

2026–27 Model Community Day School Application



Application Due Date:
Friday, August 28, 2026

California Department of Education
June 2026
High School Innovation and Initiatives Office
916-323-2183
CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov

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This application addresses legal requirements and recommends best practices governing school practices. The application provides guidance, but itself is non-binding and does not have the effect of law.

Overview

Community day schools serve and support high-risk youths, including those referred by expulsion, probation, a School Attendance Review Board or other district level referral process. They provide challenging academic curriculum and develop pro-social skills and resiliency.

In the 2023–24 school year, the California Department of Education (CDE), as co-sponsor with the California Continuation Education Association Plus (CCEA Plus), launched the first Model Community Day School (MCDS) Recognition Program.

The MCDS application packet includes instructions for completing the application and required forms, reference materials, and instructions for submitting the application.

Purpose

The purpose of the MCDS Recognition Program is to identify and recognize outstanding community day schools and create a resource list of exemplary programs for school visitations and mentoring. These model schools provide comprehensive services to at-risk/at-promise youth through the use of exemplary instructional strategies and social, emotional, and mental health and guidance support services.

Program Description

Eligibility Requirements

Schools that meet the following eligibility criteria may apply:

1. The school meets the requirements and definition of a community day school according to California *Education Code (EC)* sections 48660–48666.
2. It is recommended but not required that the school be accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Educational institutions benefit from the stimulus for self-study and self-improvement provided by the accreditation process.
 - a. If accredited, the school’s WASC Visiting Committee Report must verify that the school has completed a full self-study, which typically involves a three- and one-half-day visit.
3. Schools that are not WASC accredited **are still eligible to apply**.

Obligations of Model Community Day Schools

1. MCDSs provide examples of promising practices in the field. Schools that are selected as MCDSs commit to serving as peer mentors and, if requested by schools and districts in need of technical assistance, will be asked to provide Site Validation Visits, sample materials, telephone consultation, and training and/or virtual website links.
2. Staff from schools selected as MCDSs will be asked to participate in reviews of MCDS applications in the future, including application rating and Site Validation Visits. The CDE may also ask MCDSs to participate as experts in webinars about exemplary practices.
3. Schools selected as MCDSs agree to submit an **Annual Assurance of Services Form** by June 30 for each of the **second and third years** of designation. The Annual Assurance of Services Form certifies that the school meets or exceeds the MCDS Recognition Program standards as described in the 2026–27 application.
 - a. If the applicant school is selected as an MCDS in 2027, you will be able to obtain a copy of the Annual Assurance of Services Form from the CDE's [MCDS Recognition Program web page](#) and retain it for your records. Complete the form and submit it to the CDE on or before the following dates: **June 30, 2028**, and **June 30, 2029**.

Application Procedures and Processes

Program Timeline

The application due date has been extended until **Friday, August 28, 2026**, to accommodate the late release date of the application.

Date	Activity
June 1, 2026	Applications available to the field
June 4, 2026	Application Webinar
August 28, 2026	Applications must be received by 5 p.m.
September 11, 2026	Northern Applications reviewed and rated
September 25, 2026	Central Applications reviewed and rated
October 9, 2026	Southern Applications reviewed and rated
October 13, 2026–December 21, 2026	Site Validation Visits
February 2027	Notification of recognition
April/May 2027	Awards ceremony

Application Webinar

A webinar for prospective applicants is scheduled to be held on June 4, 2026. Any principal, or principal's designee, interested in applying may participate. The session will point out items that have disqualified applicants in previous years and will address as many questions as possible submitted during the webinar.

To sign up for the webinar and receive the required login information, check for scheduling and details on the CDE's [MCDS Recognition Program web page](#).

Application Assembly

The completed application is to be submitted as a **single PDF**. Each of the items listed below must be included for the application to be considered complete and must be assembled in the order listed below.

1. Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
2. School Information Sheet (Attachment B)
3. Certification Form for Applicant School and District (Attachment C)
4. Glossary (See p. 6 and Appendix 1)
5. Narrative Statements (5 statements; limited to two pages each)
6. WASC Award Letter (including extension letter, if applicable). Item 6 is only required if the school is WASC accredited.

