



Massachusetts Department of
**ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

Massachusetts Charter School

Guidelines for Writing Accountability Plans

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1. Why Accountability Plans?

The Massachusetts charter school initiative was established to provide students and parents throughout the Commonwealth with greater choice and quality in their public schools. In exchange for the freedom to design its own programs, hire its own teachers, and set its own budget, a Massachusetts charter school embraces a high level of accountability. Like all public schools, charter schools must comply with applicable laws and regulations in order to operate. To earn renewal of their charter, however, charter schools also must demonstrate their effectiveness; they are responsible for *results* rather than relying on plans, methods, or intentions. Charter schools that cannot demonstrate the achievement of their students and the effectiveness of their programs face non-renewal.

In addition, charter schools are highly accountable to the public because children attend the school at their parents' discretion. Parents are not required to enroll their child in a charter school, or keep them there, if the school is not effective. In short, charter schools must demonstrate their effectiveness to both public officials and individual parents in order to survive.

The ability to provide effective, compelling evidence of academic and organizational performance is central to charter school success.

As a result, the ability to provide effective, compelling evidence of academic and organizational performance is central to charter school success.

Charter schools write an accountability plan outlining the array of data the school will collect and present in proving its effectiveness and meeting its burden of accountability. When finalized, the accountability plan becomes part of the school's "charter" – the agreement between the charter authorizer and the school that allows for the school's existence. Thus, the accountability plan is a central element in the bargain of freedom to design unique programs in exchange for greater accountability to the public.

The charter school accountability process in Massachusetts is guided by three areas of inquiry: faithfulness to the terms of the charter; success of the academic program; and viability of the organization. Because schools must present affirmative evidence of success in these three areas, they provide the organizing structure for the accountability plan. The Charter School Office (CSO) developed the Common School Performance Criteria (Criteria)¹ which set standards for each of these three areas. The Criteria provide guidance about how the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) defines school success. The Criteria also guide the creation of each school's accountability plan.

In writing an accountability plan, schools should remember that the fundamental goal of the plan is to prepare an argument that will provide comprehensive and compelling evidence of success in the three areas of accountability. A well-written and rigorously tracked accountability plan provides the evidence to inform the decision-making process. These Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans give schools guidance on the type of data that provide compelling evidence and the required structure for plans.

The Guidelines give schools guidance on the type of data that provide compelling evidence, the required structure for measures, and the clearest presentation of results.

¹ available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=common>

2. The Accountability Cycle and Creating Accountability Plans

A well-written and rigorously tracked accountability plan provides the affirmative evidence that supports a strong recommendation for renewal.

A prerequisite to writing an effective accountability plan is an understanding of how this document fits into the larger system of charter school oversight. The accountability plan is a critical piece in the submissions, visits, and evaluations that comprise the “Accountability Cycle”² and ultimately serve as the basis for renewal decisions.

The first element of the Accountability Cycle is the granting of a charter. The charter application serves as a blueprint for the school and outlines the standards to which the school aspires. By the end of its first year of operation, each school must create a specific and measurable accountability plan that is reflective of its mission. By August 1 after every school year, each charter school submits an annual report to the CSO. This report’s main purpose is to demonstrate the school’s interim progress on each objective in the accountability plan and present evidence to validate this progress. Evidence that is presented in the annual report is corroborated and augmented by a series of additional external evaluations of the charter school, including one or more site visits and a renewal inspection following the submission of an application for renewal. Additionally, these visits provide context to a school’s quantitative measures of progress by adding qualitative detail and anecdotal evidence in areas that are difficult to measure.

The process of creating an accountability plan should be a deliberate one. School leaders need to think carefully about how to craft a plan, and who should be included in the process. For instance, it may be wise to include the school’s data expert, so that the measures are reflective of the way that data is actually collected and analyzed. It is critical that both school leaders and board members understand the accountability plan and are committed to its implementation.

Finalizing an accountability plan involves on-going discussion within the school community as well as between the school and the CSO. Multiple drafts are frequently required. Because the accountability plan sets the standards by which the school will seek to demonstrate its effectiveness, the CSO may require or recommend additional clarity on various measures contained in a school’s plan.

