Charter Renewal Site Visit Questionnaire

Dear School Leader,

The renewal site visit schedule will draw on the current implementation steps of the major improvement strategies identified in the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) as identified by the school leader during the pre-visit call. If needed, organizational and financial components will be added to the site visit if these areas have been identified for improvement in the DCSD Compliance Process, or through conversations with the DCSD Office of Choice Programming.

The site visit protocol will primarily focus on areas for collaborative school improvement, and the visit will also include an opportunity for the school to highlight components of their program that are unique or are a source of pride for the school. Site visits may include instructional observations, focus groups with staff, students, and interviews with school Board members and any other relevant governing committees. The visit may include additional components as determined during the planning call.

Please review the form below prior to the pre-visit planning call. After the conversation, an initial draft will be provided to the school leader to review in order to ensure that the outcomes for the site visit are clear and mutually agreed upon.

Pre-Visit Questionnaire (Please Complete)

Site Visit Contact Name	Kendra Hossfeld
Site Visit Contact Title	Principal
Site Visit Contact Email	Khossfeld@dcsdk12.org
Site Visit Contact Cell Phone	303-437-5729
Visit Date	October 4, 2023

Section 1 - Pre-visit Planning Call Prep - The area in "Charter Response" should be completed by the Charter Leader prior to the Site Planning Call. The Reviewer will add notes and responses in preparation for the Site Visit.

School Mission

Question from DCSD	Charter Response	Reviewer Response and Notes
Describe your school's mission and vision	North Star Academy provides a Core Knowledge education with an integrated Spanish language program that challenges students to meet their highest potential through differentiated academic instruction and rich social and cultural experiences within a safe, orderly and nurturing environment. The vision of North Star Academy is based on five core values that serve as the foundation for the school's educational program and are reinforced within the culture of the school: ● Excellence – motivating students to achieve at their highest potential through an award-winning, research-based academic program. ● Integrity – encouraging honesty, high standards and strong moral principles among all members of the school community through a nationally-recognized character education program. ● Respect – teaching students an appreciation of and respect for other cultures, nationalities, traditions and languages through a District-model Spanish language program. ● Citizenship – providing students with opportunities to serve others through authentic and relevant community service projects. ● Responsibility – inspiring students to act	This was particularly evident in an elementary age spanish class. The teacher, from Peru, was speaking 100% in Spanish, and speaking quickly, yet the students all responded in fluent Spanish with appropriate accent. Truly a second language, and from the makeup of the class, for many Spanish is a third language in which they are fluent. The character traits of Excellence, Integrity, Respect, Citizenship and Responsibility were not merely posters on the walls of the classrooms and hallways. In each class visited, students demonstrated an eagerness to learn, to help each other, to try new things. Each classroom represented well the diversity of the school–several ethnic groups in each classroom. The leadership Council established and the mentoring program are but two examples of Integrity in action at North Star. The Fun Run was another example of citizenship in action. Responsibility was another product of the mentoring and leadership council.

	independently, take responsibility for their actions and serve as role models for other students through meaningful leadership opportunities within the school.	
How might the site visit team observe the school's mission/vision?	Our mission drives every decision we make at NSA. Our students will be challenged to reach their highest potential as they are taught a research based curriculum using differentiated instruction. NSA provides the necessary tools and support for students of varying abilities. NSA provides a safe and nurturing environment with over 97% of our staff indicating they feel safe and over 92% of our families feeling safe. We are one of only a few elementary schools who have a full time School Resource Officer. Our SRO walks the perimeter of the school several times a day, participates in drills, security CERT trainings, and teaches the YES program to our middle school students. Quarterly character education service projects are displayed on the walls. The SAAC survey results show that over 90% of our families believe we are providing a school of excellence. Our character philosophy permeates the school with NSA students, staff and parents serving over 60 philanthropic organizations. The students at NSA are diverse, representing nineteen different languages and cultures. Our students learn spanish each day and participate in a yearly cultural day tradition.	In student interviews, all those interviewed said they not only felt safe, but respected and supported by their peers. It was evident in actions observed on the playground, in the halls and in the classrooms.