Application Submission

Applications must be uploaded into the exFiles File Transfer System as a single PDF by **5 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2026**. You must contact the High School Innovations and Initiatives Office (HSIIIO) by email at CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov to **request the Project URL, Project Code, and Password needed to submit your application**. This may be done any time prior to the day before the application due date.

Instructions for naming your PDF document and uploading your PDF document to the exFiles File Transfer can be found in the Application Submission Instructions (Appendix 2).

Incomplete or Late Applications

The CDE will not consider incomplete or late applications.

Application Evaluation Process

All qualified applicants will move forward to the site validation visit and from those all finally determined to be qualified will be recognized.

Step 1: Application Screening

Each application received by the application deadline, 5 p.m. on August 28, 2026, will be downloaded and screened by HSIIO staff to ensure that:

- The required forms listed in the Application Assembly Section are complete and are in the exact format as provided on the 2026–27 MCDS Application.
- The five Narrative Statements are included and are each a maximum of two pages, typewritten, in 11 or 12-point Arial font, single-spaced, normal character spacing, with one-inch margins. Applications that do not include the title of the statement as a heading will also be disqualified.
- If the school is WASC accredited, a copy of the WASC Accreditation Letter indicating the WASC accreditation period is included along with an extension letter, if applicable, that lists the dates for which the school is accredited.
- The application is assembled in the correct order and includes all of the required information as provided in the Application Assembly Section.
- The application is submitted as a single PDF document.

Applications that do not pass the screening process will be notified via email by HSIIO staff.

Step 2: Application Review

Applications that pass the screening process will be scored using the Scoring Rubric (Appendix 3).

The application scoring process will occur during the months of September and October 2026. (See Program Timeline for specific dates.)

Each application will be read and scored by a minimum of two readers, recruited by the CCEA Plus based on their extensive field experience. Applications will be randomly assigned to two readers, taking into consideration any conflicts of interest. The two scores are averaged to determine the final initial score.

A passing score is 75 points or above. In cases where one reader's score is at or above 75 and the other reader's score is below 75, and the resulting average of these scores is below 75, a third read will be required. Upon receipt of the third score, the lowest of the three scores will be discarded. The final score for the application will be calculated as the average of the two highest remaining scores and must total 75 points or more. Applicants that receive a final score of less than 75 points will be notified of their disqualification via email by HSIIO staff. Notifications will be sent out following the conclusion of the reading process.

An overall score of 75 points or more will lead to a site validation visit.

The CCEA Plus will provide critiques, application evaluations, and follow-up technical assistance to schools whose applications score below 75 points and are disqualified. Technical assistance can be scheduled by contacting a representative from CCEA Plus. You can find a list of contacts on the [CCEA Plus State Officers and Representatives web page](#).

Scoring

Each Narrative Statement will be rated overall on a twenty-point scale, as follows, representing ratings of the depth and breadth of the extent and quality of the information for the school in describing specific qualities and innovative characteristics that make the applicant school an exemplary model and recommended mentor for other schools.

The prompt for each Narrative Statement contains multiple elements, which are listed separately in the Scoring Rubric, along with the relative weight of each element in considering the overall score for the Narrative. The relative weights of the individual elements within a Narrative add to a total of twenty, but are only a guide as some, such as graduation for elementary students, might have no meaning for a particular school).

Rating	Possible Score
Exemplary	15–20 points
Promising	10–14 points
Emerging	6–9 points
Limited or no Evidence of Exemplary	0–5 points

Step 3: Site Validation Visit

A review team, recruited by CCEA Plus, will conduct a Site Validation Visit to applicant schools receiving a total score of 75 points or more on their application. The purpose of the visit is to evaluate evidence that demonstrates the school is an MCDS.

During the Site Validation Visit, the review team will interview the principal, teachers, students, guidance and support staff, stakeholders, and others familiar with the school. The review team may select teachers and students at random for brief interviews during the visit. The review team will share their recommendation for approval or reasons they are not recommending approval with the principal prior to the end of the Site Validation Visit.

Recommendations and Final Decisions

The site review teams make MCDS designation recommendations to the CDE, where a final determination will be made, after CDE program staff have reviewed the validation team reports as a final stage in determining if any key questions arise and require follow-up by the CDE program consultant.

