

# New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools

## **Organizational Performance Framework Guidance**

Updated August 2015

#### **Overview**

As the State Education Agency and sole charter authorizer in the state of New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Education (Department) holds all charter schools accountable for providing students with a high-quality public education. In July 2012, the Office of Charter Schools (OCS) released the Performance Framework which outlines the academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all New Jersey public charter schools are evaluated. This document provides an update to the <u>organizational section of the Performance Framework</u>. This guidance aims to provide charter schools and other key stakeholders with clear and precise information on how a charter school's organizational performance is evaluated.

Department staff adhered to the following key guiding principles throughout the revision process:

- Preserve school autonomy. The OCS ensures that Organizational Performance Framework protects the
  autonomies that allow charter schools to innovate and to determine the means by which they improve
  student achievement and outcomes.
- Clarify and prioritize all aspects of a school's organizational performance. The Framework is structured to ensure that all key areas of a school's organizational performance are included, while prioritizing key areas and reducing redundancy.
- Ensure clear communication about organizational performance. The revised Framework allows the
  Department to clearly communicate whether or not charter schools are meeting expected standards of
  performance.
- Maintain clear performance expectations while allowing for Commissioner discretion. The Framework
  clearly outlines organizational performance expectations for charter schools. However, the
  organizational framework does <u>not</u> culminate up into a single score and is <u>not</u> the only factor in highstakes accountability decisions including replication, expansion, renewal and revocation. The
  Commissioner ultimately makes these high-stakes decisions based on the totality of evidence regarding
  a charter school's performance with a strong emphasis on a school's academic performance.

#### **Framework Structure**

The evaluation of a school's organizational performance is guided by the following essential question:

#### Is the school equitable and organizationally sound?

The Organizational Performance Framework is divided into five performance areas. Within these areas, the Framework provides specific indicators, criteria, metrics and ratings that the Department will utilize to evaluate a school's performance and whether or not a school is meeting standards. The Department will use multiple sources of evidence to determine a school's rating for each indicator.

#### **Performance Areas**

The Framework includes five broad performance areas to evaluate the school's organizational performance.

**Education Program and Capacity**. A charter school's education program must demonstrate strong academic outcomes. In order to improve academic outcomes, the school's curriculum, instruction and assessment systems must be clear and effective with a well-functioning organizational structure that leads to continuous improvement. Additionally, the charter school must implement the mission and key design elements outlined in its original charter.

**School Culture and Climate.** A charter school's environment is critical to student success. In this section, a charter school will be evaluated on the expectations it sets for its students and whether or not the school environment is safe, respectful and supportive.

**Board Governance.** Charter schools must practice sound governance and comply with relevant laws and regulations. In this section, the Department will evaluate whether or not the board of trustees has the capacity to govern the school effectively and whether or not the board complies with relevant laws and regulations.

**Access and Equity.** The Department is committed to working with charter schools to ensure that they are serving and meeting the needs of all students, especially the highest need students requiring special education services, students who are English Language Learners, students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and other underserved or at-risk populations. Charter schools must demonstrate that their recruitment, application, admissions, lottery and enrollment policies and practices are fair and equitable, as required by law. Additionally, charter schools must demonstrate that they comply with state and federal laws relating to special education students and students who are English Language Learners.

**Compliance.** Charter schools are public schools that must comply with relevant laws and regulations. This section focuses on compliance and reporting related to NJSMART, Epicenter, financial management and all other relevant state and federal requirements.

#### **Indicators and Criteria**

Within each performance area, there are multiple indicators. For each indicator, the Framework provides a number of criteria, or standards, by which the Department evaluates charter schools. For each indicator, the school will receive a rating.

#### **Metrics and Ratings**

Most indicators have 3 ratings. Some indicators may only have 2 ratings. In general, for each indicator, a school receives one of three ratings based on evaluation of the established metrics.

