



Educational Program Review Protocol 2026

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

What is the Saginaw Valley State University Educational Program Review (EPR)?

The Saginaw Valley State University Educational Program Review (EPR) is a process that The Charter Collaborative at SVSU can use to understand and explain how well its charter schools are working to educate students. The EPR places a team of experienced educators in a school to collect and analyze data about school performance. The EPR is conducted over multiple days, with one or two days on-site and one day conducted virtually. The EPR is based on a transparent, research-based set of standards, Quality Criteria (QC), and the classroom observation tool. The classroom observation tool and QC are used to promote understanding and dialogue between the school and the site visit team.

What is the Classroom Observation Tool?

The classroom observation tool will look at four areas of classroom instruction. These areas are Instructional Alignment and Design, which is lesson focused, Instructional Delivery and Management, which is teacher focused, Physical Environment and Supportive Resources, which is classroom focused, and Student Engagement and Performance, which is student focused.

What are the Quality Criteria?

The QC consists of a set of standards used to assess critical aspects of a school's culture, organization, and academic program. Quality Criteria and indicators are based on research into best educational practices.

What is the purpose of an EPR?

The EPR serves as a summative review, providing specific findings concerning the protocol of a school at the current time for accountability purposes. The outcome of an EPR is a comprehensive report detailing the team's findings concerning the protocol criteria.

How does the EPR process work?

The EPR utilizes multiple sources of evidence to understand how well a school is working. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence for the protocol's criteria and indicators. Evidence collection begins with the review of the key documents (document request list found in Appendix A) that describe the school and its students. Key documents reviewed by the site visit team before arrival on site include MICIP plan and staff/student handbooks. This provides the team with initial information about the school's programs and the students it serves. While on-site, evidence collection continues through additional document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews with key school stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the team meets to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance.

The EPR places a high value on engaging the school in understanding its performance. The process may be described as an open, frank, professional dialogue between the school and the site visit team. The professionalism of the school and team is essential in the process. Both the school and the team have clear roles and responsibilities that are designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the site visit process.

What are the general steps in the EPR process?

Pre-visit Planning and Analysis

The school prepares the necessary documents. The team leader works with the school to organize the schedule for the site visit at least two weeks before the visit. Site visit team members review documents and record their initial questions about the school's performance according to protocol standards.

Evidence Gathering On-Site (in-person and virtually)

On site, in-person and virtually, the site visit team continues document reviews and conducts classroom visits and interviews with key school stakeholders.

Development of Findings

The site visit team's primary objective is to develop findings in relation to the protocol. To come to a consensus on a set of findings, the team works together to collate and discuss available evidence collected throughout the EPR process.

Written Report

After the site visit, the site visit team writes a formal written report that formalizes the findings discussed on site. This information is subsequently shared with the school's leadership team and Board Chair.

Action Plan

After discussion on the results of the written report, school leadership will address recommended areas with an improvement action plan. This plan, once accepted by The Charter Collaborative office at SVSU, will be monitored, and a final Success Plan will be submitted in June.

PART II: SAMPLE SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

Below is a sample visit schedule for the full visit, as well as a detail of a single day. Schedules will vary from school to school, depending on the size of the school and the number of site visit team members. The team leader will work to construct a daily schedule for the site visit, based on schedule documents and guidance provided by school leadership. These documents will need to be submitted to the Google drive **two weeks** before the site visit.

For multi-day site visits, sessions with school leadership may be scheduled each morning to provide an opportunity for discussion and redirection.

SAMPLE DAY SITE VISIT SCHEDULE		
Time	Day 1	Day 2
9:00 AM – 9:15 am	Team arrives at school and morning meeting	Team arrives at SVSU and morning meeting
9:15 – 10:15 am	Opening interview and meeting with the school administration	Follow-up interview with school leadership
10:15 – 11:15 am	Classroom observations & teacher focus groups	Document review & teacher/staff focus groups
11:15 – 12:00 pm	Student focus group & classroom observations	Document Review
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch and mid-day meeting and site visit team debrief	
1:00 – 2:30 pm	Teacher focus group & classroom observations	1:00 – 3:00 pm Team deliberations and coming to a consensus
2:30 – 3:15 pm	Focus group with parents & document review	
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Team deliberations and coming to a consensus	
3:30 PM	Brief closing meeting with school leadership	

PART III: DOMAINS AND KEY QUESTIONS

The following key questions guide the site visit team's work in the school. All evidence is collected in response to these key questions and their respective standards. The complete list of corresponding criteria and indicators for each key question can be found in the next section, Part IV.

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION

1. *Does the school provide all students with high-quality instruction?*¹

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

2. *Does the school identify and support its diverse learners?*
3. *Does the school cultivate a welcoming and respectful community that values individual differences and ensures a safe, supportive environment where every student feels seen, heard, and empowered to succeed?*

DOMAIN 3: EDUCATORS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

4. *Does the school design professional development and collaborative structures to sustain focus on instructional improvement?*
5. *Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?*

DOMAIN 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

6. *Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the improvement of teaching and learning?*

¹ This key question will be answered using the Classroom Observation tool

PART IV: EPR CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

Domain 1 has been adapted using the classroom observation tool.

