

Guidance on Document Submission for the 2025-2026 Sponsor Quality Practices Review

The following information is intended to guide sponsors in identifying and uploading appropriate documents for the Quality Practices component of the 2025-2026 sponsor evaluation. The 2025-2026 Sponsor Quality Practices Review is composed of a rubric that includes 33 standards designed to evaluate sponsors on various sponsoring practices. The standards are informed by both the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and Ohio laws and rules. As part of the quality review, sponsors must submit to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) documents that provide evidence of their sponsoring practices. The tables below should serve as a starting point for sponsors as they consider what documents will best demonstrate their organizational practices.

When submitting documents and files for the quality review, sponsors should comply with the following requirements:

1. **Upload all documents that best demonstrate the standard in question.** Document files uploaded into Epicenter should be named to indicate exactly what information is included in the file.
2. **If necessary, upload the same document for more than one standard.** Sponsors should upload all documents they believe are responsive to each standard. The same document can be uploaded for multiple standards.
3. **Include explanatory memos with larger documents.** All documents submitted for a quality standard that exceed 25 pages in length must be accompanied by a memo that references the specific page numbers to be reviewed for the standard in question. **Failure to include a memo with the page numbers listed with documents longer than 25 pages could result in a lower score on a particular standard.** Sponsors may highlight relevant text if they wish, but highlighting is not required.
4. **If a memo is required, sponsors should use the template provided by the Department.**
5. **If a narrative explanation is needed, sponsors should use the narrative form.** For the 2025-2026 quality review, sponsors have the option to upload a narrative explanation for 31 of the 33 standards. For Standards C.01 and C.02, which do not require document uploads, sponsors have the option to enter a brief narrative in the narrative field of these standards in Epicenter. Sponsors should use the Department's narrative template form when completing the narrative explanation for each standard. Narratives should be no longer than two, single-sided pages and should indicate the standard and number (for example, A.03) in question (as indicated on the template form). While narratives are not evidence, evaluators may use narrative explanations in the scoring process if they are substantiated by documentary evidence.
6. **Make sure documents and files are easy to open and easy to read.** It is the sponsor's responsibility to make sure all uploaded documents and files work properly. Documents and files that cannot be opened or are unreadable could result in a lower score on a particular standard.

7. **Sponsors should NEVER UPLOAD documents that contain identifying student information** or nonpublic information, such as a School Safety Plan.
8. **If a document to be uploaded contains a date (such as emails, policies and completed school applications), make sure the date corresponds to the review year (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).** However, if sponsors have policies that cover multiple years and are reviewed every two to five years instead of annually, then a policy dated outside of the review year is acceptable if the policy is still in effect during the review year.
9. **The examples listed in the chart below are not exhaustive; there may be acceptable document types other than those listed.** Also note that submitting the examples provided does not guarantee a specific rating on any standard. The Department has also identified “Examples of Unacceptable Documents,” which outline documents that will not support the standard.

A. Commitment and Capacity		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
A.01 – Mission and Strategic Plan <i>The sponsor has a clear mission and a strategic plan for sponsoring community schools.</i>	- Website screenshot with sponsoring mission - Sponsor's strategic plan	- School's mission statement - School's strategic plan
A.02 – Goals and Self-Evaluation <i>The sponsor uses a defined improvement process to evaluate its work and to implement strategic actions based on the findings.</i>	- Template for sponsor's improvement process - Minutes from meetings pertaining to use of improvement process and/or self-evaluation (with dates) - Evidence of creation and completion of action steps resulting from the improvement process - Evidence of sponsor comparing its work to national sponsoring standards	- School-level improvement plan
A.03 – Roles and Responsibilities <i>The sponsor provides training to assist schools in understanding the roles and responsibilities outlined in the contract.</i>	- Guidance document that defines sponsor and school roles and responsibilities - Emails clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each party - Certification forms from the school indicating school administration and governing authority members understand each party's roles and responsibilities - Attendance sheets, presentation materials, etc., from a sponsor-led training on roles and responsibilities	- School staff job descriptions
A.04 – Conflicts of Interest <i>All conflicts of interest exist between the sponsor and its community schools or within the sponsor's board or staff are addressed, and the sponsor collects signed conflict of interest statements from its staff and board members.</i>	- Sponsor's conflict of interest policy - Signed conflict of interest statements from sponsor's board members, sponsor's staff and/or contracted employees for the review period (may be signed prior to July 1) - Evidence of the sponsor following its conflict of interest policy - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's conflict of interest policy (if applicable)	- Community school contracts - School's conflict of interest policy - Signed conflict of interest policies from school staff