Academic Components

Question from DCSD	Charter Response	Reviewer Response and Notes
From your current UIP, please identify Major Improvement Strategy #1	Teachers will have a clear understanding of the previous year's assessment and be able to explicitly share changes they have made to the curriculum that impact the standards that have historically been areas that students score lower on. Teachers will work with the Data Accountability Coordinator to analyze data and identify curriculum gaps to find remedies to fill the gaps.	
Observable Action Step(s)/Implementation Benchmark	By the end of the first quarter, the Data Accountability Coordinator will have met with the whole fourth grade team to analyze data and identify skill gaps.	
How might the site visit team observe this action step/Implementation Benchmark?	The Data Coordinator is using a strategy titled "Heads up 7 up". A teacher could speak to how they arrived at their seven students.	

Question from DCSD	Charter Response	Reviewer Response and Notes
From your current UIP, please identify Major Improvement Strategy #2	We are utilizing our Math Tutor in the elementary grade levels in a Tier 3 capacity as of this school year to identify students in the 25th percentile and below on standardized assessments to help fill skill gaps for those students. This may not impact 6th grade students and/or test scores this year but will	The tutoring program provides support that is genuine and encouraging. One on one sessions in hallways were observed throughout the visit.

	have a long range positive effect as students transition from elementary to middle school.	
Observable Action Step(s)/Implementation Benchmark	We are utilizing our Math Tutor in the elementary grade levels in a Tier 3 capacity as of this school year to identify students in the 25th percentile and below on standardized assessments to help fill skill gaps for those students. This may not impact 6th grade students and/or test scores this year but will have a long range positive effect as students transition from elementary to middle school.	
How might the site visit team observe this action step/Implementation Benchmark?	You may see the math tutor working with small groups in the hallway, or even one on one with individual students.	This was evidence, as noted previously, throughout the visit.

Question from DCSD	Charter Response	Reviewer Response and Notes
From your current UIP, please identify Major Improvement Strategy #3	The teachers in the upper elementary grades will have access to a research based reading curriculum in addition to the Core Knowledge content to increase student growth and proficiency.	
Observable Action Step(s)/Implementation Benchmark	By the end of the first quarter 4th and 5th grade reading teachers will have a plan to best supplement the reading curriculum with high level content, so that they are reaching the needs of all students.	
How might the site visit	The site visit team may see small group	There was evidence throughout of the push-in

team observe this action step/Implementation Benchmark?	instruction in reading classes. They may see different sets of students using different vocabulary lists. They may see teachers working with different sets of students using different curriculums.	model to incorporate all students into the classroom, but as described, also the opportunity for students to work within this model at their own pace, even if that means working on different materials.

If there are additional focus areas identified for improvement within the school that will be highlighted during the site visit, in the renewal application, or mentioned during the renewal process, please describe them here.

Optional Additional Focus Areas

Additional Focus Areas	Charter Response	Reviewer Response and Notes
How might the site visit team observe these additional focus areas?	NSA is a National School of Character. We teach weekly character lessons and videos and have quarterly character education assemblies. NSA's administration, and leadership council helps deliver the character lessons, videos and assemblies. The leadership council members are the actors and actresses in the character videos and are shown during the morning announcements.	In interviewing two 8th grade students, it was clear what the outcomes of the character lessons, assemblies and leadership council are. I encountered intelligent, polite, sincere, mature young people who feel an obligation to their peers, especially those younger than they are. Their responsibilities are personified by their actions with their peers.

Required Components of the Renewal Site Visit:

Click These Links to Jump to the Section
Classroom Observations
Governing Board Obligations and Board Member interview
Board Governance
Staff Interviews
Student focus group (if appropriate for grades served)

Classroom Observations - Instruction

Note: The individual conducting the site visit will spend approximately 20-30 minutes, as needed, collecting information in accordance with the criteria outlined in the table below.