Domains 2-4 contain the complete list of the Criteria and Indicators (QC), 5th Edition. These criteria and indicators are used to guide evidence collection, team deliberation, and the development of findings during the site visit.

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION

Mission: What is your school's core purpose?

Vision: What is your long-term goal or aspiration?

To align with mission and vision statements that emphasize high-quality instruction, the focus should be on clearly demonstrating how your teaching practices directly reflect and advance your school's core purpose and long-term goals.

1.1 Instructional Alignment and Design (Lesson focused)

- The lesson appears appropriate for the grade level
- Lesson relates to Common Core standards
- Objectives are posted or shared aloud that align with the lesson
- Materials selected that align with the lesson
- Introduction or background knowledge is provided
- Direct instruction is provided to students
- Guided Practice is provided to students
- Independent Practice is provided to students
- Lesson has a closure or summative activity/task
- Informal or summative assessments are included
-

1.2 Instructional Delivery and Management (Teacher focused)

- Assists students in understanding content and accomplishing tasks
- Works respectfully with other adults in the room (paraprofessionals, interventionists, etc.)
- Provides directions or redirection to provide clarity of expectations
- Communicates with the students in a positive and clear manner
- Communicates academic content, concepts, and procedures with depth, clarity, and accuracy
- Makes connections with lesson content to real-life experiences
- Actively engaged in the lesson
- Utilizes formative assessment methods during the lesson
- Offers students opportunities to revise/rephrase/rethink responses during the lesson
- Adjusts instructional strategies, content, or instruction based on student responses
- Minimizes transition time through routines and other methods
- Provides incentives for positive behavior and guidance for unproductive behavior
- Accommodates to the diverse needs of students
- Demonstrates high expectations for student engagement with learning goals

1.3 Physical Environment and Supportive Resources (Classroom focused)

- Objectives, schedules, directions posted
- Evidence of student work and learning (anchor charts, projects)
- Adequate space for movement
- Physical arrangement that accommodates the students (desk grouping, size of furniture, lighting, storage areas for students and materials)
- Multiple areas for student exploration or acquisition of knowledge (centers, stations, etc.)
- Cultural connections (evidence of student work, photos, school events, family newsletters)
- Clean and well-organized for learning
- Materials and resources readily available
- Appropriate use of manipulatives/tools
- Effective use of staff (paraprofessionals, aides, etc.)
- Access to relevant and adequate resources to support learning and behavior management

1.4 Student Engagement and Performance (Student focused)

- Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive (smiles, raised hands, etc.)
- Asking questions and responding to questions posed during the lesson
- Active participation in the lesson that supports the lesson focus
- Use materials and resources from the lesson (manipulatives, books, technology)
- Interact in a positive manner with other students (partner talks, small groups, etc.)
- Responds appropriately to redirection and discipline
- Demonstrates adherence to classroom rules, procedures, and expectations
- Perseveres and demonstrates stamina while engaged in the work of the lesson
- Engages teachers and peers in extended, content-focused discussions or in completing the lesson activity

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Students' opportunities to learn are influenced by the *school-wide learning culture* – the norms, values, and relationships students experience at school each day – and the *school-wide practices and interventions* that support their academic and social-emotional learning. Research suggests that students learn best when their school has a culture of high expectations for behavioral and academic performance *in concert with* a culture of caring and support. This context is further bolstered when schools monitor students' academic and behavioral progress, identify students in need of more targeted support, and ensure interventions and guidance for students at risk of disengaging or failing. Together, the school's culture and supports for learning contribute to students' attitudes, skills, and abilities to succeed in and beyond the classroom.

2. Does the school identify and support its diverse learners?

2.1 The school has a process for identifying struggling and at-risk students and systematically monitors student progress and program effectiveness.

- The school monitors students' progress toward academic goals and uses this feedback to inform the levels of student academic support or intervention.
- Educators collaborate to collect and review risk indicator data to identify students in need of targeted academic supports and to plan interventions.
- The school monitors student progress toward behavioral goals and uses this feedback to inform the level of behavioral support or intervention.

- Educators collaborate to collect and review risk indicator data to identify students in need of targeted behavioral supports and to plan interventions.
- The process for identifying and monitoring the progress of struggling and at-risk students is transparent and understood by all stakeholders.

2.2 The school implements appropriate supports for its diverse learners.

- The school provides basic in-class preventions and supports to ensure academic growth, positive behavior, and equitable treatment of all students.
- The school implements specific, targeted academic and behavioral supports or interventions for students identified as at-risk students and students with disabilities.
- The school provides students who are struggling with research-based programming designed to remediate gaps in skill or content knowledge.
- The school offers students tutoring or other supplemental services provided by the school or external agencies.
- The school offers individual or small group support in test-taking, study habits, or academic content that build upon classroom curriculum and expectations
- Qualified support staff offer one-on-one individualized support to students over a sustained period of time.
- Qualified support staff deliver the supports for students with disabilities.
- The school monitors the progress of students with disabilities toward academic and behavioral goals and uses this feedback to inform the level of student support or intervention.
- *[For high school students]* Dropout prevention programs combine academic support with social skill-building and are taught by qualified staff who are trained in each program's philosophy, strategies, and materials.
- *[For high school students]* Students have opportunities to learn about post-secondary options (e.g., workplaces, internships, higher education).
- *[For high school students]:* Students have opportunities for credit recovery and new credits through after-school, weekend, or summer programs; the school offers face-to-face instructional support to complement online recovery options.