A. Commitment and Capacity *continued*

Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
A.05 – Staff Expertise <i>The sponsor has sufficient expertise and sponsoring experience to carry out its sponsoring responsibilities.</i>	- Sponsor's organizational chart, which specifies positions related to sponsoring responsibilities - Résumés for sponsor's staff members, including relevant responsibilities and dates of service - Résumés for sponsor's contracted employees (for example, treasurer, legal counsel, etc.) - Copy of sponsor's treasurer's license	- Sponsor organizational chart that is not specific to sponsoring jobs/duties - School organizational chart - School personnel résumés - Résumés that do not clearly indicate sponsor staff members' relevant responsibilities from current and previous positions - Résumés that do not include dates of positions held
A.06 – Staff Development <i>The sponsor makes evidence-based selections of professional development activities that align to sponsoring responsibilities for its staff members.</i>	- Sponsor's organizational chart, which specifies positions related to sponsoring responsibilities - List of all sponsor staff and contracted employees - Attendance sheets and/or professional development materials from trainings attended by sponsor staff related to sponsoring responsibilities - Staff résumés, staff evaluations, strategic improvement plan or other evidence used by the sponsor to select professional development activities for staff - Proof of registration for a professional development event scheduled to occur after the upload deadline but on or before June 30, 2026	- Attendance sheets and/or professional development materials from trainings attended by school staff - Attendance sheets and/or professional development materials that took place prior to July 1, 2025
A.07 – Allocation of Resources <i>The sponsor has a budget commensurate with its sponsoring responsibilities and has a plan to allocate resources to support its priorities and the needs of its schools.</i>	- Sponsor's annual budget, with detailed line items indicating revenues and expenditures - Meeting minutes, strategic plan goals, school data and/or other evidence the sponsor considers data to make budget and staffing decisions	- School's budget - Sponsor's budget that does not contain clear and complete revenues and expenditures

B. Application Process and Decision-Making

Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
B.01 – Application Process, Timeline and Directions <i>For new community schools, replicators and schools seeking a change in sponsor, the sponsor uses a documented application process that includes a defined development timeline, clear directions, detailed guidance, defined evaluation criteria and an interview.</i>	- Application for new schools - Guidance documents on application process - Scoring guidelines and/or evaluation criteria - Directions for submission of application - Interview information and/or interview questions - Screenshot of website or link to application template and application guidance	- Student enrollment applications - School grant applications
B.02 – Rigorous Criteria for New Schools <i>The sponsor requires school applicants to describe seven areas of school planning and operations and to submit additional data and documents that sufficiently corroborate these plans.</i>	- Application template for new school applicants	- Student enrollment applications - School grant applications
B.03 – Rigorous Criteria for Replicators and Schools Seeking a Change in Sponsor <i>The sponsor requires potential replicators and schools seeking a change in sponsor to submit a written application. The sponsor considers academic, operational and fiscal data in addition to interviewing the applicant and its current sponsor.</i>	- Application criteria and/or request for documentation for school replicators - Application criteria and/or request for documentation for schools seeking a change in sponsor - Interview information and/or interview questions	- Application for new schools, with no additional requirements or sections for school replicators or schools seeking a change in sponsor

B. Application Process and Decision-Making *continued*

Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
B.04 – Reviewer Expertise <i>For new community schools, replicators, and schools seeking a change in sponsor, the sponsor has an application review team with sufficient expertise and sponsoring experience to make informed application decisions.</i>	- List of application review team members - Résumés and/or bios for application reviewers, which specify relevant responsibilities and dates of service	- School personnel résumés - Résumés and/or bios that do not clearly indicate reviewers' relevant responsibilities from current and previous positions - Résumés and/or bios that do not indicate dates of positions held
B.05 – Reviewer Protocols <i>For new community schools, replicators and schools seeking a change in sponsor, reviewers carefully and consistently examine application materials.</i>	- Protocols and/or procedures for application evaluation - Scoring criteria and/or application rubric - Attendance sheets and/or materials used to train reviewers - List of application review team members with start years	- Emails from sponsor to reviewers regarding application review team meeting logistics
B.06 – Rigorous Decision-Making <i>For new community schools, replicators and schools seeking a change in sponsor, the sponsor approves only those applicants that meet an approval threshold of at least 75 percent of possible points.</i>	- Applications received from new school applicants, replicator applicants and/or schools seeking a change in sponsor during the 2025-2026 school year - Scoring documents, comments and/or completed checklists or rubrics for each application received during the 2025-2026 school year - Evidence of final decisions made for each application	- Application materials or decisions made before July 1, 2025

