



Calumet College of St. Joseph

2400 New York Avenue, Whiting, Indiana 46394

MONITORING GUIDANCE

*For Charter Schools Authorized &
Adopted by Calumet College of Saint Joseph*

Overview

One of the most important ways that Calumet College of Saint Joseph-Charter School Committee ("CCSJ-CSC") gathers performance information about the schools it authorizes is through site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school firsthand, interact with key stakeholders, and corroborate school-reported information. Pre-Opening site visits are conducted at least once prior to the start of the school's first year. Once a school has opened its doors and is serving students, the CCSJ-CSC regularly conducts Formal, Monitoring (Monthly) and End-of-Term site visits.

Formal site visits are conducted in the Fall or Winter of each year to gauge the school's progress toward meeting academic success, financial health, and organizational compliance goals. Formal site visits are conducted by CCSJ-CSC members and/or their authorized designees, who interview key stakeholders, conduct classroom observations, review documentation, and attend a Board meeting. Written feedback is provided to the Board of Directors and school leadership.

During a charter school's first year serving students, the Formal site visit is held during the Winter. The primary purpose of the Formal site visit in the first year is three-fold: to orient the school's Board of Directors to the CCSJ-CSC Accountability System, to observe the school firsthand, and to interact with key stakeholders at the school. A review and assessment of academic outcome data is incorporated into the Formal site visit protocol beginning in the Fall of the school's second year serving students.

Purpose of Formal Site Visit

The CCSJ-CSC Accountability System which is incorporated into the charter agreement, sets forth the goals and measures for the school and is used to evaluate the school's academic performance, financial health, and organizational compliance. At its core, the Accountability System poses three critical questions:

- ❑ Is the school's educational program a success?
- ❑ Is the school in good financial health?
- ❑ Is the organization in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and with the charter?

During the Formal Site Visit, the CCSJ-CSC seeks to address these three questions. Outlined below is the process the CCSJ-CSC utilizes during the Formal Site Visit to gather information as evidence of progress in each category.

Is the school's educational program a success?

The CCSJ-CSC gathers information on the academic program through a review of academic outcomes as measured by state assessments, interviews with leadership and staff, classroom observations, and inspection of the physical learning environment. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data enables the CCSJ-CSC to better understand the overall success of the school.

Is the school in good financial health?

The CCSJ-CSC gathers information on the school's financial health from interviews with leadership, board members and staff, observation of business practices, and examination of the school's financial reports and annual independent audit. Interviews with stakeholders are critical to understanding how well the school is managed financially and the extent of Board knowledge surrounding financial oversight.

Is the organization in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and with the charter?

The CCSJ-CSC gathers information on the school's organizational effectiveness and leadership through interviews with leadership and staff, observation of school routines and school climate, examination of school documents, and attendance at a school Board meeting. The CCSJ-CSC may complete a document review on site to monitor compliance. We also analyze the extent to which the Board understands its roles and responsibilities in both oversight of the school's operations and in driving the strategic direction of the school.

Planning for the Formal Site Visit

To help schools plan for the Formal site visit, we ask school leadership and the Board to make necessary arrangements and prepare applicable documents for review. This document details the specific information we request of each school. The Formal site visit will be held at the school location and will typically last 6-8 hours. In the school's first year serving students, the site visit will last approximately 3-4 hours.

CCSJ-CSC will review the following materials prior to the visit:

1. Charter Agreement, including the Application and any Amendments
2. Annual Accountability System Progress Report
3. Previous Formal Site Visit Summary Report(s)
4. Annual Financial and Compliance Audit
5. Board Meeting Minutes from the last six Board meetings
6. Master Schedule
7. Correspondence between CCSJ-CSC and School (if applicable)
8. Intervention materials, if applicable
9. Any other relevant materials the school's Board and leadership request the CCSJ-CSC to review.

Note that, during the school's Formal site visit in its first year serving students, only Items 1, and 5-9 are applicable.

Formal Site Visit Overview

In preparation for the Formal site visit, we request the following assistance and deliverables from school leadership.

- *Site Visit Schedule.* Create a site visit schedule. Schools may refer to the sample site visit schedule in this document.
- *Send Requested Documentation to CCSJ-CSC.* Email Board Meeting minutes, agenda and materials for upcoming Board Meeting, and Master Schedule to the CCSJ-CSC.
- *Allocate Sufficient Time.* Allocate time for the leadership team to accompany CCSJ-CSC during classroom observations, participate in meetings, and debrief at the end of the formal site visit to discuss observations.

