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# CHARTER SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS AUTHORIZED BY  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”) established the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) in February 1999 to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended) (the “Act”), which granted the SUNY Trustees the authority to award charters for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools offering instruction in Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

SUNY is the largest charter school authorizer in New York and the largest university based authorizer in the country. In 2010, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers recognized SUNY’s new school application process as being the “Best Application Process” for Approving New Charter Schools and in 2011, the CBT Education Trust and the World Bank identified SUNY’s Authorizing Practices as an international model and featured them in a new online toolkit.

SUNY authorized charter schools lead the state’s charter sector in student achievement on state assessments in mathematics and English language arts. Besides its rigorous new school application review process, this success is also attributable to the manner in which SUNY holds schools accountable through its charter term.

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE VISIT GUIDE

School evaluation visits are central to the accountability for autonomy bargain that serves as the foundation for the Act and the high standards and expectations of the SUNY Trustees. Consistent with The Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”),<sup>1</sup> the Institute may conduct evaluation visits multiple times during each school’s initial charter term and during subsequent charter terms. The cumulative evidence collected during these site visits, renewal evaluation visits, and the school’s record of success at meeting its Accountability Plan goals becomes part of the record that informs the Institute’s renewal recommendation to the SUNY Trustees. The SUNY Trustees’ Charter School Committee makes all final charter renewal decisions.

While the SUNY Trustees have the obligation and authority to hold charter schools accountable through a number of means during the term of operation (including revocation of an education corporation’s charter), the requirement that a school apply and be approved for renewal on a periodic basis is at the core of the Act. The Institute’s renewal review is, therefore, a high stakes process for charter schools. While this document focuses on evaluation and other mid charter term visits, the Renewal Handbook, found on the Institute’s website, is a resource detailing the aspects of a site review for renewal purposes.

Given the close ties between school evaluation and the renewal process, the Institute examines SUNY authorized charter schools through the lens of the SUNY Charter School Renewal Benchmarks (“Renewal Benchmarks”)<sup>2</sup> during all site visits. These visits provide evidence to the Institute and feedback to the schools regarding the extent to which schools are meeting SUNY’s Qualitative Education Benchmarks relating to the school’s academic program (Renewal Benchmarks 1B -1F) and organizational capacity (Renewal Benchmarks 2C – 2D) at the time of the visit.

As a product of school evaluation visits, the Institute generates letters and reports that summarize the conclusions regarding the school’s performance with regard to the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. Reports will focus on certain benchmarks in more detail depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. These reports represent an important mechanism for keeping school boards, staff, families, and community members informed about school performance. In keeping with the philosophy of autonomy in exchange for accountability, the Institute does not make direct recommendations or prescribe which, if any, changes a school should make in response to evaluation results. In addition, the body of evidence documented in these visit letters and reports, including actions a school has taken in response to Institute feedback, is used along with other data to inform the Institute’s Renewal Recommendation Reports for the SUNY Trustees.

The Institute understands the many burdens on a school’s schedule and appreciates the cooperation of school leaders and staff throughout the evaluation process. The Institute has designed this guidance document to provide practical information about school evaluation visits so stakeholders know what to expect and how to prepare. Familiarity with the following procedures and protocols will help to ensure that each visit runs smoothly. A checklist is attached to the end of this document to assist schools in preparing for and participating in the school evaluation visit.

1. The SUNY Renewal Policies are available on the Institute’s website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf). The SUNY Trustees last updated the policies on June 25, 2012 to reflect the reconstitution of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee and its authority with respect to renewal.

2. The SUNY Charter Renewal Benchmarks are available on the Institute’s website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf).

# TYPES OF VISITS

Although the Qualitative Education Benchmarks provide a consistent frame for every evaluation visit, the Institute may apply its protocols differently based on the age of the school and its track record of performance.

## FIRST YEAR VISITS

The Institute visits all SUNY authorized charter schools in their first year of operation. The visit team generally spends one full day at the school. Understanding the challenges a school may face in its start up phase, the Institute collects data that provide evidence for developing systems and processes that will likely lead to student achievement during the initial charter term. Using a streamlined and modified version of the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, Institute team members observe classrooms, review documents, and interview school leaders, the school board, teachers, and other personnel to gather evidence of the strengths and areas for growth at the school. Upon completion of the visit, the visit team drafts a first year report to the school's board chair outlining the Institute's assessment of the school's progress toward fully implementing a program that will likely lead to student achievement.