Applicants that are not recommended for MCDS designation will be notified via email by HSIIO staff.

Applicants that are recommended for MCDS designation will be notified via an official letter and news release issued by the CDE's Communications Division.

Application Instructions

Section 1: Application Cover Sheet

Include the completed Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A) as the **first page** of your application.

Section 2: School Information Sheet

Complete all items on the School Information Sheet (Attachment B).

Section 3: Certification Form

Complete the Certification Form (Attachment C). The principal of the applicant school must sign the Applicant's Certification Form. An electronic signature or typed name must be provided.

The applicant school's LEA Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, must sign the District's Certification Form. An electronic signature or typed name must be provided.

Section 4: Glossary

On an 8½ by 11-inch paper, create a table. This document will serve as the glossary for your application and must: (1) include two columns with the first row serving as the header row with "Acronym/Initialism" as the header for Column 1 and "Description" as the header for Column; (2) repeat the header row if the table exceeds one page, if applicable; (3) list all of the acronyms or initialisms used within the five **Narrative Statements**; and (4) spell out the full name or term for the acronym or initialism used.(See Appendix 1.)

Note: This tool will assist the reviewers of your application since they may not be familiar with the programs, tests, etc., utilized at your school site. Use an additional sheet of paper, if necessary.

Section 5: Narrative Statements

Each Narrative Statement is limited to two pages and must include the title of the statement as a heading, be typewritten on 8½ by 11-inch white paper, using an 11 or 12-point Arial font, single-spaced, normal character spacing, with one-inch margins.

Each Narrative Statement will be rated on a twenty-point scale, representing ratings of being exemplary (above the performance of normally effective community day schools).

Step 1: Underlying Questions When Writing Narrative Statements

Within the five Narrative Statements, keep in mind these four underlying questions:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond when some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

Step 2: Underlying Questions When Writing Narrative Statements

In this application, you will find reference to the term, “The Whole Child,” which calls out that we do not work with generic students, we work with individual students who are unique individuals who have come together to comprise a learning community. You do this by providing your students with myriad educational options, mental health resources, and other support services, through which you identify and address their unique needs, including valid and respectable goals, values, strengths, challenges, and pains that might be being expressed problematically, elevate their unique strengths and assets. We need to listen “through the whole student’s ears” to understand their lived experience. The School Evaluation of Effectiveness Narrative Statement asks you to address and document both the individual progress of each student and a compilation of these individual findings.

Step 3: Narrative Statement Topics and Requirements

1. School Profile

Please describe the following:

- The school, grade levels served, student demographics, community context, staffing, and district support.
- How does your school’s daily schedule support learning for your student population? This includes the bell schedule and the schedule of classes and other activities being offered.
- Planned times in which staff in all roles regularly come together as a full team and in smaller groups to discuss school and individual student success and challenges, significant events and student interests, family and community input, schoolwide practices, and district policy. The aforementioned gatherings are sometimes officially scheduled under the general term “professional learning communities.”
- Discuss how you prepare students to be ready for and successful in the next levels following participation in your school (another school, society, college

and/or vocational schools, career readiness and other opportunities). How do you help them to be aware of and access the possibilities?

- Describe the overall culture and climate of your school in terms of how a visitor, student, family member or staff member might perceive it. How is it safe, celebratory, etc.?
- Describe the use of professional development in response to identified needs and approaches to support continuous improvement for students and for your school.
- Describe the practices that are in place to maintain safety for students and staff at your school overall and from their perspectives.

2. School Leadership and Management

Please describe the following:

- Describe your school's leadership structure. How does your school's leadership team coordinate and collaborate with staff, students, and other educational partners who are involved in collaborating and contributing to school management, including identifying challenges and the means for identifying and implementing needed changes.
- How your school coordinates with the traditional schools and other alternative education schools within the district to provide for seamless and supportive transfer into and from your school, including how student assets are emphasized in addition to any challenges, the onboarding process, and how specific identified student populations are supported.
- How district leadership, other district schools, educational partners, families and community members are informed of the activities, successful academic, social and emotional progress of your students, and challenges within your school needing additional support.

