

Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) Performance Report

Authorizer Information

Authorizer: Northfield Public School District

Authorizer Type: School District

Evaluation Period: January 2016 – December 2020

Report Issue Date: December 7, 2020

Characteristics of the Authorizer

- The authorizer operates a small portfolio of two schools located within Northfield School District school boundaries. Both of its charter schools have a strong track record of academic performance.
- Northfield Public School District (NPSD) has a small authorizing staff, with the Superintendent serving as a point person who connects charter school staff to other district support on an as-needed basis.
- Both the authorizer and school leaders noted a strong, collaborative, two-way relationship to provide high-quality school choices to families of Northfield.

Overall Performance Rating

MAPES Overall Performance Rating for Northfield Public School District is 1.30: Approaching Satisfactory.

Performance Measures A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure – 25 Percent Weight of Overall Rating

A.1: Authorizing Mission (2.5 percent)*	3
A.2: Authorizer Organizational Goals (1.25 percent)**	0
A.3: Authorizer Structure of Operations (2.5 percent)	0
A.4: Authorizing Staff Expertise (2.5 percent)	0
A.5: Authorizer Knowledge and Skill Development of Authorizing Leadership and Staff (2.5 percent)**	0
A.6: Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools (2.5 percent)	1
A.7: Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest (2.5 percent)	1
A.8: Ensuring Autonomy of the Charter Schools in the Portfolio (2.5 percent)	2
A.9: Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices (1.25 percent)**	2
A.10: Authorizer High-Quality Authorizing Dissemination (1.25 percent)**	1
A.11: Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute (3.75 percent)	0
Total Performance Measures A Rating:	0.85

Performance Measures B: Authorizer Processes and Decision-Making – 75 Percent Weight of Overall Rating

B.1: New Charter School Decisions (11.25 percent)*	1
B.2: Interim Accountability Decisions (11.25 percent: 3.75 percent for expansion requests; 3.75 percent for ready to open standards; 3.75 percent for change in authorizers)	
Expansion Requests (3.75 percent)	2
Ready to Open Standards (3.75 percent)	2
Change in Authorizers (3.75 percent)	2
B.3: Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution (7.5 percent)	1
B.4: Performance Outcomes and Standards (11.25 percent)	2
B.5: Authorizer's Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio of Charter Schools (7.5 percent)	1
B.6: Authorizer's Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints (3.75 percent)**	2
B.7: Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance (3.75 percent overall weight)**	0
B.8: High-Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices (3.75 percent)**	0
B.9: Charter School Renewal and Termination Decisions (15 percent)	2
Total Performance Measures B Rating:	1.45

**All percentages are presented in terms of overall weight*

***Continuous Improvement Measure*

Performance Measures A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure

A.1 Measure: Authorizing Mission

Guiding Question: *Does the authorizer have a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 3-Commendable

Finding: The authorizer has a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing.

- The authorizer's mission is stated and fully aligns with Minnesota charter school statute. According to the commissioner-approved authorizer application (AAA), in 2010, at the beginning of the review term, the authorizer's mission is "to enable the creation and growth of high-performing charter schools located within the Northfield School district boundaries that support high academic achievement for Northfield children, using innovative instructional approaches that offer students alternative pathways for school success." According to the CAP (corrective action plan), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) approved the revised mission on December 15, 2014 in order to fully align with Minnesota Statute 124E.01 Subd. 1(1). Since the revised AAA, the authorizer's Board approved the mission.
- The authorizer adequately describes how the authorizer carries out its mission by chartering schools. In the authorizer's CAP, MDE directed the authorizer to provide additional evidence of how the authorizer carried out its mission by chartering schools. In response, the authorizer created a Charter School Authorization page on its district website. On September 30, 2016, the authorizer submitted a link to its Charter School Authorization page which included its authorizer mission. On January 19, 2017, the authorizer submitted examples of communication that included the District's updated charter school authorization mission statement, board minutes approving the charter school authorization mission, and an updated charter school contract template specific to authorizing. The authorizer's website currently includes contact information for authorizing staff, a best practices page, policies, links to current charter contracts, and links to the current contract template.
- The authorizer implements its mission from the AAA. The mission as stated within the authorizer's website and contract template is the same as articulated in its revised AAA. While the authorizer has simplified the language of the mission, it also has supporting vision statements and beliefs that align with the AAA to enable school choice, academic achievement, and innovative approaches that promote alternative pathways for school success. For example, in the "Our Beliefs" section of the authorizer website, it states, "We recognize that students learn in different ways and that a charter school environment may better fit their individual needs than a traditional public school system."
- The authorizer's mission is verified internally and in practice in Authorizer Annual Reports from 2016-2019. The authorizer also lists its mission on its website and in its contract template. During the authorizer interview, the respondent verified Northfield Public Schools' mission, stating that the district authorizes high quality charter schools within Northfield's district boundaries. Additionally, the authorizer noted the importance of school choice and innovative approaches both of its charters provide to Northfield's students.

