

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Annual Charter School Site Review

Charter School Copy



A quality authorizer....

Evaluates each school annually on its performance and progress toward meeting the standards and targets stated in the charter contract, including essential compliance requirements, and clearly communicates evaluation results to the school's governing board and leadership.

National Association of Charter School Authorizers

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Draft Agenda

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Annual Site Review 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

7:30–8:30 am	Introductions and Overview of the Day
8:30–10:00 am.....	Classroom Observation and School Site Observations
8:30–9:30 am	Focus Group– Students
8:30 am–12:00 pm	Document Reviews
10:00–11:00 am	Focus Group— Teachers
11:00 am–12:00 pm	Focus Group— Governing Board
12:00–1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00–3:00 pm.....	Document Review and Classroom Observations
1:00 pm.....	Focus Group— School Leadership Team
2:00 pm.....	Focus Group— Parents
3:00–3:30 pm.....	Team Debriefing and Adjourn

Charter School Annual Site Review—Overview

Each year, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) will conduct a comprehensive on-site review of each of its charter schools. As part of our charter school authorizing responsibility, AACPS will evaluate every aspect of the charter school's operations, including interviews with parents, teachers, students, school leadership, and governing board members. Upon conclusion of the site review, AACPS will provide an annual written report to each school, summarizing their performance and compliance to date and identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement. This written report will be available for each school's leadership team, staff, stakeholders and governing board. AACPS will make themselves available to discuss any items described within this report.

The overall purpose of the annual site review includes the following:

1. Identify the areas of strength and areas in need of follow up and continued support.
2. Monitor charter school contract compliance.
3. Collect information which cannot be obtained otherwise and in accordance with the charter contract which will be used as part of the charter school renewal.
4. Gain a deeper understanding of the overall school program through open discussion with stakeholder groups.

These site visits will be organized, conducted and reported according to five sections. Within each section, the review team will summarize its findings based on observations at the school site, discussion with school stakeholders, and a review of documents. The findings will consist of a summary of strengths; identification of implementation problems; areas needing attention; recommendations for improvement; and a listing of technical assistance resources available; as needed.

These five sections will include the following categories and subsections:

1. Instruction and Student Services
 - a. Classroom Observation
 - b. Special Education Services
 - c. 504 Compliance
 - d. School Counseling services, records and transcripts
2. Business and Management Services
 - a. Budget and Finance
 - b. Human Resources
 - c. Facilities
 - d. Student Data
3. Classroom and School Climate
 - a. Classroom Observation
 - b. School walk through
 - c. Stakeholder focus groups
 - d. School security
 - e. Discipline data
4. Governance and Organizational Viability
 - a. Board Member interviews
 - b. Review of board meeting minutes/meeting dates/Policies/Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation
5. Parent and Community Involvement
 - a. Parent Interviews
 - b. Documentation of Parent involvement opportunities
 - c. Interview with PTO
 - d. Community partnerships

Site Visit Specifics/Documents Requirements

Special Education

Special education will pull the special education (green) folders for random students. Additionally, they will require the portfolios for the students that are selected.

For classroom observations, current schedules for the special education teachers along with the names of the students they will be servicing on the day of the site visit. IEP snapshots for those students will also be needed.

Expectation from school:

- School will provide all of the above referenced records as well as access to each special education teacher as needed.

504 Documents

- Student records will be pulled and all 504 documents will be reviewed.
- Typically, five random files will be pulled to verify that relevant paperwork is complete and plans are written appropriately.
- Observations of selected students will also take place to verify that all accommodations are being implemented.

Expectation from school:

- A current list of all students with 504 plans.
- Access to all records of those students listed on the most updated list.

Transportation

School must provide the following documents:

Vendors
Up to date bus driver's names
Up to date bus numbers
A copy of school bus routes
Bus evacuation dates, front door, back door or both
Bus field trip list

Discussion about:

Responding to behavior issues
Procedures for before and after school bus coverage
Procedures concerning bus accidents

Expectation from school:

- A copy of all transportation documents listed above
- Access to the individual responsible for transportation oversight in order to take part in discussion items listed above.

School Security

- Drill checklist for each of the 5 system-wide drills conducted this year.
- A printed copy of the school's emergency plan.
- Latest inventory check for the trauma kit(s)
- A general security survey will occur regarding "The Office of School Security Checklist".
- Discuss with staff, one on one about security of the building.

Expectation from school:

- School will provide all relevant school security documents listed above.
- School will make all relevant personal available to discuss school security.

Human Resources

- HR will need access to the Local Management Files (LMF) as they will be inspected for their content, location of storage, how they are stored, accessibility, where key is stored, etc..
- Access to copy machine in the event that files need copied.
- Audit the work area where employee timesheets are posted and make sure employee posters are up, etc...

Expectation from school:

- School will make all employee files accessible.

Academic Accountability

Academic Accountability will examine artifacts and evidence that relate to how the school uses data and has established a data culture with the school. It would be useful to see the data displays used by the school to track progress.

