



## DeKalb County School District Qualitative Site Review Protocol

### **Purpose**

The DeKalb County School District School Innovation Department monitors DCSD authorized charter schools' compliance with the requirements of their contracts. QSRs are one tool that the district uses to ensure a school is meeting its performance obligations beyond reviews of state assessment data, submitted compliance documents, "desk audits," and other data dashboard items.

The DeKalb County School District Site Review Protocol outlines the process and procedures for site visits conducted by the School Innovation Department.

### **Frequency and Scope**

All charter schools will receive a Qualitative Site Review that is made up of (1) a site visit with classroom observations, (2) a governing board meeting observation, and (3) an annual performance review meeting. In addition to the annual site visit, annual governing board meeting observation and annual performance review meeting, the School Innovation Department also conducts monthly website audits and special education and ESOL compliance visits, as needed.

### **Procedures**

#### **1) Notification and Scheduling**

- a. School Innovation Department staff will work with the school's leadership to schedule site visits at times that are minimally disruptive.
- b. At least two weeks prior to the site visit, School Innovation staff will confirm the school's leader and board chair of the scheduled date and time via email. The notification will include the components to be completed prior to the site visit (Look Fors, ESOL questionnaire, Big Picture compliance) and identify any school

employees or board/community members whose presence will be needed during the visit.

## **2) Day of Site Visit**

On the day of the scheduled site visit, staff will report to the school's main office at the scheduled date and time. If the site visit cannot be completed in its entirety in one day, School Innovation will work with the school to schedule a time to complete the remainder of the visit.

## **3) Post-Visit Report and Monitoring**

Within two weeks of completing the final component of the site visit, The School Innovation will provide the school's principal and board chair with a report that includes a summary of the visit and notes any areas of strength and/or concern. If the report identifies any areas of concern, the School Innovation Department may require the school to develop a corrective action plan to address the concerns. School Innovation staff will then monitor the school's progress in implementing the action plan and making improvements in any areas of concern.

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

### **Before the Visit:**

One week prior to the scheduled site visit, the school leader will provide the Office of School Innovation with the following documents:

- a. Look Fors Template** - Observers will focus on areas the school believes provide evidence of the essential innovative features of the educational program outlined in the charter petition. An additional focus will be on special education and ELL subgroups. Each school leadership team will provide School Innovation with its own

- unique “look fors” template (an [example](#) is provided) allowing space for observations/notes.
- b. **Redacted Special Education Big Picture** - Each school’s LTSE and Special Education Department Chair will use the most recent [Special Education Big Picture](#) with redacted student identification . A template is provided.
  - c. **ESOL Questionnaire** - Prior to the visit to the charter school the School Innovation Department will work with the charter school’s ESOL coordinator or department chair to answer the [ESOL questionnaire](#).
  - d. **One week prior to the visit**, the school leader will provide the School Innovation Department with a bell schedule and master schedule. The school leader will also provide parking instructions for the School Innovation team.
  - e. The school leader will also create a **classroom visit schedule** for the hours that the school innovation department has indicated that they will be in the building. Fifteen-minute classroom visits allow 30 minutes for lunch, 45 minutes at the beginning of the visit for pre-work and 45 minutes at the end of the visit for debriefs. Also schedule a time for **focus group\*\*** interviews (45 minutes) and ensure that stakeholders are available during that time block.
  - f. The school leader will also confirm that the **governing board meeting\*\*\*** calendar posted on the school’s website is accurate.

### During the Visit/Day of the Visit:

The following items will be completed by School Innovation Department and shared as part of the QSR feedback:

- a) **Notes Verifying “Look Fors”** - During classroom visits, members of the School Innovation Department will observe teaching and learning and make notes on the “Look Fors” template provided by the charter school leadership team.
- b) **DCSD Special Education Classroom Observation** - School Innovation Special Education team members will visit classrooms using the [DCSD Rubric for Special Education Classroom Observations](#). This template provides a consistent method of observing the quality of instruction in a special education setting. The rubric will be used to monitor instruction and compliance to increase student achievement, identify teachers’ areas of strengths and weakness, and identify professional development needs.
- c) **DCSD [ELL Classroom Observation](#) (and [Intensive Observation](#)) if applicable** - Members of the School Innovation Team will use the DCSD ESOL Learning Walks instrument. It aligns with TKES Teacher Effectiveness Standards & Best Practices for ELs.

- d) **Classroom Observation Look-Fors:** Classroom observations focus on whether teaching and learning aligns with the essential, innovative features outlined in the school's charter petition. The following items will be completed by school staff prior to the physical site visit:

The following is the responsibility of the school/school leadership:

- a) The school should provide a place where the team can assemble and leave personal items during the visit. Please provide Wi-Fi instructions and directions to the nearest restroom.
- b) The School Innovation Team will provide its own water, snacks, and lunch. Please do not make any unnecessary hospitality provisions for site visits.

**Focus Groups:** Focus groups comprised of students, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians will be conducted by School Innovation staff. The purpose of the focus groups is to gather additional evidence of implementation of the essential, innovative features of the educational program outlined in the charter contract as well as overall satisfaction with the school among its stakeholders. The school administration will select the students, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians for the focus groups but will not attend any of the focus group sessions. In its post-visit summary report, School Innovation staff will not provide any personally identifiable information in summarizing discussions from the focus groups.

**Governance Meeting Observation:** In the same month as the site visit, the School Innovation Department will also attend a governing board meeting for the charter school. The template created for the [Standards for Effective Governance of Georgia Nonprofit Charter School Governing Boards](#) will be used during governing board observations. Feedback from the governing board observation will be provided to the school leader and governance board chair within 1 week following the meeting.

## After the Visit

**Post-Visit Summary Report and Annual Meeting:** The post-visit summary will be shared within two weeks of completing the final component of the site visit. The School Innovation Department will provide the school leader and board chair with a report that includes a summary of the visit and notes any areas of strength and/or concern. This information will be included with information from the scorecards and other desk audits and data dashboard information during the annual meeting.

The School Innovation Department reserves the right to add additional components to its site visits in accordance with state law and the district's contract with the school.