



# School Quality Review

Notes of Guidance for  
Schools and Reviewers

August, 2009

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page. It features a 3D wireframe globe of the Earth, showing the continents. The globe is set against a background of several concentric, overlapping arcs in shades of gray and orange, creating a sense of motion and depth. The globe is reflected on the surface below it.

**Reach Further.**  
Global competitiveness starts here.

## **PART ONE: PRINCIPLES OF THE QUALITY REVIEW PROGRAM**

### **1.1 Purpose of the School Quality Review program**

The School Quality Review program is designed to enable and assist:

- the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System to develop a clear picture of the quality of education provided in its schools
- schools to establish a clear view of their strengths, areas for development, challenges and successes

The purpose of these Notes of Guidance is:

- to clarify the process for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), administrators, and teachers
- to provide a comprehensive reference for the School Quality Reviewers
- to aid consistency in all practices and procedures

Principals will find study of the School Quality Review criteria, sub-criteria, and rubric helpful in preparing for the review. They may also find that these assist them in prompting reflection as part of the self-evaluation process and completion of the self-evaluation form. The criteria, if used with staff and other stakeholders, help to make the review more relevant and useful to the school's development.

### **1.2 Cambridge Education and the School Quality Review Process**

Cambridge Education has been chosen by CMS to support its School Quality Review program because it has wide experience as a review provider and trainer for schools throughout the world, including the United States. However, this is only one of the reasons for this choice; all Cambridge Education reviewers involved in CMS Quality Review have been through a rigorous training program. Cambridge reviewers have worked in schools and/or Local Education Authorities/Districts, affording them a credible history as educators.

Cambridge Education has also provided technical assistance to support the development of the School Quality Review Framework and Guidance as well as full training and facilitation for the capacity-building program which prepares reviewers from within the district for their roles within the process.

### **1.3 The Role of Self-Evaluation**

The School Quality Review is one component of CMS's program for school accountability and improvement. It is a third-party, evidence-based, objective validation of the school's work and qualities. The criteria used by the review teams are the same for all Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools and the guiding principles are closely followed by all review teams. After the lead reviewer has given oral feedback on the last day of the visit, s/he will write the final report. This report, which will be forwarded to the school for factual checking within **20 working days** after the review, is an analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development. This

information provides the school and the district with an objective view of its work and an agenda for development.

When a School Quality Review is set within a culture of self-reflection, analysis of results, and action, it becomes a very powerful tool for school improvement. The school's self-evaluation complements external review as an ongoing process of identifying priorities for improvement, monitoring performance, and evaluating outcomes.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's inclusion of a School Quality Review process aids schools in their development by setting in place a system which:

- identifies strengths and weaknesses/areas for development in key areas of their work
- models strategies which schools can then develop. For example, lesson observation and work analysis, monitoring through discussion with students and parents, and the use of questionnaires to seek a range of views on the quality of the school's work
- ensures a quality framework which operates consistently in each CMS school

#### **1.4 Building for Capacity**

The framework has been designed to offer a rigorous process which combines third-party school evaluation with the development of capacity within CMS. Key professional staff from Charlotte-Mecklenburg have participated in a training program designed to extend and widen skills and prepare them for taking part in a School Quality Review. Following this initial training, reviewers then utilize, practice, and hone their skills on site, guided and mentored by an experienced Cambridge Education lead reviewer. During and after the on-site review, the team calibrates its work to ensure that the school receives a high quality, consistent, and rigorous experience.

The Cambridge Education trainers who lead these early reviews are charged with the responsibility to maintain a high quality school review while supporting and managing team members. All lead reviewers will have a proven track record to show that they have the skills necessary to undertake this work to a high standard. Therefore, the knowledge and expertise within CMS is coupled with the skill, experience and training, and quality assurance measures provided by Cambridge Education. The intention is that this powerful combination of skills, experience, and professional expertise will provide a well-balanced and effective school evaluation. These principles underpin the initial phase of the Accountability Initiative. In time, as capacity strengthens, the reviews will be internal and led by CMS staff.

## **1.5 The Quality Review Criteria**

The School Quality Review process requires reviewers to collect evidence to support judgments about the school's effectiveness in relation to the six Quality Review Criteria:

1. Achievement
2. Curriculum
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Leadership and Management
5. Learning Environment
6. Involvement of Parents/Guardians and the Community

The full criteria, associated sub-criteria, and rubrics are given in the appendices.

## **PART TWO: THE SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW PROGRAM**

### **2.1 The Stages of School Quality Review**

The School Quality Review process has three stages:

Stage 1: Preparation

Stage 2: School – visit

Stage 3: Final report

#### **Stage 1: Preparation**

Good preparation is the foundation of a successful School Quality Review. As a first step, a member of the Cambridge Education administration team will contact the school principal to ensure that the school is fully aware of the process and procedures, including all pre-documentation requirements and the start date for the review.

The school will be asked to complete a short Self-Evaluation Form (SEF); this provides useful and relevant background information, such as number of students and teachers, languages spoken and most importantly, the school's own perception of how well it meets the six School Quality Review Criteria.

Prior to the review the school and/or the district will provide Cambridge Education with:

- the latest version of the School Improvement Plan
- key agreed-upon district/state level data about the school
- the completed Self-Evaluation Form

The reviewers will be able to use this information alongside the SEF to gain an understanding of the school context, its history and, most importantly, actions which are taking place to support school improvement. The SEF is also used to begin to evaluate how well the school knows itself and its own quality.

## Stage 2: School Visit

The reviewers will be in the school for approximately two days, during which time they will follow an intensive daily schedule. The reviewers will collect evidence through direct observation of teaching and learning, examining students' work, as well as having discussions with teachers, students, parents and other members of the school community. This evidence will provide the reviewers with a thorough understanding of the school's work, the quality of that work and lead them to the overall evaluation of the school. The school will be required to provide a suitable working space in which the review team can be based during the two day visit.

## Documentation and Data

The reviewers will review and evaluate all relevant documentation and data provided by the district and the school. This documentation should include examples of students' work, as well as curriculum documents such as pacing and alignment charts, records of internal review, and results in external tests and examinations. The school may offer other relevant documentation to demonstrate student progress and achievement.

## Leadership and Management Team

Meetings with the principal, school leadership, and administration teams will be a key element of the review visits. During these meetings, reviewers will ask key questions linked to the focus areas for the review. There will also be discussion about the SEF which will enable the reviewers to understand how well the school knows itself. The reviewers **may** also arrange with the principal to see other key staff as appropriate and available during the review (athletic, specialist staff, lead teachers, literacy facilitators, etc.).

## Class Visits

One of the most important activities will be observing how well students learn as a result of the teaching they receive. The reviewers will establish an appropriate range of lessons and classes to observe with the principal during the review. Classroom observation is a **cornerstone activity** in evaluating “the overall effectiveness of the school.”

The purpose of lesson observations in a School Quality Review is to gather evidence about the overall quality of learning and teaching within the school. Reviewers may talk with students during the class visits if appropriate but will not otherwise interrupt the flow of the lesson. Planning for the lesson and the appropriate

course of study should be left out in the classroom for the reviewer to see if needed. Feedback will not be given to individual teachers after lesson observations.

### **Meetings with Staff, Parents, and Students**

Questions for meetings will correlate with the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and descriptors.

### **Engaging Students**

Reviewers will talk with students in classrooms, when appropriate, around the school and in a focus meeting in order to assess their understanding and knowledge of various aspects of study, their attitudes towards their schoolwork, and their general feelings about how well the school helps them achieve. The focus meeting with students [six to eight students; approximately 30 minutes] is not normally attended by staff members. Students should represent the full age group and grade range of the school's population.

### **Meetings with Staff and Parents**

Meetings with staff and parents provide reviewers with a valuable insight into the quality of education offered at the school. The teachers' focus group [six to eight teachers; approximately 30 minutes] should represent the breadth of the school faculty and staff. The principal or assistant principal does not attend this meeting. Schools should try to arrange for a group of up to eight parents to attend a focus group meeting [approximately 30 minutes]. The reviewers will understand that not all schools will be able to engage the assistance of a group of eight. However, every attempt should be made to arrange for a number of parents to be available to attend the focus meeting.

