



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Massachusetts Charter School

Common School Performance Criteria

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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The Common School Performance Criteria (Criteria) have been developed using the three guiding areas of charter school accountability defined in the current regulations, 603 CMR 1.00 – faithfulness to charter, academic success, and organizational viability.

The purposes of the Criteria are:

- to bring alignment to the criteria used across all aspects of charter school accountability, from the application process to the renewal process;
- to provide charter schools with clear guidance about how the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) defines charter school success and on what basis charter schools will be evaluated; and
- to clarify the connections between charter school accountability and state and federal accountability standards.

There is a wide range of sources of evidence that will provide the data to help charter schools, the Charter School Office, and the Commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education know if a charter school has met performance expectations. A partial list of evidence sources is attached after the Criteria.

I. FAITHFULNESS TO THE TERMS OF THE CHARTER	
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).
Governance/ leadership	The board of trustees implements the governance and leadership structure as defined in the charter application and any subsequent approved amendment(s).
Contractual relationships (if applicable)	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. 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.
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).

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS	
MCAS - performance	Students at the school demonstrate proficiency, ¹ 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. ²
MCAS - growth	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.
AYP	The school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and for all statistically significant sub-groups. ³ 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.
Internal assessments of student achievement	Student performance is strong and demonstrates improvement on internally-developed assessments of academic achievement.
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.

¹ “Proficiency” includes attaining either proficient or advanced classification.

² “Accountability purposes” is any test at any grade level that “counts” toward AYP determination.

³ Making AYP requires meeting state determined targets in participation, absolute performance or improvement gains, and attendance or graduation.

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS	
Instruction	School-wide instructional practice is aligned with the school design, instructional expectations, and curriculum. Instruction is effectively delivered and conveys clear expectations to students. The use of classroom time maximizes meaningful student learning. Students are actively engaged in learning.
Classroom and school environment	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.
Diverse learners	The school provides services for all students, including English language learners and those with disabilities and/or special education needs, as required by law. The school implements and follows a Department approved recruitment and retention plan.
Professional climate	Teachers are provided with feedback and guidance that leads to improved instructional practice and student achievement. The school implements a professional development plan that effectively addresses the needs of teachers. Teachers are provided with structures for collaboration. The school establishes a professional climate resulting in a purposeful learning environment and reasonable rates of retention for school administrators, teachers and staff.
Assessment and instructional decision-making	The school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments. Teachers and school leaders use qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform, guide, and improve instructional planning and practice.
Program evaluation	The school regularly and systematically reviews the quality and effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingly.

III. VIABLE ORGANIZATION	
Solvency and stability	The school develops an annual budget that can be sustained by enrollment and is in support of student academic achievement. 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. The school's annual independent audit is free of material or repeated findings.
Fiscal oversight	The board of trustees and school leadership implement effective structures and systems to enable responsible fiscal oversight of the school. The board of trustees demonstrates long-term fiscal oversight through appropriate planning processes.
Enrollment	The school implements the student recruitment, retention, and enrollment process intended in the charter, in the school's recruitment and retention plan, and as defined by statute and regulations.
Board accountability	The board of trustees is responsible to the school community(ies) it serves.
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.

III. VIABLE ORGANIZATION

Roles and responsibilities	The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among board and staff.
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>
School leadership	School leaders administer the school in a manner that ensures academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.
Organizational planning	The school has realistic plans for program improvement, possible future expansion, and adequate facilities based on evaluation and analysis of data.
Family engagement	The school involves parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children. Families and students are satisfied with the school's program.
Coordinated Program Review	The school receives minimal findings in the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) process and immediately addresses any areas of non-compliance.
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>
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>
Employee qualifications	Employees of the school meet all applicable state and federal qualifications and standards.
Dissemination	The school has collaborated with its sending district(s) on the sharing of innovative practices and has provided models for replication and best practices.

Sources of Evidence:

Accountability Documents:

- Original charter application
- Accountability plan
- Charter amendments
- Annual reports
- Site visits
- Renewal inspection reports
- Summaries of review
- Contract and/or MOU

Governance and Leadership:

- Site visits – focus group interviews with leadership stakeholders
- Annual financial audits
- Budgets
- Capital plans
- Board minutes
- Staff data reports including exit interview summaries and teacher qualifications
- Staff surveys
- Policy documents
- Parent/family surveys
- Opening Procedures activities
- Recruitment and retention plans
- Board of trustees self evaluation or self study
- Evaluation of head of school and/or school leadership
- Handbooks- family, staff, student, board
- Operation manuals, including fiscal policies and procedures guides
- Enrollment numbers and student demographic profile

Student Achievement Data:

- MCAS scores
- Student growth percentile (SGP) data
- Sub-group analysis (including those that may be statistically insignificant for state reporting purposes) for English language learners and special education students
- AYP reports
- School identified and collected data
- Parent/family surveys

Academic Program Components:

- Site visits – classroom observations and school walk-through
- Review of curriculum documents
- Site visits – interviews
- Site visits – sample feedback tools, evaluation instruments
- Internal program evaluation reports

Compliance Documents:

- Coordinated Program Review (CPR) reports & Mid-Cycle Review reports
- Problem Resolution System complaints received and resolution status
- District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
- Special Education and English language learners program self-evaluation.
- Documentation of current Certificate of Occupancy, Health, Safety, and Fire inspections.
- Accessibility analysis