3. Educating "The Whole Child" (Instruction)

Please describe the following:

- How instruction and curriculum are matched and adapted to student developmental levels, student learning strengths and interests, and the student's lived-experience and identity. How does staff gather and use this information to inform their instruction and support student progress?
- The instructional delivery system (e.g., directed teaching, project-based assignments, group projects, and other modalities) and how this is monitored and supported.

- What methods are used to identify, evaluate, and document student learning growth and success, and promptly communicate this to the student.
- All methods students may use to earn credits. Indicate the maximum number of credits that can be earned per quarter, semester, and year.
- Discuss if all credits and partial credits are transferable to other schools in the district and outside of the district.
- If the number of credits to graduate from this school is less than the number required to graduate from the traditional high school(s) in the district, explain the differences and the rationale for requiring fewer credits, if applicable

4. Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development)

Please describe the following:

- How social, emotional, and mental health needs and appropriate responses are identified and provided to students, including trauma-informed practices, and by whom. How are these elements integrated into the total school program?
- How the school culture, climate, practices and activities are supportive as a learning community, personally and culturally relevant, sustaining, affirming and revitalizing, respectful of the lived experience of the student and family, and how implicit and explicit bias are identified and addressed.
- How are your students actively engaged with and positively impacting their community? Describe how all students participate in service-learning, in which the service activity is directly integrated with the academic curriculum and content and students engage in reflection activities after their service experience and apply their learning in real-life activities. Include how the neighboring community is made aware of these contributions.
- The alternative means of supportive improvement and intervention used to prevent or respond to behavioral and/or attendance challenges and barriers, and to minimize the use of exclusionary practices such as suspension, expulsion and other restrictions on students’ active engagement and opportunities within the learning community. These might include restorative practices, student success teams, social, emotional, and mental health supports, and other positive, asset-based recommended practices per *EC* sections 48900.5 and 48900 paragraphs (v) and (w). Provide a specific explanation of how those practices relate to any disproportionate representation

of minority students and any other identified equity concerns in such interventions.¹

- How you collaborate with the student in identifying valid and respectable goals, values, strengths, challenges, and pains that might be being expressed problematically, including those that the student identifies as a response to specific school practices, and in identifying positive, viable alternatives to the problematic behaviors and absenteeism.

5. School Evaluation of Effectiveness

Please describe the following:

- How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its educational program, both on an ongoing basis and as measured over time. What procedures are used to determine what is working and what needs to be improved (e.g., formal and informal data including student, staff, family and other educational partners' input, and other examples). This includes information about students and also systemic practices.
- How the school measures and records ongoing value-added academic, social and emotional progress, on an individual basis compared to from before the student entered this school, and throughout their participation in the school. And how these individual findings are also compiled as measures of the value added within the school. Include measures beyond the basics, such as school climate measures, number of books students have read, etc. We are looking for models that others might want to adopt.
- Discuss how staff use these objective and formative data to support instructional and school culture improvement, and how this information is shared with the student, family members, school staff, district, educational partners, and community members.

NOTE: Sections 6 and 7 are only applicable if the school is WASC accredited.

Section 6: Western Association of Schools and Colleges Award Letter

If accredited, submit a copy of the most recent WASC Accreditation Letter indicating the WASC accreditation period is included along with an extension letter, if applicable, that lists the dates for which the school is accredited.

¹ For assistance in this area, you may review recent guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Department of Justice on the [ED's School Climate and Student Discipline Resources web page](#).

Section 7: Western Association of Schools and Colleges Visiting Committee Report

If accredited and selected for a Site Validation Visit, the applicant must prepare a digital copy of the most recent WASC Visiting Committee Report and make it available to the review team on the day of the Site Validation Visit.

Appendix 1

Glossary (Sample)

Acronym/Initialism	Description
ADA	Average Daily Attendance
ASB	Associated Student Body
AVID	Advancement Via Individual Determination
BPL	Big Picture Learning
CAASP	California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
CBEDS	California Basic Educational Data System
CHKS	California Healthy Kids Survey
CTE	Career Technical Education
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
ELL	English Language Learner
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LCAP	Local Control and Accountability Plan
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SARC	School Accountability Report Card
SART	School Attendance Review Team
SSC	School Site Council
SRO	School Resource Officer
STAR	Standardized Testing and Reporting
WASC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Appendix 2

Application Submission Instructions

Instructions for naming your PDF document and uploading your PDF document to the exFiles File Transfer can be found below.