### **Collaborative Meeting**

The reviewers will observe a collaborative meeting, which should be a meeting of a group of teachers and staff that is part of the school's normal pattern of team meetings or activities. This might be a collaborative team planning meeting, grade-level meeting, or similar meeting. This is a valuable part of the review, but every attempt should be made not to overload or change the school's normal schedule.

**Sample Site Visit Schedule [start times will vary with the school's scheduled times]**

	<b>Day One</b>	<b>Day Two</b>
<b>8:00 – 8:30</b>	<b>Meet with principal, review SEF</b>	<b>Meet with principal</b>
<b>8:30 – 9:30</b>		<b>Meet with parents</b>
<b>9:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>Site tour</b>	<b>Class visits [1]</b>
<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>Class visits [2]</b>	<b>Collaborative meeting</b>
<b>11:00 – 12:00</b>	<b>Class visits [2]</b>	<b>Class visits [2]</b>
<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Reviewer/team reflection</b>	<b>Additional evidence gathering/ discussions with staff/ lesson observations</b>
<b>12:30 – 1:00</b>	<b>Lunch with teachers</b>	
<b>1:00 – 1:30</b>	<b>Student focus group</b>	<b>Meet with principal and/or District representative</b>
<b>1:30 – 2:00</b>	<b>Class visits [1]</b>	<b>Reviewer/team reflection</b>
<b>2:00 – 2:30</b>	<b>Review Documentation</b>	<b>Feedback to principal, with members of senior leadership / management team and district representative</b>
<b>2:30 – 3:00</b>	<b>Observe any after-school activities</b>	
<b>3:00 – 3:45</b>	<b>Meet with administration</b>	
<b>3:45 – 4:00</b>	<b>Reviewer/team reflection</b>	
<b>4:00 – 4:30</b>	<b>Review of day with principal</b>	

*The above should only be seen as indicative of the schedule/range of activities that will take place during the site visit. Prior to the visit the principal and the reviewer, through phone and email correspondence, will agree on the exact details of the review visit.*

**Verbal Feedback**

Throughout the visit, the reviewers will meet with the principal regularly to give feedback on the progress of the review, check, and clarify understandings and request any other information necessary. An overview of the observations made on learning will also be given daily. The principal can also direct feedback to the reviewers on any issues which need follow-up. At the end of the visit, the reviewers will provide initial oral feedback to the principal and will give an overall evaluation of the school's work based on the four evaluation grades.

The feedback outlines the main strengths and areas for improvement, which derive from the judgments made during the visit. If there has been effective communication, and particularly if the school is reflective and self-critical in its approach to the evaluation, it is unlikely that the feedback will contain any surprises.

It will be helpful, however, for the principal to have [up to two] others from the instructional leadership team and a district representative present. This will enable the principal to listen, direct all his/her attention to the messages given, ask questions, and seek clarification where necessary.

### **Stage 3: The Final Report**

The lead reviewer will use the evidence gathered to make judgments on the quality of the school's work. These are synthesized into a report which reflects an analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, along with an evaluation of how well the school meets each of the six School Quality Review Criteria and culminates in an overall evaluation of the quality of the school's work in line with the four evaluation grades (please refer to Part Five of these *Notes of Guidance*).

The school will then use the feedback within the report to modify the school improvement plan which focuses on the school as a whole and which keeps the quality of student learning at the forefront of its thinking. The judgments are made by the team using the evidence presented and therefore these judgments are final.

***A draft report will be sent to the school within 20 working days, for a factual check, with the final report being published within 30 working days of the end of the site visit and sent to the Learning Community, the school, and the Office of Accountability.***

The principles of quality assurance underpin all aspects of the School Quality Review processes and procedures, including the production of the report. These quality-assurance procedures can be found in Part Four of these *Notes of Guidance*.

## **PART THREE: THE REVIEW CRITERIA**

### **3.1 The Review Criteria**

School Quality Review uses the following six criteria:

1. Achievement
2. Curriculum
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Leadership and Management
5. Learning Environment
6. Involvement of Parents/ Guardians and the Community

**1. Achievement:** *The school demonstrates high levels of academic achievement in the core subjects and the trend of achievement shows improvement at all grades in all subjects. The school uses available student performance data to take and adjust actions to improve the quality of students' learning.*

The aim of CMS is to have high expectations for all students, often exceeding the performance of other schools in the state and nation. CMS is focused on the results of students' performance on tests and on ensuring that students are maintaining progress in all aspects of the curriculum. A measure of a school's focus on results will be in the achievement and improvement of students - how much progress they make in the school.

Achievement, therefore, is an objective measure of how well students are doing compared with a state or national benchmark, and improvement is the progress they make from where they started, taking account of their particular needs or circumstances. Progress measures indicate how well the students are doing in relation to where they started, i.e., how much progress or growth students make.

**2. Curriculum:** *The curriculum is relevant and appropriate to the needs of all children, across all grades, and for all sub-groups in the student population.*

Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the content and organization of the curriculum provide students with access to a wide range of learning experiences and promote high achievement and personal development. The review will consider the impact of the curriculum in providing students with a rich, broad, and interesting curriculum, including sports, music, dance, drama, and art, as well as academic subjects.

**3. Learning and Teaching: Student learning, progress and standards are a direct result of challenging instruction and high quality teaching. Decisions are based on use of data and evidence.**

Learning is evaluated in relation to the students' response to lessons and to the school's curricular opportunities. Reviewers take particular note of the student's level of interest and engagement in the task; teaching is assessed based on its impact on student learning.

The quality of learning is judged in terms of:

- the gains students make in knowledge, understanding, and skills
- students' competence as learners
- students' attitudes towards learning

Learning is evaluated by observing students as they take part in classroom and other activities, by looking at their work, and by talking with them in classrooms and around the school. Students' personal development is closely linked to their attitudes towards learning. This is evidenced by student behavior in the classroom and around the school campus, in their participation in school activities, in their relationships with each other and with adults, and in their willingness to take responsibility and show initiative.

Evidence is found from observing students in lessons and around the school, talking with groups of students and individuals, and assessing how they relate to peers as well as adults. In addition, other evidence will contribute; for example, data on suspensions, participation in extracurricular activities together with their participation in the community.

Reviewers will concentrate on observing lessons in a range of subjects, including core subjects. They will complete an observation form when they are observing lessons, and will record his/her evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning and judgments about students' achievement and progress.

When evaluating the quality of teaching, reviewers will focus on:

- the impact of teaching, in terms of student learning, progress, and achievement
- the aspects of teaching that work best, or need to be improved
- the identification of best practice, common strengths, and areas for development across the school and/or in individual subjects or grades
- the extent to which teaching promotes the learning of all students, paying particular attention to any Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and those who are exceptional students.

**4. Leadership & Management: *The school has a high quality leadership and management team with a clear vision, ambition, and goals; a focus on student achievement; a sense of purpose and high aspirations; and strategies which impact directly on students' learning.***

The quality of the school's leadership and management is a critical factor. Review and research findings around the world show that leadership has a profound effect on every aspect of the school.

The quality of leadership and management is measured in terms of:

- How well is the leadership leading the school to meet its goals and to achieve the school's mission?
- How effective are the strategies used for improvement of teaching in order to improve student achievement and progress?
- How effective are the strategies employed to involve parents in their child's education?
- How effective are the strategies employed in leading and developing all staff to be effective in achieving the school's mission?
- How appropriate is the school plan in order to realize its goals and mission?
- How well is the leadership promoting a highly effective planning process, through the development of the Professional Learning Community?
- How well is the leadership organizing time, people, and money to achieve school goals?

There is no simple definition of leadership, but quality leadership demonstrates:

- clear vision
- a sense of purpose and high aspirations
- a relentless focus on student achievement
- strategic planning towards the school's ambitions and goals
- the creation of effective teams
- effective communication and role modeling
- an inclusive school in which each individual matters

Management:

- undertakes a rigorous self-evaluation
- uses findings and monitors performance data
- has a commitment to staff development and utilizing the skills and experience of staff to advance student learning

**5. Learning Environment:** *The school has a safe and orderly environment and makes full use of its available resources, including technology, to directly impact student learning.*

Reviewers will evaluate how effectively the school has created a climate in which students feel safe, valued, and able to learn well. They will examine how effectively the school uses resources to support learning and whether technology is used well as a tool for teaching and learning. Evidence is collected by talking with students, parents, and staff and by observing classes.

