SchoolWorks

GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY
CHARTER SCHOOLS
OFFICE

Grand Valley State University
Charter Schools Office
Renewal Site Visit Protocol

School Year 2023-2024

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Part I: Introduction

What is the Grand Valley State University Charter Schools Office Renewal Site Visit?

The Grand Valley State University Charter Schools Office (GVSU CSO) Renewal Site Visit (RSV) is an opportunity the GVSU CSO can use to understand and explain how well schools are working to educate students. The RSV places a team of experienced educators from the GVSU CSO in a school to collect and analyze data about school performance. The length of the RSV is one day. The GVSU CSO will work with schools to create schedules and invite stakeholders to focus groups and meetings accordingly.

The RSV is based on a transparent, research-based set of standards – the GVSU CSO Renewal Benchmarks – that serve as the framework to understand the effectiveness of school practices. The RSV is used to promote understanding and dialogue between the school and the GVSU CSO.

What are the GVSU CSO Renewal Benchmarks?

The GVSU CSO Renewal Benchmarks include a set of standards used to assess critical aspects of a school's operations. The Renewal Benchmarks seek to address four Renewal Questions:

1) Is the school an academic success?
2) Is the school an effective, viable organization?
3) Is the school fiscally sound?
4) Is the school a safe environment that promotes effective teaching and learning?

The Renewal Benchmarks are organized according to the above renewal questions, with corresponding benchmarks and standards (see Appendix D for the Renewal Benchmarks). These are based on research of best educational practices.

How does the RSV process work?

The RSV places a team of educators in a building for one day to gather information related to the GVSU CSO Renewal Benchmarks. Given the breadth and depth of the Renewal Benchmarks (found in Appendix D), the RSV focuses specifically on five of the Benchmarks in particular, which can be found in Part III: Key Questions and Indicators.

1) **Is high-quality instruction evident throughout the school?** (Benchmark 1D: Pedagogy)

2) **Does the school promote cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to the school population?** (Benchmark 4B: Culture and Climate)

3) **Does the school have strong instructional leadership?** (Benchmark 1E: Instructional Leadership)

4) **Has the school been faithful to its mission and has it implemented the key design elements included in its charter?** (Benchmark 2A: Mission & Key Design Elements)

5) **Does the school organization effectively support the delivery of the educational program?** (Benchmark 2c: Organizational Effectiveness)

The RSV utilizes multiple sources of evidence to understand how well a school is working. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence in relation to the protocol's key questions and indicators.

Evidence collection begins with the review of the key documents submitted through EdLusion that describe the school and its students (the documents that will be reviewed can be found in Appendix A). The documents are reviewed by the RSV team prior to arrival on site. This provides the team with initial information about the school's programs and the students it serves.

While on site, evidence collection continues through classroom visits and interviews with key school stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the team meets to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance.

The RSV team uses evidence collected through these events to develop findings in relation to the key questions found within this protocol. Following the visit, the team provides a brief oral report to school leadership about its findings.

The RSV places a high value on engaging the school in understanding its own performance. The process may be described as an open, frank, professional dialog between the school and the RSV team. The professionalism of the school and team is essential in the process. Both the school and the team have clear roles and responsibilities that are designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. All team members are governed by the GVSU CSO's Core Values (found in Part II). Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the RSV process.

What are the general steps in the RSV process?

Pre-visit Planning and Analysis
The GVSU CSO works with the school to organize the schedule for the RSV. Prior to the visit, RSV team members review documents and record their initial assessments about the school's performance according to protocol indicators.

Evidence Gathering On Site
On site, the RSV team conducts classroom visits and interviews with key school stakeholders.

Development of Findings
The RSV team's primary objective is to develop findings in relation to the key questions. To come to consensus on a set of findings, the team works together to collate and discuss available evidence collected throughout the RSV process.

Feedback to the School
While on site, the RSV team leader communicates with school leadership to keep the school informed of the team's progress and to seek the school's input on that progress.

Sample Schedule

Following is a sample visit schedule for an RSV. Schedules and the number of classes observed will vary from school-to-school, depending on the size of the school and the number of RSV team members. The team leader and school leader will work collaboratively to construct a schedule for the RSV based on schedule documents (including the focus group organizer) and guidance provided by school leadership.

