

Charter School Renewal Guide

School Year	School Visited	Date of Visit	Evidence strongly supports, supports, somewhat supports, does not support
	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?		
Evidence Category	<u>Benchmarks</u>		
Renewal Benchmark 1A	During the contract term, the school has met or come close to meeting its Educational Goals (Schedule 7-1).		Does evidence support?
Educational Goals (Schedule 7-1)	<p>The CSO determines the extent to which the school has met the Educational Goals as set forth in the charter contract:</p> <p>Academic Achievement: As measured by the State assessment, the school’s percentage of total tested students in all tested grades identified as proficient in all tested subjects or identified as college-ready as reported by the Michigan Department of Education will meet or exceed the select peer schools’ mean reported percentage of total tested students in all tested grades identified as proficient in all tested subjects or identified as college-ready. Select peer schools are the set of school buildings determined annually by GVSU to be the most demographically, socioeconomically, programmatically, and geographically similar to the school.</p> <p>Academic Growth: As measured by the State assessment, the school’s mean student growth percentile rank in English language arts and math will meet or exceed the select peer schools’ mean student growth percentile rank. Select peer schools are the set of school buildings determined annually by GVSU to be the most demographically, socioeconomically, programmatically, and geographically similar to the school.</p>		CSO Comments
			<p>*Note that your most recent School Performance Report (created by GVSU) will automatically be imported. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.</p>

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1B	The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.	Does evidence support?
Use of Assessment Data	<p>The following items are generally present within the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and State performance standards; • The school has successfully implemented all requirements under Michigan’s 3rd Grade Reading Law; • The school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments; • The school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders, Board members, parents, and the community; • Teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention; • School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and • The school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students’ progress and growth. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 1A and 1B:

- Assessment schedule/calendar and data other than M-STEP (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress [NWEA MAP], initial and extensive), related to both growth and achievement; provide historical trends
- Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)/intervention programs; describe implementation, monitoring and utilization of results to drive instruction
- Professional development (PD) calendar and artifacts (e.g., PowerPoint slides of PD), including opportunities/training related to academics (direct instruction, differentiation, intervention, etc.)
- Process for communicating assessment results to staff, students, and families
- Data analysis process, including any teams that meet to analyze data (school-wide, grade level, content area, etc.); describe structures, initiatives, outcomes
- Improvement plan or processes if goals are not met

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1C	The school's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.	Does evidence Support?
Curriculum	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to State standards and across grades; • In addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans; • Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents; • The school has a process for selecting, developing, and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and • Teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 1C: Curriculum alignment (sample only) with academic standards

- Sample of Curriculum maps/guides (scope and sequence, pacing guides, etc.)
- Sample lesson plans from different grade levels and subject areas
- Curriculum teams/Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); describe structures, initiatives, outcomes
- Instructional Specialist job description (or similar position)
- PD opportunities/training related to curriculum (design/development, lesson planning, etc.)
- Curriculum revision process

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1D	High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.	Does evidence support?
Pedagogy	<p>The following elements are generally present within the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum and state standards; • Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding; • Teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills; • Teachers maximize learning time (e.g./ appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 1D:

- Instructional expectations (e.g. non-negotiables)
- School-wide model of instruction
- Instructional initiatives based on identified needs
- Teacher evaluation tools
- Lesson plan formats, sample unit/lesson plans
- PD opportunities/training related to instruction

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1E	The school has strong instructional leadership.	Does evidence support?
Instructional Leadership	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed; • The instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff; • Teachers are assigned to a mentor or master teachers for the first 3 years of his/her employment in the classroom, in accordance with State law (MCL 380.1526); • Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers; • Professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice; • Instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations in accordance with State law; and • Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 1E:

- Narrative to describe leadership approach
- Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
- A description of the school’s teacher mentorship/coaching program, including a sample schedule
- Professional development (PD) calendar and artifacts (e.g. PowerPoint slides of PD), including opportunities/training related to development, based on identified needs
- Specialists (instructional, intervention, assessment, etc.) job descriptions to support staff development
- Teacher evaluation tools, including sample completed teacher evaluations and informal observation/feedback forms (names removed)
- Coaching schedule and tracker, if applicable
- Agendas/minutes from leadership team or other staff meetings

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1F	The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.	Does evidence support?
At-Risk Students	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically; • The school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students; • General education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program; • The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students; • Teachers are aware of their students' progress toward meeting individualized education plan (IEP) goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students; • The school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and • The school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including school nurse, if applicable. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 1F:

- Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)/intervention programs; describe implementation, monitoring, and utilization of results to drive instruction
- Special education, 504 and ELL evaluation process (including identification process)
- Job descriptions of staff that provide support to students with special needs (consultants, teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.)
- Student enrollment data, disaggregated by disability
- Process for communication between general educators and support staff, including communication documents/tools
- Transition services/supports
- Continuum of services
- Connection with outside agencies

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2A	The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Does evidence support?
Mission & Key Design Elements	The following elements are generally present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school faithfully follows its mission; and • The school has implemented its key design elements. 	CSO Comments Please provide a narrative to support this benchmark.
Renewal Benchmark 2B	Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.	
Parents and Students	The following elements are generally present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly communicates each child’s academic performance results to families; • Families are satisfied with the school; and • Parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 2A:

- Narrative to describe school’s focus on its mission and key design elements
- Key design elements and artifacts that demonstrate the implementation of the key design elements

Examples of evidence for 2B:

- Parent communication methods (website, newsletters, surveys*, committees, etc.)
- Parent satisfaction surveys
- Student performance reporting methods (grade/behavior reports, parent access to web based system, etc.)
- Enrollment and retention data; provide historical trends

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2C	The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.	Does evidence support?
Organizational Capacity	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program; • The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; • The school has a clear student discipline system at the administrative level that is consistently applied; • The school retains quality staff; • The school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals; • The school maintains adequate student enrollment; • The school has procedures to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and • The school regularly monitors and evaluates the school’s programs and makes changes if necessary. 	<p>CSO Comments</p> <p>*Note that your student and staff handbooks will automatically be imported for this question. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.</p>

Examples of evidence for 2C:

- Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
- Enrollment and retention (student and teacher) data and process to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; provide historical trends
- Monitoring systems and procedures - describe implementation and utilization of results to drive changes
- Marketing materials/initiatives to support enrollment/retention goals
- Handbooks (student, parent, staff, etc.) and Policies (behavior, etc.), including discipline system and policies

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2D	The school board effectively governs the school and provides appropriate oversight to the service provide (if applicable).	Does evidence support?
Board Oversight	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances; • It establishes clear priorities, objectives, and long-range goals, and has benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision; • The Board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and • The Board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians, and students. 	CSO Comments

	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Benchmark 2E</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems, and processes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Does evidence support?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Governance (continued)</p>	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships; • The Board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities, or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management company fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and establishes benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion; • The Board regularly reviews and updates Board and school policies, as needed, and has an orientation process for new members; • The Board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • The Board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy, consistent with that set forth in the charter, and consistently abides by it throughout the term of the charter; • The Board implements a process for dealing with complaints, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy, including acting on complaints in a timely fashion; • The Board abides by its bylaws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding Board member election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and • The Board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and records minutes for all meetings including closed sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings. 	<p style="text-align: center;">CSO Comments</p>

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2F	The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of the charter.	Does evidence support?
Legal Requirements	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable State and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the CSO via Epicenter in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including No Child Left Behind [NCLB] highly-qualified status) and background check requirements, Freedom of Information Act requests, and the Open Meeting Act; • The school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules, and regulations; • The school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements; • The Board has an active and ongoing relationship with independent legal counsel, who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions, and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and • The school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to appropriate parties in a timely fashion. 	CSO Comments