Timeline for New Schools:

A draft accountability plan must be submitted to the CSO by March 1 of a school’s first year of operation. The first half of the first year of operation can be used to gather baseline achievement data and a solid understanding of the student population in order to create a plan that is both meaningful and realistic. The CSO will then work with the school to ensure that a final version, approved by the school’s board of trustees, is in place by June 1 of a school’s first year of operation. This timeline is intended to encourage schools to begin gathering data early in the process of implementing their school design. At the same time, it allows schools to develop their measures with the input of school constituents.

² For more information about the Accountability Cycle, please read “Massachusetts Charter Schools Accountability Guide” at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=guide>.

Timeline for Renewal Schools:

After a school successfully completes the charter renewal process, the CSO will work with the school to finalize a new accountability plan. This new plan may build on the prior version, but should create more ambitious measures to reflect heightened expectations. The new plan, approved by the school's board of trustees and accepted by the CSO, must be in place by the beginning of the new charter period.

3. Creating an Accountability Plan

When drafting an accountability plan, please use the Charter School Accountability Plan Template (template) that is found at the end of this guide. All accountability plans will have a similar format and contain objectives and measures. The template outlines some mandatory objectives and measures that all charter schools must adopt. Additionally, the template allows charter schools to choose additional objectives and create measures that fit their own unique goals.

Objectives and measures:

The Criteria define multiple **objectives** for charter schools organized around the three areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to charter, academic success and organizational viability. These objectives are general, declarative statements that define charter school success. While all charter schools will strive to achieve all of the objectives outlined in the Criteria, an accountability plan should *not* include every objective contained in the Criteria.³ Each school will use the template to create an accountability plan. The template includes seven mandatory objectives that all charter schools must include in their accountability plans.

Each objective contained in a school's accountability plan should include one or two **measures**. Measures are indicators that define whether the school is meeting performance expectations. Each measure must answer the following specific questions:

- What will the result be?
- How will the result be measured? (specify an assessment tool)
- Who will achieve the result?
- When will the result occur? (set a timeframe or target date)

The template includes eight mandatory measures that all schools must include in their accountability plans. Charter schools are expected to choose additional objectives and create accompanying measures that will best fit the school's unique goals. Optional measures can take two forms – outcome measures and process measures. **Outcome** measures outline the expected results. All objectives must be linked with at least one outcome measure that is well-aligned to the objective. **Process** measures track the implementation of activities that will lead to the desired ultimate outcomes. These measures can be a useful addition to outcome measures, particularly for new schools, for when a school launches a significant initiative, or for aspects of

³ Those objectives which are not included in the accountability plan will be assessed by the CSO using multiple sources of evidence, such as the school's annual reports and CSO site visits. A comprehensive list of the sources of evidence is attached to the Criteria.

the program that are difficult to quantify, such as character development or the implementation of sound governance practices. Such process measures focus on *how* something will be done.

Examples of Outcome and Process Measures

Outcome Measures

All students will demonstrate proficiency in word processing and Microsoft Office basics on an internally developed assessment administered every spring.

Each year, the board will meet 85 percent of the goals set at its annual retreat.

Process Measures

All students will take a class in word processing and Microsoft Office basics during their first year in attendance at Alpha Academy Charter School.

Each year the school's board will participate in a rigorous and systematized self-evaluation that includes input from the school community; these results will be made public.

Creating a Meaningful Accountability Plan

When writing the accountability plan, keep a few key elements in mind:

- Alignment to the mission:

Accountability plans should begin with the school's mission statement, which reflects the school's distinctiveness, purpose, and reason for being. Highlighting the mission statement helps the school focus on key elements and set clear priorities.

- Size and scope of the plan:

An accountability plan is not designed to describe all of the outcomes a charter school has set for itself. Rather, each charter school selects objectives from the template that will highlight areas of its performance that will inform a decision about whether to renew the school's charter. Each of the three sections of the accountability plan should include at least two objectives, with one to two measures established for each objective. Effective measurement and reporting can require a significant commitment of time and resources, and even concise measures can yield a lengthy annual report. A more powerful case is made when schools measure a few things well, rather than many things incompletely or superficially.