Meets the Standard	Schools that achieve the "meets the standard" rating generally meet the criteria outlined in a given indicator and do not present any significant concerns.
Partially Meets the Standard	Schools that meet some aspects of the criteria but not others and/or moderate concern(s) are noted will receive a "partially meets the standard" rating.
Does Not Meet Standard	Schools that are not meeting a majority of the criteria in a given indicator and/or present significant concerns within a given indicator will receive a "does not meet standard" rating.

#### **Monitoring and Oversight**

#### **Sources of Evidence**

In order to evaluate a charter school's organizational performance, the Department will utilize multiple sources of evidence, including but not limited to:

#### **School Activities and Documentation**

- Initial Charter School Application
- Charter Agreement
- Annual Reports
- Charter Amendments
- Renewal Application
- State Assessment Data
- Admissions and Enrollment Materials
- Enrollment Data (NJSMART and CHE)
- Board Minutes
- School identified and collected data from other assessments
- Curriculum Documents
- Lesson Plans
- Policy Documents
- Staff Surveys
- Handbooks- Family, Staff, Student, Board
- Professional Development Calendars / Agendas
- Discipline Data including EVVRS
- Annual Financial Audits
- Budgets
- Facility Plans
- Staff Lists
- Federal and State Reporting Requirements
- Documentation of current Certificate of Occupancy, Health, Safety, and Fire inspections.

#### **Department Activities and Documentation**

- Performance Framework Reports
- Site Visit Summary Reports and School Monitoring Documentation
- Evaluation of Board of Trustees and School Administration
- Evaluation of the Implementation of ELL and Special Education Requirements and Programs
- GAAP Accounting System Review
- Evaluation of Effective Systems for Financial Oversight
- Complaints Received and Resolution Status

### **Organizational Performance Framework**

Performance Area 1: Education Program and Capacity		
Indicator	Criteria, including but not limited to:	Metric/Rating
1.1 Mission & Key Design Elements The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	<ul> <li>Board members, administrators, teachers, students, and families demonstrate a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements.</li> <li>The school has implemented the key design elements in the approved charter.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 1.1 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 1.1 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 1.1 with moderate or major issues noted.
1.2 Curriculum The school has a comprehensive curriculum.	<ul> <li>The school's curriculum is aligned to state standards.</li> <li>The school has a clear process for selecting, developing, reviewing and revising its curriculum documents.</li> <li>The implemented curriculum addresses the needs of all learners.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 1.2 and/or only minor issues are noted. PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 1.2 with moderate issue(s) noted. DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 1.2 with moderate or major issues noted.
<b>1.3 Instruction</b> The school demonstrates high-quality instruction across all classrooms.	<ul> <li>The school staff demonstrates a common understanding of high-quality instruction with instructional practices aligned to this understanding.</li> <li>Students demonstrate strong engagement in classrooms.</li> <li>Classroom environments are conducive to learning.</li> <li>Teachers deliver purposeful lessons and maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear objective focus, efficient transitions, and high student engagement).</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 1.3 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 1.3 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 1.3 with moderate or major issues noted.
1.4 Assessment The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.	<ul> <li>The school uses an effective system of formative and benchmark assessments, including a reliable process for scoring and analyzing such assessments.</li> <li>The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program in serving all students and modifies the program accordingly.</li> <li>The schools uses qualitative and quantitative to address the needs of students on a grade, classroom and individual basis.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 1.4 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 1.4 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 1.4 with moderate or major issues noted.

## 1.5 Organizational Capacity

The school has a clear and well-functioning organizational structure that leads to continuous improvement.

- The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making.
- The school provides strong instructional leadership to teachers.
- The school has an effective, comprehensive professional development program that improves the implementation of the curriculum and instructional practices.
- The school has developed systems for proactively addressing areas such as communication with stakeholders, community outreach, and teacher evaluations.

#### MEETS THE STANDARD

The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 1.5 and/or only minor issues are noted.

#### PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD

The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 1.5 with moderate issue(s) noted.

#### DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD

The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 1.5 with moderate or major issues noted.