- The authorizer’s mission is not verified by external resources. The authorizer’s mission was articulated by school representatives during the interview, and 100% of respondents stated they were familiar with the authorizer’s mission on the school leader survey. School leaders stated that the authorizer shares the goal of providing the best possible education to Northfield’s children. They described how students moved back and forth between the two charter schools to district schools and see Northfield’s students as their “shared responsibility”. While the authorizer’s mission was clearly understood by its schools, and the authorizer updated its contract template to include its mission, the authorizer’s mission is not included on other external resources such as school annual reports, school websites or current contracts.

Key Evidence:

- A.1 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- 16.09-30 A.1 Mission A.2 Vision
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.2 Measure: Authorizer Organizational Goals

Guiding Question: *Does the authorizer have clear organizational goals and timeframes for achievement that are aligned with its authorizing mission and Minnesota charter school statute?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: The authorizer does not have clear organizational goals and timeframes for achievement that are aligned with its authorizing mission and Minnesota Statute.

- The authorizer does not have clear organizational goals and timeframes for authorizing. The authorizer's AAA states, "Northfield will measure its progress in implementing this authorizing approach through an annual evaluation of its success in two areas: (1) the start-up and early operational performance of new charter schools and (2) the consistency in renewing, non-renewing or terminating the contracts of existing and new charter schools based on academic, financial and operational performance." The A.2 narrative states, "This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.2 Measure: Authorizer Organizational Goals;" however, there is no documented evidence to show that the process and practices are being implemented to develop organizational goals annually. The authorizer's CAP submission from 2017 shows a screenshot from the authorizer's website listing two goals: 1) renew the Arcadia Charter School contract by May 30, 2017 and 2) complete annual site visits at Arcadia Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School and provide feedback to the charter schools by May 30, 2017." However, these goals are not clearly aligned with state statute and are not consistent with the AAA.
- Organizational goals are not consistent with the AAA. While the authorizer described the district's strategic plan during the interview, the authorizer did not submit documentation to show further development of clear organizational goals or timeframes for achievement aligned with its AAA. As indicated above, the goals submitted as part of the authorizer's 2017 CAP are not consistent with the AAA.

Key Evidence:

- A.2 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- 16.09-30 A.2 Organizational Goals
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

A.3 Measure: Authorizer Structure of Operations

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer operate with a clear structure of duties and responsibilities and sufficient resources to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: The authorizer does not operate with a clear structure of duties and responsibilities to effectively oversee its portfolio of schools.

- The authorizer’s structure of duties and responsibilities is unclear. The A.3 narrative states, “This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.3 Authorizer Structure of Operations;” However, NPSD did not provide documented evidence to demonstrate the authorizer’s structure of duties and responsibilities. Review of the NPSD Leadership Team document submitted with NPSD’s CAP in 2016 shows that the authorizer submitted a list of those who comprise the authorizing team (e.g., Superintendent, Director of Teaching and Learning, District Assessment Coordinator, Director of Special Services, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Finance), which includes titles and a brief summary of their role. For example, under the Superintendent it lists “primary authorizer contact, general support for all areas, contract, contract renewals, evaluation.” However, there is no documentation to describe the structure of the authorizing team (e.g., organizational chart) or more information regarding their specific responsibilities (e.g., job descriptions). In the interview, the authorizer noted that roles have shifted within the past year due to changes in authorizer staffing; however, no documents were submitted to reflect those changes. It should be noted that charter school leaders stated in the interview that the Superintendent serves as a primary point person who can direct people to necessary district support, and they also reported that they felt supported by various members of the authorizing staff; however, no documentation was submitted that provides a clear structure of duties and responsibilities related to authorizing.

Key Evidence:

- A.3 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- 16.09-30 A.5 NPSD Leadership Team
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.4 Measure: Authorizing Staff Expertise

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer have appropriate experience, expertise and skills to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: It is unclear to what degree the authorizer has appropriate experience, expertise and skills to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of schools.

- There is no documented evidence to demonstrate that authorizing staff is qualified to oversee the portfolio of charter schools. The A.4 narrative states, “This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.4 Authorizer Staff Expertise;” however, there was no documented evidence to show that current authorizing staff is qualified to oversee the portfolio of charter schools across the term of authorizer review. During the authorizer interview, the participants gave an overview of current staffing, which includes the Superintendent, Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Instructional Services, Director of Human Resources, and Finance Director. These positions are also listed in the AAA. Participants also articulated each staff member’s experience and expertise and during the interview, charter school directors all noted that authorizing staff have appropriate expertise and skills to oversee their schools. Charter school leaders described how the Superintendent acts as the primary point of contact who directs them to appropriate district staff, but no documentation was submitted to show credentials for these staff members, such as resumes/vitae of authorizing personnel including contracted individuals with employment/contract, certifications, licenses, or degrees documenting staff expertise.