- Duration of the plan:

Schools are expected to create a plan at the beginning of the five year charter term that they can adhere to for the duration of charter period. Of course, it is possible that during the course of a charter term, a school may want to reexamine the objectives and measures that it set for itself at the beginning of its charter. Nonetheless, the desire to improve upon a plan

must be balanced against the importance of creating a track record that extends over the duration of the charter term.

4. Creating Specific Measures for the Three Areas of Charter School Accountability

i. Faithfulness to Charter

The accountability plan should include objectives related to the school's faithfulness to the unique concepts and programs it proposed in its charter application, and highlights in its mission statement. Typically, a school would want to measure its effectiveness in implementing the most important and unique aspects of its program. For example, a school with a bilingual program would want to measure its students' facility in their second language. A school with a strong emphasis on character development might wish to assess the school culture or climate. A technology-focused school would want to measure its students' ability to apply computer skills. In creating such objectives, schools should remember that accountability plans are designed to measure only the most important elements of a school's program.

Effective measurement of these unique aspects of a school's program requires creativity in including outcome measures as well as process measures. In many cases, schools may find that tools do not yet exist to measure results in the areas they wish to evaluate. In such cases, schools may have to develop measurement tools themselves.

In understanding how to best measure faithfulness to key elements of the charter, we can use the technology-focused school as an example. This school's accountability plan may include process measures that illustrate the computer literacy classes students will be required to take or the extent to which technology will be integrated into the core academic curriculum. While it is important to measure the implementation of technology programs, the accountability plan should also measure the effectiveness of the programs with outcome measures. Such outcome measures might be developed by creating a list of key technology skills that students should master by the end of each grade level. The faculty might construct a rubric describing how students demonstrate mastery of those skills. The school might then plan an assessment to take place at the end of each year that evaluates students' ability using the established rubric. The school would then create a measure based on expectations for student performance on the assessment as shown through rubric scores.

The template includes five objectives related to faithfulness to charter. Each charter school should choose one or two objectives in the faithfulness to charter section that best fit the overarching goals of the school. For each chosen objective, the charter school should create one or two measures that will be used to quantify the school's progress towards meeting the chosen objective.

ii. Academic Performance

A school's first priority is the academic achievement of its students. Therefore, it is imperative that charter schools provide solid and convincing data regarding the success of their academic programs. In addition to the three mandatory academic program objectives and five mandatory measures included in the template, charter schools can use a variety of assessment tools and

different methods of measuring academic performance to present evidence of overall student achievement.

Mandatory Objectives and Measures

In order to meet the standards set out in the Criteria, the Charter School Office has drafted mandatory objectives and measures that each school must attain, or show progress towards attaining, during its five year charter term. The required areas pertain to the first three criteria contained in the academic program section of the Criteria – MCAS performance, MCAS growth, and AYP.

- MCAS Performance

All accountability plans must include the mandatory MCAS performance objective and two measures outlined in the template. The MCAS is a criterion-referenced test, based on a fixed standard of student achievement. The first mandatory measure requires schools to show and annual increase in Composite Performance Index (CPI) for both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics scores in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups. This measure will track each school’s efforts towards achieving grade level proficiency for all students. The second measure requires schools to show an annual decrease in the percentage of students scoring in the Warning/Failing categories on standard MCAS tests in ELA and mathematics in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups. This measure will indicate the extent to which each school is supporting its neediest students towards reaching proficiency.⁴

- MCAS Growth

All accountability plans must include the mandatory MCAS growth objective and accompanying measure. Growth is a norm-referenced measure. The Commonwealth’s growth model measures the extent to which students in a school, grade, or group perform from one year to the next with respect to students with the same or similar “score histories” (scores in previous years). All schools have the opportunity to show growth, regardless of their students’ academic background.⁵

- AYP

All accountability plans must include the two mandatory AYP objectives and two measures. The No Child Left Behind Act sets a goal for all schools of making AYP in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups. This goal is an example of an absolute measure of academic performance.