## SCHOOL EVALUATION VISITS

The Institute does not visit all schools on an annual basis but conducts site visits as frequently as it deems necessary to monitor schools' progress toward meeting the Renewal Benchmarks. School evaluation visits generally last between one to two and a half days, depending on the unique circumstances of the school and/or time necessary to address the Institute's questions. Visit teams observe classrooms, review documents, and interview school leaders, the school board, teachers, and other personnel while relying on the Renewal Benchmarks as a framework for gathering evidence. In contrast to first year visits, school evaluation visits focus on the depth, quality, and efficiency of systems in order to evaluate whether or not the academic program is likely to result, or has resulted in, high academic achievement. The reports issued following school evaluation visits highlight some program strengths, but tend to focus more on the areas in which the school will need to improve in order to become a likely candidate for charter renewal. Past reports are available on the Institute's website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/school-performance-reports/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/school-performance-reports/).

## BOARD MEETING TO REVIEW THE SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW

For some schools, the Institute will schedule time to meet with the education corporation board of trustees to present the school's most recent school performance data through the form of a Performance Review. The Performance Review highlights areas of concern that the Institute has with regard to the school's most recent student achievement data. For schools that are not meeting or coming close to meeting their Accountability Plan goals, the Institute will coordinate time to meet with the board to discuss the Performance Summary and Review and then send a letter to the board chair with an overview of the meeting.

## PRE-KINDERGARTEN ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW

On an annual basis, the Institute conducts a review of a school's pre-Kindergarten program, utilizing the New York Statewide Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Program Quality Assurance Protocol.<sup>3</sup> These visits include a review of academic, organizational, and financial documentation, classroom observations of the pre-Kindergarten classrooms, and an interview with the program leader.

3. The Institute implements the New York Statewide Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Program Quality Assurance Protocol with fidelity during pre-K reviews. Refer to page 3 of this protocol for additional information on how this evaluation tool is used. Additional information can be found here: [www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/).

# PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

## SCHEDULING VISIT DATES

The Institute conducts visits throughout the school year. Prior to a visit, the Institute contacts schools with planned visit dates. The Institute considers factors such as holidays, testing, and professional development schedules of the schools, districts, and state as well as the availability of evaluators when selecting visit dates. While the Institute attempts to accommodate schools' schedules, the Institute generally is unable to change visit dates unless a serious conflict exists, namely if a large number of students will not be in attendance or participating in typical instruction. Once a school leader knows the day(s) of the Institute's site visit, the leader should share that information with staff and board members and begin preparations for the visit.

Recognizing that the time of year may have an impact on the quality of instruction and efficiency of operations, the Institute takes timing into consideration when drawing conclusions from evidence collected during a visit. The Institute asks that schools refrain from varying the school's regular daily routine in anticipation of the visit.

## POINT OF CONTACT

The Institute's Senior Analyst is the initial point of contact for issues related to school evaluation visits. As the visit date approaches, a visit team leader will be assigned to your school and will work with you to develop a schedule for the day(s) of the visit. The schedule will include classroom observations, interviews, and time for document review. The visit team leader will be a member of the Institute's staff. In the weeks leading up to the visit, the school's primary contact will be the team leader, though schools should always feel free to contact the Senior Analyst with questions or concerns that the team leader is unable to address.

## TEAM COMPOSITION

The Institute's Director of School Evaluation is responsible for creating visit teams. Visit teams often include external consultants as well as Institute staff members. The Director of School Evaluation carefully considers multiple factors such as school performance, past visit reports, school size, and location in order to build visit teams with expertise that corresponds to the unique profile of each school.

## THE VISIT SCHEDULE

Institute teams generally conduct evaluation visits over the course of one to two and a half days, depending on the size and structure of the school. Using the teacher schedules and the school's organization chart provided by the school leader, the visit team leader drafts a broad visit schedule shortly before the visit. This schedule identifies the times when team members will conduct classroom observations and interview teachers (usually during their preparation periods) but in some instances may not specify particular classes and teachers. The schedule also includes interviews of school leadership, specialists, staff developers, coordinators, operations personnel, and other out-of-classroom staff.

The schedule will include meeting times for evaluation team members to share notes, discuss patterns or trends, identify areas for further inquiry, and develop conclusions. The schedule also includes time for visit team members to meet with school leadership at the end of each day of the visit to ask further questions and/or share preliminary conclusions.

Most days typically run from approximately 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. If this falls outside of the school's normal operating hours, please inform the custodial and security staff of the visit team's expected presence and inform the visit team of special procedures for entering or exiting the building before or after regular school hours.