Key Evidence:

- A.4 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- 16.09-30 A.5 NPSD Leadership Team
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.5 Measure: Authorizer Knowledge and Skill Development of Authorizing Leadership and Staff

Guiding Questions: *To what degree does the authorizer build the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development? Is professional development aligned with the authorizer's operations, mission and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: It is not clear the degree to which the authorizer adequately builds the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development.

- NPSD did not provide adequate documentation to establish that the district offers professional development to its authorizing leadership on a regular basis, in accordance with its AAA. The A.5 narrative states, "This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.5: Authorizer Knowledge and Skill Development of Authorizing Leadership and Staff;" however, there is no documented evidence to show that professional development is offered to authorizing leadership and staff. During the interview, the authorizer reported attending monthly Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) meetings; however, there is no documented evidence to confirm this. Review of MDE provided documentation confirms that Northfield attended the following MDE trainings: 17.01-09 Authorizer Conference PM Sign In, 18.07-09 Conference; 19.09-09 Conference; and 19.12-13 Conference. Similarly, while the 2017 CAP indicated that the authorizer team engages with many professional organizations including MACSA, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and the Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), no documented evidence was provided to show this commitment has been fulfilled. Annual reports for FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 state: "The NPSD team members have documented their individual professional development activities and completed a charter school authorizer alignment reflection. A meeting takes place with the Superintendent in order to provide dialogue about their professional development activities and how it relates to our charter school authorization responsibilities." Each annual report includes a link to an example of the professional development reflection form; however, the authorizer did not submit corresponding staff reflections or documents except in 2017 to demonstrate professional development fulfills commitments provided in the authorizer's CAP.
- There is no documented evidence that professional development aligns with the authorizer's operations, mission and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools.

Key Evidence:

- A.5 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- 16.09-30 A.5 Professional Development
- 17.01-09 Authorizer Conference AM Sign-in Sheet
- 17.01-09 Authorizer Conference PM Sign-in Sheet
- 17.01-10 Authorizer Conference Sign-in Sheet
- 18.07-19 Conference Attendees
- 19.09-09 Conference Sign In Sheet
- 19.12-13 Authorizer Sign In
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

A.6 Measure: Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools

Guiding Question: *To what degree is the authorizer’s actual resource allocation commensurate with its stated budget, and the needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1- Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: While the authorizer’s actual resource allocation is commensurate with its stated budget, it is unclear how resources are allocated to meet the needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools.

- Statements of Income and Expenditures submitted from FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 show that resource allocations for authorizing are consistent with the resources to portfolio size ratio committed in NPSD’s AAA. As the authorizer’s portfolio has remained consistent at two schools, annual income and expenditures have remained consistent (between \$28,000 and \$32,000 annually) over the course of the review period.
- According to the authorizer’s annual reports, the portfolio size of the authorizer did not change, and a review of Income and Expenditure reports indicates expenses for staff remained stable.
- It is unclear how resource allocations are sufficient to fulfill authorizing responsibilities. The A.6 narrative states, “This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.6: Measure: Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools;” however, there was no documented evidence to show the authorizer allocates sufficient resources to fulfill authorizing responsibilities commensurate with the needs and scale of its portfolio. For example, while the FY 2016 Statement of Income and Expenditures breaks down payroll expenditures (e.g., Superintendent devoting 90 hours to authorizing activities, and a breakdown of other positions, hours, and costs associated with authorizing), FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019 reports do not include a description of how staffing expenditures are allocated or titles of authorizing staff. Additionally, as noted above, the authorizer does not have a clear staffing structure, and the budget does not reflect how payroll expenses are allocated. In interviews, the authorizer reported, and school leaders confirmed, that various district staff support its schools, but NPSD has not completed a time audit, as it has not been necessary. Additionally, according to Statements of Income and Expenditures, while professional development expenditures increased from \$250 to \$500 over the course of the review term, costs remain relatively low for training multiple authorizing staff members and evaluators. There is no documentation to confirm what the authorizer’s projected versus actual budgets are or how it determined whether its resource allocations are sufficient.

Key Evidence:

- A.6 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- 16.09-29 Northfield Income and Expenditure Report
- 17.09-12 Northfield Income and Expenditure Report
- 18.09-27 Northfield Income and Expenditure Report
- 19.09-30 Northfield Income and Expenditure Report
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.7 Measure: Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer implement a clear policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1-Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer has a clear policy to address conflicts of interest for charter school board members and authorizers; however, it is unclear how the policy is implemented to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.