C. Performance Contracting		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
C.01 – Contract Performance Measures <i>The sponsor's contracts include a performance framework that defines each school's expected academic, financial and organizational/operational outcomes with clear, measurable and inclusive targets.</i>	Evaluators will randomly select a percentage of each sponsor's contracts for review. Sponsors do not need to submit any documentation for Standard C.01. However, sponsors may enter a narrative explanation for this standard in the narrative field of this standard in Epicenter.	
C.02 – Contract Terms for Renewal and Non-Renewal <i>The sponsor specifies the terms and process for renewal in each school's contract, including a high-stakes review.</i>	Evaluators will randomly select a percentage of each sponsor's contracts for review. Sponsors do not need to submit any documentation for Standard C.02. However, sponsors may enter a narrative explanation for this standard in the narrative field of this standard in Epicenter.	
C.03 – Contract Amendment and Updates <i>The sponsor updates its contract language to ensure consistency with changes in law and Ohio's accountability system.</i>	- Evidence of a process for reviewing changes in federal and/or state law to determine the need for contract modifications - Evidence of a process for reviewing school data and/or changes in Ohio's achievement reporting to determine the need for modifications to the contract performance measures - Forms that are completed as part of the review of school data and Ohio's accountability system - Forms that are completed as part of the review of federal and state law - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's policy to review changes in federal and/or state law (if applicable)	- Operator contracts

D. Oversight and Evaluation		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
D.01 – Oversight Transparency <i>The sponsor's oversight and evaluation processes are transparent, and the sponsor communicates how it will monitor academic, operational and financial performance.</i>	- Written communication from the sponsor to the school with information regarding timelines and/or expectations for systems of oversight, intervention and/or evaluation (with dates) - Guidance documents, standard operating procedures and/or protocols for systems of oversight, intervention and/or evaluation that is communicated to the schools - Sections of the contract template that include language articulating systems of oversight, intervention and/or evaluation beyond the contract template - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's policy for oversight and evaluation (if applicable)	- Contract language that is statutorily required
D.02 – Enrollment and Financial Reviews <i>The sponsor reviews and provides feedback on the enrollment and financial records of each school monthly.</i>	- Completed financial and enrollment reviews - School board meeting minutes with agenda items for the sponsor treasurer/representative to share financial and enrollment review feedback - Emails from sponsor to its schools with financial and enrollment review feedback - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's policy for enrollment and financial reviews (if applicable)	- Financial and enrollment reviews conducted prior to July 1, 2025
D.03 – On-Site Visits <i>The sponsor conducts on-site visits (beyond the monthly enrollment and financial reviews) at least twice per year while school is in session (with one visit during the first half of the review year and the other visit during the second half of the review year), which include an examination of the school's compliance with all applicable laws, rules, contractual obligations and academic performance measures.</i>	- Evidence of conducting on-site reviews - On-site visit protocol, including classroom observation and/or interview guidelines - Evidence of what data is collected and from whom - Evidence of at least two on-site visits that collectively include a review of the school's compliance with all contractual obligations, all academic performance measures and all applicable laws and rules	- On-site reviews conducted prior to July 1, 2025

D. Oversight and Evaluation *continued*

Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
D.04 – Site Visit Reports <i>The sponsor provides its schools with a report (beyond the monthly financial and enrollment reports) after each site visit, conducted at least twice while school is in session (with one visit during the first half of the review year and the other visit during the second half of the review year), and it follows up with schools regarding any areas needing improvement.</i>	- Evidence of the sponsor sharing completed site visit reports with its schools - If applicable, evidence of the sponsor following up with schools regarding any identified areas needing improvement - Evidence of at least two site visit reports that collectively provide information on the sponsor's review of the school's compliance with all contractual obligations, all academic performance measures and all applicable laws and rules	- Site visit reports written prior to July 1, 2025
D.05 – Performance Monitoring <i>The sponsor reviews each school's academic, financial and organizational/operational performance annually using data related to the terms in each school's performance framework.</i>	- Evidence of the sponsor reviewing academic performance of its school(s) - Evidence of the sponsor collecting data on its schools' performance throughout the school year	- Performance framework from the contract
D.06 – Intervention <i>The sponsor defines its systems for intervention and/or corrective action, and it intervenes when a school violates the contract and/or is academically, financially or organizationally/operationally deficient.</i>	- Guidance documents that communicate conditions that may trigger intervention, consequences that may ensue and/or a process for resolving issues to avoid possible consequences - Evidence of the sponsor sharing its intervention policy with schools prior to the beginning of the school year - Any instances during the 2025-2026 school year in which the sponsor has intervened due to a school's contract violation of performance deficiency and the corresponding evidence of how the intervention was carried out - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's intervention policy (if applicable)	- Examples of intervention that occurred prior to July 1, 2025
D.07 – Annual Performance Reports <i>The sponsor annually provides reports to its schools that summarize academic, fiscal and organizational/operational performance.</i>	- School reports produced by the sponsor regarding academic performance, fiscal and operational compliance - Annual reports produced by the sponsor that compare the school's performance against its contract and include multiple years of data - Evidence the reports were shared directly with the schools	- Required annual sponsor report to the Department - Reports produced by the school