Sample Daily RSV Schedule				
Time	**Team Leader**	**Team Member #1**	**Team Member #2**	**Team Member #3**
8:00–8:30 AM	Team morning meeting			
8:30–9:30 AM	Interview with School Leadership			
9:35–10:20 AM	Classroom visits (2)		Teacher Focus Group #1	
10:25 - 11:10 AM	Department Leadership Focus Group		Classroom visits (2)	
11:15–12:00 PM	Teacher Focus Group #2		Focus group with students	
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; Mid-day meeting and RSV team debrief			
1:00–1:30 PM	Non-instructional staff focus group	Focus group with parents		Non-instructional staff focus group
1:35 – 2:00 pm	Final Check in with School Leadership/ Follow-up	Classroom visit (1)	Final Check in with School Leadership/ Follow-up	Classroom visit (1)
2:00– 5:00 PM	Team debrief and moderation; evidence sorting			
5:00 PM	RSV team concludes visit			

Part II: GVSU CSO Core Values

The RSV team is guided in its work by the GVSU CSO's Core Values. At Grand Valley State University's Charter Schools Office, the primary focus is understanding complex problems in the GVSU network of schools, facilitating the design of solutions, and advancing remarkable change in teaching and learning. Our mission, vision, and strategic outcomes reflect the university's five core values. These core values provide a foundation and framework for all of the GVSU CSO's decision-making processes. These core values are described as follows:

1. **Inquiry:** Encourage active questioning and problem solving to improve lives and strengthen communities. Building on our strong foundation of a liberal education and commitment to teaching excellence, we strive to provide opportunities that integrate theory and practice towards personal transformation and career success. Active scholarship, creative expression, and relevant co-curricular experiences drive learners toward fulfillment, prosperity, and justice.

2. **Inclusive & Equitable Community:** Foster and sustain a sense of belonging, promote diversity and respect, and address systemic issues that impact outcomes for those who have been historically excluded from higher education. Inclusion and equity are experienced through our physical campuses and in digital environments, as well as our interpersonal, institutional, and community engagements.

3. **Innovation:** Puts ideas into practice, drives us toward excellence, and represents our forward-thinking mindset. We value entrepreneurship, risk taking, and interdisciplinary collaboration that solves local, regional, and global problems and advances the common good.

4. **Integrity:** Drives us to be accountable to ourselves and to others. Integrity moves us to actively pursue and sustain quality educational experiences rooted in research and evidence, and to be excellent stewards of our communities, resources, and planet.

5. **International Perspectives:** Support people, planet, and prosperity. We think and act on a global basis. Our efforts at supporting the well-being of individuals, groups, and ecosystems are important locally, nationally, and globally—all of which are interconnected and interdependent.

Part III: Key Questions and Indicators

The following key questions guide the RSV team's work. All evidence is collected in response to these key questions and their respective standards, which are found below. Please note that these key questions and indicators are drawn directly from the renewal guide. Given that you have submitted evidence and a narrative for every single benchmark in the Renewal Guide, the RSV will focus on the key questions/benchmarks below during the site visit.

Key Question 1: Is high quality instruction evident throughout the school? (Benchmark 1D)

o   Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum and State standards.

o   Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding.

o   Teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

o   Teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient.

Key Question 2: Does the school promote cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to the school population? (Benchmark 4B)

o   Teachers have effective classroom management techniques/routines.

o   The school has an appropriate discipline policy.

o   Teachers have received professional development (PD) on cultural responsiveness as related to the specific school populations and have knowledge of the cultures in their classrooms that they apply to their practice.

o   There are structures to guarantee that the school and work environment is open to, and accepting of, diversity and free from discriminatory behavior and practices.

o   School staff interact with students in ways that respect and encourage their cultural norms, preferences, and native languages that may be different from a teacher's own.

Key Question 3: Does the school have strong instructional leadership? (Benchmark 1E)

o   The school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed.

o   The instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff.

o   Teachers are assigned to a mentor or master teacher for the first 3 years of his/her employment in the classroom, in accordance with State law (MCL 380.1526).

o   Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive PD program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers.

o   Professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice.

o   Instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations in accordance with State law.

o   Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.

Key Question 4: Has the school been faithful to its mission and has it implemented the key design elements included in its charter? (Benchmark 2A)

o   The school faithfully follows its mission.

o   The school has implemented its key design elements.

Key Question 5: Does the school organization effectively support the delivery of the educational program? (Benchmark 2C)

o   The school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

o   The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities.

o   The school retains quality staff.

o   The school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals.

o   The school maintains adequate student enrollment.

o   The school has procedures to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, English language learners (ELLs), and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly.

o   The school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary.

Appendix A: School Document List

The RSV Team will utilize documents previously submitted to the GVSU CSO through EdLusion to prepare for the RSV. The following list indicates which documents, in particular, will be used as part of the RSV.