Optional Objectives and Measures

Within the Criteria, there are nine additional criteria that all charter schools are expected to meet in terms of academic program success. Each school may choose to select additional objectives, from these additional nine criteria, and create accompanying measures to present evidence of academic performance through their accountability plan.

⁴ For details about how CPI is calculated, please refer to <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/>

⁵ For more information about the Commonwealth’s growth model, please visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/>

These Guidelines will discuss three types of assessment tools that could be used to measure student achievement:

- criterion-referenced,
- norm-referenced, and
- internally developed assessments;

and the three measures of student achievement that can be derived using these assessment tools:

- absolute,
- value-added, and
- comparative measures.

These types of assessments and measures can be used to create a variety of methods of tracking academic success. Beyond the mandatory measures, the CSO does not require the use of any type of assessment tool, or method of measuring performance. Each charter school should choose assessments and measures that are appropriate for the school's goals.

Assessment Tools

Types of Assessments
Criterion Referenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCAS• International Baccalaureate• DIBELS• DRA
Norm Referenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stanford 10• ITBS• Terra Nova• GRADE• GMADE
Internally Developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolios• Rubrics• Performance-based

Criterion-referenced tests are based on a fixed standard of achievement. They rate students' performance not in relation to the achievement of other students but in relation to what experts and authorities believe an educated student should know and be able to do. The levels of achievement are determined prior to the administration of the test and remain the same no matter how students perform. The MCAS is such an assessment. Additional examples of criterion-referenced assessments are the International Baccalaureate, the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Learning Skills) benchmark assessment, and the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment).

Norm-referenced tests are standardized and measure the student's achievement against a standard established by a norm group. Some of the more commonly administered norm-referenced tests are the Stanford 10, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and the Terra Nova. These tests are usually multiple-choice, and are scored by

comparing individual student performance is compared to a national peer group. These tests are particularly helpful in providing measures of growth over time (see Value-added Measures of Student Achievement, below). It should be noted that most norm-referenced, standardized tests measure a limited array of basic skills and are most effective in assessing progress in skill-intensive disciplines like math and reading. Because these tests do not always align with state learning standards in social studies and science, some schools find them less effective in measuring progress in these disciplines.

Many schools wish to include measures in their accountability plans that are based upon a system they have designed themselves. While schools may choose to rely on externally validated standardized tests, some schools' **internal assessment systems** are integral to their educational approach and therefore key to measuring student progress. Such internal assessments can often

provide rich and compelling data that is beyond the scope of externally designed measurement tools. These can take many forms, such as portfolios, juried assessments, project grades, and essays. It is important, however, to design and implement such an assessment system in a way that is reliable and valid. Effectively designing and evaluating a school's own internal assessment system requires a significant amount of work. A school should keep in mind the following when creating such a system:

- Internal assessments should be scored according to specific standards using consistent protocols or rubrics. To collect meaningful data through an internal assessment, a school must ensure that such assessments are scored according to valid, reliable and objective standards. One of the keys to such a system is pre-determined rubrics, as are clear protocols for the implementation and scoring of such assessments.
- Internal assessment systems should be vetted and validated. If a school is using a common rubric and scoring protocol, it must ensure that these tools are being used by the entire faculty or group of graders in the same manner (often called interrater reliability). Some schools may develop a process of examining student work and corresponding grades to ensure consistency. Others have their system vetted by experts outside the school community or use external reviewers to evaluate student work.
- Internal assessments should assess areas of knowledge beyond the scope of other measurement tools. Internal assessments in accountability plans serve little purpose if they fail to get beyond basic skills more easily assessed by standardized tests. Such internal assessments are most compelling when they show that students have mastered complex, "higher-order" skills.

As an example of an internal assessment used in an accountability plan, a school might augment standardized measures of its students' writing abilities with an assessment that asks students to write a five-paragraph essay analyzing a novel. Such an assessment would provide compelling data if the results were scored by an internal committee or qualified, independent experts. The school would also want to document that its panelists had looked for the mastery of specific skills using pre-defined criteria.