Performance Area 2: School Culture and Climate		
Indicator	Criteria, including but not limited to:	Metric/Rating
2.1 School Culture & Climate The school promotes a culture of high expectations and is safe, respectful and supportive.	<ul> <li>The school environment fosters a culture of learning, scholarship and high academic expectations.</li> <li>The school environment and interactions amongst stakeholders are respectful, supportive, professional and constructive.</li> <li>The school creates a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional and health needs of its students.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 2.1 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 2.1 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 2.1 with moderate or major issues noted.
2.2 Family & Community Engagement The school actively engages families and the community towards achieving its mission.	<ul> <li>The school has strong relationships with families/guardians that support students' academic growth and achievement and social-emotional health.</li> <li>Partnerships with educational institutions or community organizations align to the school's mission and education program.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 2.2 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 2.2 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 2.2 with moderate or major issues noted.

Performance Area 3: Board Governance		
Indicator	Criteria, including but not limited to:	Metric/Rating
3.1 Board Capacity The board has the capacity to govern the school effectively.	<ul> <li>The board recruits, maintains and trains members with appropriate skills, experience and expertise to govern the school; board membership is diverse and includes legal, fiscal, educational, community and board leadership/governance experience.</li> <li>The board determines the strategic direction of the school by setting goals aligned with the school's mission and driven by data analysis; the board regularly monitors progress relative to its priorities and goals and engages in continuous improvement.</li> <li>The board has adequate filled seats, and regularly has a quorum, according to the school's bylaws.</li> <li>Board meetings are well-organized, purposeful and strategically focused.</li> <li>The board updates school policies to ensure compliance with applicable requirements to facilitate efficient, effective operations.</li> <li>The board hires and evaluates the school leader(s) and/or management organization on an annual basis and holds these individuals accountable for meeting specified goals.</li> <li>The board uses a performance-based evaluation process to assess its own performance annually.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 3.1 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting some of the criteria identified in indicator 3.1 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 3.1 with moderate or major issues noted.
3.2 Compliance The board complies with relevant laws and regulations.	<ul> <li>In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:11-3.1(d), members complete required training prepared and offered by the New Jersey School Boards Association during the first year of his or her first term on the board.</li> <li>Members have completed required criminal background checks.</li> <li>Members have submitted required disclosure forms and do not have any conflicts of interest.</li> <li>The board is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.</li> <li>The board is in compliance with its by-laws.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 3.2 and has not received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 3.2.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD The school presents moderate/major concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 3.2 and has received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 3.2.

Performance Area 4: Access and Equity		
Indicator	Criteria, including but not limited to:	Metric/Rating
4.1 Access and Equity The school demonstrates a commitment to serving and meeting the needs of all students, especially the highest need students requiring special education services, students who are English Language Learners, students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and other underserved or at-risk populations.	<ul> <li>The school's recruitment, application, admissions, lottery and enrollment policies and practices are fair and equitable and demonstrate a commitment to serving all students; these policies and practices align with the requirements and recommendations in the Department's "Guidelines for Access and Equity in New Jersey Charter Schools":         <a href="http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/equity/guidelines.pdf">http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/equity/guidelines.pdf</a></li> <li>The school monitors and minimizes attrition rates to ensure stable and equitable enrollment.</li> <li>The school's suspension and expulsion policies align with state law and regulation.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 4.1 and/or only minor issues are noted. PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 4.1 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 4.1 with moderate or major issues noted.
4.2 Students with Disabilities The school complies with state and federal special-education laws and provides a high- quality learning environment for all students.	<ul> <li>The school consistently complies with rules relating to student identification and referral.</li> <li>The school consistently complies with rules relating to the academic program, assessments, discipline, and all other aspects of the school's program and responsibilities.</li> <li>Student Individualized Education Plans and Section 504 plans are consistently carried out by appropriately certified staff.</li> <li>Access to the school's facility and program are provided to students and parents in a lawful manner and consistent with their abilities.</li> <li>The school ensures a high-quality learning environment for all students including, but not limited to, access to a multidisciplinary intervention team, relevant professional development, and differentiated instruction.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 4.2 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting some of the criteria identified in indicator 4.2 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 4.2 with moderate or major issues noted.
4.3 English Language Learners The school complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations relating to English Language Learner requirements.	<ul> <li>The school consistently and effectively implements steps to identify students in need of ELL services.</li> <li>Requisite ELL services are provided to identified students by appropriately certified staff.</li> <li>Students are provided with appropriate accommodations on assessments.</li> <li>Students are exited from ELL services in accordance with their assessed capacities.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 4.3 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting some of the criteria identified in indicator 4.3 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 4.3 with moderate or major issues noted.

