



New Mexico Public Education Department
Charter Schools Division

Charter School Annual Monitoring Site Visit Protocol
2023-24

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Contents

Purpose and Overview	2
PEC Performance Review and Accountability System	2
CSD Monitoring Process	2
Annual Performance Report	2
Performance Framework	2
Students and Employees	5
Site Visit	6
Classroom Observations	6
Interviews and Focus Groups	6
Coordinating and Scheduling the Site Visit	6
Responsibilities and Expectations	6
Responsibilities of the School	6
Responsibilities of the Site Visit Team	7
Site Visit Team Code of Conduct	9
Sample Site Visit Schedule	11

Purpose and Overview

PEC Performance Review and Accountability System

The Public Education Commission (PEC) serves as the authorizer of charter schools for the state of New Mexico. Under Section 22-8B-12 of the New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1978, the PEC evaluates charter schools through its own student academic outcomes, organizational viability, and ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner.

The annual evaluation, based on the PEC [Performance Framework](#), is conducted by the PEC's authorized representatives in the Charter Schools Division (CSD) of the Public Education Department (PED).

CSD Monitoring Process

The CSD conducts annual reviews by means of both desktop monitoring and onsite visits. As part of the monitoring process, charter schools submit academic, financial, and organizational data to the PEC, various PED divisions, and other governmental entities. The CSD will obtain much of the data required to produce the school's Annual Report through the [Nova/STARS](#) data system, school reports and by request from PED divisions. Other documents will be requested from charter schools prior to, during, and when needed following, the site visit.

Data requested from schools will be uploaded into a Google Drive folder that CSD will provide for each school. A link to that folder will be shared in an email to the school leader and governing board chair from the CSD. A team lead will schedule the site visit and serve as the school's primary point of contact for questions during the monitoring process. Some indicators will be monitored across all schools by a single member of the CSD team, so the school may receive requests from other members of the CSD staff in addition to the team lead for the school.

The CSD will avoid duplicate reporting whenever possible. If data is available from another division within the PED, the CSD will obtain it internally rather than requesting it from schools.

[Annual Site Visit Purpose](#)

[The CSD conducts annual reviews and visits the school as part of the annual process, to evaluate the school's progress toward the performance framework goals and compliance with the charter contract \(6.2.9.12 NMAC\).](#)

[Annually, the CSD visits PEC-authorized schools to:](#)

- [Gain a better understanding of the school and its context.](#)
- [Provide technical assistance.](#)
- [Meet with the school leader, the governing board and other staff as needed to review progress toward the performance framework goals.](#)
- [Assess compliance with the charter contract and to following up on any corrections from previous unsatisfactory performance; and](#)
- [Corroborate information with desktop monitoring.](#)

[The information collected on-site will help CSD write an annual report, in alignment with 6.2.9.12 NMAC, which becomes part of the charter record.](#)

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Annual Performance Report

The CSD will provide the school with preliminary ratings on the performance framework indicators within ~~ten~~ 30 days of the site visit, per 6.2.9.12C(2) NMAC. Phase 1 and Phase 2 Annual Reports will be completed as per 6.2.9.12 NMAC. Timelines for finalizing the reports will depend on the availability of assessment participation and academic data provided by the PED. Final ratings on all indicators except 1.b. Assessment Participation will be provided by July 31, at which time the school will have an opportunity to provide evidence and feedback. The annual report will be completed and sent to the school and the PEC after assessment data are available.

Performance Framework [Rubric](#)

Each state charter school's performance framework is embedded in its contract. ~~Schools with terms beginning in 2019, 2020, and 2021 have contracts that include the framework approved by the PEC May 10, 2019. Schools with terms beginning in 2022 and 2023 have contracts that include the framework approved by the PEC April 8, 2022. Schools with contract terms of 2020-2025 and 2021-2026 have the 2019 Performance Framework in their contracts. Schools with contract terms of 2022-2027 and 2023-2028 have the 2022 Performance Framework in their contracts. Both versions are posted on the PEC Performance Framework web page.~~

The 2022 Framework moved the financial indicators (2a-f) to the end of the organizational framework and renamed them 5a-f, with organizational indicators 3a-c, 4a-e, and 5a-d renamed as 2a-c, 3a-e, and 4a-d. Indicator numbers from both performance framework versions are listed in the tables of indicators and monitoring processes below.