3. Does the school cultivate a welcoming and respectful community that values individual differences and ensures a safe, supportive environment where every student and staff member feels seen, heard, and empowered to succeed?

3.1 The school's leadership and staff are actively engaged, well-supported, and contribute to a culture that values respect, belonging, and the unique strengths and perspectives of every individual.

- Leadership and staff share a clear understanding of how to implement practices that promote respect, belonging, and representation for all individuals (such as through advocacy efforts or support groups); their contributions in these areas are recognized and appreciated.
- School leadership and instructional interventions support the development of teaching and learning practices focused on improving outcomes and addressing gaps for diverse student populations, experiences, backgrounds, and learning approaches.
- The school has clear and comprehensive systems for employee recruitment, retention, and promotion that prioritize fairness, broaden representation, and support varied backgrounds and experiences.
- Educators describe the school climate as one that values individual differences, varied experiences, and multiple perspectives among both teachers and students.

- The school's data collection and analysis processes are reliable and valid, designed to break down information by student groups and uncover trends that inform strategies to improve access, engagement, and outcomes for all learners.
- Leadership and staff engage in multiple professional learning opportunities focused on instructional practices that reflect students' backgrounds, experiences, and needs.

3.2 Students experience and actively participate in a school culture that values respect, belonging, and the varied identities and experiences of all individuals.

- Instructional materials and practices affirm values, focus on students' strengths, and create more confident student learners.
- Instructional materials and practices are meaningful and responsive to students' backgrounds, lived experiences, and prior knowledge.
- Students describe the school climate as one that values teacher and student differences and multiple perspectives.
- All students are provided with ample opportunities to consider diverse perspectives and develop leadership skills.
- Teachers set high expectations for learning and behavior for all students.
- All students experience restorative and disciplinary practices that are respectful, fair, and aligned with their backgrounds and lived experiences.
- All students share a sense of belonging and pride in the school community.
- All students have access to high-quality and rigorous learning opportunities in school activities, after-school activities, and extracurricular activities.
- The school provides opportunities for all students to engage in positive social group activities (e.g., extracurricular clubs, sports teams, or community service groups).

3.3 The school provides a safe environment to support students' learning.

- School leaders ensure that the school's physical environment is clean, orderly, and safe.
- School leaders disperse responsibility for discipline; all staff regularly supervise students in the school's public spaces.
- Students and staff indicate they believe school rules are fairly and consistently enforced for all students.
- The school has few reported incidents of physical violence, aggression, bullying, teasing, or harassment.
- Students report feeling safe from bullying, teasing, and harassment.
- Students report they have friends and positive relationships with peers and adults at school.
- The school provides opportunities for students to seek help from staff with academic or social issues.

DOMAIN 3: TEACHERS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Teachers' opportunities to learn are influenced by the *school-wide professional culture* – the norms, values, and relationships teachers experience at school each day – and the *school-wide practices* that support teachers' ongoing professional growth and collaboration. Research indicates that a culture of mutual responsibility, trust, and collective efficacy provides an essential foundation for teacher- and leader-focused collaboration around instructional challenges. This collaboration is further strengthened by well-designed, sustained, and job-embedded professional development, with beginning teachers receiving additional guidance from trained mentors. Together, this school-wide culture and the school's supports for professional

learning and collaboration contribute to teachers' collective capacity to deliver high-quality instruction, not just in individual classrooms but also across the school.

4. Does the school design professional development and collaborative structures to sustain focus on instructional improvement?

4.1 Professional development (PD) is ongoing, aligned to daily work, evaluated, and improved upon.

- PD engages teachers in active learning (e.g., leading instruction, discussing with colleagues, observing other teachers, developing assessments).
- PD is embedded in teachers' daily work through coaching, collaborative planning, and reflection.
- Trained coaches and/or colleagues with instructional expertise provide coaching and support around instructional planning and lesson design, pedagogy, assessment, and student engagement.
- PD provides follow-up sessions and ongoing support for teachers' continued learning.
- PD combines workshops, conferences, and trainings (at least 14 hours per school year) with the ongoing work of educators' learning teams.
- The quality of professional development delivery is regularly monitored, evaluated, and improved.
- The effects of professional development are assessed using data on teacher instruction and student achievement.

4.2 Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress.