Methods of Measuring Academic Performance

Measuring Academic Performance:

- **Absolute Measures** – student performance is measured against fixed criterion
- **Value-Added Measures** – gains or losses in student performance are measured over time
- **Comparative Measures** - student performance is compared to that of other selected student populations
- **Process Measures** – the process of implementing a new practices is measured

There are three types of outcome measures of academic performance that can be used in the accountability plan - absolute, value added and comparative measures. In addition to these outcome measures, schools can also set process measures for academic performance. Each of these will be discussed in more detail, below.

Absolute Measures of Student Achievement

To measure success in reaching an accountability plan goal, some schools may choose to use absolute measures of student achievement. Such goals set an ultimate goal of where a school wants its students to be on a certain assessment – such as all students scoring above the 50th percentile on a norm-referenced test. These particular

objectives are not focused on growth but rather on the ultimate level of achievement expected by the school.

Value-Added Measures of Student Achievement

Value-added measures chart longitudinal data of student progress over time on a particular assessment, comparing students' scores to their own previous scores. Looking at data in this way can provide an indication of how much students have progressed academically within a given time frame. When doing this type of analysis, schools should pay particular attention to tracking cohorts of students who have all been enrolled in the school for the same amount of time.

Because a value-added measure compares students to their own prior performance, it is an effective tool for eliminating demographic issues such as the socio-economic status of students. When student scores are aggregated, a value-added measure shows how much a school has added to its students' performance. In the case of students who arrive performing poorly and perhaps several years behind their peers, a value-added measure allows a school to demonstrate evidence of learning that may not show up on a criterion-referenced assessment that is tied to specific grade level learning standards. Without a value-added measure, the progress of an eighth grade student whose math skills improved from the fourth to the seventh grade level might be missed. At the other extreme, a school that inherited a population of students who were already performing consistently above grade level might not be able to demonstrate clearly the school's contribution to the students' performance without value-added data.

Schools can generate effective value-added data from norm-referenced assessments. These tests can be given to students each year and are specifically designed to allow for year to year comparison. Value-added measurement can also be achieved using an internal assessment system provided that it is designed to collect such data reliably.

Comparative Measures of Student Achievement

Comparative measures track a charter school's progress against the progress of similar populations of students at other schools. While it may be tempting to use comparative measures

to demonstrate that the students at a charter school are outperforming those at other schools, these types of measures should be approached very carefully. Because charter schools are much smaller than school districts, and may draw students from more than one district, a straight comparison of the performance of the students at the school with a district can be statistically misleading.

Comparative measures are most useful when comparing particular subgroups. For example, a school that specialized in serving at-risk or former drop-outs might usefully compare the success of its students with that of the same kind of students enrolled in other programs.

Process Measures of Student Achievement

When a school seeks to establish a new practice that it believes will lead to specific performance outcomes for its students, it can measure the implementation of that practice through one or more process measures. It is critical, however that process measures be linked with outcome measures. In other words, whatever activities are proposed should be clearly linked to a measurable purpose.

EXAMPLES of an Academic Program Measures

Absolute Measure

Each year, the aggregate NCE score on the English language arts section of the Terra Nova will be at least 50 for each grade level.

Value-Added Measure

The average national percentile ranking of each cohort of students will increase by an average of three percentiles per year on the reading battery of the ITBS until the average national ranking of the cohort is 70%.

Comparative Measure

Averaged scores for students at Alpha Academy Charter School will place the school among the top 25% of middle schools in the Omega district on the MCAS English language arts examination, as measured by CPI.

Process Measure

As tracked by observations conducted by the principal, the primary instructional practices at Alpha Academy Charter School will be cooperative learning techniques, interdisciplinary classes, and differentiated instruction, as described in the school's charter.

iii. Organizational Viability

In general, organizational viability objectives demonstrate that the school is a sustainable organization and likely to continue operating in an effective and responsive manner. The Criteria include many areas in which to demonstrate a charter school's organizational viability, and it is possible to design measures for each of these areas. However, keeping in mind that an accountability plan should measure only the most critical areas of a school's performance, for most schools, three to four objectives related to organizational viability is sufficient.