**6. Involvement of Parents/Guardians and the Community:** *The school has a range of regular, two-way methods for communicating with parents, guardians, and the wider community and takes steps to encourage active engagement in the education of their children and involvement in the life of the school.*

A respectful relationship with parents/guardians in which they feel involved in and informed about their child's education is an important factor in the progress that students make.

Evidence can come from the meeting between the lead reviewer and parents/guardians about how well the school involves and informs them. The reports that the school sends home are also an indication of the quality of communication with parents. Reviewers will assess how effectively the school devises strategies to include all parents and guardians and the range and quality of the partnerships which the school has with its local community and ways in which these community partnerships have a positive impact on student learning.

## PART FOUR: QUALITY ASSURANCE

### 4.1 Quality Assurance

Cambridge Education will work closely with CMS to ensure that school review is consistently high quality. Consistency is maintained through:

- recruitment, training, and development of high quality reviewers who have the necessary professional and interpersonal skills to fulfill the role to a high standard and who have met Cambridge Education's quality assurance standards
- implementation of effective systems to ensure consistent processes and practices
- selected on-site monitoring and evaluation visits from Cambridge Education's professional consultants in order to calibrate the quality of work across and between teams
- support and monitoring of the team's work on site by the lead reviewer
- quality reading, review, and calibration of reports at draft and final stage
- review and evaluation of the quality of the evidence submitted by the reviewer
- requesting feedback from the school and district on the quality of the review; listening and reflecting on client feedback and, when necessary, taking action to improve

### 4.2 Code of Conduct

**All reviewers, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' staff, sign a Code of Conduct in which they agree to:**

- evaluate objectively and impartially
- report honestly, accurately, and fairly, ensuring that their evaluations and judgments accurately and reliably reflect the school's work
- work with integrity, treating everyone with courtesy and respect
- minimize stress, not over-observe staff or demand unreasonable amounts of paperwork
- act with the best interests and well-being of students and staff
- communicate clearly, frankly, and sensitively in order to ensure understanding between the review team and the school, support the school to improve, and develop practice
- listen respectfully to the evidence presented by the school and within the team
- respect the confidentiality of information
- work to meet deadlines
- undertake regular training and development as required
- accept and comply with Cambridge Education's monitoring and quality assurance policy

If a school believes that this code has not been followed during a review, the matter should be discussed in the first instance with the lead reviewer or with the Cambridge Education's complaints manager.

## PART FIVE: APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Quality Review Criteria and Rubric

#### Consistency

In the complex context of quality review, it is important that the terminology used is clearly understood by everyone concerned. It is also imperative that everyone recognizes that there are many ways in which a school can merit a particular evaluation, and that **awarding levels will always be more of a professional judgment than a technical process**. It is important that there are agreed rubrics and descriptors to guide the judgments made and to ensure that there are consistent and transparent processes and clearly understood procedures.

The following rubrics provide an overview of the terminology and evaluation criteria to be used both during the School Quality Review and feedback process.

***It is important to remember that an evaluation of the quality achieved within the school will always be more of a professional judgment than a purely technical process.***

***However, the following general guidelines should be consistently applied, evidence weighed, and wherever possible, evidence should be cross-referenced.***

#### Evaluation Scale

- 4 – High Quality
- 3 – Well-Developed
- 2 – Proficient
- 1 – Undeveloped

*Sub-criteria that are not applicable to the school will be marked N/A*

#### Evaluation Descriptors

An evaluation of **high quality** is characterized by major strengths which have a significant impact on student learning. The few weaknesses that may exist do not diminish the students' learning experiences. While an evaluation of **high quality** represents a high standard, it is a standard that should be achievable in all schools. It implies that a school should continue its work without significant adjustment, and continue to take advantage of opportunities to improve.

An evaluation of **well-developed** is characterized by a number of strengths. While there are weaknesses, they do not adversely impact the students' learning experiences to a significant degree. Schools characterized as **well-developed** should address their weaknesses and continue to take advantage of opportunities to improve.

An evaluation of **proficient** is characterized by some strengths, but also some important weaknesses that have an impact on the quality of students' learning experiences. Although an evaluation of **proficient** suggests the minimum acceptable standard, it also implies the need for intervention and adjustment on the part of the school. Schools characterized as **proficient** need to address their weaknesses and adjust their School Improvement Plan accordingly to ensure improvement in student learning.

An evaluation of **undeveloped** is characterized by weaknesses which require immediate action by the school and district. Limited strengths are evidenced and these are significantly overshadowed by the impact of the weaknesses. Such schools should revisit goals and strategies in their School Improvement Plan, and amend the School Improvement Plan immediately.

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 1 - Achievement

**1. Achievement:** The school demonstrates high levels of academic achievement in the core subjects and the trend of achievement shows improvement at all grades for all students. The school uses available student performance data to take and adjust actions to improve the quality of students' learning.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of Evidence
1.1	The school's achievement results are comparable to those of similar populations of students in the district/state.	The school attained the highest rating on the CMS School Progress Report rating system. Achievement is tracked so that the school knows what is working well, where value is added, and what needs to be improved.	The school attained a satisfactory rating on the CMS School Progress Report rating system. Outcomes are tracked; however, the school is not aware of what is working well and what needs to be improved to adjust and revise planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teacher, student, parent feedback</li> <li>✓ Observation</li> <li>✓ SQR walkthroughs</li> <li>✓ SQR Self Evaluation form</li> <li>✓ Supervisory feedback</li> <li>✓ Principal's knowledge and assessment of achievement</li> <li>✓ CMS School Progress Report data</li> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan (Goals, Strategies, Achievement data)</li> </ul>
1.2	The school is achieving high standards or is improving based on NC ABC program expectations.	The school has met state goals for High Growth. It knows the next goals for growth and has put in place achievement targets for all student groups.	The school has met state goals for Expected Growth. However, outcomes are not monitored with sufficient accuracy to ascertain next steps in planning for improvement towards reaching next goals for growth.	<p>As above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NC ABC Program data</li> <li>✓ AYP Data</li> </ul>
1.3	The school uses data to adjust student learning processes for ALL students (Achievement Levels I, II, III and IV).	The school uses very effective strategies to foster achievement growth for all students. Teachers know their students well and thoroughly use a comprehensive range of data to plan instruction. All student groups are making good progress and progress is monitored thoroughly, regularly, and consistently by leadership and teachers.	The school uses some strategies to foster achievement growth for some students but is not yet using data fully to identify which groups are progressing well and which need greater challenge. Outcomes from assessment data are reviewed but are not used consistently in teacher planning and instruction. Differentiation is evident in teacher practice but assessment outcomes are not used comprehensively and/or regularly to benefit all students.	<p>As above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Any additional school</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of Evidence
1.4	Disparities in student achievement are being addressed.	The school implements very effective strategies to successfully reduce the achievement gap in ALL classes and for all student groups. Teachers use data effectively to ensure that all groups are making good gains and are progressing very well. Improvement is actively sought for all student groups.	The school uses strategies that specifically address the diverse needs of students but these strategies are not used consistently in teacher planning and instruction. Disaggregated data for these student groups are not always used regularly by teachers. Many teachers are aware of the need to reduce gaps in student achievement, but do not always use the most effective strategies for doing so.	As above
1.5	The school addresses the specialized needs of students with disabilities.	There is evidence that the school is proactive and is successfully implementing effective strategies to address the special needs of students with disabilities. Exceptional Children (EC) and general education teachers regularly plan and meet to ensure that all aspects of their respective students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are being addressed. Issues that arise that may require an adjustment to a student's IEP are handled swiftly and efficiently.	The school uses strategies that specifically address the special needs of students with disabilities but these strategies are not used consistently in planning and instruction. General education teachers plan consistently with EC teachers to address needs and issues for students with disabilities participating in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.  All teachers are familiar with the students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and provide these students with the necessary accommodations. Issues are not always addressed consistently, swiftly and/or efficiently.	As above, plus:  ✓ Specific data relating to EC students

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of Evidence
1.6	The school addresses the specialized needs of students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).	The school implements very effective strategies to specifically address the diverse needs of LEP students. General education teachers plan regularly with English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to address needs and issues for LEP students and achievement outcomes are closely monitored for impact. Teachers are actively involved with students' Personal Education Plans (PEPs) when appropriate and provide the necessary accommodations for their respective students. Data are effectively utilized to revise planning and teaching.	The school uses some strategies that specifically address the diverse needs of LEP students. General education teachers plan with ESL teachers to address needs and issues for LEP students, but there are still some gaps in achievement which are not fully addressed in planning and instruction. Most teachers are familiar with students' Personal Education Plans (PEPs) when appropriate and provide some accommodations for their respective students. Data are not always used effectively to revise planning and teaching.	As above, plus:  ✓ Specific data relating to LEP students.