- Educators meet frequently during regularly scheduled, uninterrupted times (e.g., staff, department, and grade-level meeting times) to collaborate, establish improvement goals, and make data-informed instructional decisions.
- Educators' collaborative meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning and achievement.
- Educators describe sharing knowledge and expertise among colleagues as an essential collaborative activity for their job success.
- Teachers are willing to talk about their own instructional practice, actively pursue and accept feedback from colleagues, and try new teaching strategies.
- School leaders ensure that staff and team meeting discussions are structured and facilitated to support the staff's reflective dialogue around data and instruction (e.g., by attending to explicit group norms, by using protocols).
- School leaders provide guidance to teacher teams (e.g., help to establish meeting routines, model and promote the use of discussion protocols, ensure the systematic monitoring of student progress, create a focus on linking results to instruction) and ensure that teachers utilize tools and time well.

5. Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?

5.1 Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.

- Educators convey a shared vision and shared values about teaching and learning and reference these to guide their instructional decision-making.
- Educators convey shared commitment to the learning of all students in the school.
- Educators convey a belief that students' learning is their collective responsibility, regardless of students' personal or home situations.

- Educators convey that it is important not to give up on any students, even if it appears that they do not want to learn.
- Educators convey commitment to and hold each other accountable for collaboratively established improvement goals and tasks.

5.2 The school reflects a safe, trustworthy, and growth-oriented professional climate.

- Educators describe non-evaluative, “blame-free” norms for sharing data and solving challenging instructional problems.
- Educators’ concerns and decisions focus on students’ learning and well-being instead of staff members’ individual or competing preferences.
- Educators convey that they are willing to share and discuss their own instructional practice, seek and accept feedback, and collectively experiment with new teaching strategies.
- Educators describe colleagues and administrators as open, honest, well-intentioned, caring, and reliable.

DOMAIN 4: LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

School governance and leadership support the essential work of teaching and learning in schools. *School leadership* influences every aspect of a school’s culture, organizational practices, and academic programs. In the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria, school leadership functions are represented by two dimensions. The first – instructional leadership – emphasizes overseeing and guiding the school’s collective focus on instruction and student learning. The second organizational leadership involves leading strategic conversations and planning and ensuring effective school operations to advance the school’s mission and vision.

Governance is leadership that establishes and conveys the school’s vision, values, and mission; maintains the organization’s viability; and ensures that the organization meets its legal and ethical responsibilities. Governance is typically provided by a Board of Directors, a school committee, or other oversight group. The *chief executive* is the one person the Board hires and oversees to administer the direction they set for the school. This person may be an executive director, superintendent, or other formally designated head of the organization.

6. Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the improvement of teaching and learning?

6.1 School leaders ensure that the school has a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum.

- School leaders ensure that the curriculum includes the essential content and skills for all students to learn at each grade level and that it is mapped across the school year with adequate instructional time allocated.
- School leaders ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned with state standards, aligned with each other, and coordinated both within and across grade levels.
- School leaders monitor instructional plans for alignment with the curriculum program (e.g., periodic review of curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, and formative assessments; classroom observations).
- School leaders ensure that plans are informed by students’ prior knowledge, current skills, and learning needs.

- School leaders ensure that instructional materials are selected and/or developed in accordance with a school-wide instructional framework and are aligned with established curriculum standards.
- School leaders ensure that the curriculum is periodically reviewed and that revisions are made accordingly.
- School leaders provide meaningful feedback on the quality of lesson and/or unit plans.

6.2 School leaders ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.

- School leaders regularly observe the quality of instruction.
- School leaders provide regular, meaningful, and timely feedback that helps teachers improve their instructional practice.
- School leaders hold teachers accountable for applying feedback to their practice.
- Educators indicate that school leaders model high-quality instruction.
- Educators convey that school leaders have sufficient knowledge of content and subject areas and how they are taught effectively.

6.3 School leaders provide conditions that support a school-wide data culture.

- Teachers have easy access to varied, current, and accurate student and instructional data.
- School leaders ensure that teachers employ a regular cycle of interim assessments to gather data on student performance.
- Teachers are provided with time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data and use tools that help them act on results.
- Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to make adjustments to the organization of students in the classroom, pace of instruction, or content being taught.
- Teachers use results from interim or summative assessments to identify students in need of remediation or acceleration and assign appropriate supports to students.
- The Board's membership possesses the appropriate instructional expertise to provide oversight of the academic program.
- The Board has systems and structures that ensure questioning, scrutiny, and deliberation regarding academic performance; the Board monitors leadership efforts to address performance gaps.
- The Board compares school progress to priorities and to the performance of other schools and/or districts based on a data-based benchmarking process.

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL TASK CHECKLIST

The School Task Checklist can be used by the school to prepare for the EPR. It includes key tasks that the school leader should complete **prior** to the site visit, including the list of materials the site visit team is requesting prior to the visit and uploaded to the provided Google file. The following task list is an example and may be modified and sent separately to a school in advance of the visit.