***Note that your board calendar and a sample of board minutes will automatically be imported for this question. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.**

Examples of evidence for 2D, 2E and 2F:

- School performance reports (internal, not provided by CSO)
- Budget adoption; describe the process of reviewing and adopting
- Board policies and procedures, including the process for reviewing and updating; ensure they are updated, include information on involvement of legal counsel
- Evaluation tools (Board self-evaluation and management evaluation of Board)
- Examples of benchmarks/initiatives established when deficiencies are identified
- Board recruitment; describe process for recruiting candidates, interview questions, etc.
- Board training process and materials (orientation, ongoing)
- Board communication systems (internal, external)

	Renewal Question 3 Is the school fiscally sound?	
Renewal Benchmark 3A	The school operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate.	Does evidence support?
Budgeting and Long Range Planning	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures; • Board members, school management, and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate; • The school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions; • The school routinely analyzes budget variances; the Board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and • Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions. 	CSO Comments

	Renewal Question 3 Is the school fiscally sound?	
Renewal Benchmark 3B	The school maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures.	Does evidence support?
Internal Controls	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures; • The school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management’s direction, laws, regulations, grants, and contracts; • The school safeguards its assets; • The school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions; • The school has controls to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy; • The Board members and school employees adhere to a code of ethics; • The school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained; • The school has systems to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the Board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements; • A staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; • The school prepares payroll according to appropriate State and federal regulations and school policy; and • The school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the CSO, and/or Michigan Dept. of Education or Treasury, if needed. 	CSO Comments

	Renewal Question 3 Is the school fiscally sound?	
Renewal Benchmark 3C	The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing GVSU CSO and the Michigan Department of Education with required financial reports that are on time, complete, and follow generally accepted accounting principles.	Does evidence support?
Financial Reporting	<p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; • Annual budgets and cash flow statements; • Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses; • Grant expenditure reports 	CSO Comments
Renewal Benchmark 3D	The school/ESP (if full service) maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).	Does evidence support?
Financial Condition	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly; • The school prepares and monitors cash flow projections; and • If necessary, the school pursues state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding. 	CSO Comments

Examples of evidence for 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D:

- Budget creation and adoption; describe the process of creating, reviewing, and adopting the budget
- Budget and amendments*
- Evidence of monitoring of operating budget and process to correct deficiencies (meeting minutes)*
- Financial audit*
- Fiscal policies and procedures, including payroll

	Renewal Question 4 Is the school a safe environment that promotes effective teaching and learning?	
Renewal Benchmark 4A	The school building is structurally sound, clean, and meets all requirements of the law.	Does evidence support?
Building Structure	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school building has a valid Certificate of Occupancy; and • The school building has passed a facility review conducted by the GVSU CSO. 	CSO Comments

***Note that your certificate of occupancy and most recent facility review reports will be automatically imported for this. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.**

Examples of evidence for 4A:

- Certificate of Occupancy*
- Facility review report*

	Renewal Question 4 Is the school a safe environment that promotes effective teaching and learning?	
Renewal Benchmark 4B	The school's promotes cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to the school population.	Does evidence support?
Culture and Climate	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have effective classroom management techniques/routines; • The school has established an appropriate discipline policy; • Teachers have received PD on cultural responsiveness as related to the specific school populations and have knowledge of the cultures in their classrooms which they apply to their practice; • There are structures to guarantee that the school and work environment is open to, and accepting of, diversity and free from discriminatory behavior and practices; and • School staff interact with students in ways that respect and encourage their cultural norms, preferences, and native languages that may be different from teachers' own. 	CSO Comments Please provide a narrative to support this benchmark.

Examples of evidence for 4B:

- Narrative to describe school's culture and climate; explain how this is achieved
- PD opportunities/training on school culture, cultural responsiveness, and diversity/equity/ and inclusion
- Behavior models and classroom management approach/techniques, including discipline policies