Step 1: Naming Your Document. When you create your document, please name it as described below:

- School Name County-District-School (CDS) code_MCDS26
- Example: Treasure Community Day_34 65656 0000001_MCDS26

Make sure that the document name **does not exceed** 50 characters, including blank spaces. It is appropriate to shorten your school's name, if necessary. Your 14-digit CDS code **must** be included in its entirety, along with the text, "MCDS26."

Step 2: Uploading Your PDF Document. Follow the instructions below to complete the upload process into the exFiles File Transfer System for the "2026–27 MCDS Applications" Project:

- After creating your PDF document and labeling as instructed above, enter the Project URL for the exFiles File Transfer System into your web browser.
- Once you arrive at the exFiles File Transfer System web page, you will be prompted to enter the Project Code.
- After you enter the Project Code, you will be prompted to enter the Password.
- Next, you will be asked to select a file to upload. Click the "Browse" button. Then navigate to the PDF document you want to upload.
- After selecting the PDF document, you will return to the file upload screen. In the description text box, enter the exact name of the PDF document selected for upload.
 - The name of the PDF document you selected, and the description **must** be the same.
- Once you have selected the PDF document and entered the PDF document name into the description text box, click the "Upload File" button.
 - Do not encrypt the file. Do not select a file encryption type or enter anything into the File Encryption Password text box. Just click the "Upload File" button.
- After you click "Upload File," the name of the PDF document and the description of the PDF document (these should be the same), will be displayed in the File Listings table.

- Within the File Listings table, a date and time stamp will be displayed next to the PDF document name and description of your application. This information will serve as your confirmation receipt. It is highly recommended that you print this page for your records.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure their application is complete.

If you suspect that your PDF document does not include all of the required elements, you must contact the HSIO by email at CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov and request your previous submission be deleted. Once the previous submission has been deleted, you must then upload the new PDF document in its entirety, prior to the deadline on **Friday, August 28, 2026, at 5 p.m.**

If an applicant submits multiple PDF documents with only partial information, regardless of whether they comprise all the requirements in the 2026–27 MCDS Application, they will be considered two separate incomplete applications, and the application will be disqualified.

Appendix 3

Scoring Rubric

Components for the School Profile Narrative Statement	Maximum Points	Exemplary	Promising	Emerging	Little or No Evidence
The school, grade levels served, student demographics, community context, staffing, and district support.	3	3	2	1	1
How does your school's daily schedule support learning for your student population? This includes the bell schedule and the schedule of classes and other activities being offered.	1	1	0	0	0
Planned times in which staff in all roles regularly come together as a full team and in smaller groups to discuss school and individual student success and challenges, significant events and student interests; family and community input, schoolwide practices and district policy. The aforementioned gatherings are sometimes officially scheduled under the general term "professional learning communities."	4	4	3	2	1
Discuss how you prepare students to be ready for and successful in the next levels following participation in your school (another school, society, college and/or vocational schools, career readiness, and other opportunities). How do you help them to be aware of and access the possibilities?	4	4	3	2	1
Describe the overall culture and climate of your school in terms of how a visitor, student, family member or staff member might perceive it. How is it safe, celebratory, etc.?	4	4	3	2	1
Describe the use of professional development in response to identified needs and approaches to support continuous improvement for students and the community day school or continuation high school.	2	2	1.5	1	0

Components for the School Profile Narrative Statement	Ma xi mu m Po int s	Ex em pla ry	Pr om isi ng	E me rgi ng	Lit tle or No Ev ide nc e
Describe the practices that are in place to maintain safety for students and the community day school or continuation high school.	2	2	1.5	1	0