### One Day Visit

	Visit Team Lead	Team Member 2	Team Member 3
7:45-8:15	Team Arrival and Team Meeting		
8:15-9:00	School Leader Interview		
9:00-9:45	Classroom Observations	Teacher Interview	Dean of Students Interview
9:45-10:30	Teacher Interview	Classroom Observations	Classroom Observations
10:30-10:45	Drop Everything and Meet (DEAM)		
10:45-11:30	SETSS Teacher Interview	Document Review	Classroom Observations
11:30-12:30	Team Lunch and Debrief		
12:30-1:15	Interview with Assistant Principal	Teacher Interview	Interview with Director of Operations
1:15-2:00	Classroom Observations	ELL Teacher Interview	Special Education Teacher Focus Group
2:00-2:45	Document Review	Classroom Observations	Document Review
2:45-3:30	Special Education Coordinator Interview		Classroom Observations
3:30-5:15	Team Meeting & Debrief		
5:15-5:30	Reporting Initial Feedback to School Leadership		
5:30-6:30	Board Meeting		



## PRE-VISIT DOCUMENTS

### SUBMISSION OF PRE-VISIT DOCUMENTS

The Institute uses pre-visit documents in order to gain familiarity with the organizational structure and programs of each school prior to on site review. This practice allows the visit team to maximize time spent in classrooms and speaking with school staff during the visit.

Schools scheduled for an evaluation visit are required to submit all of the following documents three weeks prior to the start of the visit. The Institute understands that program schedules and staffing assignments may be fluid very early in a semester and works with schools to get accurate and timely information.

Please be sure that pre-visit documents provide consistent, up to date information such as teacher room numbers and class names, so the Institute can develop an accurate visit schedule. Again, we recognize that this process takes valuable time, but complete and timely receipt of these documents helps to ensure that the visit runs efficiently. To the extent possible, please feel free to submit existing documents. Please note that while the Institute team reviews all submitted information, team members might not decide to ask questions about specific documents during the visit.

### REQUIRED PRE-VISIT DOCUMENTS

*Please note that the pre-visit document list below is a sample of some items the Institute will request and not a full list of items. Please refer to the pre-visit document list that the Institute sends to the school with the scheduling e-mail for a school's evaluation visit.*

- **At-Risk Programs Charts.** Complete and submit the Institute's form detailing the school's program(s)/ requirement(s) for general education students struggling academically, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Please provide information on the programmatic elements, staff who work with the students, how the school identifies students for services, staff coordination requirements, and the professional development activities the school provides to school staff. The template for this document is available on the Institute's website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/school-visits/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/school-visits/).
- **Statistical Overview.** Complete and submit the Institute's Statistical Overview form requesting student enrollment and discipline data. The template for this document is available on the Institute's website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/school-visits/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/school-visits/).
- **Visit Data Collection Form:** Complete and submit the Institute's Visit Data Collection Form requesting student enrollment and teacher faculty retention data. The template for this document is also available on the Institute's website at: [www.newyorkcharters.com/accountability/school-visits/](http://www.newyorkcharters.com/accountability/school-visits/).
- **Staff Member/Employee List Spreadsheet:** Using the Institute's Staffing Information template, complete each tab with the following information:



- **Certification.** This section details each current teacher’s certification, teaching area, and experience. The Institute recognizes that teacher rosters are subject to change at the beginning of the school year and asks that school leaders highlight these changes during pre-visit discussions with the visit team leader. Note too that the list should include any previous surnames that may appear on certification or fingerprint records.
- **Staff Directory and Employee List.** Provide a complete staff directory that includes each person’s room/office number; for teachers, also include grades and subjects taught. The directory should list ALL non-instructional staff, including persons in the school who may not be employees, such as special education contractors, volunteers or cafeteria and security personnel utilized by the school. Please also provide the previous year’s directory.
- **The Institute’s template is available at:** <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/school-visits/>.
- **Assessment List and Calendar:** Provide a list of all diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments by grade level administered during the year; also provide the current annual calendar of when they are administered.
- **Organizational Chart:** Provide a chart that includes all types of staff members and illustrates the school’s reporting structure. It need not include individual staff members by name, but should reflect all positions in the school and relationships with any management company or charter management organization.
- **Professional Development Calendar and Rationale:** Provide a calendar of all professional development opportunities provided to staff.
- **Teacher Schedules:** Provide schedules that clearly indicate where each teacher will be and what subject and grade he or she will teach throughout the day(s) of the visit. Please also indicate non-instructional time, e.g., prep or planning periods, team meetings, lunch, etc. Again, in order to facilitate scheduling, please be sure to clarify class names and locations. If a teacher’s schedule contains class names for internal purposes such as “Harvard” or “801B,” please provide an explanatory key. The Institute uses this information to schedule teacher interviews with every effort to avoid conflicts with classroom instruction, though situations may arise when the visit team may ask that coverage be provided for a teacher in order to accommodate an interview. The Institute recognizes that teacher schedules are subject to change at the beginning of the school year and asks that school leaders highlight these changes during pre-visit discussions with the visit team leader.

