



The Learning Collective

## California Public Charter School Grant Program External Review Benchmarks

*Note: The 7 benchmarks correlate with the required elements in the Public Charter Schools Grant Program request for applications.*

<b>BENCHMARK 1 – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:</b> <b>Is the school an academic success?</b>	
<u>Evidence Sub-Category</u>	<u>Benchmark</u>
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & LEARNING	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are making the progress that is expected at their grade level;</li> <li>• Students are enthusiastic about their learning and engage in lessons as active learners;</li> <li>• Students work together and relate well in pairs, or groups, to collaboratively solve problems; and</li> <li>• Students are challenged and sufficiently develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>
USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention;</li> <li>• Teachers actively examine assessment results and data from online learning programs and use that data to inform their instructional practices (if applicable);</li> <li>• Students are involved in the practice of reflection and in the assessment and analysis of their own work; and</li> <li>• School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies.</li> </ul>
CURRICULUM	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders ensure that all learning environments have a</li> </ul>

	<p>coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents.</li> </ul>
PEDAGOGY	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers establish, share and revisit standards-based learning objectives so that all students understand what they are learning and why it is important;</li> <li>• Teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students) and have effective classroom management techniques;</li> <li>• Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding;</li> <li>• Teachers use questioning and discussion techniques to increase conceptual understanding and extend higher order thinking; and</li> <li>• Teachers design and deliver complex instructional tasks to prepare students for future levels of learning by providing opportunities for them to become independent learners, critical thinkers, and thoughtful problem solvers.</li> </ul>
AT-RISK STUDENTS	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school identifies at-risk students;</li> <li>• The school's intervention programs meet the needs of at-risk students;</li> <li>• The school monitors the progress and success of at-risk students; and</li> <li>• The school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff.</li> </ul>
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations;</li> <li>• Instructional leaders establish a culture of respect and rapport to support the emotional safety of students;</li> <li>• The instructional leadership supports the development of the teaching staff;</li> <li>• Instructional leaders measure the effectiveness of learning and teaching through observations of lessons and analysis of student work;</li> <li>• Instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers' instructional effectiveness; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria.</li> </ul>
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**BENCHMARK 2 – CHARTER MANAGEMENT:**

**Does the board of directors effectively govern the school?**

	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the board of directors possess appropriate skills;</li> <li>• The board systematically selects, and evaluates, the chief executive;</li> <li>• The board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances;</li> <li>• The board establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision;</li> <li>• The board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies – or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations;</li> <li>• The board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable); and</li> <li>• The board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>
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**BENCHMARK 3 – COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT:**

**Are parents engaged in, and satisfied with, the school?**

	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders and teachers engage families and community members as partners in raising student learning;</li> <li>• The school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families;</li> <li>• Families are satisfied with the school;</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and</li> <li>• School leaders and teachers celebrate student achievements and school successes with families and the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BENCHMARK 4 – SUSTAINABILITY AND ALIGNMENT OF RESOURCES:</b></p> <p><b>Is the school fiscally sound?</b></p>	
	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board reviews and approves the annual budget and monitors actual performance against budget;</li> <li>• Board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate;</li> <li>• The board ensures there is an annual independent audit/review;</li> <li>• The school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts the plan to meet changing conditions;</li> <li>• Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue;</li> <li>• The school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly; and</li> <li>• The school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (approximately three months).</li> </ul>
<p><b>BENCHMARK 5 – TARGETED CAPACITY BUILDING:</b></p> <p><b>Is the school an effective, viable organization?</b></p>	
<p><b>CURRICULUM EVALUATION SYSTEM</b></p>	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and</li> <li>• School leaders facilitate, and provide opportunities for, the discussion and coordination of curriculum planning between educators within and across grade-levels, including English learner and diverse learner resource teachers, to ensure alignment and consistency.</li> </ul>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers;</li> <li>• Professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice;</li> <li>• School staff members received governance and fiscal management training in the first year of the school's operation;</li> <li>• Beginning teachers receive sufficient support; and</li> <li>• Professional development is evaluated.</li> </ul>
OPERATIONS & HUMAN RESOURCES	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>• The school's data systems measure student success and inform teachers and principals on how they can improve their practices;</li> <li>• The school utilizes technology systems to support the school's operations;</li> <li>• The school recruits and retains quality staff; and</li> <li>• The school maintains adequate student enrollment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BENCHMARK 6 – AUTONOMY:</b>  <b>Is the school sufficiently autonomous from the district?</b></p>	
	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a high degree of autonomy over its budget, expenditures, personnel, and daily operations; and</li> <li>• Representatives of the authorizer do not constitute the majority of the board of directors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BENCHMARK 7 – NOTIFICATION AND ADMISSIONS:</b>  <b>Does the school attempt to have a student population representative of the community?</b></p>	
	<p>The extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school makes adequate attempts to inform all members of the community about the school; and</li> <li>• All children have an equal opportunity to attend the school, including a lottery if the school is at capacity.</li> </ul>