	2019 PF	2022 PF	Indicator	CSD Monitoring Process
Educational Program	1.a	1.a	Is the school implementing the material terms of the approved charter application as defined in the Charter Contract?	CSD will obtain data from Nova/STARS to verify that schools are serving authorized grade levels and are within enrollment cap; CSD site visit team will observe classroom instruction and conduct interviews with teachers and other school staff, and students to observe how the educational program and mission, as codified in the charter contract , are being implemented.
	1.b	1.b	Does the school comply with state and contractual assessment requirements?	CSD will obtain data from the PED Assessment Bureau and Special Education Division, and assessment participation data provided by PED Accountability Bureau. Additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
	1.c	1.c	Is the school protecting the rights of students with disabilities?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with Special Education Division, focus group interviews with school stakeholders. Additional data may be

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			requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
1.d	1.d	Is the school protecting the rights of English Learners?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with Language and Culture Division, STARS EL Error Report, focus group interviews with school stakeholders to ensure proper identification, ELD instruction and EL assessments are implemented. Additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
1.e	1.e	Does the school comply with federal and state grant program requirements?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with other PED bureaus; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
1.f	1.f	Does the school implement a school improvement 90-day plan Educational Plan for Student Success for Student Success (NMDASH)?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with Priority Schools Bureau to ensure schools with a designation have a plan in place ; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the school site visit.
Financial Management and Oversight	2.a	5.a	Is the school meeting financial reporting and compliance requirements?
	2.b	5.b	Is the school following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles?
	2.c	5.c	Is the school responsive to audit findings?
	2.d	5.d	Is the school managing grant funds responsibly?
	2.e	5.e	Is the school adequately staffed to ensure proper fiscal management?
			Desktop monitoring in collaboration with School Budget Bureau to ensure timely reporting ; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the school site visit.
			CSD review of audit report for prior fiscal year; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the school site visit.
			CSD review of audit report for prior fiscal year; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the school site visit.
			Desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Administrative Services Division; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
			Desktop monitoring to ensure business manager, CPO, and GC audit and finance committees; and of amendment requests; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.

	2.f	5.f	Is the school meeting their obligations timely and with appropriate internal controls?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with other PED bureaus; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
Governance; Reporting	3.a	2.a	Is the school complying with governance requirements?	Desktop monitoring including governing council record of training hours, board meetings, and adherence to OMA, bylaws, and PEC board policies. School website will be reviewed, and additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit
	3.b	2.b	Is the school complying with nepotism and conflict of interest requirements?	Desktop monitoring; schools provide conflict of interest and nepotism policies to CSD if those are not available on the school's website.
	3.c	2.c	Is the school meeting reporting requirements?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with other PED bureaus; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
Students and Employees	4.a	3.a	Is the school protecting the rights of all students?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with Student Success & Wellness Bureau and other PED bureaus; review of lottery and admission policies on school website; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the school site visit.
	4.b	3.b	Does the school meet attendance, retention, and recurrent enrollment goals for students?	Desktop monitoring by Nova /STARS reports; no data required from schools unless issues arise.
	4.c	3.c	Is the school meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements?	Desktop monitoring by Nova /STARS reports in collaboration with the Licensure Bureau and requested waivers; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
	4.d	3.d	Is the school respecting employee rights?	School mentorship program for new teachers, teacher observation/feedback system, desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Educator Quality Bureau. Additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
	4.e	3.e	Is the school completing required background checks and reporting ethical violations?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Licensure Bureau; no data required from schools unless issues arise; evidence of staff background checks provided upon request.

School Environment	5.a	4.a	Is the school complying with facilities requirements?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Public Schools Facilities Authority (PSFA); facilities walkthrough during site visit; facilities documents provided to CSD upon request.
	5.b	4.b	Is the school complying with transportation requirements?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Transportation Bureau; no data required from schools unless issues arise.
	5.c	4.c	Is the school complying with health and safety requirements?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with the Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau; emergency drill documentation and immunization records available upon request
	5.d	4.d	Is the school handling information appropriately?	Desktop monitoring in collaboration with other PED bureaus; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
		4.e	Is the school making information accessible to the public?	Desktop monitoring of school website; additional data may be requested from schools before, during or after the site visit.
		4.f	Does the school have an equitable and positive school climate that supports students' social and emotional development?	Desktop monitoring of materials provided by school; site visit focus groups and observations.