Components for the School Leadership and Management Narrative Statement	Maximum Points	Exemplary	Promising	Emerging	Little or No Evidence
Describe your school’s leadership structure. How does your school’s leadership team coordinate and collaborate with staff, students, and other educational partners are involved in collaborating and contributing to school management, including identifying challenges and the means for identifying and implementing needed	10	9–10	7–8	3–6	0–2
How your school coordinates with the traditional high schools and other alternative education schools within the district to provide for seamless and supportive transfer into and from your school or continuation high school, including how student assets are emphasized in addition to any challenges, the onboarding process, and how specific identified student populations are	4	4	3	2	1
How district leadership, other district schools, educational partners, families, and community members are informed of the activities, successful academic, social and emotional progress of your students, and challenges within your school needing additional	6	5–6	3–4	2	0–1

Components for the Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction) Narrative Statement	Maximum Points	Exemplary	Promising	Emerging	Little or No Evidence
How instruction and curriculum are matched and adapted to student developmental levels, student learning strengths and interests, and the student’s lived-experience and identity. How does staff gather and use this information to inform their instruction and support	8	7–8	5–6	2–4	0–1

Components for the Educating “The Whole Child” (Instruction) Narrative Statement	Ma xi mu m Po int s	Ex em pla ry	Pr om isi ng	E me rgi ng	Lit tle or No Ev ide nc e
The instructional delivery system (e.g., directed teaching, project-based assignments, group projects, and other modalities) and how this is monitored and	3	3	2	1	0
What methods are used to identify, evaluate, and document student learning growth and success, and promptly communicate this to the student.	3	3	2	1	0
All methods students may use to earn credits. Indicate the maximum number of credits that can be earned per quarter, semester, and year.	1	1	0	0	0
Discuss if all credits and partial credits are transferable to other schools in the district and outside of the district.	1	1	0	0	0
If the number of credits to graduate from this school is less than the number required to graduate from the traditional high school(s) in the district, explain the differences and the rationale for requiring fewer credits, if applicable. Note: If an elementary community day school one point	4	4	3	2	1

Components for the Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) Narrative Statement	Ma xi mu m Po int s	Ex em pla ry	Pr om isi ng	E me rgi ng	Lit tle or No Ev ide nc e
How social, emotional, and mental health needs and appropriate responses are identified and provided to students, including trauma-informed practices, and by whom. How are these elements integrated into the total school program?	5	5	4	2–3	0–1
How the school culture, climate, practices and activities are supportive as a learning community, personally and culturally relevant, sustaining affirming and revitalizing, respectful of the lived experience of the student and family, and how implicit and explicit bias are identified and addressed.	4	4	3	2	1
How are your students actively engaged with and positively impacting their community? Describe how all students participate in service-learning, in which the service activity is directly integrated with the academic curriculum and content and students engage in reflection activities after their service experience and apply their learning in real-life activities. Include how the neighboring community is made aware of these	2	2	1	0	0
The alternative means of supportive improvement and intervention used to prevent or respond to behavioral and/or attendance challenges and barriers, and to minimize the use of exclusionary practices such as suspension, expulsion and other restrictions on students’ active engagement and opportunities within the learning community. These might include restorative practices, student success teams, social, emotional, and mental health supports, and other positive, asset-based recommended practices per California Education Code sections 48900.5 and 48900 paragraphs (v) and (w). Provide a specific explanation of how those practices relate to any disproportionate representation of minority students and any other identified equity concerns in such interventions.	5	5	4	2–3	0–1

Components for the Educating “The Whole Child” (Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Development) Narrative Statement	Ma xi mu m Po int s	Ex em pla ry	Pr om isi ng	E me rgi ng	Lit tle or No Ev ide nc e
How you collaborate with the student in identifying valid and respectable goals, values, strengths, challenges, and pains that might be being expressed problematically, including those that the student identifies as a response to specific school practices, and in identifying positive, viable alternatives to the	4	4	3	2	1