Evidence may be some or all of the following relevant data points:

- Statement of Mission
- Statement of Vision
- Accountability Plan
- MSA, HSA, or other state or national assessment data
- Data from benchmarks
- Data from other local or nationally normed assessments
- Formative Assessment Data
- Summative Assessment Data
- Minutes or notes from collaborative planning sessions
- Data displays
- Awards
- PSAT, SAT, AP
- Course Enrollment
- Comparison data

Expectation from school:

- Make available to the review team the point of contact for the school's data team or person responsible for school wide data collection in order to answer questions or take part in discussion about the school's use of data.
- Provide to review team any of the above referenced artifacts that support the school's use of data.

Finance and Budget

- Current interim financial statements
- Board approved policies and regulations concerning financial management
- Board minutes concerning financial decisions and/or obligations
- Charter school financial management procedures and guidelines
- Trial balance
- AACPS payment statements
- Bank Reconciliations
- Folder containing outstanding invoices and listing of outstanding accounts payable as of April 30
- Approved Invoices
- Check register as of April 30
- Agreements or contracts applicable to the current fiscal year or entered into for upcoming years
- Lease agreements or similar financial obligation documents
- Loan agreements or funding arrangements with financial institutions or parent company
- Bank statements for the current fiscal year to date
- Budgeted projections for current and next fiscal year (if available)

Expectation from school

- Make available to the review team the school's finance manager as well as all documents referenced above.

Inventory Management

Inventory management will go through the school to make sure items are barcoded and listed in inventory records. They may also have an occasional question for the person who does the purchasing for the school.

Expectation from school:

- Ensure that person responsible for purchasing is made available for discussion.
- Inventory management has access to applicable inventory for observation of appropriate barcode and inventory records.

Food and Nutrition

The AACPS Office of Food and Nutrition will review the following:

- Renewal of equipment repair contract
- Pest control records and renewal of contract
- Review of the grease trap maintenance log for this school year
- We will review equipment needs for this kitchen and make recommendations.

Expectation from school:

- Ensure that each of the above referenced documents is available for review.
- Provide access to kitchen area in order for staff to review equipment.

Library and Media

The AACPS Office of Library and Media will review the following items:

- Library Media Curriculum
- Library plan with status updates
- Classes taught
- Classes taught in collaboration with classroom teachers
- Number of students using the library
- Collection Development report (items purchased and weeded this year)
- Financial documents for this year. (Budget and expenditures)
- Circulation Statistics

Expectation from school:

- Ensure that each of the above referenced items is available for site team review.
- Provide access to library/media space in order to review library/media center equipment and materials.

- Tips for Being a Successful Site Review Team Member -

- 1 **Think of yourself as an “observer”.** You provide technical assistance to a site that is taking great risks to change school and classroom practices. Celebrate the positive.
- 2 **Be analytical.** Look beneath the surface to ensure you are giving an honest appraisal of where the school is now and where it needs to be. Do not make assumptions or inferences; just collect evidence.
- 3 **Take copious notes.** Do not rely on your memory, no matter how good it is. You will give the team leader your notes at the end of the visit, so be sure they are clear. Keep your notes confidential.
- 4 **Provide data to support your findings.**
- 5 **Ask pointed questions in interviews.** Be persistent; if a question is not answered to your satisfaction, ask it in a different way. Talk to teachers and students in the halls as well as during interviews.
- 6 **Read and study materials provided by the school.**
- 7 **Visit all classes assigned to you.**
- 8 **Talk in specifics** – not generalities. Remember that each outstanding practice and each challenge must have a strong, clear rationale.

Site Visit Responsibilities and Obligations

Charter School

1. The charter school will provide private work space where the review team can work as well as private space free from interruptions where team members can conduct interviews with stakeholder groups.
2. The charter school should to the extent possible, provide breakfast and lunch for the review team. Charter schools often ask their PTO and or business partners to provide meals for the visiting team.
3. Identified staff (including principal) should be available throughout the day to work with the review team as requests come up from time to time.
4. Charter school should have all requested documentation available in an organized manner and available for review team members upon arrival. Please also include school artifacts that may not be requested by review team (see below for examples).
5. Charter school should have all stakeholder groups identified and scheduled prior to site visit (School leadership team, Teachers, Parents, Governing Board, and Students).
6. Charter school should brief staff members prior to the visit and review site visit expectations.

Supplies/Materials to be made available for the Site Visit Review Team:

- Access to a printer and copier
- Labeled map of the school
- Master Bell schedule which includes teacher schedules/staff roster and classroom assignments (Room number included).

