

Public Charter Schools Grant Program External Review

External Review

A review of the quality of your educational program, governance and operations, and fiscal condition

Who?

Adam Aberman is the CEO and Founder of The Learning Collective. Adam has profound content expertise in technology-based innovation and a 20-year track record educating young people in numerous venues from traditional public schools to school district administration trainings. Over the past 15 years, Adam has assessed over 200 current, and 100 proposed, charter schools nationally (in California, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Washington), including lead on charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is ultimately submitted to authorizers. Adam has also evaluated authorizers in Minnesota and Ohio. Adam has evaluated the effectiveness of schools on issues including schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, professional development, governance, parental involvement and school finances. Adam is a former LAUSD teacher. Adam received a B.A. from Vassar College and a Master in Public Policy, with an emphasis on Education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Dr. Hillary Johnson or Amber Leage may conduct the review pending review dates.

How long?

- The review will be completed by one reviewer over approximately 2.5 days
- 2 days of information gathering through interviews (board, school leader/s, teachers, parents, students [when possible]) and document reviews (school self-assessment, student work, parent surveys, financials)
- 1/2 day Prioritization Session, in which reviewer presents the findings from the previous two days and a team from the school prioritizes next steps stemming from the findings

What will the reviewer do (before) the visit?

- Send the self-assessment form
- Send the rubric
- Send a signed template of the no-conflict-of-interest letter
- Conduct pre-visit call with the principal
- Develop a review schedule with the principal
- Examine the documents you send him
- Analyze the self-assessment form you send

What will you do (before)?

- Keep yourself and your staff calm
- Develop a review schedule with the reviewer
- Several days before visit: Fill out and return the self assessment form. Also send the reviewer: Cross-section of student work (grade levels, proficiencies), recent parent satisfaction surveys, organizational chart, staff roster, school charter, financial documents (current year budget, budget projections, and current year actuals), the 15-page narrative grant response (Form 2 of PCSGP), a draft schedule for the 2.5 days of the visit (you and the reviewer will discuss on a phone call)
- Clear your calendar for parts of the first two days and day 3 in the morning
- For the day 3 Prioritization Session, clear the calendars of school leaders (and other key teachers and staff).

Completing the Self-Assessment

- Keep it short and to the point using single words, bullet points and notes to self
- Involve other school leaders in answering the questions
- It is an important document and is the focus for the first meeting on day 1 of the review

What will the reviewer do (during)?

- Examine student work
- Conduct student learning observations w/a school staff member – Google classroom, Zoom, recorded online lessons, etc.
- Interview school leaders, board members, teachers, students and parents
- Ask you a lot of questions

Speak with focus group – Board

- Organize a convenient time (about 1 hour) when the reviewer can speak by phone with two board members (no staff members)
- Ideally the end of day 1 (late afternoon or early evening) or early morning of day 2

Speak with focus group – Parents

- Organize a convenient time (about 1 hour) when the reviewer can speak by phone with two parents
- Invite parents who will talk confidently, are a cross section and who have experience of other schools. Don't just pick the fan club

Speak with (2) focus groups – Teachers

- Organize convenient times when the reviewer can speak by Zoom videoconference (about 1 hour) with two different teacher focus groups – on day 1 and day 2 – of two or more teachers in each focus group
- Invite a cross section of teachers, including some new to the school

Speak individually – Teachers (2)

Organize convenient times when the reviewer can speak by Zoom videoconference (about 1 hour) with two teachers individually

Speak with focus group – Students

- Organize a convenient time when the reviewer can speak by phone with 2 students (about 1 hour)
- Select the good and the not-so-good, including your stars and those that will know, first hand, how you organize and implement your academic and behavioral intervention systems

Speak with Administrators

- The reviewer will speak via Zoom videoconference with you and your leadership team at the beginning and end of the first two days so that he can update you on the progress of the review and ask questions
- The first meeting on day 1 will discuss the self assessment form that you will complete with your school community

What will you do (during)?

- Answer questions and provide information
- Conduct learning observations with the reviewer
- Keep the school community calm and well informed about how things are going

What will the reviewer do (after)?

- Write a report about your school that details what is working really well and what needs to be improved
- Send a draft copy of the report to make sure there are no factual inaccuracies
- Send the final version of the report to you

What will you do (after)?

- Review the draft copy of the report to make sure there are no factual inaccuracies
- Keep the final version of the report on file for five years
- Email a copy of the report to your PCSGP representative consultant at CDE and confirm receipt of that email
- Implement the next steps determined during the Prioritization Session

Review Aspects

- Educational Program – Learning, Pedagogy, Curriculum, Student Achievement
- Management/Governance – Board
- Parent Involvement
- Sustainability – Post-Grant Fiscal Health
- Capacity Building – Curriculum Eval System, PD, Operations & HR
- Admissions – Recruitment, Lottery
- Autonomy – From Authorizer

What does a schedule look like?

	Day 1		Day 2
<i>Times</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Activity</i>
8:00 – 9:00	Principal Meeting (Zoom)	8:00 – 9:00	Meeting with principal (Zoom)
9:00 – 11:30	Learning Observations (w/School Staff Member) Document Review (Student Work, Parent Surveys, Financials)	9:00 – 10:00	Parent Focus Group (Phone; Two parents)
11:30 – 12:00	Student Focus Group (Phone; Two students)	10:00 – 11:00	Teacher Focus Group 2 (Zoom; Two or more teachers)
12:00– 1:00	Teacher Focus Group 1 (Zoom; Two or more teachers)	11:00 – 12:30	Learning Observations (w/School Staff Member) Document Review (Student Work, Parent Surveys)
1:00 – 2:00	Individual Teacher Interview 1	12:30 – 3:30	Reviewer completes writing draft report
2:00 – 3:00	Meeting with Principal (Zoom)		
3:00– 4:00	Individual Teacher Interview 2 (Zoom; Two or more teachers)		
4:00 – 5:00	Board Focus Group (Phone; two board members)	3:30 – 4:00	Summative verbal feedback – Preliminary Conclusions
	9:00-12:00 - Day 3 – Prioritization (Zoom; Minimum 3 School Staff Members)		

Thank you for the opportunity to work together!

Adam Aberman

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