Mandatory Objectives and Measures

In order to meet the standards set out in the Criteria, the Charter School Office has drafted mandatory objectives and measures that each school must attain, or show progress towards attaining, during its five year charter term.

- Solvency and Stability

There are three mandatory objectives included in this section, pertaining to the school's overall financial health and system of internal controls. The accompanying three measures should be met each year in order to demonstrate that the school is operating in a way to sustain organizational viability.

Optional Objectives and Measures

Within the Criteria, there are fourteen additional criteria that all charter schools are expected to meet in terms of organizational viability. A charter school should select at least one other organizational viability objective in an area for which the school aims to demonstrate effectiveness. Using the guidance in these Guidelines, the school should then create one or two measures that will outline how the school will reach the objective(s).

Charter School Accountability Plan Template

School Name:

Charter Period: (20__-20__)

Mission Statement: [please include mission statement here]

Instructions: *In addition to the required objectives and measures (that are numbered), please choose one to two other objectives from each of the three areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to charter, academic success, and organizational viability. For each of the selected objectives, list one to two measures that quantify the school’s progress towards meeting the objective. Process measures may be included, but at least one measure for each objective must be an outcome measure. When submitting your draft plan to the Charter School Office, please delete the rows that are not included in the school’s accountability plan.*

I. THE SCHOOL IS FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF ITS CHARTER.		
CRITERIA	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
Mission, Vision and Educational Philosophy	The school is faithful to the mission, vision and educational philosophy defined in the charter application and any subsequent approved amendment(s).	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Governance/ leadership	The board of trustees implements the governance and leadership structure as defined in the charter application and any subsequent approved amendment(s).	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Contractual relationships (if applicable)	<p>The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with their management company. Changes in the school’s relationship with its management company comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p> <p>The board of trustees of a Horace Mann charter school establishes and operates under one or more Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the host district regarding services, facilities and funding, and waivers of collective bargaining agreement provisions, if applicable.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Academic program	The school establishes an academic program that includes the pedagogical approach, curriculum, assessment, and other unique elements defined in the charter application and any subsequent approved amendment(s).	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>

II. THE SCHOOL'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM IS A SUCCESS.

CRITERIA	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
MCAS - performance	1. Students at the school demonstrate proficiency, ⁶ or progress toward meeting proficiency targets on state standards, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams in all subject areas and at all grade levels tested for accountability purposes. ⁷	1. The school shows an annual increase in the CPI in ELA and mathematics in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups. 2. The school shows an annual decrease in the percentage of students scoring Warning/Failing on standard MCAS tests in ELA and mathematics in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups.
MCAS - growth	2. The school achieves and maintains a median student growth percentile (SGP) of 40 or higher in the aggregate and for all statistically significant sub-groups in all subject areas tested for accountability purposes.	1. Each year, the median student growth percentile is 40 or higher in the aggregate and in all statistically significant sub-groups in all subject areas tested for accountability purposes.
AYP	3. The school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and for all statistically significant sub-groups in English language arts and mathematics. ⁸ 4. The school does not have a status for accountability purposes of Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring.	1. Each year, the school makes AYP in the aggregate and for all statistically significant sub-groups in English language arts and mathematics. 2. Each year, the school does not have a status for accountability purposes of Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring.
External assessments of student achievement	If externally-developed assessments other than the MCAS are administered, student performance is strong and demonstrates improvement over time on those assessments.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Internal assessments of student achievement	Student performance is strong and demonstrates improvement on internally-developed assessments of academic achievement.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Curriculum	The school's curriculum is documented, articulates the skills and concepts that all students must know and be able to do to meet state standards, is aligned horizontally and vertically, and supports opportunities for all students to master these skills and concepts.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>

⁶ "Proficiency" includes attaining either proficient or advanced classification.

⁷ "Accountability purposes" is any test at any grade level that "counts" toward AYP determination.

