

## ***CSDC School Review for Public Charter School Grant Program***

We are pleased to provide a description of the services we provide as part of the School Review Process for the Public Charter School Grant Program. CSDC has a nearly 20 year history of supporting the charter movement in California. We have conducted school reviews for charter schools for about 8 years, using a rubric-based instrument that aligns to the 16 charter elements. We are approved as a provider for the PCSGP's 2010-2015 cycle. We have conducted several school reviews for schools in both this cycle as well as in earlier PCSGP cycles.

In conducting our school reviews we take a comprehensive look at your school through the lenses of the charter law, your school's charter and other core documents, as well as charter school best practices. Our two-person team examine three key areas of your school's implementation of your charter—the educational program, the school's governance and operations, and the school's fiscal operations. More specifically:

***Educational Program:*** We examine the way your school's educational program embodies the mission and vision as detailed in your charter. We examine the school's curriculum and instructional plan and assess the level of implementation. We examine programs for English learners, special education students, students who are struggling, and students who are academically advanced. We examine the school's goals and methods of measurement of the goals and the level of implementation of the goals.

***Governance and Operations:*** We examine the school's governance structure as described in the charter and bylaws and compare with its implementation. We examine a sample of board minutes, school policies, and related documents. We examine a sample of student records to ensure that they contain legally-mandated documents are included. We examine the school's compliance with admission requirements including lottery requirements. We examine the school's compliance with health and safety procedures including documentation of compliance with LiveScan clearance and immunization requirements.

***Financial Management:*** We examine the school's current year budget and budget projections and compare to actual in order to assess school viability. We review school's audit, fiscal policies, internal fiscal controls, and examine accounting procedures including payroll and student attendance reporting procedures. We examine the school's insurance coverage and the retirement system participation.

***Other Compliance Issues:*** If the school engages in independent study, we analyze compliance with the laws and regulations governing independent study. The team also checks for compliance with minimum and maximum age requirements, public operating principles, and appropriate location of school sites.

### **School Visit Process Steps**

In order to gather information on the elements described above, CSDC assigns a two-person team which reviews a series of foundation documents including the school's charter, bylaws, budget and budget projections, MOU with the district, and other relevant documents. Following the review, that two

person team makes a two-day visit to the school to meet with school stakeholders and to examine other documents including school policies, to sample records described above as well as other relevant documents. The team meets with the school administrators, the responsible fiscal leader, the staff responsible for recordkeeping, a focus group of teachers, a focus group of parents, a focus group of students, and a focus group with board members. The team also interviews other staff as appropriate including the person responsible for implementing the program for English learners, the Resource Teacher, and other support personnel. The team also makes classroom observations in multiple classrooms.

### **CSDC Report**

Following the visit, CSDC prepares a comprehensive report to the school linked to the 16 mandatory charter elements and best practices around those elements. It also includes additional items that address the school's financial management processes. Because both the educational program and the fiscal management are broken out into more specific topics, the report addresses 29 separate areas of the school's operation. Each of the 29 areas of the school's program, governance, operations, and financial management is addressed in the report and each area includes a description of the school's strengths and areas of improvement. We send the school a draft of the report for comment and feedback and revise the report as necessary based on the feedback.

### **Cost Estimate**

Our cost for the PCSGP review is between \$6500 and \$7500 (billed at actual cost) plus actual travel expenses. The cost includes a review of the school's foundation documents, the two-day visit by a two-person team from CSDC, and the preparation and revision of the report.

### **Contact**

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