This addendum to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS) Accountability Review Protocol (Protocol) outlines the components of CMVS renewal inspections.

## **General overview**

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) is obligated by [statute](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section94) and [regulation](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr52.html) to conduct ongoing performance reviews of each CMVS and, by the last year of the school’s certificate term, decide whether or not to renew the school’s certificate. The certificate renewal decision is based upon the school’s performance over the term of the certificate in three areas:

1. The school’s faithfulness to the terms of its certificate,
2. The success of the school’s academic program, and
3. The viability of the school as an organization (603 CMR 52.11).

The renewal process included the submission of a renewal application, a renewal inspection visit, and analysis of all evidence related to the CMVS’ performance, including quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (Department) CMVS accountability process.

This addendum explains the process by which information is gathered, analyzed, and reported regarding the performance and progress of CMVS applying for renewal. In determining whether or not to recommend certificate renewal, the Department considers the information provided by the renewal inspection, prepared in accordance with this addendum, along with other sources of evidence.

In 2014, the Department developed and released the CMVS Performance Criteria (Criteria). The Criteria define CMVS success and provide the standards by which schools are evaluated for all aspects of CMVS accountability, from the application process to renewal. The Criteria outline expectations for CMVS performance in the three areas of accountability: faithfulness to its certificate, academic program success, and organizational viability. The Criteria provide the performance benchmarks and framework for the renewal inspection visit and for subsequent Department analysis, which leads to a recommendation regarding certificate renewal.

## **components and Timeline for the certificate Renewal process**

The major components of the certificate renewal process are summarized below:

| **Component** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **Submission of Application for Renewal** | The CMVS submits the Application for Renewal of a certificate (renewal application) under 603 CMR 52.00 no later than 12 months before the certificate is set to expire. Typically, June 30. The Board will review renewal applications pursuant to the criteria set forth in 603 CMR 52.11 and M.G.L. c. 71, § 94. The completed renewal application must follow the content and format guidelines set forth in the following pages and must be complete upon submission. |
| **Application for Renewal review** | The Department reviews the completed Application for Renewal. The Application for Renewal is accepted or returned to the school for revision or the inclusion of additional information. |
| **Renewal inspection** | The renewal inspection provides the Department with current information about the school’s performance relative to the CMVS Performance Criteria. The length and scope of the renewal inspection varies depending on the school’s age, size (if visit is conducted in-person), status (conditions or probation), and/or past performance. All renewal inspections collect evidence that is required for a renewal determination as outlined in 603 CMR 52.11 and M.G.L. c. 71, § 94. Department staff may conduct the renewal inspection, or the Department may contract with an independent organization to conduct the renewal inspection.  Following the renewal inspection, the renewal inspection team prepares a renewal inspection report summarizing the team’s findings or observations regarding the school performance relative to its Accountability Plan and the CMVS Performance Criteria. The CMVS has the opportunity to provide factual corrections to the renewal inspection report. |
| **Opportunity for Response** | In addition to factual corrections, the CMVS may provide the Department with a formal response to the renewal inspection report; this response becomes part of the school’s permanent record. |
| **Summary of Review – drafting process** | Department staff prepare a Summary of Review (SOR), which summarizes for the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner) and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education the school’s performance over the certificate term. The SOR incorporates the evidence compiled throughout the certificate term from sources such as annual reports, accountability reports, renewal inspection report, demographic data, state assessment results, board of trustees’ documents, and financial audits. The SOR also contains relevant background information and evidence from the school’s history. |
| **Summary of Review – factual correction process** | The Department sends a draft of the SOR to the school for review. The school is given approximately one week in which to make factual corrections to the report.  The school may provide the Department with a formal response to the SOR; this response is appended to the final draft of the SOR. |
| **Renewal decision** | The SOR is presented to the Commissioner, who makes a renewal recommendation to the Board based on the evidence. Board members will then deliberate and vote on the Commissioner’s recommendation during a meeting of the Board.  The Board will consider renewal applications pursuant to the criteria set forth in 603 CMR 52.11 and M.G.L. c. 71, § 94. When deciding on certificate renewal, the Board shall consider progress made in student academic achievement and whether the CMVS has met its obligations and commitments under the certificate. |

## **Massachusetts virtual school performance criteria**

The school’s accountability plan and the CMVS Performance Criteria provide the analytical framework used to hold a CMVS accountable for performance in these three areas and to decide whether or not a certificate should be renewed (603 CMR 52.11(2)).