ITEMS TO BE REVIEWED FOR THE RSV
Key Question 1
1. Instructional expectations (e.g., non-negotiables)
2. School-wide model of instruction
3. Instructional initiatives based on identified needs
4. Teacher evaluation tools
5. Lesson plan formats, sample unit/lesson plans
6. PD opportunities/training related to instruction
Key Question 2
7. Narrative to describe school's culture and climate; explain how this is achieved
8. PD opportunities/training on school culture, cultural responsiveness, and diversity/equity/and inclusion
9. Behavior models and classroom management approach/techniques, including discipline policies
Key Question 3
10. Narrative to describe leadership approach
11. Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
12. A description of the school's teacher mentorship/coaching program, including a sample schedule
13. Professional development (PD) calendar and artifacts (e.g., PowerPoint slides of PD), including opportunities/training related to development, based on identified needs
14. Specialists (instructional, intervention, assessment) job descriptions to support staff development
15. Teacher evaluation tools, including sample completed teacher evaluations and informal observation/ feedback forms (names removed)
16. Coaching schedule and tracker, if applicable
17. Agendas/minutes from leadership team or other staff meetings
Key Question 4
18. Narrative to describe school's focus on its mission and key design elements
19. Key design elements and artifacts that demonstrate the implementation of the key design elements
Key Question 5
20. Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
21. Enrollment and retention (student and teacher) data and process to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; provide historical trends

22.	Monitoring systems and procedures; describe implementation and utilization of results to drive changes
23.	Marketing materials/initiatives to support enrollment/retention goals
24.	Handbooks (student, parent, staff) and Policies (behavior), including discipline system and policies

Appendix B: Classroom Visit Tool and Guidance

What is the purpose of the classroom visit tool?

The purpose of the classroom visit tool is threefold:

1. To enable observers to easily identify practices and summarize their evidence base and, therefore, establish ratings that characterize classroom practices across the school;

2. To supply the report writer with quantifiable ratings across classes observed that are supported by documented pieces of evidence; and

3. To gather qualitative evidence about classroom practices that provides additional evidence to the school.

The information collected from classroom visits provides the site visit team an additional source of information that can be used to better understand school practices and to support the team's findings.

Frequently-asked questions about classroom visits

1. *How does the site visit team select the classrooms that will be visited?*
    Classroom visits will be selected on the basis of the school's master schedule and the size of the site visit team. In larger schools, representative classes will be selected to reflect a range of teacher experience, a variety of subject areas, the range of grades served at the school, and special services or program classes as they reflect the school's mission. The site visit schedule is developed by the site visit team leader with input from school leadership.

2. *What is the length of a classroom visit?*
    It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Most visits will be planned and scheduled for the site visit team, but unplanned visits may occur. Unplanned visits may be shorter in duration.

3. *What do teachers need to do to prepare for the classroom visit?*
    Teachers need not do anything to prepare for a classroom visit. Classes should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. The site visit team is composed of education professionals who understand that behavior in the classroom may be unpredictable. The ESR seeks to establish trends across the school, not to assess isolated incidents within a single classroom.

4. *Should teachers expect to interact with the classroom visitor?*
    The intent of the classroom visit is to cause as minimal disruption to daily classroom practices as possible. Teaching staff does not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work and/or classroom postings, if appropriate.

5. *Do teachers receive feedback from the classroom visitor?*
    The site visit team seeks to identify trends across the school, not to provide information on the effectiveness of specific classroom practices or individual teachers. Team members will NOT provide feedback to individual teachers. Class visits are NOT teacher evaluations. They will not be shared with individual teachers or any other school personnel. They are intended to provide information to the site visit team about the implementation of the academic program, the availability of resources, and any additional evidence that demonstrates aspects of school practices and operations.

6. *Should the classroom visitor expect to see all of the indicators on the classroom visit tool in a single classroom?*

   The classroom visit tool is aligned with the indicators in the SQC that reflect a range of effective practices. It is not expected that the classroom visitor would see all of these indicators. The tool serves as a resource for the site visit team to identify and explain practices that are characteristic of each individual school.

School: _____	District: _____	Observer: _____
Date: _____	Grade: _____	Subject: _____
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____	# Adults: _____	# Students: _____

Instructions: Circle one rating for each indicator. Two of the Common Core indicators should be marked N/A. No other indicators should be marked N/A or left blank.