Prior to the visit, CCSJ-CSC will check in with the school leader to learn of any unique scheduling circumstances for the day. *For example, CCSJ-CSC should be notified of any*

testing, new teachers in the building, substitutes, and special programming. Please note that much of the formal site visit includes meetings with key stakeholders. This document contains sample meeting questions to assist in stakeholder preparations.

During the visit, CCSJ-CSC will – either individually or as a full team – complete the following tasks:

- ☐ Check in with school leadership to review schedule for the day.
- ☐ Meet with the School Leader to discuss the status of the school.
- ☐ Meet with representatives of the Education Service Provider (“ESP”), if applicable.
- ☐ Observe classrooms, hallway transitions, and out-of-class time (e.g., lunch) with school leadership. See the *CCSJ-CSC’s classroom observation tool* in this document.
- ☐ Meet with 3-4 teachers, potentially during their lunch hour or prep periods.
- ☐ Meet with the CFO/COO or their equivalent. If bookkeeping services are handled by a third-party, a representative of the third-party should attend this portion of the site visit.
- ☐ Meet with the curriculum and/or testing coordinator. This individual may or may not be the School Leader.
- ☐ Meet with 2-3 parents.
- ☐ Meet with 3-4 students.
- ☐ Meet with the Board Chair.
- ☐ Meet with the Chair of the Audit or Finance Committee.
- ☐ Attend and observe a Board meeting. Due to scheduling constraints, this may occur on a separate day.
- ☐ Debrief with the Board Chair, School Leader and ESP representative (if applicable) to provide some verbal feedback on the day’s observations. Depending upon scheduling constraints, this debrief session may occur via telephone a day or two after the site visit.

The CCSJ-CSC will conduct all stakeholder meetings with a long-term perspective in mind. The purpose of these meetings is to review the progress of the school over the course of the charter term, not just during the current school year. Wherever possible, meetings should be conducted separately. Note that the CCSJ-CSC may ask stakeholders to provide evidence to substantiate a statement (e.g., Board minutes).

Additional Board members are welcome to attend parts of the site visit; however, please be aware of Open Door Law requirements with respect to quorum.

Site Visit Feedback

Following the Formal site visit, CCSJ-CSC will provide formal written feedback summarizing our observations. The feedback will identify areas of strength as well as areas that require improvement. This written feedback will be provided to the Board, school leadership and ESP (if applicable) in the form of a narrative and completed *Formal Site Visit Summary Form*.

Sample Meeting Questions

School Leader/Educational Program

□ Over the course of the charter term, how has the **school model or educational program evolved and improved**? What circumstances drove these changes and what is your rationale for any significant changes to your school approach as articulated in your charter?

□ What are the greatest **strengths** of your educational program? **Weaknesses**? Are these perceptions in alignment with the perceptions of the Board? Why or why not? What measures do you take to continuously evaluate the effectiveness and equity of your educational program?

□ What **changes** would you like to make to the educational program in the near future (e.g., curricular, staffing, organizational)? Why? Do you have specific data supporting such changes and specific research suggesting new strategies?

□ With regards to the following outcomes, how are you collecting formative data to ensure your school and charter specific goals will be met? What **preliminary data** have you collected to ensure that the indicators and measures set forth in the CCSJ Accountability System are being met in:

- ISTEP+ and ECA proficiency;
- IREAD-3 proficiency and NWEA
- Sub-group proficiency;
- Growth to proficiency, as measured by interim assessments utilized by the school as well as the Growth Model;
- College and Career Readiness;
- Attendance; and
- Graduation?

□ What is your assessment of the **school's academic performance and outcomes to date**? Are you pleased with the progress of the school and the quality of the educational program?

□ What **curricula/programs** is the school currently using and what materials are available to teachers? How is the school assessing the effectiveness of curriculum?

□ Are you satisfied the curriculum is being well-implemented and are there measures in place to **ensure that state standards and graduation requirements are being addressed systematically** in all coursework and compliant with state expectations for grade advancement and/or graduation?

□ Describe the school's **behavior management system**. How consistently is it implemented? What teacher development is necessary to implement and maintain a positive school culture? What changes have you made over time to improve the system?

