

**TOOL FOR ANALYSIS
Charter School Plan for School Improvement**

Summary Questions

This page contains summative questions that should serve as the focus for plan review. These questions should be answered *after* Steps 1 through 3, on subsequent pages, are completed.

1. Has the charter school presented a responsive and coherent (integrated/logical/prioritized) plan for improving student performance?

Evidence

The school's chosen improvements and action steps align with its root cause analysis/hypotheses. Improvements have been prioritized, and evidence in the school improvement plan (item analysis) confirms that the school is using data to inform decisions.

2. Does the plan seem feasible and viable in this charter school?

Evidence

Structures and personnel are in place to make this plan both feasible and viable. For example, the school has time for teachers, and it now has leaders in place to undertake and oversee curriculum development and coaching work. The action steps required for engaging in planned improvement work are carefully broken down by month and include specifics on who is responsible for overseeing specific aspects of the work. Nevertheless, planned actions, other than those that are "ongoing", end in November 2007 (p40). Providing more details about specific steps to be taken during the broader 2007-08 school year and beyond would improve the plan.

3. Does the charter school demonstrate a sense of commitment and urgency to making whatever changes in the school's systems, personnel, and practices are necessary for implementing the plan?

Evidence

Yes, the school demonstrates a sense of commitment and urgency. One indication of this is that it reorganized its schedule mid-year, in January 2007, to ensure that students who had not reached proficiency were provided extra time in math and ELA (p17). Also, the school's planning consultant outlined urgent recommendations. These recommendations are at the core of improvements noted in the plan. However, it is unclear precisely when a standards-based curriculum will be in place for all course offerings, and it is also uncertain whether or not sufficient focus has been placed on building curricula and improving standards-based teaching and learning. Do the

personnel assigned to build these curricular documents have the time and expertise to do so effectively, and quickly, so that students will benefit from rigorous standards-based instruction throughout the 2007-08 school year and beyond?

4. Is the plan an effective tool for communication with faculty, the Board of Trustees, and other stakeholders?

Evidence

The school improvement plan clearly delineates the work to be done in making improvements to impact student performance. It also details the rationales for selecting specific improvement initiatives. This clarity/detail stands to serve the school well as it shares the plan with stakeholders. It is unclear which stakeholders had roles in creating the school improvement plan. Text indicates that a consultant, in addition to the current Acting Principal, may have played the most active roles in developing the plan (p3). However, because development was done following a roll-up of report, survey, and other data, input from key stakeholders appears to have been used.

5. Do plan reviewers have additional questions that need to be answered? If so, please note them below.

Evidence

1. Curriculum development work falls primarily on the shoulders of one school leader and the teachers. Is more help required in ensuring that aligned curricula are in place, that curriculum documents are appropriately vetted, and that teachers can reach to standards-based curricula as they teach their students in 2007-08 and beyond?
2. Are the needs of subgroups addressed? Are any initiatives targeted to specific student groups? The *Summary of Review-January 2007* notes that the school has not completed required Special Education program evaluations or a civil rights analysis, but this not addressed through action steps. Has the school completed this work?
3. Is the performance evaluation system fully developed? Are teacher and administrator evaluations linked to improvement targets and/or student performance?
4. Are implementation and student performance benchmarks sufficient to allow the school to mark progress?
5. Are planned improvements sufficient to allow the school to make AYP in the aggregate and for all subgroups each year through 2014 and beyond? Are expectations high enough?
6. Is enough emphasis devoted to math, considering the significant CPI gains that must be made? Are safety nets in place?

**Draft TOOL FOR ANALYSIS of
District Plan for School Improvement**

Use the following criteria to evaluate the charter school plan. Note evidence that coincides with your evaluation of this part of the plan.