1=Ineffective ↔ 4=Effective

	Indicators	Observer Notes			Score		
Common Core Implementation	**1a. Common Core Literacy Implementation (for ELA classes only)** Content standards implementation Instructional shifts implementation		N/A	1	2	3	4
	1b. Common Core Math Implementation (for math classes only) Content standards implementation Instructional shifts implementation Standards for mathematical practice implementation		N/A	1	2	3	4
Classroom Climate	**2. Behavioral Expectations** Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior			1	2	3	4
	3. Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Learning time maximized			1	2	3	4
	4. Supportive Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' non-academic needs			1	2	3	4
Purposeful Teaching	**5. Focused Instruction** Learning objective that drives all lesson activities Effective communication of academic content High expectations **CLO:**			1	2	3	4
	6. Instructional Strategies Multisensory modalities and materials Instructional format Student choice			1	2	3	4
	7. Participation and Engagement Active student participation Strategies to increase participation			1	2	3	4
	8. Higher-Order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Justify thinking or reasoning			1	2	3	4
In-Class Assessment & Feedback	**9. Assessment Strategies** Use of formative assessments Alignment to academic content or lesson objective			1	2	3	4
	10. Feedback Clear, specific, and actionable Clarifies misunderstanding or provides guidance			1	2	3	4

Appendix C: Interview Worksheets and Guidance

During the RSV, interviews will be conducted to gather information about the school. Interview data, similar to classroom visits, are intended to provide information about the implementation of the school's program and operations. The RSV team leader will work to establish a schedule that is appropriate for the school.

INTERVIEWS		
Interviews	**Description**	**Approximate Time Needed**
School Leadership	School leadership includes the principal and key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, instructional coaches, and/or lead teachers). In addition to an interview, school leadership may be asked to provide further guidance and insight throughout the visit. Feedback on the team's preliminary findings will be presented to school leadership at the end of the RSV.	**1-hour**
Teacher focus groups	Groups of teachers make up focus groups. School leaders should select a representative sample of teachers across grade levels and subject areas to attend these focus groups. Additionally, teachers should vary in tenure at the school.	**45 minutes**
Non-Instructional Employees	Non-instructional employees, including the Business/Office Manager and employees who handle enrollment will also be interviewed.	**45 minutes**
Student focus group	A selection of **four-to-eight** students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff. Students are asked to bring a piece of recent work to share with the focus group leader.	**30 minutes**
Parent focus group	A representative group of **four-to-eight** parents, whose children have a range of academic needs, have attended the school for various lengths of time and who have a range of participation experiences with the school.	**30-45 minutes** (If possible, scheduled around dismissal)

What is the purpose of the interview worksheet?

Interview worksheets are provided to:

1. Enable the interviewer to easily identify questions consistent with the key questions and indicators in the protocol, in order to gather appropriate evidence;

2. Ensure uniformity across interviews conducted; and

3. Provide multiple sources of evidence to support the RSV team's findings.

The interview worksheet provides a template for the RSV team to use during interviews. This ensures that questions are being asked in accordance with the protocol and that all team members are asking uniform questions. While on site, the team may develop additional, school-specific interview questions that are based on the team leader's judgment of what must be learned to come to findings on the protocol's key questions.

An interview worksheet exists for each type of focus group (e.g., school leadership, teachers, non-instructional employees) who the RSV team will interview while on site. Interview questions might look

slightly different. Interviews conducted with school leadership might include slightly different content than what the team would ask special education staff members. In addition, question delivery might vary slightly.

How do I use the interview worksheet?

The interview worksheets contain possible interview questions. The column on the left may be used to check the most relevant questions. The right column may be used to insert any additional questions that the RSV team, during team meetings, decides are important to ask in order to gather the required evidence. Interview notes are recorded by the RSV team for use during team deliberations and to provide the report writer with a record of interviews to ensure a sound and accurate evidence base.

School Leadership

Key Question 1	School-specific questions

❑ What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms? Probe for the following:
   o Specific strategies (probe project-based learning, Teaching for Understanding, and workshop);
   o Lesson structure and objectives;
   o Students deeply and meaningfully engaged in, and challenged by, learning;
   o Development of higher-order thinking skills; and
   o Student joy for learning
 	
❑ How do teachers check for student understanding?
 	
❑ What are examples of ways teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills?
 	
❑ How are teachers maximizing learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus, and clear directions to students)?
 	
❑ What kinds of Section 504 accommodations and special education programs and services are you currently providing?	

Key Question 2	**School-specific questions**

❑ What is the school's approach to classroom management?
   o Are there some effective classroom management techniques and routines that teachers use to create a consistent focus on academic achievement?
 	
❑ Describe the school's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
   o PD on cultural responsiveness for specific student population
   o Structures to guarantee school and work environment is open to, and accepting of, diversity and free from discrimination; probe for examples
   o Interaction with students' cultural norms, preferences, and native languages	

Key Question 3	**School-Specific Questions**
❑ What expectations do you have for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical, and belief that all students can succeed)? ❑ How does instructional leadership support the development of the teaching staff? o Describe the coaching cycle used to improve teachers' instructional effectiveness	

School Leadership

o How are teachers held accountable for quality instruction and student achievement?