Performance Area 5: Compliance		
Indicator	Criteria, including but not limited to:	Metric/Rating
5.1 NJ SMART Compliance The school submits critical information punctually and accurately via NJ SMART.	<ul> <li>The school meets NJ SMART reporting deadlines.</li> <li>The school's NJ SMART data submissions have a final error rate of no more than 2% defined as number of errors/total number of student records.</li> <li>The school's student identification (SID) data, including student demographic data, for the October 15th NJSMART snapshot are accurate and aligned to the Charter School Enrollment System data.</li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 5.1 and/or only minor issues are noted.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 5.1 with moderate issue(s) noted.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents concerns in meeting a majority of the criteria identified in indicator 5.1 with moderate or major issues noted.
5.2 EpiCenter Compliance The school submits critical information punctually and accurately via EpiCenter.	The school submits required documentation to EpiCenter accurately and on time.	MEETS THE STANDARD The school has >85% on time and accurate submissions.  PARTIALLY MEETS THE STANDARD The school has between 70-85% on time and accurate submissions.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD The school has <70% on time and accurate submissions.
5.3 Financial Management and Compliance The school follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and meets financial reporting and compliance requirements.	<ul> <li>The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter agreement relating to financial management and oversight expectations as evidenced by:         <ul> <li>✓ An Annual Independent Audit with an unqualified audit opinion</li> <li>✓ An Annual Independent Audit devoid of significant conditions or internal control weaknesses</li> <li>✓ The Independent Auditor's Management Report has no significant or "Repeat" findings</li> <li>✓ Employment of a School Business Administrator (SBA)</li> <li>✓ On-time submission and completion of the Annual Independent Audit and Corrective Action Plan</li> <li>✓ Submission of periodic financial reports as required by the Department</li> <li>✓ On-time submission and completion of annual and revised budgets (if applicable)</li> <li>✓ Submission of board contracts with a management company (if applicable)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	MEETS THE STANDARD  The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 5.3 and has not received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 5.3.  DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD  The school presents moderate/major concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 5.3 and has received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 5.3.

**5.4 Other Compliance** The school materially complies with state/federal law and reporting requirements.

- The school completes all Facilities, Safety, Security and Health Requirements in a timely manner.
- The school meets all criminal background check requirements.
- The school completes on time submission of Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) Reporting
- The school completes on time and accurate NCLB Reporting.
- The school meets educator evaluation, staffing and licensure requirements.
- The school meets other relevant state and federal reporting and compliance requirements.

#### **MEETS THE STANDARD**

The school generally meets the criteria identified in indicator 5.4 and has not received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 5.4.

#### DOES NOT MEET THE STANDARD

The school presents moderate/major concerns in meeting at least 1 of the criteria identified in indicator 5.4 and has received a notice of concern from the Department related to indicator 5.4.

#### **Monitoring Process**

The Department will provide Organizational Framework Reports annually for all charter schools in the state. Note that certain areas within the framework cannot be evaluated without a comprehensive site visit. Therefore, some schools may not receive a complete Organizational Framework Report for all Performance Areas.

Depending on a school's status, a charter school may receive additional oversight and monitoring from the Department. For example, charter schools up for renewal and schools on probation will undergo a more comprehensive review of its operations based on the Organizational Performance Framework. Regardless of monitoring status, schools are required to meet the criteria within each indicator and comply with relevant laws and regulations.