STEP 1. Self Analysis

<p>1. <u>Performance Targets:</u> The plan includes performance targets for the school to make AYP in the aggregate and subgroups and substantially increases the percentage of students attaining proficiency.</p>	
<p>A. ELA Student performance targets to reach AYP in ELA are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stated accurately for the aggregate and subgroup populations. ▪ Composed to significantly increase the numbers of students performing at proficient and advanced. ▪ Focused on subgroups and grade levels exhibiting the greatest need. 	<p><i>Evidence (Provide numeric targets and use AYP data.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ELA CPI will increase from 85.3 in 2007 to 87.4 in 2008, 89.5 in 2009, 91.6 in 2010, 93.7 in 2011, 95.8 in 2012, 97.9 in 2013, to 100 in 2014. ○ Focus on subgroup improvement can be increased in plan updates/refinements.
<p>B. Mathematics Student performance targets to reach AYP in Mathematics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stated accurately for the aggregate and subgroup populations. ▪ Composed to significantly increase the numbers of students performing at proficient and advanced. ▪ Focused on subgroups and grade levels exhibiting the greatest need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Math CPI will increase from 61.6 in 2007 to 67.1 in 2008, 72.6 in 2009, 78.1 in 2010, 83.6 in 2011, 89.1 in 2012, 94.6 in 2013, to 100 in 2014. ○ Focus on subgroup improvement can be increased in plan updates/refinements.

2. Hypotheses: Plan includes the charter school’s analysis about the underlying reasons for the school’s performance problems. It identifies the barriers, policies, or past practices that inhibited establishing the conditions for effective practice, as well as what it will take to eliminate the barrier(s). It provides an overview of past efforts to resolve these impediments.

<p>A. Identification of Barriers and Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The charter school’s analysis draws conclusions about barriers to improving student performance. ▪ The analysis considers and addresses barriers to improving performance in all student groups for which targets are set. 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, barriers are noted. However, overcoming the barrier of not having an aligned curriculum is a challenge, and the plan does not sufficiently allow the reader to determine how this will be overcome effectively and in the near term. ○ The focus on subgroups needs to be improved in plan updates.
<p>B. Elimination of Barriers</p> <p>The charter school addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How it will eliminate barriers to establishing conditions for effective practice at the school. ▪ Its past efforts to remove barriers for establishing conditions for effective practice and how its current preparations ensure a more effective result. 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The school's historical experience with trying to remove barriers is provided, as is information on how new planned improvements will allow for the establishment of conditions for effective practice. ○ Details on specific professional development, efforts to build curricula, and efforts to oversee the work of teachers and administrators will be useful to include in future plans.

3. Assessment of Necessary Conditions: The charter school describes the extent to which essential personnel and related infrastructure establish the conditions for improved student achievement. A Worksheet is provided at the end of this document to collect evidence that will lead you to answers to the following:

<p>A. Assessment The charter school’s assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thoroughly documents the current status of the necessary conditions in the major levers (aligned curriculum, data to inform instruction, time for students and teachers, instructional leadership, and governance). ▪ Reflects systemic, integrated analysis of present conditions. 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The plan provides details on the quality of the necessary conditions, and these details are clearly laid out. ○ Many of the conditions—curriculum, assessment, oversight and tools to engage in oversight of curriculum implementation—relate to one another. The school appears to be aware of this, and this is evidenced in the planned improvements it has selected.
<p>B. Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides evidence of the implementation of the essential conditions, looking critically and honestly at what is in place and what is lacking. ▪ Where the conditions are in place, the charter school demonstrates a good understanding of why the essential conditions have not yet had sufficient impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The plan looks critically at the quality of the conditions, but its analysis of why some conditions that have historically been in place have not taken hold and/or resulted in improved performance is less detailed.
<p>C. Prioritization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The charter school provides a rationale for prioritizing implementation of the conditions in its plan, if applicable. ▪ The charter school’s choices emphasize systemic approaches. ▪ A feasible plan for instituting all conditions over time is provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improvements are prioritized and systemic. However, the plan will be strengthened with additional information on how improvement work unfolds in 2008 and beyond.

STEP 2. Planned Improvements

1. Planned Improvements: The charter school identifies needed changes in essential personnel and conditions, describes the redeployment of existing personnel and the redesign of existing infrastructure, describes how the Board of Trustees will monitor and evaluate the school’s progress and take action, describes how the Board of Trustees will evaluate school leadership, provides a timeline for key changes, and defends its prioritization of changes and the feasibility of its proposals.