❑ What opportunities are available for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels?

❑ Describe professional development (PD):

   o How does PD develop the competencies and skills of all teachers?

   o How does PD interrelate with classroom practice?

❑ Describe the teacher evaluation process.

   o Probe for frequency, clear criteria, and the ability to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses.

Key Question 4	School-Specific Questions
❑ What is the school's mission? What are some examples of the school implementing the mission? ❑ What are the school's key design elements?	
Key Question 5	**School-Specific Questions**
❑ Describe the school's administrative structure, including leadership team and staff. ❑ How do staff members know their own roles and responsibilities? ❑ How does the school retain quality staff? ❑ What is the process to ensure the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals? ❑ Has the school maintained adequate student enrollment? What strategies have been implemented? ❑ Does the school have procedures to monitor enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELL students, and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly? ❑ What are a few examples of when the school monitored and evaluated the school's programs and, if necessary, made changes?	

Teachers

Key Question 1	School-specific questions

❑ What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will observe across classrooms? Probe for the following:
 	
    o Specific strategies (probe project-based learning, Teaching for Understanding, and workshop);
    o Lesson structure and objectives;
    o Students deeply and meaningfully engaged in, and challenged by, learning;
    o Development of higher-order thinking skills; and
    o Student joy for learning
 	
 ❑ How do you check for student understanding?
 	
 ❑ What are examples of ways you include opportunities in your lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills?
 	
 ❑ How do you maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus, and clear directions to students)?
 	
 ❑ What kinds of Section 504 accommodations and special education programs and services are you currently providing?	

Key Question 2	School-specific questions

❑ What is the school's approach to classroom management?
    o Are there some effective classroom management techniques and routines that you use to create a consistent focus on academic achievement?
 	
 ❑ Describe the school's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
    o PD on cultural responsiveness for specific student population
    o Structures to guarantee school and work environment is open to and accepting of diversity and free from discrimination; probe for examples
    o Interaction with students' cultural norms, preferences, and native languages	

Key Question 3	School-Specific Questions
❑ What expectations does school leadership have for your performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical, and belief that all students can succeed)? ❑ How does instructional leadership support your development? o Describe the coaching cycle used to improve your instructional effectiveness	

Teachers

○ How are you held accountable for quality instruction and student achievement?	
❑ What opportunities are available for you to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels?	
❑ Describe professional development (PD):	
○ How does PD develop your competencies and skills?	
○ How does PD interrelate with classroom practice?	
❑ Describe the teacher evaluation process.	
○ Probe for frequency, clear criteria, and the ability to identify your strengths and weaknesses.	

Key Question 4	**School-Specific Questions**
❑ What is the school's mission? What are some examples of the school implementing the mission?	
○ How does this play out in your classroom?	
❑ What are the school's key design elements?	

Key Question 5	**School-Specific Questions**
❑ Describe the school's administrative structure, including leadership team and staff.	
❑ How do staff members know their own roles and responsibilities?	
❑ How does the school retain quality staff?	
❑ What are a few examples of when the school monitored and evaluated the school's programs and, if necessary, made changes?	

Non-Instructional Staff

Key Question 4	School-Specific Questions
❑ What is the school's mission? What are some examples of the school implementing the mission? ❑ What are the school's key design elements?	

Key Question 5	School-Specific Questions
❑ Describe the school's administrative structure, including leadership team and staff. ❑ How do staff members know their own roles and responsibilities? ❑ How does the school retain quality staff? ❑ What is the process to ensure the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals? ❑ Has the school maintained adequate student enrollment? What strategies have been implemented? ❑ Does the school have procedures to monitor enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELL students, and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly? ❑ What are a few examples of when the school monitored and evaluated the school's programs and, if necessary, made changes?	

Students

Key Question 1	School-specific questions
❑ What does a typical lesson look like? ○ ELA, math ❑ How do you know how you are doing academically? ❑ Is instruction challenging? Provide examples. ❑ What do you do if you need help academically? How do you get more assistance?	

Key Question 2	School-specific questions

❑ What are your teachers' expectations for behavior while in the classroom? Out of the classroom?
    ○ Is there an established behavioral system?
❑ What are the school's rules? What are your classroom's rules?
    ○ What happens if you break the rules? What is the process?
❑ How do you know how you are doing behaviorally?
❑ How do teachers treat students?
    ○ Probe for respectful interactions and encouraging cultural norms.
❑ Do you feel safe in the school (both physically and emotionally)?
❑ Is there an adult in the building to whom you can go if you need help (academically or socially-emotionally)?	