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 2 – Curriculum

**2. Curriculum:** The curriculum is relevant and appropriate to the needs of all students, across all grades, and for all sub-groups in the student population.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
2.1	The curriculum and instructional programs are aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS).	All teachers consistently use the NCSCOS to plan. The instructional programs are monitored, evaluated, and reviewed by the instructional leadership team to ensure consistency, alignment, and full coverage of the NCSCOS. The curriculum is taught to the standards and is well-differentiated to meet the full range of individual need and to provide access to the curriculum for all learners.	All teachers use the NCSCOS to guide planning and instruction. Instructional programs are aligned to the NCSCOS but may not be fully consistent throughout the school, in all grades and classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ NCSCOS</li> <li>✓ School pacing/alignment guides</li> <li>✓ Student data</li> <li>✓ Learning Community (LC) curriculum school visits</li> <li>✓ Curriculum &amp; Instruction (C&amp;I) data from school visits</li> </ul>
2.2	The curriculum is designed to meet the individual learning needs of all students.	<p>The curriculum plan is fully implemented and adhered to across all grades and classes. Through planning, instruction is differentiated to meet the academic needs of all students and is evaluated regularly to ensure that all academic needs of students are met.</p> <p>Flexible amendments are made to the plan as necessary to meet student needs and the plan is implemented carefully to meet the range of student learning need.</p>	The curriculum is planned to meet the full range of students' needs through all grades and classes. However, while there is an overarching school-wide curriculum plan in all classes and/or grades, this is not implemented rigorously and consistently. Differentiation is present but may not fully meet the learning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Professional development</li> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan</li> <li>✓ School/Student data</li> <li>✓ CMS Student and Family Surveys</li> <li>✓ C&amp;I data from school visits</li> </ul>
2.3	The curriculum provides students with a broad range of learning experiences.	Curriculum planning and delivery is designed to meet the academic needs and interests of all students. The curriculum is broad and the arts, physical and health education are included and are given a high priority in the school's schedule. There is cross curricular planning to integrate core subjects. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available to all students.	Most students have planned opportunities to participate in a broad range of learning experiences (e.g., in arts/health education, life skills). While these are available for all students, they may not be an integrated part of the curriculum or may not be given an equal place in the school's schedule. Delivery of the curriculum does not always match the planned intent. As a result, the curriculum does not meet the academic needs and interests of all students. A limited range of extra-curricular activities is available to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ SQR walkthroughs</li> <li>✓ Teacher planning/meeting notes</li> <li>✓ CMS Student and Family Surveys</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Student work samples</li> <li>✓ Instructional schedule</li> <li>✓ Extra-curricular activities</li> <li>✓ Pacing guides</li> </ul>

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 3 – Learning & Teaching

**3. Learning and Teaching:** Student learning, progress, and standards are a direct result of challenging instruction and high quality teaching. Decisions are based on use of data and evidence.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
3.1	Students are making very good progress. The pace of learning is challenging and appropriate for their grade and level of achievement.	Students are making very good progress in their learning. All student groups are progressing well because the teaching they receive is consistently high quality, well paced, and challenging.	Most students make gains in their learning, but the pace of learning and teaching is not sufficiently challenging to ensure that all students make good gains. There is some evidence of underachievement for some students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>
3.2	Students demonstrate a high level of time on task.	Students are highly motivated to achieve and improve. They demonstrate a high level of time on task, are interested in and enjoy their learning and will persevere when work is difficult.	Most students are generally on task and are moderately engaged in their own learning. Students show enthusiasm for their work but others are less motivated, possibly because work is not always engaging or well-matched to their learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>
3.3	Students are given responsibility for, and are involved in, their own learning. They are provided with opportunities for independent thinking and problem solving.	The majority of students are developing high-quality skills in problem solving. They have developed effective strategies that enable them to approach problem solving with confidence and independence because teachers are very effective in planning and implementing strategies to explicitly and incrementally develop these skills. Students know their strengths and areas for improvement.	While there are opportunities for students to develop independent learning in some classes and some students do demonstrate independent thinking and skills in problem solving, the impact of these strategies is not consistently effective for promoting learning in all classes and for all students. Not all students know their strengths and areas for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Student interviews</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
3.4	Students respond well to opportunities for collaborative working.	Students are developing and using good collaborative skills because teachers are very effective in providing planned opportunities for them to develop and use these strategies. Students understand the importance of working together and articulate how participation in teamwork and cooperative activities can help them improve their own learning.	Collaborative learning is used effectively in some classes. While students are provided with opportunities to work/learn collaboratively, they may not fully understand its value to them as learners because teachers do not articulate/explain its value. More could be done to enable students to challenge themselves by working collaboratively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Student interviews</li> </ul>
3.5	Students respond to the high expectations for achievement set by teachers.	All students respond well to the good pace, rigor, and high expectations set by their teachers. Students are encouraged to think and communicate at a level that is challenging yet age-appropriate. It is evident both through student work and student response that high expectations have been established. Students are aware of their own progress and display pride and ownership regarding their work. Students are engaged in the learning process.	Students are responsive to the school's expectations but expectations for student achievement and rigor are set too low. There is an awareness of the need to aim high and to achieve; however, not all students are equally committed to high achievement or fully engaged in the learning process because of the match and pace of teaching and learning. It is not always evident that benchmarks for quality student work and student response have been clearly established and communicated. There is some evidence of underachievement in groups and individuals that is not addressed effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Student interviews</li> </ul>
3.6	Teaching is aligned with the derived, written, and posted NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) objectives.	All teachers regularly teach lessons aligned with the derived, written, and posted NCSCOS. These are clearly and consistently articulated to students in age-appropriate ways in the classroom to give focus and purpose to learning. Students are consistently aware of the purpose of the lesson.	Many teachers plan by aligning their lessons to NCSCOS objectives to plan lessons, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Objectives are usually evident but are not always effectively shared with students within lessons in ways that clearly identify the learning intentions and give focus and purpose to classroom activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
3.7	Teachers work collaboratively to plan lessons which are effective and improve instruction.	Teachers effectively demonstrate collaborative inquiry to develop plans for quality instruction and to ensure that there is alignment between grades, courses, and classes. Working together, they design and implement lesson plans that include appropriate components of effective lesson design (review, learning objective/ guiding questions, input, modeling, check for understanding, guided practice, independent practice, summary). This collaboration includes: measures for evaluating teacher effectiveness, examination of data with a focus on student work, and development and adjustment of instructional strategies to address the needs of each student.	Teacher collaboration is generally a feature of the school's Professional Learning Community; teams meet regularly to plan instruction, using pacing guides, alignment guides, and textbooks as planning tools. Most teachers may plan collaboratively but outcomes are not always consistent and planning is not fully aligned between grades, courses, and classes. Teachers do not always appropriately adapt planning for the differentiated needs of their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Team agenda/minutes</li> </ul>
3.8	Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge, skills, and understanding of content/subject taught.	The majority of teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught. They are highly skilled in making well-judged adjustments to their teaching so that students are challenged and make good progress.	Many teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge, but they do not always modify lessons to meet the learning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>
3.9	Teachers use questioning strategies that promote higher level thinking and problem solving.	Most teachers consistently challenge learners by using effective questioning skills and providing opportunities for higher-level thinking and problem-solving which engage, motivate, and challenge students,	Teachers do use a range of strategies, including higher order questioning to extend student thinking. However, these opportunities are not always fully effective in providing challenge for all students to engage in problem-solving activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> <li>✓ Posted question stems</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient – 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
3.10	Teaching reflects strategies that appropriately meet the needs of diverse learners.	Most teachers frequently differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning needs. The match with the achievement level of each student is well-judged to ensure that teaching is highly effective in securing very good progress for all students.	Teaching is differentiated in most classes but strategies are not always effective for all groups and individuals across the school. As a result, gains in learning are not always sufficient in all lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Lesson plans that document differentiation</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>
3.11	Teachers use a variety of strategies, data, and information to assess all students' achievement of learning objectives. Information derived is used to inform instruction and make adjustments to teaching as necessary.	Most teachers use multiple methods to assess students' attainment of learning objectives. Appropriate and relevant data and information are routinely used to make adjustments to planning and modify instruction. Classroom organization and student grouping are effectively and consistently based on outcomes from assessment.	Teachers use a range of strategies to assess student learning and generally these are effective in gathering information about what students know, understand and can do. However, assessment data are not always used consistently to plan for next steps in learning, to reveal underachievement, and to ensure all students are making good progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Teacher-made tests</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough records</li> <li>✓ Student work</li> </ul>