□ What does the school do to recruit, hire, and retain **high quality teachers and staff**?

Describe your school's teacher retention pattern over the course of the charter. What special circumstances have driven this? What support measures and programs are in place to systematically promote teacher retention?

□ What is your calendar/cycle of **professional development throughout a year**? How do you ensure that instructional staff is appropriately trained and continuously improving instructional practices?

□ How do you **evaluate teachers and other staff**? How often? What research-based methods are used? What tools do you use to evaluate teachers on an annual basis and to obtain formative data on teacher performance?

□ Describe your **Special Education (SPED) program**. Who is your current SPED teacher of record? How is your school meeting the needs of special needs students? What is your process for ensuring that any and all IEP provisions are met by instructors and that you are in compliance with all IDEA mandates?

□ (If Applicable): Describe your **English Language Learner** program. How is your school meeting the needs of these students? How have these demands changed over the course of the charter? What ongoing training plan are you utilizing to ensure that your staff remains compliant with changing state standards regarding ELL instruction and testing?

□ Describe your school's **enrollment and attendance** patterns over the course of the charter, and the reasons for student attrition as categorized by exit/mobility codes. What special circumstances drove these statistics? What has the school done to meet enrollment and attendance goals? Does the school have an ongoing retention/recruitment plan designed to maintain sustainability of the program?

□ Has the school completed **criminal background checks** of all staff and volunteers with ongoing contact with students at the school? What is the school's policy with respect to the frequency of ongoing background checks for existing staff, beyond the initial check conducted during the hiring phase?

Organizational Effectiveness and Charter Compliance

□ What have been your greatest **successes** as a school leader? What are your greatest **challenges**?

□ How have school leadership and staff worked to build and maintain a **positive and equitable school culture**? What does this look like in your school? Provide examples.

□ What tools do you use to **communicate with stakeholders**—students, families, staff, Board members, authorizer, broader community? What has been most effective? Least effective? How do you know?

□ Are Board members, teachers and families aware of and supportive of the **school's mission and charter goals**? How do you know?

□ How has **family satisfaction** evolved over time? How do you know? What does the school do to ensure families continue to be satisfied with the school's program?

□ How has **family involvement** in the school – in actual operation of the program, or participation in other initiatives – evolved over time? Does the school have a plan to increase family engagement?

□ Is the current school **facility** adequate for meeting the school's learning program goals? If not, what plans have been made to improve the facility and/or find adequate space?

□ Has the Board worked with the School Leader to create a long-term **strategic plan** for the school? If yes, do you as School Leader regularly refer to the plan when interacting with the Board, and also with your staff?

□ Do you believe your Board has a firm understanding of its **roles and responsibilities**? What role does the School Leader play and what role does the Board play?

□ How would you characterize your **relationship with the Board**?

□ (If Applicable), how would you characterize the **relationship between the Board and the Educational Service Provider (ESP)** with which the school has contracted for education management services? Are roles and responsibilities between the Board, ESP and all school staff clearly articulated and understood by all?

□ The **Statement of Assurances** was signed by you and the Board Chair as part of the Accountability Plan Progress Report submission requirements. Please elaborate on the school's compliance as outlined in this document. For example, Open Enrollment requirements, FERPA, etc. Can you verify compliance?

□ The **Statement of Assurances** was signed by you and the Board Chair as part of the Accountability System Progress Report submission requirements. Please elaborate on the school's compliance as outlined in this document. For example, Open Enrollment requirements, FERPA, etc. Can you verify compliance?

Chief Financial Officer/ Chief Operating Officer or Equivalent

If applicable, these questions will also be directed to a third-party bookkeeping or accounting firm.