Key Question 4	School-Specific Questions
❑ What is the school's mission? What are some examples of the school implementing the mission? ❑ What are the school's key design elements?	

Parents

Key Question 1	School-specific questions
❑ How do you know how your student is doing academically? ❑ Is instruction challenging for your student? Provide examples. ❑ If your child is struggling, how does s/he get more assistance/help?	

Key Question 2	School-specific questions

❑ What are your teachers' expectations for your child's behavior while in the classroom? Out of the classroom?
   o Is there an established behavioral system?
❑ How do you know how your student is doing behaviorally?
❑ How do teachers treat students?
   o Probe for respectful interactions and encouraging cultural norms
❑ Do you believe your child is safe in the school (both physically and emotionally)?	

Key Question 4	School-Specific Questions
❑ What is the school's mission? What are some examples of the school implementing the mission? ❑ What are the school's key design elements?	

Appendix D: GVSU CSO Renewal Benchmarks

Charter School Renewal Guide			
School Year	**School Visited**	**Date of Visit**	**Evidence strongly supports, supports, somewhat supports, does not support**
	Renewal Question 1 **Is the school an academic success?**		
Evidence Category	<u>**Benchmarks**</u>		
Renewal Benchmark 1A	**During the contract term, the school has met or come close to meeting its Educational Goals (Schedule 7-1).**		**Does evidence support?**
Educational Goals (Schedule 7-1)	The CSO determines the extent to which the school has met the Educational Goals as set forth in the charter contract: Academic Achievement: As measured by the State assessment, the school's percentage of total tested students in all tested grades identified as proficient in all tested subjects or identified as college-ready as reported by the Michigan Department of Education will meet or exceed the select peer schools' mean reported percentage of total tested students in all tested grades identified as proficient in all tested subjects or identified as college-ready. Select peer schools are the set of school buildings determined annually by GVSU to be the most demographically, socioeconomically, programmatically, and geographically similar to the school. Academic Growth: As measured by the State assessment, the school's mean student growth percentile rank in English language arts and math will meet or exceed the select peer schools' mean student growth percentile rank. Select peer schools are the set of school buildings determined annually by GVSU to be the most demographically, socioeconomically, programmatically, and geographically similar to the school.		**CSO Comments** ***Note that your most recent School Performance Report (created by GVSU) will automatically be imported. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.**

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1B	**The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.**	**Does evidence support?**
Use of Assessment Data	The following items are generally present within the school: • The school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and State performance standards; • The school has successfully implemented all requirements under Michigan's 3rd Grade Reading Law; • The school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments; • The school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders, Board members, parents, and the community; • Teachers use assessment results to meet students' needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention; • School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and • The school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students' progress and growth.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 1A and 1B:
- Assessment schedule/calendar and data other than M-STEP (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress [NWEA MAP], initial and extensive), related to both growth and achievement; provide historical trends
- Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)/intervention programs; describe implementation, monitoring and utilization of results to drive instruction
- Professional development (PD) calendar and artifacts (e.g., PowerPoint slides of PD), including opportunities/training related to academics (direct instruction, differentiation, intervention, etc.)
- Process for communicating assessment results to staff, students, and families
- Data analysis process, including any teams that meet to analyze data (school-wide, grade level, content area, etc.); describe structures, initiatives, outcomes
- Improvement plan or processes if goals are not met

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1C	**The school's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.**	**Does evidence Support?**
Curriculum	The following elements are generally present: • The school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to State standards and across grades; • In addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans; • Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents; • The school has a process for selecting, developing, and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and • Teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 1C: Curriculum alignment (sample only) with academic standards
• Sample of Curriculum maps/guides (scope and sequence, pacing guides, etc.)
• Sample lesson plans from different grade levels and subject areas
• Curriculum teams/Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); describe structures, initiatives, outcomes
• Instructional Specialist job description (or similar position)
• PD opportunities/training related to curriculum (design/development, lesson planning, etc.)
• Curriculum revision process

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1D	**High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.**	**Does evidence support?**
Pedagogy	The following elements are generally present within the school: • Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum and state standards; • Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding; • Teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills; • Teachers maximize learning time (e.g./ appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 1D:
- Instructional expectations (e.g. non-negotiables)
- School-wide model of instruction
- Instructional initiatives based on identified needs
- Teacher evaluation tools
- Lesson plan formats, sample unit/lesson plans
- PD opportunities/training related to instruction