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 4 - Leadership & Management

**4. Leadership & Management:** The school has a high-quality leadership and management team with a clear vision, ambition, and goals; a focus on student achievement; a sense of purpose and high aspirations, and strategies which impact directly on students' learning.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
4.1	<b>Instructional Leadership</b>			
a.	The leadership and management team guides and supports continuous improvement in curriculum and instruction to promote student achievement.	The leadership and management team consistently and very effectively guides and supports continuous improvement in curriculum and instruction to promote effective teaching and high student achievement. The team frequently engages staff in an ongoing study of best practices. It coaches and supports teachers and revises the SIP as necessary in response to changing needs.	The leadership and management team regularly guides and supports continuous improvement in curriculum and instruction that sufficiently promotes generally effective teaching and satisfactory student achievement. However, coaching and other support are not always fully consistent and effective in their impact on teacher practice. The leaders do not consistently promote, support, and coach teachers in best practices strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Observation documents</li> <li>✓ Professional development plan</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough observations</li> <li>✓ Meeting minutes</li> <li>✓ Teacher feedback</li> <li>✓ Data analysis</li> <li>✓ Focus groups</li> </ul>
b.	The leadership and management team is visible in classrooms and planning meetings to coach and support staff. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) promotes collaborative practices.	The leadership and management team is visible in all classrooms, uses data from visits to coach and support teacher improvement in highly effective ways, and inspires and engages staff in striving for excellence. It actively promotes a highly effective collaborative planning process, through the development of the PLC.	The leadership and management team is visible across the school, but not regularly in all classrooms; schedules time for planning meetings to occur; and coaches teachers on effective instructional practices in a planned, consistent, and somewhat effective way which addresses priorities and individual teacher needs.	

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
c.	The leadership and management team sufficiently and strategically deploys instructional expertise to coach and support staff.	Staff in instructional leadership roles are highly expert in their area. Instructional experts provide highly effective support to individuals and teams through common planning time. Instructional leadership roles have clearly defined responsibilities with accountability. They have “caseloads” and clearly defined responsibilities with accountability that enable meaningful support. Instructional support provided to teams and individuals is grounded in student data. Teachers recognize instructional experts as valuable resources to improving instruction and student outcomes.	Some staff in instructional leadership roles are fully expert in their designated areas. Instructional expert caseloads and scope are not clearly defined and appropriately assigned given level of need. Instructional support is grounded in school or student performance data. Accountability structures for instructional leadership roles are not fully/uniformly performed/executed. Teacher perception of experts as valuable resource is not uniform.	As above
d.	The leadership and management team monitors and evaluates the instructional program using multiple data sources. The PLC is aware of results and challenges.	The leadership and management team systematically monitors and evaluates planning and the instructional program. It conducts formal and informal teacher observations, analyzes multiple data sources to determine student progress and areas of need, and makes highly effective decisions to improve teacher quality and student learning based on this information. The outcomes are monitored to evaluate efficacy. A Data Inquiry Team is highly developed and effective in organizing data, identifying needs based on data, creating a plan to address those needs, and developing a process to assess the plan.	The leadership and management team monitors the planning of the instructional program and analyzes achievement data to make decisions to improve teacher quality and student learning. This is done in a consistent and coherent way and often results in appropriate action to improve teacher quality and student learning. Demonstrable improvement is not always evident. A Data Inquiry Team is consistent in its efforts to organize data, identify needs from that day, create a plan to address those needs, and develop a process to assess that plan.	

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion	Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
4.2	<b>Strategic Planning and Vision</b>		
a.	The leadership and management team organizes time, people and money based on a long term instructional vision for the school that is based on high expectations for all students and is driven by the school's specific needs (as reflected in the SIP).	The leadership and management team involves all stakeholders in the collaborative development and monitoring of and responsibility for the school's overall improvement as articulated in the SIP. It articulates a clear vision, high expectations for all students, and places student and teacher learning at the center of all planning. Implementation is carefully monitored and evaluated by the school leadership team. Timely and effective revisions and adjustments are made as necessary to ensure improvement. The plan and its goals are effectively disseminated to all stakeholders who are actively and fully involved in ensuring that it is achieved. The plan is a meaningful document that drives the activity of all stakeholders.	The leadership and management team makes the SIP available to all stakeholders, informs key personnel of their role in effectively implementing the plan, but does not actively seek a wide audience for involvement or implementation. The plan is comprehensive but is not consistently monitored, evaluated or revised to ensure improvement.
b.	The leadership and management team defines specific responsibilities for staff at all levels consistent with this vision (as reflected in the SIP).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vision and Mission statements displayed focus on the school's vision</li> <li>✓ CMS Teacher, Family and Student Surveys</li> <li>✓ School surveys</li> <li>✓ SLT quarterly monitoring and adjustments or strategies based upon evidence of effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Stakeholders' ability to verbalize vision of school</li> <li>✓ Minutes/Observation of SLT meetings</li> <li>✓ Interviews with members of school groups</li> <li>✓ Data analysis worksheets/plan</li> <li>✓ Stakeholders' ability to verbalize the plan's intent</li> <li>✓ SIP</li> <li>✓ SQR self-evaluation form</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion	Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence	
4.3	<b>Capacity Building</b>			
	Working as a Professional Learning Community, the leadership and management team leads an effective instructional team, which supports and develops all teachers.	The leadership and management team designs and implements leadership development and differentiated professional growth based on shared beliefs and clear priorities of the professional learning community that are reflected in the SIP. The leadership and management team and teacher leaders work together to ensure academic success through professional growth. Teacher leaders are empowered to strengthen instruction across the school using multiple data sources and a variety of very effective coaching models to encourage accountability for improving instruction. All staff is empowered to fully contribute in the drive toward continuous improvement.	The leadership and management team builds the capacity of the instructional team through joint planning, effective communication, and growth opportunities. Priorities are shared through the SIP but professional development and opportunities are mostly aligned to the school's priorities and/or student achievement. A culture of achievement with clear expectations is evident but not throughout the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Meeting schedule and minutes</li> <li>✓ Leadership and Management Team division of tasks</li> <li>✓ Induction program</li> <li>✓ Interview notes/decisions</li> <li>✓ Professional Development schedule/plan</li> <li>✓ Teacher feedback</li> <li>✓ SIP</li> <li>✓ SQR self-evaluation form</li> <li>✓ Individual Growth Plan (IGP)</li> </ul>
4.4	<b>Communication</b>			
a.	The leadership and management team demonstrates effective communication skills. This practice enables the school to run smoothly.	Leaders consistently demonstrate excellent written, spoken, and nonverbal interactions with staff and students. Effective communication is a feature of the school community.	School leaders' communication skills are sufficient to sustain effective relationships and interactions with staff and students. School leaders are accessible to all stakeholders, but are not proactive in ensuring that communication is effective and clear for all groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Observation</li> <li>✓ Teacher feedback</li> <li>✓ Parent, student and staff surveys</li> <li>✓ Meeting observation</li> <li>✓ Meeting notes</li> <li>✓ Written notices, memos,</li> </ul>
b.	The leadership and management team represents the school and/or district appropriately.	The leadership and management team effectively advocates for the school and the school district; consistently and effectively communicates with all stakeholders utilizing numerous tools to ensure that stakeholders participate in the communication process. The School Leadership Team is well developed and contributes to the school's improvement process. The School Leadership Team aligns the school improvement plan with the district's strategic plan goals.	The leadership and management team advocates for the school and the school district and communicates with stakeholders in the community, but in a limited and not entirely effective manner. The School Leadership Team aligns the school improvement plan with the district's strategic plan goals; however, it is not highly effective toward the school's improvement process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Newsletters, Announcements</li> <li>✓ Crisis plan</li> </ul>