## LOGISTICS

The visit team seeks the following accommodations:

- **Coordination:** The school should designate someone, typically a school leader, to serve as a liaison for the visit team. That person should be available throughout the visit to troubleshoot issues with the schedule, help team members locate documents or other evidence, and ensure that the evaluation team has the chance to gather as much information as possible about the school’s program and accomplishments.
- **Meeting Space:** The evaluation team will require a private meeting space (e.g., a small conference room, vacant classroom, or lounge) for the duration of the evaluation visit.
  - The Institute understands that space is often limited in charter schools and recognizes that taking over a space for an entire day may cause disruption to some staff. Notwithstanding, a private meeting space is essential to the successful conduct of the evaluation visit. This space will be used for team discussions, document reviews, and interviews with members of the school community if necessary. Place and clearly label requested documents for review in this room.

- It is essential for the Institute visit team to have a private space for each individual interview as the visit team will discuss topics related to individual staff members and students (i.e., staff evaluation results).
- Note, too, that many of the evaluation team members utilize laptop computers during the visit. Please ensure that adequate power outlets are available in the team's meeting room, which may require providing a power strip and/or extension cords.
- **Meals:** The team, which may ask school staff to accept delivery of meals, will cover all costs. Please note that team members are required to pay for their lunch and that the school should not provide food or beverages for the team members during the school evaluation visit.

# DURING THE VISIT

Evaluation team members will observe classrooms, interview teachers, administrative staff, and school board members and review documents during the visit. Team members then analyze the data collected from these activities to generate conclusions about the links between student achievement data, the educational program, and organizational capacity. The team typically shares preliminary conclusions with school leaders at the end of the visit, but these conclusions are subject to change following additional analysis.

## DOCUMENT REVIEW

Visit team members also examine a broad range of documents during the visit. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits the Institute and its staff, as the school's authorizer, to inspect student records including student performance data, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and discipline records during an evaluation visit. All external members of the visit team have signed, and are bound by, confidentiality agreements.

All requested documents should be available for review in the team's private meeting space upon its arrival. Please note that the Institute prefers to access documents electronically, so to the extent that curricular and other requested documents are available through a shared server, or flash drive, the school can provide access in this manner to the Institute. Some schools may create a temporary log in for the visit team to utilize during the visit to access school documents. If the school provides the materials in hard copy, please ensure the materials are organized and clearly identified (e.g., in labeled binders or folders). In addition, throughout the visit, the evaluation team may request additional documents to explore a particular line of inquiry. In order to minimize the work in preparing these documents for the visit, and to enable the Institute to understand the school's actual operation, provide only existing documents and do not create anything new for the purpose of the visit. If school leaders have any questions about the requested documents, they should contact the Senior Analyst well before the visit date.

*The list below provides a sample of typically requested documents; however, the visit team lead will communicate specific documents for the visit at the time of the pre-visit call:*

- **Map of School:** Provide a basic floor plan that evaluators can use to locate classrooms and offices. This does not need to be a formal blueprint.
- **Core Curriculum Documents:** Present documents that demonstrate a comprehensive curriculum aligned to state standards, such as curriculum frameworks or maps, scope and sequences, pacing guides, unit plans and lesson plans. These documents should include the documents that teachers use in their planning. If the school uses commercial curriculum materials (e.g., textbooks or prepared labs) provide examples showing their alignment to the school's curriculum and to state standards.
- **Lesson Plans:** Provide copies of English language arts and mathematics lesson plans from all teachers who will be teaching these subjects during the school evaluation visit.
- **Assessment Documents:** Provide examples of the school's key assessments, such as interim assessments or unit tests. In addition, documents, tools and results should be provided that demonstrate the school's systems for collecting and analyzing data and indicate how the school leader and staff use assessment results. These documents might include sample data binders, rubrics, item analysis, action plans or report cards.