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1E	**The school has strong instructional leadership.**	**Does evidence support?**
Instructional Leadership	The following elements are generally present: • The school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed; • The instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff; • Teachers are assigned to a mentor or master teachers for the first 3 years of his/her employment in the classroom, in accordance with State law (MCL 380.1526); • Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers; • Professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice; • Instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations in accordance with State law; and • Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 1E:
- Narrative to describe leadership approach
- Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
- A description of the school's teacher mentorship/coaching program, including a sample schedule
- Professional development (PD) calendar and artifacts (e.g. PowerPoint slides of PD), including opportunities/training related to development, based on identified needs
- Specialists (instructional, intervention, assessment, etc.) job descriptions to support staff development
- Teacher evaluation tools, including sample completed teacher evaluations and informal observation/feedback forms (names removed)
- Coaching schedule and tracker, if applicable
- Agendas/minutes from leadership team or other staff meetings

	Renewal Question 1 Is the school an academic success?	
Renewal Benchmark 1F	**The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.**	**Does evidence support?**
At-Risk Students	The following elements are generally present: • The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically; • The school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students; • General education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program; • The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students; • Teachers are aware of their students' progress toward meeting individualized education plan (IEP) goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students; • The school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and • The school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including school nurse, if applicable.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 1F:
• Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)/intervention programs; describe implementation, monitoring, and utilization of results to drive instruction
• Special education, 504 and ELL evaluation process (including identification process)
• Job descriptions of staff that provide support to students with special needs (consultants, teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.)
• Student enrollment data, disaggregated by disability
• Process for communication between general educators and support staff, including communication documents/tools
• Transition services/supports
• Continuum of services
• Connection with outside agencies

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2A	**The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.**	**Does evidence support?**
Mission & Key Design Elements	The following elements are generally present: • The school faithfully follows its mission; and • The school has implemented its key design elements.	**CSO Comments** <mark>Please provide a narrative to support this benchmark.</mark>
Renewal Benchmark 2B	**Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.**	
Parents and Students	The following elements are generally present: • The school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families; • Families are satisfied with the school; and • Parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 2A:
- Narrative to describe school's focus on its mission and key design elements
- Key design elements and artifacts that demonstrate the implementation of the key design elements

Examples of evidence for 2B:
- Parent communication methods (website, newsletters, surveys*, committees, etc.)
- Parent satisfaction surveys
- Student performance reporting methods (grade/behavior reports, parent access to web based system, etc.)
- Enrollment and retention data; provide historical trends

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2C	**The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.**	**Does evidence support?**
Organizational Capacity	The following elements are generally present: • The school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program; • The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; • The school has a clear student discipline system at the administrative level that is consistently applied; • The school retains quality staff; • The school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals; • The school maintains adequate student enrollment; • The school has procedures to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and • The school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary.	**CSO Comments** *Note that your student and staff handbooks will automatically be imported for this question. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.*

Examples of evidence for 2C:
- Organizational chart (internal); outline specific roles and responsibilities
- Enrollment and retention (student and teacher) data and process to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; provide historical trends
- Monitoring systems and procedures - describe implementation and utilization of results to drive changes
- Marketing materials/initiatives to support enrollment/retention goals
- Handbooks (student, parent, staff, etc.) and Policies (behavior, etc.), including discipline system and policies

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2D	**The school board effectively governs the school and provides appropriate oversight to the service provide (if applicable).**	**Does evidence support?**
Board Oversight	The following elements are generally present: • The Board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school's program and finances; • It establishes clear priorities, objectives, and long-range goals, and has benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision; • The Board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and • The Board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians, and students.	**CSO Comments**

	Renewal Question 2 Is the school an effective, viable organization?	
Renewal Benchmark 2E	**The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems, and processes.**	**Does evidence support?**
Governance (continued)	The following elements are generally present: • The Board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships; • The Board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities, or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management company fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and establishes benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion; • The Board regularly reviews and updates Board and school policies, as needed, and has an orientation process for new members; • The Board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • The Board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy, consistent with that set forth in the charter, and consistently abides by it throughout the term of the charter; • The Board implements a process for dealing with complaints, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy, including acting on complaints in a timely fashion; • The Board abides by its bylaws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding Board member election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and • The Board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and records minutes for all meetings including closed sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.	**CSO Comments**

	Renewal Question 2 **Is the school an effective, viable organization?**	
Renewal Benchmark 2F	The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of the charter.	**Does evidence support?**
Legal Requirements	The following elements are generally present: • The school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable State and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the CSO via Epicenter in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including No Child Left Behind [NCLB] highly-qualified status) and background check requirements, Freedom of Information Act requests, and the Open Meeting Act; • The school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules, and regulations; • The school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements; • The Board has an active and ongoing relationship with independent legal counsel, who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions, and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and • The school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to appropriate parties in a timely fashion.	**CSO Comments** *Note that your board calendar and a sample of board minutes will automatically be imported for this question. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.