The sub criteria for making judgments for the above criterion	Descriptors: High Quality – 4	Descriptors: Proficient – 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence	
4.5	<b>Management – Organizational and Operational</b>			
a.	The development of the school's master schedule is data driven and is structured strategically.	Master schedule provides extended blocks of common planning time for strategically-defined teacher teams that engages expert support. Teacher assignment considers student need and teacher strength, so that the strongest teachers' assignments disproportionately focus on higher needs students. Class sizes and grouping strategies are data-driven based on student need. Use of student time (student coursework, including double-blocking) is data-driven based on student need.	Common planning time is structured in teacher schedules; however, teacher assignments are not consistently created based on student need. Class sizes, grouping strategies and student class time are considered but do not consistently reflect differentiated student need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Master schedule</li> <li>✓ Staffing plan</li> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan</li> <li>✓ Map showing space usage</li> <li>✓ Schedules</li> <li>✓ Achievement data</li> </ul>
b.	The leadership and management team demonstrates the organizational skills to manage the school.	Planning for sustainable resourcing is linked to the SIP and resourcing is managed thoughtfully and efficiently. Data collection, storage, and retrieval occur systematically and carefully. Facilities are managed in ways that enhance learning. The leadership and management team demonstrates outstanding organizational skills necessary to ensure the school runs in an orderly manner, with procedures in place and committees and teams established.	Resources are managed effectively but may not be carefully linked to the strategic plan. Some data collection, storage, and retrieval occur on a regular basis. Facilities are managed satisfactorily but more could be done to modify or extend their use to enhance learning. The leadership and management team demonstrates adequate organizational skills necessary to make the school run in an orderly manner, with procedures in place, and committees and teams established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan</li> <li>✓ Staff and parent handbooks</li> <li>✓ Newsletters</li> <li>✓ Master schedule</li> <li>✓ Discipline referrals</li> <li>✓ Map space usage</li> <li>✓ Staffing plan</li> <li>✓ Exchange forms</li> <li>✓ Staff assignments and duties</li> <li>✓ Professional Development plans</li> <li>✓ Individual Growth Plans</li> <li>✓ Schedules</li> <li>✓ Health, safety, and inspection reports</li> </ul>
c.	The leadership and management team organizes and supports the use of technology.	The leadership and management team uses technology effectively to promote a well-organized school and to enhance the use of 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning skills for all adults; works with school and district staff to maximize technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich the school environment. The administration and most staff consistently use a variety of technology to facilitate daily operations.	The leadership and management team uses technology to enhance the use of 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning skills for all adults, however not in a manner to effectively enrich the school environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan</li> <li>✓ Technology plan</li> <li>✓ Communication plan</li> </ul>

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 5 – Learning Environment

**5. Learning Environment:** The school has a safe and orderly environment and makes full use of its available resources, including technology, to directly impact student learning.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
5.1	The school environment is friendly, well-ordered, and welcoming.	Supervision of students is at a premium at all times during the school day. High-quality and well-displayed student work is evident in the halls, display areas, and throughout the school. Classrooms are student-centered, interactive, and engaging. Office staff is welcoming, efficient, and friendly. Visitors sign in and their movement is monitored.	Supervision of students is adequate to maintain a well-ordered environment – before school, between classes and after school. Student work is displayed; however, it is not always high quality. Some classrooms are student-centered and engaging with sporadic evidence of interactive activities. Office staff is efficient, generally welcoming and friendly towards parents and other visitors. While there is a sign-in procedure, it is not always implemented consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Safe School Audit reports</li> <li>✓ Master Schedule</li> <li>✓ Supervision schedule</li> <li>✓ Classroom and general observations</li> <li>✓ School walkabout</li> </ul>
5.2	The school's policies and practices ensure a safe, orderly, and secure school climate.	All discipline, attendance, and crisis plans are comprehensive and reflect the needs of the school. Teacher/student and student/student relationships are consistently positive and engage a high level of response in student behavior and attitudes. School staff actively seeks to identify and remove barriers to learning. Students express themselves as safe and secure in school.	The school has discipline, attendance, crisis, and emergency plans in place. The arrival and dismissal of students are mostly safe and orderly. Student movement is generally orderly. Transitions are usually organized, orderly, and safe. Teacher/student and student/student relationships are generally positive, but are sometimes tense and/or inappropriate. Most school staff seek to identify and remove barriers to learning but there is some inconsistency in staff response and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organizational plans for school</li> <li>✓ School Crisis Plan</li> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Parents, student, teacher SQR focus groups</li> <li>✓ CMS Student Survey items</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
5.3	The Professional Learning Community is inclusive and cohesive.	Various perspectives, norms, and values are respected. There is celebration of diversity. The needs of all groups and diversities are effectively reflected in the school's policies and practices. Monitoring and evaluation ensure equality of opportunity for staff and students.	School and district rules are generally enforced. There is a tolerance for diversity but the needs of all groups and diversities are not consistently reflected in all policies, practices, and instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pictures from cultural events</li> <li>✓ School newsletters</li> <li>✓ Team newsletters</li> <li>✓ Parent/teacher student SQR focus groups</li> </ul>
5.4	There is a sense of identity and pride in the school.	Students and staff identify strongly with the school and are proud to be associated with it. Extra-curricular events are well attended by a broad range of the community. School mascot and insignia are seen often; assemblies are regularly held. The building and grounds are clean and free of debris.	Extra-curricular events are offered, assemblies are held a few times a year, and students may purchase school logo items. Not all students and staff are proud of their school. The school is generally clean.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Calendar of extra-curricular events</li> <li>✓ Calendar of assemblies</li> <li>✓ Facilities Audit report</li> <li>✓ Pictures of school, grounds and halls</li> <li>✓ Focus groups</li> </ul>
5.5	Students show initiative, take responsibility, and contribute to the school community.	There is significant evidence of students engaged in school and community service. There are opportunities to develop student leadership skills under teacher guidance.	There are opportunities for student leadership to emerge within the school community. This is not, however, given sufficiently high priority throughout the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Roster of community service participants</li> <li>✓ Schedule of student leadership meetings</li> <li>✓ Calendar of student government activities</li> </ul>
5.6	Students work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviors.	The school very effectively and diligently addresses issues of vandalism, bullying, violence, sexism, and racism. The school operates very effectively with agreed policies and procedures that support students and protect them from harm, abuse, and neglect.	District discipline guidelines are enforced, but not consistently by all teachers. Operational policies and procedures exist, and there is evidence of some implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Copies of disciplinary files</li> <li>✓ Discipline Data Summary Forms</li> <li>✓ Student surveys</li> <li>✓ Teacher surveys</li> <li>✓ Parent surveys</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality – 4	Descriptors: Proficient – 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
5.7	Students and teachers respond well to the school's effective measures to promote good attendance and behavior and to eliminate truancy and violence.	Links between achievement, student behavior, and attendance are routinely analyzed, and interventions are implemented, documented, and monitored. Referrals to support agencies and programs are provided when appropriate. Parents are effectively and routinely involved in plans and strategies and expectations are shared and reinforced in a highly consistent way with all stakeholders.	The school has measures to promote good attendance and behavior but the root causes of behavior and attendance issues are not always thoroughly examined and acted on. There is more to be done to communicate and enforce the school's expected standards and to monitor for effective implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Copies of attendance letters</li> <li>✓ List of support agencies used</li> <li>✓ School's plan to address attendance</li> <li>✓ Discipline referrals</li> <li>✓ SWIS reports if appropriate</li> </ul>
5.8	The school ensures that school rules and consequences are clearly defined, communicated, and understood by students, teachers, and parents.	Teacher, school, and district discipline plans are well aligned and understood and are implemented effectively by all members of the school community. School accident reports, suspension, and attendance rates indicate that the school environment is safe for both students and staff.	School and teacher discipline plans exist, but may not be fully aligned with each other or the district plan. Entire staff demonstrates understanding of plans, but application of them is not consistent. School accident reports, suspension and attendance rates indicate that the school environment is usually safe for both students and staff. Administrators review the <i>Rights and Responsibilities Handbook</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School discipline plan</li> <li>✓ Schedule of assemblies to review <i>Rights and Responsibilities Handbook</i></li> <li>✓ Discipline Data Summary Reports</li> <li>✓ Safe School Audits</li> </ul>
5.9	The school maximizes its use of all available resources, including technology, to support student learning.	School resources are aligned to support high quality teaching and learning. Technology is used positively to enhance the quality of learning and teaching throughout the school.	Most resources for teaching and learning are appropriate, but may not always be used to maximum effect in the classroom. Technology is visible, but not used consistently or frequently enough to directly impact student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Classroom observations</li> <li>✓ Walkthrough observations</li> <li>✓ Focus group meetings</li> <li>✓ Interviews</li> </ul>