CRITERIA	0	1	2	3	SCORE
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are partially intellectually engaged, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contributions to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.	3
Curriculum	The school does not have research-based, Common Core/CAS-aligned curricula in place.	The school has research-based, Common Core/CAS-aligned curricula for all core subjects in place. There are scope and sequence documents that outline grade and subject learning objectives; teachers are familiar with curriculum documents and use them consistently to	All criteria for partially meets expectations plus: Common Core/CAS-aligned curricula and resources extend into intervention, special education, acceleration, the arts, and PE.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The school has tailored their curriculum to meet the needs of the particular student population.	3

		guide their planning.			
Academic Intervention and Acceleration	The school provides limited supports for students who are struggling academically or in need of acceleration. The RTI process is not systematically structured to assist all learners in need of intervention.	Tiered interventions are in place to provide needed additional academic and behavior supports. Although the MTSS/RTI process is in place and used by some teachers, the MTSS/RTI process is unclear to some.	All criteria for partially meets expectations plus: There are sufficient research-based resources and strategies available to provide services to students in need of intervention and/or acceleration.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The school collects data to inform and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of academic intervention and acceleration programming.	3
English Language Development	Observed content instruction does not demonstrate explicit strategies to effectively meet the needs of Multilingual Learners (MLL). The focus of the lesson is on content, not on language.	Observed content instruction meets the needs of only a subset of MLL students. Language is referenced but is not taught explicitly and/or teacher provides some opportunities for students to practice language orally and/or in writing.	Observed content instruction meets the needs of all MLL students. Instruction explicitly addresses academic language and vocabulary, and teacher provides regular opportunities for students to practice language orally and/or in writing.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: Strategies and supports utilized for MLL students (in ELD or content classes) are monitored on an ongoing basis for effectiveness.	3
Special Education Instruction	Observed Special Education instruction and instructional environment	Observed Special Education instruction and instructional environment provides access to the	Observed Special Education instruction and instructional environment provide meaningful access to	All criteria for meets expectations plus: instruction and systems result in quality of	3

	provides minimal access to the appropriate grade level standards. Systems for developing IEPs do not result in a clear connection between the strengths and needs identified in the present levels, goals, and the service delivery statement.	appropriate grade level standards or extended evidence outcomes such as through accommodations, specially designed instruction, etc. There is a system in place to collect progress monitoring data, including evidence of student progress and growth.	the appropriate grade level standards or extended evidence outcomes such as through accommodations, specially designed instruction, etc.	programming that exceeds compliance standards.	
Total Score					**15**

Scoring Scale: Instruction	Total
Exemplary	**12-15**
Meets Standards	**9-11**
Needs Improvement	**7-8**
Inadequate	**0-6**

Classroom Observations - School Culture

Note: The individual conducting the site visit will spend approximately 20-30 minutes, as needed, collecting information in accordance with the criteria outlined in the table below.

CRITERIA	0	1	2	3	SCORE
Creating an Environment of Respect	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among members of the class.	3
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard.	3

Managing Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior.	3
Total Score					9

Scoring Scale: School Culture	Total
Exemplary	8-9
Meets Standards	5-7
Needs Improvement	3-4
Inadequate	0-2

Board Legal Obligations

Prior to Site Visit: The school leader will consolidate all information relevant to the board governance criteria outlined below in a binder for document review.

Board Interview: The individual conducting the site visit will reserve a portion of the board interview to ask any questions that arose during document review necessary to evaluate the school according to the criteria outlined below.

Item	Met (1) / Not Met (0)	Notes
Bylaws in place that outline board role and legal obligation	1	
Articles of incorporation in place that indicate current nonprofit status	1	
Board handbook in place that outlines board member expectations	1	
Financial transparency compliance	1	
Financial reporting compliance	1	
Board complies with open meetings requirements	1	
Board holds meetings (at least quarterly)	1	
Regular revision and approval of key policies (employment, enrollment, etc.)	1	
Approval of annual audit	1	
Approval of annual budget	1	
Board meets authorizer deadlines and	1	

requirements		
The charter school has adopted and implemented conflict of interest policies that prevent real or apparent conflicts of interest.	1	
The charter school administration provides monthly financial reports to its governing board for review and approval.	1	
Total Score	**14**	

Scoring Scale: Board Legal Obligations	Total
Exemplary	**13-14**
Meets Standards	**11-12**
Needs Improvement	**9-10**
Inadequate	**0-8**

Board Governance

Prior to Site Visit: The school leader will consolidate all information relevant to the board governance criteria outlined below in a binder for document review.

Board Interview: The individual conducting the site visit will reserve a portion of the board interview to ask any questions that arose during document review necessary to evaluate the school according to the criteria outlined below.