E. Termination and Renewal Decision-Making		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
E.01 – Renewal Application <i>The sponsor clearly communicates its renewal application process and defines criteria used to evaluate the application that include multiple sources of evidence.</i>	- Renewal application - Guidance documents on renewal application process - Scoring guidelines and/or evaluation criteria - Directions for submission of application - Interview information and/or interview questions - Evidence of documentation/data review (financial audits, compliance reports, student achievement data, etc.)	- Any renewal applications submitted prior to July 1, 2025
E.02 – Renewal and Non-Renewal Decisions <i>The sponsor makes evidence-based renewal decisions.</i>	- All completed renewal applications that were submitted during the 2025-2026 school year - Board meeting minutes indicating renewal decisions for each of a sponsor's schools that were up for renewal during the 2025-2026 school year - All completed renewal rubrics used for evaluating renewal applications submitted during the 2025-2026 school year	- Renewal decisions made during school years preceding the 2025-2026 school year - Documents and board meeting minutes prior to July 1, 2025
E.03 – Non-Renewal Notification <i>If the sponsor non-renews a school, it explains its rationale for this decision in writing and ensures the school's families are notified in a timely manner.</i>	- If the sponsor non-renewed a school during the 2025-2026 school year, evidence the sponsor notified the school of the reason(s) for its decision - If the sponsor non-renewed a school during the 2025-2026 school year, evidence the sponsor notified the school's families of the non-renewal	- Non-renewal documents and notifications pertaining to school years preceding the 2025-2026 school year
E.04 – Contract Termination <i>The sponsor has information regarding termination in the contract and a separate written policy and procedures that go beyond statutory language, communicates its termination policy and procedures with its schools and consistently follows its termination policy and procedures.</i>	- Written policy explaining grounds for termination - Documents from 2025-2026 school year that provide evidence for the termination - If sponsor terminated one or more school contracts during 2025-2026 school year, evidence showing the sponsor followed termination processes and procedures - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/adoption of the sponsor's termination policy (if applicable)	- Community school contracts

E. Termination and Renewal Decision-Making <i>continued</i>		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
E.05 – Closure Process <i>The sponsor has information regarding its obligation to oversee school closure in the contract and a separate written policy and procedures that go beyond statutory language.</i>	- Closure policy - Closure procedures - Evidence of the sponsor's governing board's approval/ adoption of the sponsor's closure policy (if applicable) - If the sponsor had one or more schools close during the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 school years, evidence the sponsor informed parents, transitioned student records and/or submitted closing assurances - The resolution passed by the school's governing authority to close the school	- Student records - Outstanding school bills/invoices
E.06 – Renewal Reviewer Protocols <i>For schools seeking to renew, reviewers carefully and consistently examine renewal materials and the results of the high-stakes review.</i>	- Protocols and/or procedures for evaluation of contract renewal - Renewal scoring criteria and/or renewal rubric - Attendance sheets and/or materials used to train reviewers - List of renewal review team members with start years - Evidence that reviewer training included calibration	- Emails from sponsor to reviewers regarding renewal review team meeting logistics

F. Technical Assistance		
Quality Rubric Standard	Examples of Relevant Documents	Examples of Unacceptable Documents
F.01 – Ongoing Technical Assistance <i>The sponsor has an established process for determining the needs of its schools, and it conducts a needs assessment to determine what type of technical assistance it offers.</i>	- Evidence of technical assistance provided by the sponsor to its school(s) - Needs surveys or other methods of collecting information from schools about their technical assistance needs - Evidence of communication between the sponsor and schools regarding technical assistance issues	- Evidence of technical assistance provided by the sponsor prior to July 1, 2025
F.02 – Legal and Policy Updates <i>The sponsor updates schools on relevant legal and policy changes.</i>	- Emails sent to schools showing the sponsor provided information on legal and policy updates - Sponsor newsletters and/or documents sent to schools that included information on legal and policy updates - Documents provided to schools at in-person training sessions or online webinars that included information on legal and policy updates	- State laws and rules (unless they were included in emails and documents the sponsor provided to its schools)
F.03 – Professional Development for Schools <i>The sponsor uses the results of a needs assessment to determine which professional development opportunities to offer.</i>	- Emails and newsletters sent to schools regarding professional development opportunities - Needs assessment or evidence of other data collection methods used with schools to determine their professional development needs	- Attendance sheets and/or professional development materials from trainings attended by sponsor staff
F.04 – Relationships with Schools' Governing Authorities <i>The sponsor takes steps to build a positive working relationship with each school's governing authority.</i>	- School board meeting minutes highlighting instances where sponsor staff presented information to the board or responded to information provided by the board - Emails and other documents showing instances during the 2025-2026 school year in which the sponsor communicated with school governing boards	- Monthly financial and enrollment reviews - Communication documents prior to July 1, 2025