Site Visit

Classroom Observations

The site visit team will observe classroom instruction for approximately 20-minute periods, with the goal of seeing as many different grade levels and subject areas as is feasible, including special education and intervention classes. Observers will use an observation protocol and will not record the name of the teacher.

Interviews and Focus Groups

The CSD team will meet with the school leadership team, business manager, teachers, students, and governing board members.

Coordinating and Scheduling the Site Visit

The CSD team lead will contact the head administrator and governing board chair to schedule the visit. The site visit team will usually consist of 2-4 members, depending on the size of the school, and may include contractors as well as CSD staff. The CSD team lead will place a site visit schedule in the school's Google folder.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Responsibilities of the School

Before the site visit:

- Upload to the Google folder:
 - Class schedule
 - Map of school campus
 - Staff list with names and job titles
 - Wireless network name and password to be used at visit
 - Any other documents requested by CSD
- Explain the site visit process and Protocol procedures to school community members.
- Submit all documents requested by the CSD and the site visit team leader in a timely manner.
- Participate in a meeting/phone call with the team leader to begin the planning process and discuss the requirements of the site visit.
- Work with the team lead to develop the site visit schedule and inform the school community of the schedule and the team's open access to classrooms and school activities.
- Gather a representative group for each focus group to be conducted during the site visit through an open invitation and inform each participant of the time and place of the meeting. For student group(s), provide team lead with a list of students for team to select a random sample.
- Designate a contact person (typically the head administrator) who will be available to respond to team inquiries and requests prior to and during the visit.
- Reserve a comfortable, private, and secure working space for the site visit team that will not be used for other purposes during the visit.
- Reserve a private space for the site visit team to conduct focus groups and interviews. Be sure the space is large enough to comfortably accommodate the largest focus group.

During the site visit:

- Provide Wi-Fi access to the team.
- Ensure COVID-safe practices are followed throughout the school.
- The Head Administrator (or designee) should be available to respond to team inquiries.
- Post the schedule for each classroom and other instructional spaces on or just outside the door.
- Post a notice on the door of any instructional space where a substitute teacher is in charge.
- Provide access to all personnel and instructional spaces requested by the team.
- Ensure that focus group participants arrive on time.
- Focus group and interview participants are expected to provide informative, accurate, and responsive answers to team questions. Assume that all responses are "on the record."
- Communicate any concerns regarding the team's actions to the team lead and the CSD Director.

After the site visit:

- Respond promptly to any requests for clarification from the team.

Responsibilities of the Site Visit Team

Before the site visit:

- Assemble a team of individuals from the CSD, PED colleagues and/or contractors whose professional backgrounds and expertise are relevant. The team may include member(s) who can provide expertise related to the school's mission, operations, academic program, population, and/or environment and who have expertise in understanding the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- Ensure that all team members have a sufficient understanding of charter schools and the legal requirements of charter schools in New Mexico.
- Ensure that the team includes enough team members so that two team members are present for each focus group and the team can conduct a sufficient number of classroom observations.
- Disclose to the CSD any prior or current business or personal relationship between a team member, or an organization employing the team member, and the school.
- Designate a team leader who will serve as the team's liaison with the school and the CSD, coordinate the work of team members while on site, and lead the team's work in preparing for the visit, collecting the site visit notes, and drafting the Annual Performance Report.
- Engage in site visit training.
- Schedule a meeting/phone call with the head administrator of the school to begin the planning process and discuss the requirements of the site visit.
- Schedule enough classroom observations, ensure focus groups are set.
- Ensure that team members have reviewed all relevant documents and developed focus group questions and observations that are informed by that review and that allow the team to gather sufficient data and evidence in the areas of inquiry.
- Conduct a call with the head(s) of school just before the visit to confirm details of the visit, including logistics, the schedule, and the list of focus group attendees.

During the site visit:

- ~~Engage in COVID-safe practices.~~
- Bring water, lunch and/or snacks; school is **not** expected to provide these.
- Take detailed, accurate and relevant notes during interviews and observations.
- Conduct enough classroom observations, documenting what is observed.
- Avoid conducting observations of instruction led by short-term substitute teachers.
- Review all academic and other mission-related programs provided by the school, including regular education, inclusion, Special Ed, pull-out classrooms, and after-school programs.
- Facilitate the team process to share, sort, and substantiate relevant evidence. The team leader is responsible for guiding the team through a process during which team members share the

evidence they have collected and use their professional expertise to evaluate the quality of the evidence, so that team members' individual viewpoints coalesce into a collective perspective.