***Lack of materials uploaded prior to the visit will cancel the EPR process and pause reauthorization.**

ITEMS TO BE SENT TO THE SITE VISIT TEAM LEADER BEFORE THE EPR		
Scheduling	1. Roster of ALL staff, including grade levels and subject areas taught	
	2. Master schedule for all staff, including periods/times teaching and room numbers	
	3. A list of teacher preparation times or “free” periods (if not included in the roster or master schedule)	
	4. School bell schedule	
ITEMS TO BE PREPARED BEFORE THE EPR		
	1. Faculty and staff are aware of the visit and its purpose	
	2. Private meeting space for the site visit team secured & copies of the school map provided	
	3. Internet access codes are provided for the team’s use while in the building.	
ITEMS UPLOADED TO GOOGLE FILE		
Instruction	1. Sample curricular documents that link standards to school/classroom instructional practices (e.g., scope and sequence, pacing guides, textbooks) from varied grade levels and subject areas	
	2. Sample lesson plans from different grade levels and subject areas	
	3. Examples of formative and summative assessments from a variety of grade levels/subject areas	
	4. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to classroom instruction	
Students Opportunities to Learn	5. Description of the school’s MTSS/Rtl and English language learner systems	
	6. MTSS/Rtl and ELL meeting minutes or agendas and sample student intervention plans	
	7. Curriculum materials (as it relates to culturally responsive curriculum)	
	8. School or district survey results from staff, students, and families	
	9. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to students’ opportunities to learn	
	10. Agendas and minutes from collaborative planning or grade-level team meetings	
	11. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to educators’ opportunities to learn	
	12. Agendas and minutes from the leadership team or other staff meetings	
	13. Sample data meeting files or data trackers	
	14. Board reports, goals, progress trackers	
	15. Any other documents that the school believes would help the site visit team better understand its programs and initiatives related to leadership and governance	

ITEMS AVAILABLE ON ACADEMY WEBSITE	
1. School handbooks (staff, student, family, SPED, ELL, and 504)	
2. MICIP / strategic plan	
3. Professional development (PD) calendar and sample PD documents	
4. Sample completed teacher evaluations and informal observation/feedback forms (WITHOUT names)	
5. Board meeting minutes, agenda, and bylaws	

APPENDIX B: CLASSROOM VISIT TOOL AND GUIDANCE

What is the purpose of the classroom visit tool?

The purpose of the classroom visit tool is threefold:

1. to enable observers to easily identify practices and summarize their evidence base and, therefore, establish findings that characterize classroom practices across the school;
2. to supply the report writer with quantifiable ratings across classes observed that are supported by documented pieces of evidence; and,
3. to gather qualitative evidence about classroom practices that provides additional evidence to inform the site visit team's findings.

The information collected from classroom visits provides the site visit team with an additional source of information that can be used to better understand school practices and to support the team's findings.

Frequently asked questions about classroom visits.

1. *How does the site visit team select the classrooms that will be visited?*

Classroom visits will be selected based on the school's master schedule and the size of the site visit team. In larger schools, representative classes will be selected to reflect a range of teacher experience, a variety of subject areas, the range of grades served at the school, and special services or program classes as they reflect the school's mission. The site visit schedule is developed by the site visit team leader with input from school leadership.

2. *What is the length of a classroom visit?*

It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Most visits will be planned and scheduled, but unplanned visits may occur. Unplanned visits may be shorter in duration.

3. *What do teachers need to do to prepare for the classroom visit?*

Teachers need not do anything to prepare for a classroom visit. Classes should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. The site visit team is composed of education professionals who understand that behavior in the classroom may be unpredictable. The EPR seeks to establish trends across the school, not to assess isolated incidents within a single classroom.

4. *Should teachers expect to interact with the classroom visitor?*

The intent of the classroom visit is to cause minimal disruption to daily classroom practices as much as possible. Teaching staff do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work and/or classroom postings, if appropriate.

5. *Do teachers receive feedback from the classroom visitor?*

The site visit team seeks to identify trends across the school, not to provide information on the effectiveness of specific classroom practices or individual teachers. Team members will NOT provide feedback to individual teachers, nor will they provide feedback on individual teachers to school leadership. Class visits are NOT teacher evaluations. They will not be shared with individual teachers or any other school personnel. They intend to provide information to the site visit team about the implementation of the academic program, the availability of resources, and any additional evidence that demonstrates aspects of school practices and operations.

6. *Should the classroom visitor expect to see all the indicators on the classroom visit tool in a single classroom?*

The classroom visit tool is aligned with the indicators in the protocol that reflect a range of effective practices. It is not expected that the classroom visitor will see all of these indicators. The tool serves as a resource for the site visit team to identify and explain practices that are characteristic of each school.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDANCE AND WORKSHEETS

During the EPR, a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information about the school. Interview data, like classroom visits, are intended to provide information about the implementation of the school's program and operations. The site visit team leader, with guidance from school leadership, will work to establish a schedule that is appropriate for the school. Depending on the purpose of the EPR and the school's structure, the number and length of interviews conducted varies. The following are examples only.