CRITERIA	0	1	2	3	SCORE
Academic Oversight	The Board does not receive sufficient data on the school's academic performance to understand how the school is performing.	The Board regularly monitors some academic metrics, which they use to guide decision making. However, the Board lacks sufficient expertise to fully understand all data.	The Board has members with expertise in E-12 education, and all Board members are able to understand student achievement data. Student achievement metrics, both interim and summative and aggregate as well as disaggregated, are regularly monitored by the Board.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The Board receives annual PD on student achievement data.	3
Financial Oversight	The Board does not regularly monitor the school's financial performance.	The Board sets and regularly monitors progress around key financial metrics that are both short and long-term, including budget versus actuals. There is a comprehensive,	All criteria for partially meets expectations plus: The Board has members with finance expertise, and all Board members are able to understand budgets, audits, and	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The Board sets and monitors progress towards financial goals that are related to the school's long-term financial health.	3

		Board-adopted financial policies document in place that is followed by both the Board and school leadership. The Board monitors implementation of internal controls.	development. The Board sets and regularly monitors progress towards financial goals. The budget creation process is based on data, including sound revenue and enrollment projections.		
Operational Oversight	The Board does not monitor operational metrics — such as facilities, transportation, school culture, and enrollment metrics as appropriate for the school — or does not use data to inform decision making.	The Board regularly monitors some of the school's operational metrics, which they use to guide decision making. However, the Board lacks sufficient expertise to fully understand all data or data conversations are incomplete.	The Board has members with expertise in school operations, and all Board members are able to understand operational data. Appropriate operational metrics are regularly monitored by the Board. The Board sets goals around relevant operations systems.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The Board receives annual PD on relevant operational data.	3
Strategic Planning	The Board does not engage in strategic planning and spends the majority of its time on reactive conversations and decisions.	The Board has expertise in strategy and long-term planning but spends close to half its time on reactive conversations and decisions.	The Board regularly engages in strategic planning to influence the school's short- and long-term direction as appropriate for its stage of	All criteria for meets expectations plus: The Board has a formal long-term strategic plan that is revisited and revised as needed on an annual basis.	3

			development.		
Human Capital Oversight	The Board has not discussed future leadership plans within the last twelve months.	The Board has discussed leadership succession in the last twelve months but has not developed any corresponding written plans.	The Board has a leadership succession plan in place to ensure consistency in implementing the mission and vision of the school during transition of leadership. The Board evaluates the school leader at least annually.	All criteria for meets expectations plus: There is a strong plan for developing /maintaining a school leader pipeline, including both internal candidate development and external partnerships for leadership development.	3
Total Scores					15

Scoring Scale: Board Governance	Total
Exemplary	**13-15**
Meets Standards	**11-12**
Needs Improvement	**9-10**
Inadequate	**0-8**

Overall Scoring for Site Visit	Rating
Instruction	**Exemplary**
School Culture	**Exemplary**
Board Legal Obligations	**Exemplary**
Board Governance	**Exemplary**

Staff Interview Notes

Notes from Reviewer	Staff demonstrated a passion and commitment to North Star that is unique even to charter schools. When asked what makes the school "work," staff responded that the Leadership and the Board's commitment to "common sense policies, decision-making and problem solving has earned the respect of staff. Decisions are made collaboratively and explained and implemented with intelligence. "This is a zero street work environment," was the comment of one staff member. Additionally, community support was at a level unseen in most schools, even charter schools. Principal Hossfeld noted the high level of community and parental support, noting that several parents teach or support teachers in the classroom, allowing for a staffing to student ratio to be particularly low and allowing for additional support in special education classrooms. Staff also noted that they felt taken care of. "We have all that we need," noted one staff member. A staff member noted that the administration and board have a sincere respect for the profession. They let people do their jobs. When asked about any blind spots, none came

	to mind. It was noted that the site plan and strategic plan look forward and anticipate needs. The greatest strengths of the school included the love for kids, the tight, collaborative culture among staff, and the parent community. Staff noted that Douglas County treats them as one of the DOUGCO family and includes them as they would any district school in any opportunities

Student Interview Notes

Notes from Reviewer	The students interviewed mirrored the attitudes of the staff. School spirit, mixed grade events, the mentors program, leadership council, curriculum and approach to teaching, where teachers allow students to discover how they learn, were particular strengths of North Star. No student could come up with any policy, practice, rule or tradition that they thought the school should take another look at, with an eye toward modifying.