## CMS School Quality Review Rubric: Criterion 6 – Involvement of Parents/Guardians & Community

**6. Involvement of Parents/Guardians & the Community:** The school has a range of regular, two-way methods for communicating with parents, guardians, and the wider community and takes steps to encourage active engagement in the education of their children and involvement in the life of the school.

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
6.1	Communication between home and school is ongoing, two-way and purposeful.	Communication with parents/guardians is given a very high priority and is highly effective. Information is clear, comprehensive, user-friendly, and transparent so that parents know about school performance, goals, and strategies that impact upon their children’s education. Translation is provided where necessary to allow full access to information. Methods of communication are diverse so that every parent and guardian has an opportunity to be well-informed. Parents/guardians know how to make contact with the principal or their child’s teacher because this information has been clearly communicated to them. Newsletters and other information are attractive and are sent out regularly. Parents/guardians are asked to provide feedback on communication, its quality, and its value; their views are sought, listened to and acted upon. Complaints or concerns are dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner.	A range of strategies and media are used to communicate with parents/guardians (e.g., Connect-ED, newsletters and phone messages). Materials are consistently translated as necessary to allow relatively sufficient access to information. Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the school and are welcomed. They know when and how to contact their child’s teacher, but arrangements for parent/teacher conferencing may not be sufficiently flexible. They may feel their views are listened to and respected, but the school is not proactive in seeking their views and asking for their contributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Parent/guardian conference attendance data</li> <li>✓ Newsletters</li> <li>✓ School website</li> <li>✓ Parent/guardian focus group interviews</li> <li>✓ PTA attendance logs and agendas</li> <li>✓ Compacts</li> <li>✓ Copies of Connect ED logs and/or messages</li> <li>✓ Parent Family Surveys</li> <li>✓ Parent Assist data</li> </ul>
6.2	Parents/guardians receive quarterly progress reports which are clear, and useful in helping them understand their child’s achievement levels as well as next steps in learning.	The school regularly communicates useful, valuable, and clear information regarding student achievement and what needs to improve. Parents/guardians are given strategies to help their children maximize learning. Quarterly progress reports are of high quality because this is a matter of high priority for teachers and leadership. Information is clear and accessible to all. Parents/guardians are given ample opportunity to discuss progress reports and other matters of interest to them. Flexible arrangements exist for parent/teacher conferencing that enable parents/guardians to attend. Useful training on Parent Assist has been provided for parents and guardians.	The school regularly communicates information regarding student achievement in a manner which most parents/guardians understand. They are provided strategies to help their children maximize learning. Workshops are held to enable parents/guardians to understand and share in their children’s learning. The school is in the process of training parents in the use of Parent Assist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Staff newsletters</li> <li>✓ Administrator newsletters</li> <li>✓ Connect-ED logs</li> <li>✓ School website</li> <li>✓ CMS Family &amp; Teacher Surveys</li> <li>✓ Parent/guardian communication logs</li> <li>✓ Quarterly progress reports</li> <li>✓ Workshop &amp; conference agendas</li> <li>✓ PTA minutes &amp; attendance logs</li> <li>✓ Staff and Parent/guardian interviews</li> </ul>

The sub-criteria for making judgments for the above criterion		Descriptors: High Quality - 4	Descriptors: Proficient - 2 (minimum acceptable standard)	Sources of evidence
6.3	Parent/guardian involvement is solicited to enhance the work of the school.	There is a plan with clear policies and practices which support parent/guardian involvement and contribution to student learning. Contributions and involvement are encouraged and welcomed. There are very effective strategies in place to increase engagement and understanding in learning, such as workshops and opportunities to volunteer in classes. Parents/guardians are given information that will help them provide assistance with homework. Newsletters are focused on learning. Appropriate training is provided to parents/guardians to help them understand the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, student achievement data, student performance standards, No Child Left Behind and the school report card, as well as the goals set by the school.	A plan for increasing parent involvement has been created and implemented, reflecting data analysis. However, more could be done to ascertain the views of parents about ways of involving them in the school community. Training is provided to parents/guardians to help them understand the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, student achievement data, student performance standards, No Child Left Behind and the school report card.	As above and... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Leadership Team</li> <li>✓ Data Dashboard</li> <li>✓ Parent Assist</li> <li>✓ District websites</li> </ul>
6.4	Partnerships are fostered through positive collaboration with community stakeholders to support students' learning.	The number and variety of partnerships fully reflect the general composition of the school community and serve to promote an inclusive school community. These partnerships are active, their work has clear goals and these are prominently included in the School Improvement Plan. Parents are actively engaged on the School Leadership Team. Often the curriculum is enhanced by judicious use of community partnerships and this is evaluated to assess the efficacy of the impact. Parent and community groups are very active and inclusive and make a major contribution to the school's work as a learning community.	The number and variety of partnerships reflect the general composition of the school community. A variety of partnership activities is evident. Some partnerships are encouraged, but there is no evidence that this is a school-wide priority as reflected in the School Improvement Plan. Partnership leads are limited to those provided by the school and volunteer offices. Parent and community groups are active and inclusive; they contribute to the school's work as a learning community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Partnership lists, meetings &amp; minutes</li> <li>✓ Volunteer logs</li> <li>✓ Volunteer data</li> <li>✓ CMS Family &amp; Teacher Surveys</li> <li>✓ Interviews</li> <li>✓ Parent/guardian workshops</li> <li>✓ Newsletters &amp; other communication forums</li> <li>✓ Parent/Guardian resources</li> <li>✓ Community surveys</li> <li>✓ Student achievement data</li> <li>✓ Resource lists</li> <li>✓ School Improvement Plan</li> </ul>

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Quality Review  
School Self-Evaluation Form**

Name of principal:

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Name of school:

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***Please complete with as much detail as you can, use the completion as a professional development exercise if appropriate and send it to your lead reviewer (electronically) two weeks before the review.***

**Completing this form will help you prepare for some of the discussions which will take place both before and during the review. It will also help the review team get to know you and your school and to understand how well the school community knows itself.**

**Guidance on completing the form:**

- Please be evaluative, rather than descriptive, and make your focus outcomes for students.
- Include references to where the evidence of your self-evaluation can be found, e.g., "excellent boys' results in state math tests as shown in annual report to the state", "parents' questionnaires from 2006".
- Be concise; (for example, use bullet points or note form).
- Aim to confine your response to no more than eight pages.
- Please place an X against the grade (1-4), which most accurately reflects your judgment of overall quality in response to the questions.
- ***You are advised to complete section B last. This section is summative and draws on your evaluations elsewhere in the self-evaluation report.***
- Please omit sections where you feel that you are not in a position to respond.

**How should evaluations be made?**

- ***You are strongly encouraged to refer to the Quality Criteria, sub-criteria and rubrics and as you complete the evaluations. These are included within the Notes of Guidance for the School Quality Review and should be kept close at hand as you complete the evaluations.***

**What approach should we take?**

Schools have adopted different approaches.