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Review Team

1. Review team will arrive punctually and work efficiently throughout the review.
2. Review team will be respectful of the teaching and learning process by limiting disruptions to the learning environment.
3. Review team will be respectful to stakeholder groups while conducting interviews by respecting both stakeholder privacy and confidentiality.
4. Review team will compile data and provide a written report as quickly as is feasibly possible.
5. Review team will remain flexible as unexpected situations may arise from time to time.
6. Review team will be respectful of school property and return all work spaces to their original condition.
7. Review team will follow up with the charter school if necessary to collect additional information needed to complete final report.

Essential Artifacts for Site Visit

The charter school should make all relevant school artifacts available to the review team. Some of these artifacts may include documents or materials that may not be requested by review team members but would provide reviewers with a more in-depth picture of the school's overall effectiveness or program. Sample artifacts are categorically shown below.

General School Information

- Mission and Vision Statement
- Previous Enrollment and students per classroom
- Current Enrollment and students per classroom
- Demographic Data of current school population
- Governing Board Members
- Faculty and Staff roster with titles, room numbers and extensions
- School Map
- School Improvement Plans
- Student Handbook/Faculty Handbook
- Awards and Recognition
- Examples of stellar student work

Parent Choice

- Student Enrollment Comparison by year
- Most recent Family/Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Parent Organization Information
- Parent Covenant/Contract/Newsletters

Budget and Finance

- Pre/Final Budget
- Year to Date Financials
- Audit Comments and Report
- Federal Grant Financial Data

School Marketing and Outreach

- Marketing Information
- Brochure
- School Website
- New initiatives and programs

Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction

- Most recent State Assessment Results & student benchmark results
- Teacher Certification Status
- Professional Growth Plan
- Leadership Team Members
- Accountability Plan
- Curriculum Mapping/Focus Calendar (if being utilized)
- Lesson planning templates

Student Services

- School wide Character Education Program/ Initiatives
- Data on referrals, suspensions, expulsions, absenteeism, and tardies. Should include an annual categorical comparison in each category.

Site Visit Team Members

Name of School: _____ Date: _____

Charter School Staff Liaison: _____

Review Team Members: _____

Focus Group and Stakeholder Interviews

An essential component to the site review process requires interviews with relevant stakeholder groups. The goal of these interviews is to solicit honest, transparent feedback which when compiled will provide both the authorizer and charter school critical information in which to use to assess ongoing program improvements. It is essential that all focus groups are provided a confidential and safe environment in which to answer focus questions honestly and openly. In order to obtain the most useful feedback, stakeholder groups should be interviewed without the need to worry about a breach in trust.

Therefore only, the focus group stakeholders and interviewers should be present at the time of the interviews.

The basic purpose of the classroom visit is to find out:

- the extent to which students are challenged
- the extent to which students are engaged in learning
- the extent of teacher preparation
- the extent to which the classroom is focused and managed
- the extent of differences between high and low achieving classes

The Point of Contact will review assignments and forms for team members to use in making classroom visits and participating in scheduled interviews. Team members are responsible for getting detailed information about teaching practices, student participation and administrative support. Team members are encouraged to record specific examples of high-quality instructional activities that motivate students and engage them in challenging lessons. Informal conversations with teachers and students before and after classroom observations also provide excellent information.

Team members should spend 15 to 20 minutes in each of the classes assigned by the team leader. If time remains after all visits are completed, go to other classes to see as much as possible or return to classes already visited. Each team member should visit both lower-level and higher-level classes.

Each team member should use the Classroom Observation Protocol as a guide to get an idea of what is happening in each classroom. These forms are not teacher evaluation instruments. Document outstanding instructional approaches in which the teacher was well prepared or caused students to think and reflect. Take detailed notes in the space provided on the form.



Charter School Site Review – Classroom Observation Protocol

Teacher	Grade	Content Area
Observation Completed By		Date
Student's Address	City	State Zip Home Phone No.

For each of the following criteria, please use the appropriate status code below:

Status: **E**—Evident/Observed **S**—Somewhat Evident **N**—Not evident/Not Observed

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		INSTRUCTION	
Climate, Safety, Management & Readiness For Learning		Instructional Related Competencies	
Criteria	Status	Criteria	Status
1. Room is organized with students and instruction in mind. There are spaces available for group activities.		1. Current objectives are posted, stated, clear, measurable, and lesson specific using the student friendly language of the applicable content standards.	
2. There is evidence and consistent use of a management system which reflects monitoring and consequences and/or rewards for student behavior.		2. Current student work is appropriately displayed both inside and outside the classrooms along with applicable rubrics.	
3. Classroom rituals, routines and rules are posted.		3. Lesson plans are current, appropriate and available. Teachers appear prepared and organized.	
4. Students are orderly and focused on learning.		4. Teacher provides active, engaging instruction appropriate for content and grade level being taught.	
5. Teacher demonstrates positive attitude, language and proximity toward students.		5. Instruction demonstrates academic rigor and expectations for performance is set at a high level for both teacher and students.	
Comments		Comments	

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES			
I observed...	Effective (E)	Ineffective (I)	I wonder...

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Department of Student Support Services
Office of Alternative Education



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