After the site visit:

- Contact the school by telephone or email only for clarification of important questions.
- Send preliminary performance framework ratings within 30 days per 6.2.9.12 NMAC.

After site visit and desktop monitoring is complete:

- ~~Complete Annual Report Phase 1 and Phase 2 per 6.2.9.12 NMAC. Draft, review, and edit summary statements and evidence. Incorporate them into a draft of the Annual Performance Report, which is submitted for review to the CSD Director.~~
- ~~Complete revisions requested by CSD Director. The CSD Director will work with the team to ensure that the evidence included in the draft is clearly aligned with the Performance Framework, that it is of sufficient quality, and that it is clearly presented.~~
- ~~After revisions have been completed, the report is provided to the school for factual corrections.~~
- ~~Once the school has reviewed to the draft report, the CSD will evaluate all information available, and submit the Annual Performance Report to the PEC, with a copy provided to the school.~~

Site Visit Team Code of Conduct

The site visit team's conduct throughout the site visit process can significantly affect the team's ability to obtain and report information regarding the school's performance; it can also influence perceptions of the school community about the objectivity of the site visit process and report. This Code of Conduct provides guidance for team members (including team members from CSD as well as external team members) in fulfilling their assigned responsibilities.

- Acknowledge and respect the Code of Ethics (NMAC 6.60.9.8) and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators (NMAC 6.60.9.9)
- Ensure that you review all necessary materials, including this Protocol and the documents and information provided in advance of the site visit by the CSD and the school.
- Approach the review of a school with a clear understanding of the school's mission, grade levels, and population served.
- Understand your obligation to conduct the site visit without personal or professional bias and act accordingly, including disclosing any possible conflicts of interest, e.g., prior relationships with school staff, students, or families.
- Ensure that all of your communications with the school are professional and courteous in tone.
- Arrive at the school on time and closely follow the schedule for the day. Inform the school contact immediately of any changes to the agreed-upon schedule.
- Refrain from using your cell phone during classroom observations, focus groups, and team meetings. Site visitors may use the lunch break to use cell phones and check email.

- Avoid unnecessary disruptions to school and classroom routines while performing your assigned tasks such as classroom observations.
- Under no circumstances criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school during an observation or focus group.
- Where appropriate, ensure the confidentiality of school information such as student names and personnel information.
- Do not offer personal or professional opinions or recommendations, even if solicited by interviewees.
- Reject requests from those interviewed to speak “off the record”; all conversations and other evidence gathered during the site visit are considered “on the record.”
- Bring water bottles, lunch and/or snacks.
- Do not evaluate the performance of individuals, either orally or in written descriptions of the evidence.
- Findings must be supported by evidence in documents, focus groups and observations.
- Treat the draft site visit report, notes, and related evidence as confidential.
- Refrain from communications with outside groups or individuals. Do not discuss the site visit or your opinions regarding individuals working at the school with outside groups or individuals, including the media.
- Contact the CSD Director immediately in a private setting if you observe any egregious, illegal, or violent behavior that poses an immediate threat to the students or staff at the school.

Sample Site Visit Schedule

This is a sample schedule for the site visit team’s work at the school. The schedule illustrates the types of activities that occur during a typical site visit. The actual schedule will be developed by the CSD team leader in consultation with the school’s head administrator or designee.

Time	[Team Member 1]	[Team Member 2]	[Team Member 3]
7:30-8:00	Team Meeting		
8:00-8:30	Meeting with Head Administrator		
8:30-9:30	Governing Board Focus Group		Meeting with Business Manager
9:30-11:00	Classroom Observations		
11:00-12:00	Classroom Observations	Teacher Focus Group: General Education, Special Education, and ELD Staff	
12:00-1:00	Lunch/Document Review		
1:00-2:00	Student/Family Support Staff Focus Group	Classroom Observations	Student/Family Support Staff Focus Group
2:00-2:30	Student Focus Group		Classroom Observations
3:00-4:15	Team Time		
4:15-4:45	Exit Discussion with Head Administrator		