Components for the School Evaluation of Effectiveness Narrative Statement	Ma xi mu m Po int s	Ex em pla ry	Pr om isi ng	E me rgi ng	Lit tle or No Ev ide nc e
How the school evaluates the effectiveness of its educational program, both on an ongoing basis and as measured over time. What procedures are used to determine what is working and what needs to be improved (e.g., formal and informal data including student, staff, family and other educational partners' input, and other examples). This includes information about students and also systemic practices.	7	7	5–6	3–4	0–2
How the school measures and records ongoing value-added academic, social and emotional progress, on an individual basis compared to from before the student entered this school, and throughout their participation in the school. And how these individual findings are also compiled as measures of the value added within the school. Include measures beyond the basics, such as school climate measures, number of books students have read, etc. We are looking for models that others might want to adopt.	6	6	4–5	3–4	0–2
Discuss how staff use these objective and formative data to support instructional and school culture improvement, and how this information is shared with the student, family members, school staff, district, educational partners, and community members.	7	7	5–6	3–4	0–2

Appendix 4

Expectations for Site Validation Visits

The applicant school is responsible for showcasing the components that make it a Model Community Day School (MCDS). Remember that the emphasis is on what makes the school exemplary, rather than simply a good school. The following steps must be completed:

1. The applicant school must submit a Site Validation Visit agenda (See Appendix 5) to the site review team in advance of the visit.
2. The following activities are expected to take place during the Site Validation Visit:
 - a. Classroom visits to see all or a representative sample of the entire program. It is the school's responsibility to arrange classroom visits.
 - b. Meetings with administrators and staff members.
 - c. Meetings with stakeholder group(s).
 - d. Meetings with student focus group(s), individual students, and parent/guardian/caregiver focus group(s).
 - e. Opportunities to observe evidence or discuss all components of the self-nomination as an MCDS. This can occur through meetings with appropriate staff and observations of exemplary components and/or practices.
 - f. A meeting with site review team members before the exit interview to discuss tentative findings.
 - g. An exit interview that includes the following:
 - The site review team summarizes what they saw as exemplary components and cites areas of concern. The school staff will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and respond to any concerns.
 - The site review team offers positive recommendations and gives indications of exemplary practices that were observed.
 - The site review team informs the principal if it is not recommending the school as an MCDS. The team must identify specific areas that failed to meet to provide sufficient evidence. The team should offer the school technical assistance or provide a referral for technical assistance.
 - The site review team may inform the principal if it recommends that the school be designated as an MCDS. However, the site review team must make it absolutely clear that the final decision will be made by the California Department of Education.

Appendix 5

Common Problems with Site Validation Visits

The following are common problems that may occur during the Site Validation Visits:

1. The site review team does not find evidence to support the elements that have been presented in the application.
2. The school does not provide sufficient opportunity for the site review team to meet representative samples of stakeholder groups, students, administrators, staff, and others.
3. The Site Validation Visit schedule does not allow time for the site review team to meet and compile their report.
4. The site review team fails to hold an exit interview and/or fails to identify specific areas of concern that support a recommendation against recognition as a Model Community Day School (MCDS).
 - a. The site review team must inform the principal if the applicant school is not going to be recommended as an MCDS and must provide reasons that support the findings.
 - b. Technical assistance or a referral for technical assistance should be provided and, if appropriate, the school should be encouraged to reapply the following school year.
5. The site review team informs the school that it has been selected as an MCDS by the California Department of Education.

Appendix 6

Sample Site Validation Visit Agenda

Note: This sample agenda is provided as a general guideline. The sample agenda items should be considered as suggestions only and may be modified at the discretion of the applicant school.

DAY ONE

- 1 p.m. Entrance interview with principal (and anyone else the principal chooses)
- 1:30 p.m. Focus group (district superintendent, administrators, school board members)
- 2:15 p.m. Focus group (service provider partners, members of nonprofit agencies, social services, probation, law enforcement, treatment providers, others)
- 3 p.m. Focus group (members of the community, private sector, service clubs, faith community, others)
- 3:45 p.m. Focus group (parents/guardians/caregivers)
- 4:15 p.m. End of Day One

DAY TWO

- 7:45 a.m. Meet with principal/greet arriving students
- 8 a.m. Prepare for classroom observations
- 8:30 a.m. Classroom observations
- 10:30 a.m. Focus group (students)
- 11:30 a.m. Classroom observations
- Noon Lunch, perhaps combined with focus group (teachers)
- 1:30 p.m. Classroom observations
- 2 p.m. Site review team meeting (come to consensus, draft report)
- 3 p.m. Exit interview with principal (and anyone else the principal chooses)
- 3:45 p.m. End of visit