In some schools the principal and the leadership team have completed the form as a part of one of their regular meetings.

Other schools have devoted part of a faculty meeting as a way of involving all members of staff; this is highly recommended as a means of engaging the whole staff, helping them to prepare for the review and gathering evidence which reflects the work of the whole school.

Whichever approach you adopt, we recommend that you do not make this an onerous task but that you take the opportunity to stop, reflect and record your immediate perceptions.

<b>School Profile</b>		
<b>School name and number:</b>		
<b>School address:</b>		
<b>School telephone number:</b>		
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Grades:</b>		
<b>Number of students enrolled:</b>		
<b>Number of general education students:</b>		
<b>Number of EC students:</b>		
<b>Number of LEP students:</b>		
<b>Principal suspensions:</b>		
<b>Superintendent suspensions:</b>		
<b>Percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch:</b>		
<b>Ethnic make-up of the students (by percentage):</b>		

**A. What is distinctive about your school?**

**B How effective is your school overall?**

		4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation:	High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)

***How do you know?***

***What are its notable strengths?***

***What are its main areas for improvement?***

**1. How effective is your school in ensuring high quality achievement for students in all grades, especially in the core subjects?**

	4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation: High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)

***How do you know?***

***In which subjects and grades do students do best, and why?***

***In which subjects and grades is improvement needed, and what action is being taken?***

***Is there evidence of disparities in student achievement by subgroups? If so, what action is being taken?***

***How is the school addressing the specialized needs of EC and LEP students?***

***How does the school use student performance data to take and adjust actions to improve student achievement?***

***How does your school allocate available resources to improve student learning and achievement?***

**2. How effective is your school in providing a relevant and appropriate curriculum for all students, grades and sub-groups?**

		4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation:	High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)
<b><i>How do you know?</i></b>						
 <b><i>How is alignment with the NCSCOS ensured?</i></b>						
 <b><i>How does the school ensure a broad range of learning experiences?</i></b>						

**3. How effective is the quality of teaching and instruction in ensuring high quality learning, progress and achievement?**

		4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation:	High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)
<b><i>How do you know?</i></b>						
 <b><i>Which are the strongest features of teaching and learning and why?</i></b>						
 <b><i>What aspects of teaching and learning most need improvement and what action is being taken?</i></b>						
 <b><i>How do teachers assess students' achievement of learning objectives and adjust instruction with assessment information?</i></b>						

**4. How effective is the school in ensuring high quality leadership and management?**

	4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation: High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)
<b><i>How do you know?</i></b>					
 <b><i>Which are the strongest aspects and why?</i></b>					
 <b><i>What most needs improvement and what action is being taken?</i></b>					

**5. How effective is the school in creating a high quality learning environment?**

	4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation: High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)
<b><i>How do you know?</i></b>					
 <b><i>Which are the strongest aspects and why?</i></b>					
 <b><i>What most needs improvement and what action is being taken?</i></b>					

**6. How effective is the school in establishing a high quality partnership with parents, other schools and the community?**

		4	3	2	1	
School Self-Evaluation:	High quality (4)					Undeveloped (1)
<b><i>How do you know?</i></b>						
<b><i>Which are the strongest features of communication between home/school about the school's work and about each student's achievement? Why?</i></b>						
<b><i>What most needs improvement and what action is being taken?</i></b>						
<b><i>What aspects of the school's work to involve parents/guardians and the community in the life of the school work best? Why?</i></b>						
<b><i>What needs improvement and what action is being taken?</i></b>						

**7. What other information, if any, do you feel it would be important for the reviewers to know prior to the review? (For example: principal recently appointed previous month)**

## **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As part of its commitment to quality, Cambridge Education undertakes to provide rigorous and continuing training, and professional development, feedback and support for all staff. This aims to ensure that they can deliver a high quality service to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and to the district. The staff is bound by the Code of Conduct, which all have signed. This binds them to undertake work of a high standard, in all aspects of their work.

It is recognized that within this framework there will still be occasions when schools feel that the process has not served them well. It is important that there is a clear procedure through which schools make a complaint.

This document therefore sets out the procedures agreed between Cambridge Education and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for resolving any such issues that arise. This will be done in a timely manner that seeks to assure schools that their concerns have been listened to, investigated in a thorough manner, and resolved in an objective way.

#### **STAGE 1 – INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

- 1) In the first instance, when a school is not satisfied with the conduct or outcomes of the review, as expressed at the exit conference or earlier, school staff should seek to resolve the particular issues through discussion with the lead reviewer at any point during the review process and certainly before she/he leaves the school after the final exit conference.
- 2) It is anticipated that many issues of concern can be resolved to the school's satisfaction through such discussion. Reviewers are aware that this forms the initial part of the complaint procedure and schools need to be aware that this is regarded as the way in which they first express their concern. The Code of Conduct seeks to ensure that this will provide an effective way to resolve most issues that arise and manages this in a professional and positive way that enable both the reviewer and the school to express their views and to resolve any points before the first draft of the report is issued.
- 3) If the issue is one that arises because of comments made in the draft report sent out for an accuracy check by the Quality Review Team, principals should write back to the team and explain where the inaccuracy has occurred, giving the page and paragraph number so that it can be traced. Principals will be told how to do this in the letter that accompanies the draft and will have seven days in which to respond. The point of inaccuracy can be amended by the team, if appropriate after clarification has been sought from the reviewer or the school.
- 4) If there are issues that remain unresolved after the completion of this informal stage, the procedure then sets out the process by which a formal complaint will be made. The ways in which this will be investigated and resolved are set out below.

## **STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

- 5) Once the final report has been published and if the informal process outlined above has failed to resolve issues, the principal should, in the first instance, discuss matters with the complaints officer designated by CMS
- 6) If it is agreed that the matter needs to be taken forward, the Cambridge Education complaints manager will write a letter that sets out the nature and exact content of any complaint for formal resolution. This should also be copied to the designated complaints officer for Charlotte Mecklenburg.
- 7) The letter will be acknowledged by the Quality Review Team within two working days of receipt.
- 8) A formal investigation will be carried out by a senior officer of the Quality Review team and a response will be sent to the school within 10 working days of the acknowledgement letter being sent out. This will set out the findings of the investigation and any changes to the Quality Review report that would be made. Sources of evidence that will be used in the investigation includes the contents of the letter of complaint, the record book completed by the quality reviewer and, if appropriate and any necessary discussions/telephone conversations/email contacts between, the school and the quality reviewer.
- 9) The written response of the investigating officer will be sent by mail to the school and a copy will also be sent to the designated contact at the Office of Accountability. If changes have been made to the school's final report, a copy of the new report will also be sent out alongside the response.
- 10) If the school remains dissatisfied with the situation after the completion of the formal investigation there is a final recourse to the Office of Accountability, which will carry out an investigation, the outcome of which will be binding on all parties.

## **STAGE 3 – EXECUTIVE INVESTIGATION**

- 11) If it is decided that a final resolution to a formal complaint is needed, all the documentation from the procedures should be submitted by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' complaints officer, with a letter that details the exact nature of the remaining complaint. This should be sent to the Chief Accountability Officer of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. S/he will make arrangements to undertake a review of the evidence and undertake interviews with any of the parties involved in the previous phase of the investigation.
- 12) Having undertaken this review, s/he will issue his final ruling on the matters being investigated and send copies of this simultaneously to the complaints manager for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and to the Quality Review Team.
- 13) If changes to the Final Report are required, the Review Team will undertake such amendments within two working days of receipt of this final instruction from the Office of Accountability and re-issue the amended document.
- 14) The outcome of the investigation is the final and binding stage of the complaints process and will be accepted by all parties.

**Global competitiveness starts here.**



**REACH FURTHER.**



**Office of Accountability**

701 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard / Charlotte, NC 28202

Phone: 980-343-6242 / Fax: 980-343-6660

[www.cms.k12.nc.us](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us) / CMS TV

In compliance with federal law, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administers all education programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.

*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility:* If auxiliary aids for communication are necessary for participation in a CMS program or service, participants are encouraged to notify the ADA coordinator at least one week prior to program commencement at 980-343-6661 (voice) or [accessibility@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:accessibility@cms.k12.nc.us).