Financial Health

- What is the current status of the **school's financial health**?
- Describe any **financial challenges** the school may be facing. How have any challenges been addressed and rectified?
- Describe the school's **financial management and oversight model**. What systems are in place to ensure that the school's financials are well-managed (i.e., adherence to a balanced budget, maintenance of cash flow, management of financial reserves or fund balance, etc.)?
- Does the Board have a **Finance or Audit committee**? If no, why not? If yes, what role does the CFO/COO play on this committee?
- How are both major and minor **financial decisions** made at the school?
- Describe the school's **budgeting process**. How are enrollment estimates formulated and vetted? How often is the budget revised throughout the year? Why?
- What changes, if any, have been made to ensure the school has a **clean financial audit with no findings**?
- Do you have any **concerns** regarding reporting, internal controls, or compliance issues?
- What is your **whistleblower policy**? If you do not have one, why not?
- Do you believe the **Board has a solid understanding of the school's financial situation** and any challenges it may be facing? What kind of financial information does the Board receive from the school? Who reports this information to the Board?
- How would you characterize your **relationship with the Board**?
- (If Applicable), how would you characterize the **relationship between the Board and the Educational Service Provider (ESP)** with which the school has contracted for education management services? Are roles and responsibilities between the Board, ESP and all school staff clearly articulated and understood by all?

Curriculum and/or Testing Coordinator (may be the School Leader) /Educational Program

- Discuss **academic results over time**. Discuss interpretation of result trends and any factors you believe have impacted the school's academic results over time (e.g., population change, professional development, staffing changes, classroom reconfigurations, curricular decisions, etc.).
- What is your assessment of the school's academic performance and outcomes to date? Are you **pleased with the progress** of the school and the quality of the educational program?
- Discuss the school's **growth data by grade level**. Discuss reasons for particularly high or low growth by grade level, if applicable. Discuss interpretation of growth results and how they relate to intervention initiatives or curricular changes.
- How is the school working to meet the **academic indicators and measures** outlined in the ICSB Accountability Plan? What systems are in place to ensure continuous evaluation of academic outcomes?
- Discuss any **interim assessments** the school uses to measure proficiency or progress over time. How does this help inform staff of student progress and inform your instructional practices and intervention systems?
- What processes do you have in place to **evaluate assessment data** and link them to instructional practices?
- Do you have confidence that the assessments you are using will provide you adequate information related to student learning?

- How are **curricular decisions** made and what steps are taken to implement these decisions?
- To what extent does the school use assessment data in **staff performance assessments and staff development**? How has this evolved over time? Do you have confidence that **staff** use assessment data to modify instructional strategies? How do you know?
- How does the school **vary instructional levels and methods** for students with different needs? Is differentiation a clear, stated priority for all instruction?
- How are the needs of **SPED and ELL** students assessed and addressed?

Board Chair/Organizational Effectiveness and Charter Compliance

- What do you see as the school's **strengths and weaknesses**? Are these observations in alignment with the perceptions of the School Leader? Why or why not?
- Has the Board completed a **long-term strategic plan** for the school? How does the plan support the mission of the school and the terms of the charter? Is the plan referred to during Board meetings, and used to assess school performance over time?
- If there is no strategic plan, why not? Does the Board plan to create one? How does the **Board assess progress** of the school?
- Are the school's **mission and the goals** set forth in the Charter Agreement being achieved?
- What is the Board's process for **evaluating the school leader**? How is the evaluation used? How frequently is the school leader evaluated? Has the Board established measureable goals for the school leader?
- Have Board members received **board training**? If so, please describe.
- Do you believe your Board has a firm understanding of its **roles and responsibilities**? How do you evaluate this and address concerns if they arise? What role does the school leader play and what role does the Board play?
- How would you characterize your **relationship with the School Leader**?
- (If Applicable), how would you characterize the **relationship between the Board and the Educational Service Provider (ESP)** with which the school has contracted for education management services? Are roles and responsibilities between the Board, ESP and all school staff clearly articulated and understood by all?
- Describe your Board's **governance model**—composition, committee structure, frequency of meetings, etc. How does this support your school's mission and long-term plan? How do you ensure that the Board maintains necessary expertise to do its job?
- Does the Board complete a **self-review** each year? If so, please provide documentation of the most recent review. Does this review assess the extent to which the Board understands and acts upon its roles and responsibilities?
- Do you have a **governance binder** with written policies, board bylaws, school handbooks, etc.? How often are bylaws reviewed and updated?
- Do you have a process in place to **regularly review and update Board written policies, especially after the completion of legislative sessions each year**? Do you believe the Board has been proactive or reactive on policy review? Can you provide some examples of when the Board has reviewed/changed policy?
- What **orientation process** does the Board have in place for new members? What training are members given on how to read your school's monthly financial statements? How long is the period between member election and seating? What is asked of members-to-be during this period? Does the school complete criminal background checks of new Board members prior to their joining the Board, as required by the charter agreement?
- The **Statement of Assurances** was signed by you and the school leader as part of the Accountability Plan Progress Report submission requirements. Please elaborate on the school's compliance as outlined in this document. For example, Open Enrollment requirements, Open

Door Law for Board meetings, etc. Can you verify compliance?

i) Does the school comply with **criminal background checks** for all staff and volunteers with ongoing interaction with students? How do you know this is happening?