A. Addressed Needs and Powerful Levers

The charter school’s planned improvements:

- Respond to its hypotheses and conditions.
- Identify the expected impact on meeting performance targets for identified groups of students.
- Are integrated into a coherent system.
- Are prioritized based on an articulated rationale.
- Are feasible.

Evidence

- Planned improvements are responsive to needs, hypotheses, and the current state of necessary conditions at the school. No subgroup breakdowns are provided, with the exception of information provided on subgroups that count toward making AYP. However, feasible and prioritized improvements are identified for the school as a whole and appear to be integrated into a coherent system.

B. New and/or Reallocated Personnel and Conditions

The charter school:

- Identifies changes in personnel and essential conditions at the school level and specifies how they will result in improvements.
- Uses a systemic approach to reallocating and realigning personnel and infrastructure at the school.
- Shows how it is taking responsibility for maximizing the use of the personnel and infrastructure changes in implementing improvements.
- Describes and provides details on any changes in resource allocation.

Evidence

- Changes in personnel are noted; the school leader can select and assign staff; and a consultant has been hired to improve school leadership structures and practices. Having a formalized evaluation system in place will be important.
- Personnel devoted to establishing the condition of having a strong curriculum in place may not be sufficient.

<p>C. Timeline The charter school provides a timeline that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sets annual goals and/or meets the terms of conditions specified. ▪ Maps out the narrative’s plan for improvements to teaching and learning. ▪ Expedites the implementation of the current year’s planned improvements. ▪ Schedules sessions needed to plan improvements for the following years. 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual AYP goals are clearly articulated. ○ Most action steps end in the 2007-08 school year. Improvements and goals beyond this are unclear.
<p>D. Governance The charter school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gives specific information on how the Board of Trustees will monitor and evaluate progress, and take action if goals are not being met. ▪ The Board of Trustees makes strategic decisions based on data. ▪ Gives specific information on how and with what tool the Board of Trustees will evaluate school leadership. 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A plan is in place for Board of Trustees’ monitoring of progress. Quarterly reviews of progress are scheduled, and these will include a focus on student performance data and accountability plan goals. ○ Tools for evaluating school leadership are under development.

<p>2. Benchmarking Progress and Impact: The charter school, through its Plan and Accountability Plan, describes how it will monitor progress and measure the impact of changed expectations to school organization and student learning experiences.</p>	
<p>A. Monitoring and Measuring Progress The charter school Plan and Accountability Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitors progress, measures impact of initiatives. 	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmarking needs to be improved.
<p>B. Addressed Needs and Powerful Levers The charter school’s planned improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to its hypotheses and conditions. ▪ Identify the expected impact on meeting performance targets for identified groups of students. ▪ Are integrated into a coherent system. ▪ Are prioritized based on an articulated rationale. ▪ Are feasible. 	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence exists.
<p>C. Benchmarks The charter school establishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student-learning benchmarks that are aligned to its planned improvements, are achievable, and are rigorous. ▪ Clear and high standards for adult performance. 	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standards for adult performance are less clearly articulated than standards for student performance. Evaluation tools and processes are currently under development.
<p>D. Standards-Based and Observable Practices The charter school’s expectations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students are defined by observable practices and behaviors that are standards-based. ▪ Adults are tied to observable practices or behaviors and are clearly linked to student learning. 	<p><i>Evidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is unclear if teacher and administrator evaluations will be tied to student performance. However, the school's <i>Report of Outcomes</i> (p32) is detailed, with outcomes being measurable.

School: North Central Charter School

Reviewers: Kristin Burke & Eve Laubner

Step 3. Outcomes The charter school reports on this Plan and on its Accountability Plan as determined by the charter school statute and regulations, by the terms of any conditions placed on the school's charter, and as may be otherwise required.

<p>A. Monitoring, Measuring Progress, and Reporting</p> <p>The charter school Plan and Accountability Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establishes processes for monitoring progress and measures the impact of initiatives.▪ Is reported on in the school's Annual Report, which provides comprehensive information on the status of all goals and benchmarks defined in the Improvement Plan and the Accountability Plan.	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ An Accountability Plan with measurable goals exists. Results will be discussed in the Annual Report.
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