to serve as a guide for the team. This process may vary from school to school; each school has unique needs and different levels of experience with prioritization planning.

What are the steps involved in prioritization?

There are several steps that are addressed during prioritization. These steps are described in further detail on the following pages.

1. Introduce the process
2. Review SQR findings
   a. Identify strengths and resources
   b. Identify needs, issues, and opportunities
3. Prioritize area
4. Select goal
5. Define measure to monitor progress of goal
6. Define action steps
7. Evaluate actions and prioritize
8. Create an implementation plan and select champions
9. Close the process

Facilitation and decision-making methods

Throughout prioritization, there are many decisions to be made. The very nature of the process forces the participants to narrow their focus. This can be challenging because it means letting go of some things in the short term to first address what is most important. Going through such a process is easier if you start by determining how decisions will be made.

Neither the site visit team members nor the team leader will be making decisions for the school. The facilitator will present the school with various methods that can be used to support decision making, and the school will choose one of those methods.

1. **Introduce the process**

The participants will review the purpose of prioritization and engage them in the process by previewing the session agenda and outlining clear roles and responsibilities of all parties. During this component, the facilitator will work with participants to set team norms/ground rules and determine how decisions will be made throughout the session.

2. **Review SQR findings**

The facilitator will share the SQR findings with participants and the group will have an opportunity to react to the findings by identifying what each participant finds surprising, encouraging, and painful about the findings. The

3. **Prioritize area**

During this step in the process, participants will identify the findings that have the greatest impact (both positive and negative) on the success of the school, in order to move forward with developing an action plan.

4. **Select goal**

During this step in the process, the participants will identify the goal that will provide vision and direction for the school's actions moving forward. The goal will be aligned to the areas for improvement that have been prioritized by the participants.

5. **Define measure to monitor progress of goal**

The participants will determine a measure that will allow them to monitor the progress of their goal over the following weeks and months. This measure will also allow them to know when they have achieved their goal or if they need to alternative actions.

6. **Define actions to address barriers and assets**

The participants will identify barriers that have the ability to hinder or are hindering the school's ability to reach its goals, as well as assets that, if lost or absent, may have a detrimental effect on the school. The participants will then generate a list of actions that the school can take in order to overcome barriers or leverage assets.

7. **Evaluate actions and prioritize**

The facilitator will assist participants in identifying high impact actions that require low effort and/or limited investment in additional resources (time, money, or other).

8. **Create an implementation plan and select champions**

The facilitator will guide participants in the creation of an implementation plan that will identify the length of time that is needed to complete each action, the date by which it will be completed, a champion for each action, and a method for reporting progress. The champion is not responsible for completing the actions or single-handedly reaching the goal but, instead, to promote the goal and report back on the status of the goal to the participants of the prioritization session.

9. **Close the process**

Together, the group will revisit the session objectives and evaluate accomplishments.