Academic Performance

ii) With regards to the following outcomes, how are you collecting formative and summative data to ensure your school and charter specific goals will be met? What **preliminary data** have you collected to ensure that the indicators and measures set forth in the CCSJ Accountability System are being met in:

- ISTEP+ and ECA proficiency;
- IREAD-3 proficiency; NWEA
- Sub-group proficiency;
- Growth to proficiency, as measured by interim assessments utilized by the school as well as the Growth Model;
- College and Career Readiness;
- Attendance; and
- Graduation?

iii) What is the Board's assessment of the school's academic performance and outcomes to date? Are you **pleased with the progress of the school** and the quality of the educational program? Is this a school where you would enroll your own children/ grandchildren/ nieces/ nephews?

Guided Observation Example

Guided Classroom Observation Form (used during Announced Monitoring Visits)

All teachers bring into the classroom their individual teaching styles. Within that style there are various and assorted behaviors and actions they will perform in their instruction. Below there are five sections of instruction that will be observed during an Announced Monitoring Site Visit. This Monitoring tool is not an evaluation of the teacher, but a tool to guide the observer in observing various behaviors and actions for an effective teaching and learning environment. The observer will indicate the following: **Yes:** meaning observe definite presence of the item, **Some:** meaning observed some presence of the item, and **N.O.:** meaning "not observed" during this setting.

Classroom Teacher: _____ Date: _____
 Number of students: _____ Number of other adults: _____
 Subject: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

1. LEARNER-CENTERED	Yes	Some	N.O.
Does the teacher:			
o Challenge the students at or above grade level			
o Give explanations of what is expected			
o Encourage students to work together (centers, co-learning, etc.)			
o Ask open ended questions requiring a thoughtful response from students			
o Provide material that is interesting and relevant			
o Shows respect (know names, is polite, etc.)			
o Provide individual attention to personal learning styles			
o Encourages student to ask questions			
Specific examples of learner centered behavior as checked above:			

2. STRATEGIC END-PLAN (LESSON PLANNING)	Yes	Some	N.O.
Does the teacher:			
o Provide daily lesson plan aligned to Common Core Standards			
o Provide the class with a plan for that class period (verbal or written outline)			
o Provide a summary of the previous class to lead into the objective of the day			
o Come to the class prepared with notes, instructor aides, equipment needed, etc.			
o Explain any and all materials needed for that class period.			
o Follow a clear format throughout the class time			
o Summarize material presented			
Specific examples of learner centered behavior as checked above:			

3. RESOURCE-RICH	Yes	Some	N.O.
Does the teacher use:			
o Notes			
o Handouts			
o Whiteboard/Chalkboard			
o Videos			
o Computer generated presentations (ppt, Prezi, etc.)			
o Demonstrations			
o Textbooks			
o Overhead Transparency			
o Technology			

Specific examples of learner centered behavior as checked above:			
--	--	--	--

4. ENGAGING AND ACTION-ORIENTED

	Yes	Some	N.O.
Does the teacher:			
○ Give real world examples			
○ Ask questions according to Blooms Taxonomy or another Framework			
○ Provide group/individual activities			
○ Allow students to participate in demonstrations			
○ Ask for demonstrations from students			
○ Require problem-solving skills of learners			
○ Move about the classroom			
○ Change or adapt their instruction if students are not responding			
Specific examples of learner centered behavior as checked above:			

5. ASSESSMENT-DRIVEN

	Yes	Some	N.O.
Does the teacher:			
○ Ask questions to determine students understand of material presented			
○ Ask questions to determine critical thinking			
○ Provide specific encouraging feedback to students on a frequent basis			
○ Give quizzes and/or exams			
○ Display usage of formative assessments			
○ Display usage of rubrics			
○ Provide additional material if needed			
○ Show interest in students' feedback			
○ Move about the classroom			
Specific examples of learner centered behavior as checked above:			