- **Student Writing Samples:** Provide student writing products from each student from one representative class in each grade.
- **Evaluations:** Provide all protocols for evaluations of teachers, administrators, school leaders, the board and management company or partner organization, if applicable. Since leaders will not have completed summative evaluations for the current year by the time of the visit, provide instead evaluations from the previous year. The Institute understands the confidential nature of these documents and will review them in confidence in its meeting room, assuming that it offers adequate privacy. Please make teachers aware that team members may discuss their evaluations with them and/or with school leaders who completed the evaluation.

Please make documents available from each of the following groups of staff and school community members:

- **Teachers:** This can include formal evaluation documents, such as observation checklists/narratives, teacher self-assessments, or summative evaluation documents.
- **Administrators:** Provide all evaluations of instructional leaders and other senior staff and the criteria used, e.g., annual goals, job descriptions, bonus requirements.
- **School Leaders:** Provide the board's evaluation of school leaders who report directly to it and the criteria used to assess leadership performance.
- **Management Company/Organization:** If a school has a management company/organization, provide the board's evaluation of the company.

## CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In order to maximize information gathering and ensure an in depth understanding of the school's program, members of the visit team often begin visiting classrooms at the start of the visit. While the visit team is unlikely to visit all classes, evaluation team members do attempt to observe a representative sample of classrooms, particularly those in the core areas of instruction.

During their time in the classroom, evaluation team members observe instruction and review curricular resources and the work of students on display as well as in folders, journals, and written assignments. Evaluators do not interrupt instruction, but may briefly talk to students or teachers at opportune moments.

Teachers should have lesson plans, grade books, and related documents, as well as artifacts of student work available for the visit team. Please inform teachers and students that visitors may be entering and leaving their classes throughout the day, please reassure them that they are not obligated to greet or respond to visitors in any way, and the visit team prefers a 'business as usual approach.' Teachers should refrain from deviating from their typical routine or pedagogical style. Changes to routines and teaching methods often have undesirable consequences, as students are neither accustomed to, nor prepared for, the changes. Furthermore, such practice prevents the evaluation team from accurately assessing the effectiveness of typical and daily instructional activity.

## INTERVIEWS

The school evaluation team will conduct interviews with a number of school stakeholders. Interviews typically take 45-60 minutes and may not require all of the time set in the visit schedule. In addition, the Institute may choose to cancel an interview noted in the schedule if team members feel they have sufficient evidence to support a given conclusion. In the event that team members would like to add an interview, the visit team lead will work with the school leader in order to find a mutually suitable time

- **Leadership Interviews:** During the pre-visit video conference meeting, the school leader(s) provides a general orientation to the school, indicating current priorities, immediate challenges, and program changes since the previous visits, as well as the reporting structure and the roles of key personnel. During the visit, the visit team will meet with school leaders at various points. At the end of each day, the visit team will meet with the school leader to ask any clarifying questions and provide initial feedback. The visit team lead will determine which leaders to meet with and may not necessarily elect to meet with every member of a leadership team, depending on the unique circumstances of each school and time available.
- **Teacher Interviews:** The visit team schedules interviews with teachers at random. As noted above, team members make every attempt to schedule interviews with teachers when they are not instructing students; however, the Institute may request coverage for a class so that a particular teacher can participate in an interview.

Please provide accurate teacher schedules for the day(s) of the visit in order to avoid, to the extent possible, any conflicts with classroom instruction. Please let all personnel know about scheduled interview times according to the visit schedule. The visit team prefers to conduct interviews in the teachers' classrooms so that they can readily refer to their curriculum and other materials; however, when that is not possible, please identify another private space such as an unused classroom or office. In such cases, the visit team requests that teachers bring their laptop computer or documents with them such as curriculum guides, grade books, assessment calendars, etc. The Institute's Qualitative Education Benchmarks (in particular Renewal Benchmarks 1B-F, 2C) provide a framework for the types of information the visit team collects during teacher interviews. Please ensure that teachers understand that the purpose of the school visit is to evaluate the overall school program, not individual teachers. The Institute does not use staff member names and minimizes the identification of titles and positions in its evaluation reports. In addition, team members do not provide feedback to individual teachers regarding observed performance in the classroom.