SCHOOL-WIDE INTERVIEWS		
Interviews/ focus groups	Description	Approximate Time Needed
Board	This interview is conducted with a representative group of the school's governing body (not a quorum), or oversight body, if applicable. This might include a Charter School Board.	30 minutes
School Leadership	School leadership includes the principal and key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director and/or lead teachers). In addition to an interview, school leadership may be asked to provide further guidance and insight throughout the visit. Feedback on the team's preliminary findings will be presented to school leadership at the end of the site visit.	1-hour focus group each day
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically by grade level , make up focus groups. In some cases, the team may request a focus group meeting with teaching assistants, aides, or other personnel to discuss their roles in the delivery of the academic program at the school. The team tries to speak to all the school's teaching staff if possible.	30 minutes (When possible, scheduled during common prep periods.)
Specialist interviews	Interviews with specialists are conducted. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning (e.g., the school's special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, guidance counselors and other relevant staff).	30 minutes
Student focus group	A selection of four-to-eight students representing a variety of grade levels (grade 2 and up) and varying instructional needs. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff.	30 minutes
Parent focus group	A representative group of four-to-eight parents, whose children have a range of academic needs, have attended the school for various lengths of time, and have a range of participation experiences with the school.	30 minutes (If possible, scheduled around dismissal)

What is the purpose of the interview worksheet?

Interview worksheets are provided to:

1. enable the interviewer to easily identify questions consistent with the criteria and indicators in the EPR protocol to gather appropriate evidence;
2. ensure uniformity across interviews conducted;
3. provide multiple sources of evidence to support the site visit team's findings; and
4. provide transparency. Feel free to share the questions with focus group members.

The interview worksheet provides a template for the site visit team to use during interviews and focus groups. This ensures that questions are being asked in accordance with the EPR protocol and that all team members are asking uniform questions. While on-site, the team may develop additional, school-specific interview questions that are based on the team leader's judgment of what must be learned to come to findings on the protocol's key questions.

An interview worksheet exists for each type of focus group (e.g., school leadership, teachers, students, parents, board members) that the site visit team will interview while on site. Interview questions might look slightly different; interviews conducted with school leadership might include slightly different content than what the team would ask teachers or parents. In addition, question delivery might vary slightly.

How do I use the interview worksheet?

The interview worksheets contain possible interview questions. The column on the left may be used to check the most relevant questions. The right column may be used to insert any additional questions that the site visit team, during team meetings, decides are important to ask to gather the required evidence. Interview notes are recorded by the site visit team for use during team deliberations and to provide the report writer with a record of interviews to ensure a sound and accurate evidence base.

PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDE

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
1.	Is there a school-wide approach to behavior management that we will observe in the classrooms? ☐ Behavioral expectations ☐ Maximize learning time	
2.	What is the school's approach to instruction? What instructional strategies are emphasized across classrooms? ☐ Specific strategies ☐ Lesson structure and objectives ☐ Differentiation, including students who are ELLs, students with disabilities, and accelerated learners ☐ Components of the school's curriculum ☐ Student collaboration/peer work ☐ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher order thinking	
3.	Describe the curriculum and instructional resources used. ☐ Alignment with instructional strategies and state standards ☐ Selection criteria ☐ When and how are modifications done? ☐ Use of MSTEP or NWEA data to rate effectiveness of current instructional programs	
4.	How do teachers assess students' mastery of skills and content during lessons? ☐ Formative assessments/checks for understanding ☐ Feedback to students	
DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
5.	How does the school identify and support students from different backgrounds and with varied needs? ☐ Process for identification of students needing academic and behavioral supports (Response to Intervention [RtI], child study/student support teams) ☐ Process for identification of students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students needing enrichment ☐ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ☐ Approach to monitoring progress and adjusting instruction ☐ Services for students with disabilities/English language learners/accelerated learners	
6.	Describe the school's efforts to foster a welcoming environment, ensure fair access and support for all students, and promote a sense of belonging within the community. ☐ Use of disaggregated behavioral and academic data ☐ Leadership and staff engage in multiple professional learning opportunities focused on instructional practices that reflect students' backgrounds, experiences, and needs. ☐ Principles of fairness and inclusivity are woven into the school culture for both staff and students (for example, ensuring equal access to extracurricular programs).	

PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDE

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
7.	In what other ways does the school support student learning? ☐ Safe and caring environment (physical and emotional safety) ☐ Family engagement ☐ High expectations for ALL students ☐ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ☐ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ☐ Celebration of students' success and growth ☐ Parent and community involvement	
DOMAIN 3: EDUCATORS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
8.	Describe the school's approach to professional development (PD). ☐ Focus of PD and how it was identified ☐ Structure, frequency, and content of PD (active, intensive, sustained, follow-up) ☐ Evaluation and evidence of effectiveness ☐ Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (mentors, teams, structures, follow-up) ☐ Role of school leaders in facilitating/supporting teacher collaboration	
9.	Describe the adult culture in the building. ☐ Growth-oriented focus; shared commitments and beliefs ☐ Collaborative structures in place ☐ Relationship among staff/between staff and administrators	
DOMAIN 4: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
10.	In what ways do you monitor and work to continuously improve the academic program? ☐ Academic vision, goals, and progress monitoring ☐ Review of curriculum and curriculum revisions ☐ Feedback to teachers on planning documents and instruction (frequency, content, consistency) ☐ Analysis of data and determining next steps ☐ Use of disaggregated behavioral and academic data ☐ The role of MICIP to monitor progress toward goals	
11.	What assessments does the school administer, and what is the purpose of each assessment? ☐ Type and frequency ☐ How school leaders use the data (strategic, impact on programs, transparency) ☐ How teachers are expected to access and use the data (systems, structures, time allocated)	
12.	How do you ensure effective operations at the school? ☐ Targeting resources (school budgeting process and spending priorities, staffing, and deployment of human resources) ☐ Communication and decision-making processes and structures ☐ Leadership pipeline	

PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDE

DOMAIN 4: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
13.	Describe how the Board oversees the school. ☐ Information they receive about the academic program; expertise to understand its meaning ☐ Communication between the board and school leadership, parents, staff, and community	

BOARD INTERVIEW GUIDE

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
1.	Describe the measures the school board has put in place to ensure the safety of students and school staff. ☐ Investment in security personnel or equipment ☐ Training for staff and students, including sessions focused on building respect, fostering understanding, and creating a welcoming environment for all.	
DOMAIN 4: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
2.	Describe how the Board oversees the school. ☐ Ways board members support student achievement and school improvement ☐ Information they receive about the school's finances, and financial expertise ☐ Communication with the school leader and/or CMO/EMO ☐ Communication with parents, staff and the community ☐ Recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of the chief executive ☐ Oversight of contract with CMO/EMO ☐ Strategic plan	
3.	How do you ensure effective operations at the school? ☐ School budgeting process ☐ Spending priorities ☐ Staffing and deployment of human resources	
4.	What measures have you put in place to ensure the sustainability of the school? ☐ School leadership pipeline ☐ Financial viability ☐ Facilities ☐ Self-assessment of governing practices and outcomes	

PARENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
1.	In what ways is your child's school preparing them for the future—whether that's high school, college, or a career?	
2.	What is the school's approach to instruction? ☐ Differentiation, including students who are ELLs, students with disabilities, and accelerated learners ☐ Components of the school's curriculum ☐ Instructional practices that reflect students' backgrounds, experiences, and needs ☐ Equal access to curriculum, extracurriculars, clubs, etc. ☐ Student collaboration/peer work ☐ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher order thinking ☐ High expectations for ALL students' learning	
3.	How do teachers know where students are struggling and what they are doing well? ☐ Assessments ☐ Feedback to students	
DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
4.	How does the school support students who are struggling or at risk? ☐ School's process for identification of students needing academic or behavioral supports (Response to Intervention [RtI], child study/student support teams) ☐ Process for identification of students needing enrichment ☐ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ☐ School's approach to monitoring progress ☐ Services for students with disabilities/English language learners/accelerated learners	
5.	Describe the school's efforts to foster a welcoming environment, ensure fair access and support for all students, and promote a sense of belonging within the community. ☐ Use of disaggregated behavioral and academic data ☐ Teaching and classroom materials that help all students feel seen, respected, and connected to their learning. ☐ Principles of fairness are woven into the school culture for both staff and students (for example, ensuring equal access to extracurricular programs) ☐ Caring and fair ways of guiding behavior that respects each student's background and experiences. ☐ Communication with parents ☐ Parent and community involvement with the school	

PARENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
6.	In what other ways does the school support student learning? ☐ Celebration of students' (academic) accomplishments ☐ Family communication and engagement (workshops, opportunities to share home practices to support student learning, parent volunteerism, PTOs) ☐ Safe and caring environment (physical and emotional safety across classrooms, hallways, parking lots, etc.) ☐ Hold and communicate high expectations ☐ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ☐ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ☐ Extracurricular activities (clubs, sports) – equitable access	

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION	SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
1. How is your school helping you get ready for what's next- like high school, college, or even a job? Do you ever/Have you ever: ☐ Complete an extended (3-to-5-page) research paper ☐ Read non-fiction materials ☐ Take notes while the teacher gives you a presentation or a lot of information ☐ Conduct science experiments and analysis of data ☐ Work on challenging math concepts (fundamentals of algebra, geometry) ☐ Take a second language ☐ Practice time management skills ☐ Create to-do lists, set goals, etc. ☐ Use computers to complete your assignments ☐ Work on assignments that require considerable out-of-class preparation ☐ Learn about the college admissions process, tuition/financial aid ☐ Learn career/technical skills (vocational opportunities)	
2. What are the expectations while you are in class? ☐ High expectations (behavior and academic) ☐ Consistency across the school ☐ Communication of expectations ☐ Rewards for good behavior ☐ Equitable treatment of all students	
3. What kinds of activities do you usually do in class? Describe a typical lesson in: ☐ Reading/Writing/Math/Science/Social Studies ☐ Challenging ☐ Engaging ☐ Work collaboratively ☐ Specific strategies used by teachers	
4. How do teachers know how you are doing in class? How do <u>you</u> know how you are doing at this school? ☐ Report cards ☐ Progress reports ☐ Assessments (standardized and teacher created) ☐ Rubrics ☐ Feedback from teachers or peers ☐ Chances to correct or revise work	