The CMVS renewal inspections, reports, and summary of review will align with CMVS Performance Criteria found below, as those criteria were in place during the current certificate terms of both CMVS.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Massachusetts Virtual School Performance Criteria (2014)** | | |
| **Faithfulness to Certificate** | 1. **Mission and Key Design Elements:** The school is faithful to its mission, implements the key design elements outlined in its certificate, and substantially meets its accountability plan goals. | |
| 1. **Access and Equity:** The school ensures program access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school. | |
| 1. **Compliance:** The school compiles a record of compliance with the terms of its certificate and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. | |
| **Academic Program Success** | 1. **Student Performance:** The school consistently meets state student performance standards for academic growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness. | |
| 1. **Program Delivery:** The school delivers an academic program that provides improved academic outcomes and educational success for all students. | Curriculum |
| Instruction |
| Assessment and Program Evaluation |
| Supports for Diverse Learners |
| 1. **Culture and Family Engagement:** The school supports students’ social and emotional health in a safe and respectful learning environment that engages families. | Social, Emotional and Health Needs |
| Family Engagement |
| **Organizational Viability** | 1. **Capacity:** The school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and creates a professional working climate for all staff. | School Leadership |
| Professional Climate |
| Contractual Relationships (If applicable) |
| 1. **Governance:** Members of the board of trustees’ act as public agents authorized by the state and provides competent and appropriate governance to ensure the success and sustainability of the school. | |
| 1. **Finance:** The school maintains a sound and stable financial condition and operates in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner. | |

## **Scope of Renewal Inspections**

## Renewal inspection

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose:** To corroborate information contained in the school’s renewal application, submitted during the final year of its certificate term as part of the renewal process. The renewal inspection report becomes part of a body of evidence used by the Board to determine whether or not the school may continue to operate. The renewal process includes the submission of a renewal application, a renewal inspection visit, and an analysis of all evidence related to the performance of the school | | | | | | |
| **Length:** | 1-2 day(s) | **Team**: | Department Staff and External Reviewers | **Product**: | Renewal Inspection Report and Summary of Review | |
| **Eligible Schools**:   * Schools in the last year of their certificate term | | | **Required Focus Groups/Interviews**:   * Administrators * Special Ed./ELL Administrators/ Teachers * Board of Trustees * Teachers * Students * Parents/Families | **Required Documents**:   * See Appendix A and the list contained in Appendix F.   Copies of special education and **ELL policies and procedures manuals** should be sent to the Department four weeks prior to the visit. | | **Renewal Criteria Addressed**:   * 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and conditions (*if applicable*) |

As indicated in the Protocol, the Department notifies each school of the scope of the renewal inspection prior to the visit (p. 3).

## **Renewal Inspection Preparation**

The Protocol provides a detailed checklist for school leaders/designees to use in preparation for any and all accountability reviews (Appendix A pp. 10-11). This checklist can also be applied to preparations for renewal inspection visits.

## **Renewal Inspection Documents**

The Protocol lists all the documents that schools *may* be asked to provide for accountability reviews and renewal inspections (Appendix D: Required Documents pp. 23-26). Because renewal inspections will be conducted **remotely**, schools will *not* be required to submit the following documents:

* Directions
* Map of Administrative Offices

As noted in the Protocol, when the Department notifies each school of the scope of the renewal inspection, the school is provided with a list of the specific documents that will be required and a timeline for submitting them (p. 18).

The multiple accountability review components described in the Protocol will also be applied to renewal inspections (pp. 3-9). The following components are meetings and will be held **remotely** using Zoom or a comparable online meeting platform:

* Meeting(s) with head(s) of school
* Focus groups/interviews (various stakeholder groups)
* Team time/team moderation
* Exit meeting with head(s) of school

The renewal inspection team leader will work with the school to determine who is responsible for hosting and sending the links for meetings that include school stakeholders. Renewal inspection teams are responsible for hosting meetings that include only members of the renewal inspection team.

As noted in the Protocol, it is the school’s responsibility to gather representative focus groups through an open invitation (p. 7).

## **Site Visit Schedule**

A number of focus groups must be scheduled for the day(s) of the review. It is the school’s responsibility to gather a representative group from each category through an open invitation, and to inform each participant of the time and place of the meeting. The Department expects that each participant is present for the entirety of the meeting and is given complete freedom to speak regarding their knowledge of and experience at the school, with no limits or repercussions imposed. Focus group composition **should not include more than 10 individuals**. Additionally, it is not necessary for individuals to attend multiple focus groups. For instance, it is not necessary for the special education administrator to attend the school leaders/administrators focus group. This person should only attend the focus group for special education/ESL administrators.

Conducting a successful renewal inspection remotely may require allowing extra time between focus groups and/or extending the usual length of focus groups. When preparing the renewal inspection schedule, the renewal inspection team leader and school personnel should consider whether it may be advantageous to schedule elements of the renewal inspection over two days instead of trying to complete everything in one day.

Below is a sample schedule for the renewal inspection team’s work at the school. The schedules illustrate the types of activities that occur during a typical site visit. The actual schedule will be developed by the team leader in consultation with the school. Each team may include fewer or more members than what is represented on the sample schedules. Focus groups are typically an hour in length, but the renewal inspection team leader may schedule longer or shorter meetings depending on several factors. Focus groups with school leaders/administrators may be extended to 90 minutes, while 30 minutes or 45 minutes may be enough for some focus groups. The renewal inspection team leader should review the list of questions for each focus group and determine an appropriate amount of time.