- **Administrator Interviews:** The Institute interviews other school leaders, besides the principal or head of school, generally at the beginning of the visit. Evaluators may follow up with school leaders later in the visit as additional questions emerge and clarification of issues is needed. In addition, the Institute may schedule other key staff members such as the school's special education coordinator, academic intervention coordinators, or curriculum specialists for interviews.
- **Education Corporation Board Interview:** The board interview requires approximately one hour and may occur at the school during the visit or at the Institute's Albany or New York City offices on a separate date from the school visit. As oversight is one of the major responsibilities of the board, the Institute anticipates that all board members will attend. The board interview primarily focuses on governance and the board's plans for the future; it also includes discussion of school performance, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. While school leaders may be ex-officio, non-voting members of their school's board, the Institute may ask them not to participate in part or all of the board interview.

## DEBRIEF WITH SCHOOL LEADERS

At the end of the visit, the evaluation team typically generates preliminary conclusions based on the information collected during the visit and shares them with school leaders. Note that these conclusions are preliminary as the Institute conducts additional analysis of available evidence after the visit. Participation by other school staff members at this briefing is left to the discretion of the school leader; typically, senior school leaders attend and sometimes board members.

# AFTER THE VISIT

## REPORTS

After the school evaluation visit, the Institute produces a draft School Evaluation Report based on the findings of visit team during the school evaluation visit. Using SUNY's Qualitative Evaluation Benchmarks as a guide, the report focuses substantively on the school's progress in providing students with the academic and organizational program promised in its charter and Accountability Plan. The purpose of the visit is to evaluate the overall school program, not individual teachers or other staff members; thus, as noted above, the Institute does not use names in its reports. However, reports may refer to specific positions when warranted, such as discussion of instructional leadership or coordination of the at-risk program.

The Institute shares School Evaluation Reports with the school's board and school leader. At its discretion, the Institute will accept and post online any response that the education corporation makes in response to the School Evaluation Report. The Institute publishes the final School Evaluation Report on its website about two weeks after the report is sent to the school.

# SCHOOL LEADER CHECKLIST

## THE SCHOOL LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The following checklist is designed to help school leaders prepare for evaluation visits conducted by the Institute. The pre-visit call serves as an opportunity to answer any specific questions and provide additional guidance and instructions for the visit.

### TWO TO THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVALUATION VISIT

Share information with the school's board, staff, students, and parents regarding the school evaluation visit.

Lead the school in preparing the requested pre-visit documents (the pre-visit document list is shared with school leaders at the time when the school is notified about when the visit will occur).

Once documents are submitted, work with Visit Team Lead to clarify any uncertainties Institute staff have regarding Pre-Visit Documents.

### TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE VISIT

Participate in the pre-visit call with the Institute visit team.

Work with the Visit Team Leader to plan for the evaluation visit, including the development of a schedule for the visit.

### ONE WEEK BEFORE THE VISIT

E-mail with the Visit Team Leader to ensure a final schedule is complete.

Communicate the final schedule with the school community.

Ensure the requested documents are available for the visit team either via an online source or hard copies.

Secure a room that is both private and secure where the visit team may meet for discussions and leave materials without interruption during the course of the school evaluation visit.



## THE DAY BEFORE THE VISIT

Ensure that the requested materials are available, organized, and clearly labeled in the team's private meeting space. Please be prepared to provide additional documents based upon the visit team's review of materials.

Prepare copies of the map of the school.

Inform teachers that they should have lesson plans and related documents, as well as artifacts of student work available for review during their interview times. In addition, inform all teachers that the team may also visit their classes unannounced and request to speak to them.

Ensure teachers have lesson plans posted in an easily accessible place in each classroom.

Make teachers aware that, because of the limited amount of time for the visit, the team may not be able to spend time in each class

Finally, please ensure that teachers understand that the Institute visit team is not there to evaluate or provide feedback to each individual teacher and that staff names are not included in the school evaluation report.

If necessary, inform custodians, security and other relevant personnel about the arrival and/or departure of the evaluation team before or after regular school hours.

## DURING THE VISIT

Please note that members of the visit team will pay for lunch; the school should not provide food or beverages for team members during the school evaluation visit.

Ensure that the team's meeting room remains private and all requested documents are available and clearly labeled. As needed, provide a power strip and/or extension cords to power laptop computers.

Make yourself available to the team leader and other members of the team throughout the visit to ensure the inspection team has the chance to gather as much information about the school's program and accomplishments as possible. Assist the team in securing data, information and documents as needs develop during the visit.

Attend an end of visit meeting to listen to the team's preliminary visit conclusions and discuss next steps in the evaluation process. It is left to the discretion of the school leader to decide which school stakeholders attend this meeting.

## AFTER THE VISIT

Review the School Evaluation Report and share the report with staff members, parents, and the school community. Reach out to the Institute's Director of School Evaluation for any clarifications.



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