⁸ Making AYP requires meeting state determined targets in participation, absolute performance or improvement gains, and attendance or graduation.

Instruction	<p>School-wide instructional practice is aligned with the school design, instructional expectations, and curriculum.</p> <p>Instruction is effectively delivered and conveys clear expectations to students.</p> <p>The use of classroom time maximizes meaningful student learning.</p> <p>Students are actively engaged in learning.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Classroom and school environment	<p>The classroom and school environment is orderly, supports the goal of student understanding and mastery of skills, and is consistent with the school’s mission.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Diverse learners	<p>The school provides services for all students, including English language learners and those with disabilities and/or special education needs, as required by law.</p> <p>The school implements and follows a Department approved recruitment and retention plan.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Professional climate	<p>Teachers are provided with feedback and guidance that leads to improved instructional practice and student achievement.</p> <p>The school implements a professional development plan that effectively addresses the needs of teachers.</p> <p>Teachers are provided with structures for collaboration.</p> <p>The school establishes a professional climate resulting in a purposeful learning environment and reasonable rates of retention for school administrators, teachers and staff.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Assessment and instructional decision-making	<p>The school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments.</p> <p>Teachers and school leaders use qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform, guide, and improve instructional planning and practice.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Program evaluation	<p>The school regularly and systematically reviews the quality and effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingly.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>

III. THE SCHOOL IS A VIABLE ORGANIZATION.

CRITERIA	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
Solvency and stability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school develops an annual budget that can be sustained by enrollment and is in support of student academic achievement. 2. The school demonstrates a history of positive net assets, adequate cash flow to sustain operations and support the academic program, and consistently operates within budget. 3. The school's annual independent audit is free of material or repeated findings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school's annual budget is sustained by its enrollment. 2. Each year, the school demonstrates a history of positive net assets, adequate cash flow to sustain operations and support the academic program, and consistently operates within budget. 3. There is an absence of material or repeated audit findings in annual audits by qualified independent auditor
Fiscal oversight	<p>The board of trustees and school leadership implement effective structures and systems to enable responsible fiscal oversight of the school.</p> <p>The board of trustees demonstrates long-term fiscal oversight through appropriate planning processes.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Enrollment	The school implements the student recruitment, retention, and enrollment process intended in the charter, in the school's recruitment and retention plans, and as defined by statute and regulations.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Board accountability	The board of trustees is responsible to the school community(ies) it serves.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Decision making and communication	The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication. These systems result in a common sense of purpose for all school constituencies.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Roles and responsibilities	The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among board and staff.	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>

Board oversight	<p>The board of trustees makes use of best practices to hire (an) effective school leader(s).</p> <p>The board of trustees regularly and systematically assesses the performance of (the) school leader(s) against clearly defined goals and makes effective and timely use of the evaluations.</p> <p>The board of trustees operates with a clear set of goals for the school and has developed a set of tools for understanding progress toward meeting those goals.</p> <p>The board of trustees manages the school in a manner that ensures academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
School leadership	<p>School leaders effectively administer the school in a manner that ensures academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Organizational planning	<p>The school has realistic plans for program improvement, possible future expansion, and adequate facilities based on evaluation and analysis of data.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Family engagement	<p>The school involves parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children.</p> <p>Families and students are satisfied with the school’s program.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Coordinated Program Review	<p>The school receives minimal findings in the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) process and immediately addresses any areas of non-compliance.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Safety	<p>The school establishes and maintains a physically safe environment for students and staff.</p> <p>The school establishes an environment free from harassment and discrimination for students and staff, and effectively addresses the social, emotional, and health needs of its students.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Facilities	<p>The school provides facilities that meet applicable state and federal requirements.</p> <p>The school’s facilities are suited to its program and are sufficient to serve diverse student needs.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Employee qualifications	<p>Employees of the school meet all applicable state and federal qualifications and standards.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>
Dissemination	<p>The school has collaborated with its sending district(s) on the sharing of innovative practices and has provided models for replication and best practices.</p>	<i>OPTIONAL MEASURE: The school may create one to two measures that quantify its progress towards meeting this objective.</i>