Examples of evidence for 2D, 2E and 2F:
• School performance reports (internal, not provided by CSO)
• Budget adoption; describe the process of reviewing and adopting
• Board policies and procedures, including the process for reviewing and updating; ensure they are updated, include information on involvement of legal counsel
• Evaluation tools (Board self-evaluation and management evaluation of Board)
• Examples of benchmarks/initiatives established when deficiencies are identified
• Board recruitment; describe process for recruiting candidates, interview questions, etc.
• Board training process and materials (orientation, ongoing)
• Board communication systems (internal, external)

	Renewal Question 3 Is the school fiscally sound?	
Renewal Benchmark 3A	**The school operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate.**	**Does evidence support?**
Budgeting and Long Range Planning	The following elements are generally present: • The school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures; • Board members, school management, and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate; • The school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions; • The school routinely analyzes budget variances; the Board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and • Actual expenses are equal to, or less that, actual revenue with no material exceptions.	**CSO Comments**

	Renewal Question 3 **Is the school fiscally sound?**	
Renewal Benchmark 3B	**The school maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures.**	**Does evidence support?**
Internal Controls	The following elements are generally present: • The school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures; • The school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management's direction, laws, regulations, grants, and contracts; • The school safeguards its assets; • The school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions; • The school has controls to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy; • The Board members and school employees adhere to a code of ethics; • The school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained; • The school has systems to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the Board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements; • A staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; • The school prepares payroll according to appropriate State and federal regulations and school policy; and • The school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the CSO, and/or Michigan Dept. of Education or Treasury, if needed.	**CSO Comments**

	Renewal Question 3 Is the school fiscally sound?	
Renewal Benchmark 3C	**The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing GVSU CSO and the Michigan Department of Education with required financial reports that are on time, complete, and follow generally accepted accounting principles.**	**Does evidence support?**
Financial Reporting	The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner: • Annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; • Annual budgets and cash flow statements; • Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses; • Grant expenditure reports	**CSO Comments** *Note that your most recent annual financial audit and board adopted budget/amendments will be automatically imported for this. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.*
Renewal Benchmark 3D	**The school/ESP (if full service) maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).**	**Does evidence support?**
Financial Condition	The following elements are generally present: • The school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly; • The school prepares and monitors cash flow projections; and • If necessary, the school pursues state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding.	**CSO Comments**

Examples of evidence for 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D:
- Budget creation and adoption; describe the process of creating, reviewing, and adopting the budget
- Budget and amendments*
- Evidence of monitoring of operating budget and process to correct deficiencies (meeting minutes)*

- Financial audit*
- Fiscal policies and procedures, including payroll

	Renewal Question 4 Is the school a safe environment that promotes effective teaching and learning?	
Renewal Benchmark 4A	**The school building is structurally sound, clean, and meets all requirements of the law.**	**Does evidence support?**
Building Structure	The following elements are generally present: • The school building has a valid Certificate of Occupancy; and • The school building has passed a facility review conducted by the GVSU CSO.	**CSO Comments** ***Note that your certificate of occupancy and most recent facility review reports will be automatically imported for this. Please submit any additional information you believe to be relevant.**

Examples of evidence for 4A:
- Certificate of Occupancy*
- Facility review report*

Renewal Question 4 Is the school a safe environment that promotes effective teaching and learning?		
Renewal Benchmark 4B	**The school's promotes cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to the school population.**	**Does evidence support?**
Culture and Climate	The following elements are generally present: • Teachers have effective classroom management techniques/routines; • The school has established an appropriate discipline policy; • Teachers have received PD on cultural responsiveness as related to the specific school populations and have knowledge of the cultures in their classrooms which they apply to their practice; • There are structures to guarantee that the school and work environment is open to, and accepting of, diversity and free from discriminatory behavior and practices; and • School staff interact with students in ways that respect and encourage their cultural norms, preferences, and native languages that may be different from teachers' own.	**CSO Comments** ==Please provide a narrative to support this benchmark.==

Examples of evidence for 4B:
• Narrative to describe school's culture and climate; explain how this is achieved
• PD opportunities/training on school culture, cultural responsiveness, and diversity/equity/ and inclusion
• Behavior models and classroom management approach/techniques, including discipline policies