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
5.	What types of support does the school offer kids who need extra help or enrichment? ☐ Identifying students in need/accessing extra help or enrichment ☐ Out-of-school academic services (tutoring) ☐ In-school academic services ☐ Opportunities for credit recovery during summer or weekend programs	
6.	How does your school make sure that everyone feels welcome, gets the help they need, and feels like they belong here? ☐ Access to extracurriculars, clubs, etc. ☐ Books and materials that reflect students' background, experiences and needs ☐ Sense of belonging embedded into school culture	
7.	Does the school offer any programs aimed at helping kids develop social skills? ☐ Violence/anger management programs ☐ Community circles ☐ Mentoring programs ☐ Boys'/girls' groups ☐ Clubs and extracurricular activities ☐ Sports ☐ Student governance/student council	
8.	How does the school celebrate your accomplishments? ☐ Awards ceremonies ☐ Announcements ☐ Rewards/trips ☐ National (Junior) Honor Society	
9.	Is this school a safe place? ☐ How does the school work to make sure that kids here are safe? ☐ Security personnel or equipment ☐ Training/workshops ☐ Bullying	
10.	How does the school involve your families? ☐ Communication with families ☐ Workshops for parents ☐ Opportunities to volunteer ☐ Attendance at ceremonies, community meetings ☐ Parent/Teacher Organizations	

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 1: INSTRUCTION		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
1.	Is there a school-wide approach to behavior management that you implement in your classrooms? ☐ Behavioral expectations ☐ Maximize learning time	
2.	What is the school's approach to instruction? Are there common practices we will see when we observe classrooms? ☐ Specific strategies ☐ Lesson structure and objectives ☐ Differentiation, including students who are ELLs, students with disabilities, and accelerated learners ☐ Components of the school's curriculum ☐ Student collaboration/peer work ☐ Ensuring students' cognitive engagement/higher order thinking	
3.	Describe the curriculum and instructional resources used. ☐ Alignment with instructional strategies and state standards ☐ Selection criteria ☐ When and how are modifications done? ☐ Use of MSTEP or NWEA data to rate effectiveness of current instructional programs	
4.	How do you assess students' mastery of skills and content during lessons? ☐ Formative assessments/checks for understanding ☐ Feedback to students	
DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
5.	How does the school identify and support its diverse learners? ☐ Process for identification of students needing academic and behavioral supports (Response to Intervention [RtI], child study/student support teams) ☐ Process for identification of students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students needing enrichment ☐ Available academic/behavioral supports offered by school (types, frequency, staffing, training) ☐ Approach to monitoring progress ☐ Services for students with disabilities/English language learners/accelerated learners	

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 2: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
6.	Describe the school's efforts to foster a welcoming environment, ensure fair access and support for all students, and promote a sense of belonging within the community. ☐ Use of disaggregated behavioral and academic data ☐ Leadership and staff engage in multiple professional learning opportunities focused on instructional practices that reflect students' backgrounds, experiences, and needs. ☐ Principles of fairness and respect are woven into the school culture for both staff and students. (For example, ensuring equal access to extracurricular programs).	
7.	In what other ways does the school support student learning? ☐ Safe and caring environment (physical and emotional safety) ☐ Family engagement ☐ High expectations for ALL students ☐ Programs and supports to develop social and emotional awareness skills ☐ Opportunities to form positive relationships with peers and adults ☐ Celebration of students' success and growth	
DOMAIN 3: EDUCATORS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
8.	Describe the school's approach to professional development (PD). ☐ Focus of PD and how it was identified ☐ Structure, frequency, and content of PD (active, intensive, sustained, follow-up) ☐ Evaluation and evidence of effectiveness ☐ Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (mentors, teams, structures, follow-up) ☐ Role of school leaders in facilitating/supporting teacher collaboration	
9.	Describe the adult culture in the building. ☐ Growth-oriented focus; shared commitments and beliefs ☐ Relationship among staff/between staff and administrators ☐ Collaborative structures in place	
DOMAIN 4: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
10.	In what ways does leadership monitor and work to continuously improve the academic program? ☐ Academic vision, goals, and progress-monitoring ☐ Review of curriculum and curriculum revisions ☐ Feedback to teachers on planning documents and instruction (frequency, content, consistency) ☐ Analysis of data and determining next steps ☐ Use of disaggregated behavioral and academic data	

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

DOMAIN 4: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
11.	What assessments does the school administer, and what is the purpose of each assessment? ☐ Type and frequency ☐ How school leaders use the data (strategic, impact on programs, transparency) ☐ How teachers are expected to access and use the data (systems, structures, time allocated)	
12.	How do leaders ensure effective operations at the school? ☐ Systems, structures, and routines ☐ Targeting resources (school budgeting process and spending priorities, staffing, and deployment of human resources) ☐ Communication and decision-making processes and structures ☐ Leadership pipeline	
13.	Describe how the Board oversees the school. ☐ Information they receive about the academic program, expertise to understand its meaning ☐ Information they receive about the school's finances, and financial expertise	