## Day 1 Sample Schedule

| **Time** | **Team Member 1** | **Team Member 2** | **Team Member 3** | **Team Member 4** | **Team Member 5** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8:00-8:20 | Department Team Meeting | | | | |
| 8:20-8:30 | Break | | | | |
| 8:30-8:45 | Meeting with Head(s) of School | | | | |
| 8:45-9:00 | Break | | | | |
| 9:00-10:30 | **\*School Leaders/ Administration Focus Group** | **\*Board of Trustees** | **School Leaders/ Administration Focus Group**  *Notetaker* | **Board of Trustees**  *Notetaker* | Break |
| 10:30-11:00 | Break | | | | |
| 11:00-12:00 | Break | **Parent Focus Group**  *notetaker* | Break | Break | **\*Parent Focus Group** |

## Day 2 Sample Schedule

| **Time** | **Team Member 1** | **Team Member 2** | **Team Member 3** | | **Team Member 4** | **Team Member 5** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8:30-8:50 | Department Team Meeting | | | | | |
| 8:50-9:00 | Break | | | | | |
| 9:00-9:15 | Meeting with Head(s) of School | | | | | |
| 9:15-9:30 | Break | | | | | |
| 9:30-10:30 | **\*Student Focus Group** | Break | **Student Focus Group**  *Notetaker* | Break | | Break |
| 10:30-11:15 | Break | | | | | |
| 11:15-12:15 | **\*General Education Teachers/Special Education and ESL Staff Focus Group** | **Contractual Partner Representatives Focus Group**  (support) | Break | **General Education Teachers/Special Education and ESL Staff Focus Group**  *(Notetaker)* | | **Contractual Partner Representatives Focus Group**  *Notetaker* |
| 12:15-2:30 | Break | | | | | |
| 2:30-4:30 | Department Team Moderation Time | | | | | |
| 4:30-4:45 | Break | | | | | |
| 4:45-5:00 | Exit Discussion with Head(s) of School | | | | | |

## **classroom Observations**

Renewal inspections will include remote classroom observations. During the four weeks preceding the scheduled day(s) of the review, the school will be asked to provide the team with access to its learning management system (LMS) and classrooms via test accounts. The team may also request to have a demonstration of the LMS, and the school will be expected to demonstrate the LMS and how to access.

## Virtual Lesson Observation Form

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Department logo, figure holding a star |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of observer:** |  | **Lesson date:** |  |
| **Name of course:** |  | | |
| **Subject area:** |  | | |
| **Special education? (Y/N):** |  | **ELL / SEI? (Y/N):** |  |
| **Grade level(s) addressed:** |  | **# teachers and their roles:** |  |
| **Number of students expected:** |  | **Number of students observed:** |  |
| **Start time (always 0:00)** | 0:00 | **End time (0:01-X:XX):** |  |
| **Lesson objective:** |  | | |

**To the observer:** In the box below, describe what is happening and for how long, including what LMS functions are being used (attach additional sheets as needed).

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**To the CMVS :** In the column labeled “Expected practice” below, please provide practice indicators observers should see in the virtual observations.

**To the observer:** In the column labeled “Evidence” below, record what was happening and for approximately how long. When possible, please provide specific examples as opposed to a running narrative.

| **Classroom culture and management** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Expected practice (CMVS)** | **Evidence (Observer)** | **Rating (0-3)** |
| Classroom climate is characterized by clear routines, respectful relationships, behaviors, tones, and discourse |  |  |  |
| Learning time is maximized for all students |  |  |  |
| Classroom practices foster student engagement |  |  |  |

| **Quality instruction** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Expected practice (CMVS)** | **Evidence (Observer)** | **Rating (0-3)** |
| Instructional practices are consistent with the school’s expected practice |  |  |  |
| Instruction/activities challenge all students to develop and use higher order thinking (analyzing, creating, evaluating) |  |  |  |
| Teacher uses various checks for understanding throughout the lesson |  |  |  |
| Instruction provides skill/content that are aligned to grade-level standards and/or students’ educational needs |  |  |  |
| Activities/materials/strategies are differentiated to provide support for all learners |  |  |  |
| **SEI Classrooms:** Instructional content in the English language is sheltered |  |  |  |
| **SWD Classrooms:** To extent observable, students with disabilities are provided with the appropriate assistive technologies, accommodations, supports, adaptations and related services |  |  |  |

**To the virtual school (optional):** In the column labeled “Expected practice” below, please provide any additional practice indicators observers should see in the virtual observations. Examples include practices in the areas of instruction, behavior, and accommodations not provided above.

| **Additional practices specified by the CMVS (Optional)** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Expected practice (CMVS)** | **Evidence (Observer)** | **Rating  (0-3)** |
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