- A conflict of interest policy for authorizing exists, but implementation is unclear. A clear conflict of interest policy titled “Charter School Board Members and Authorizer Conflict of Interest” was adopted by the authorizer’s board in October 2016 and was revised in July 2019. The conflict of interest policy is also posted on the authorizer’s website, and the contract template was updated to include reference to the authorizer conflict of interest policy. According to the MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric, on January 30, 2017, the authorizer submitted signed conflict of interest forms for its charter authorization team; however, there is no documentation of forms being completed in following years. The A.7 narrative states, “This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.7: Measure: Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest;” however, there was no documented evidence to show that there are procedures in place to ensure effective implementation of the conflict of interest policy such as authorizer conflict of interest processes and procedures for implementation and execution (e.g., forms, checklists). While the authorizer’s current policy addresses charter board members and the authorizer’s conflict of interest, there is no documentation to show that the authorizer has a conflict of interest policy for charter school evaluators. For example, during an annual site visit/external review for charter renewal decisions, one of the three site team members was a former director of the school being evaluated.
- There is no documented evidence that the authorizer follows its conflict of interest policy in alignment with the AAA. As noted above, although the narrative serves as a promissory letter that the authorizer is in compliance, it did not submit documentation to confirm this.
- Decision-making is not transparent and it is unclear what criteria are used by the authorizer to make decisions. In the narrative, the authorizer states, “This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.7: Measure: Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest;” however, there was no documentation of examples of how the authorizer successfully implemented its conflict of interest policy. In the interview, the authorizer cited an example of their decision not to provide food service to their charter schools as a means of avoiding potential conflicts of interest. However, no documented examples were included to verify how the authorizer makes decisions.

Key Evidence:

- A.7 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- 16.09.30 A.7 NPSD Board Preliminary Reading of COI Policy
- 16.09.30 A.7 School Board Packet 9.26.16
- 17.03-03 MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric-Northfield- FINAL
- Charter School Board Members and Authorizer Conflict of Interest, Authorizer Website
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Arcadia External Visitation 1.31.2017
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

A.8 Measure: Ensuring Autonomy of the Charter Schools in the Portfolio

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer preserve and support the essential autonomies of the portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer preserves and supports the essential autonomies of the portfolio of charter schools.

- The authorizer’s contract includes a clear policy to ensure school autonomy. Articles II, III, IV, and V of its two charter contracts outline roles and responsibilities for the school and authorizer. For example, Section 2.2 states, “The School is not and shall not be deemed to be a division or part of the District. The relationship between the School and the District is based solely on the applicable provisions of the Charter School Act and the terms of this Contract or other written contracts or written agreements between the District and the School.” Further, both the authorizer and school leaders noted in interviews that schools exercise a high degree of autonomy and are clear about authorizing oversight and roles and responsibilities of both the authorizer and schools.
- NPSD’s policy on school autonomy establishes and recognizes the schools’ authority over academics, financials and operations and respects the school’s authority over the school’s day-to-day operations. For example, Section 2.2 of the contract states, “Except as otherwise provided in the Contract or the Charter School Act, the District shall have no authority or control over operational, administrative, or financial responsibility for the School.”
- NPSD’s practices align with policy set forth in the contract; NPSD holds its charter schools accountable for performance outcomes and compliance with statute rather than on processes and inputs. More specifically, Section 3.1 of the contract states, “The District shall monitor and evaluate School performance using various criteria, processes and procedures set forth generally in Article VI and Exhibit M. For example, Exhibit M states NPSD evaluates the school in three primary areas: academic performance (based on absolute proficiency, comparative proficiency, growth, achievement gap, world’s best workforce plan and governance; fiscal performance (based on external audit, fund balance, state finance award and governance); as well as operations and legal compliance (based on compliance with applicable law, MDE audit results, charter contract reporting obligations and leadership).
- There is no documented evidence to show that the authorizer’s policy aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards.

Key Evidence:

- A.8 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2021
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.9 Measure: Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer self-evaluate its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practices) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer self-evaluates its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practice) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools.

- The authorizer regularly evaluates its internal ability to oversee the portfolio of charter schools. According to the MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric, the authorizer created a self-evaluation webpage (submitted to MDE September 2016) that includes an annual survey of four open-ended questions that are asked of the authorizer's charter school leaders annually. These questions include: 1) "What concerns do you have about Northfield Public Schools serving as your authorizer?" 2) "What do you appreciate about Northfield Public Schools serving as your authorizer?" 3) "What other services or support could Northfield Public Schools provide as your authorizer?" and 4) "Please share any other comments you have that would be helpful for us to know as your authorizer." Survey results posted on the authorizer website show this survey was administered in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. According to annual reports, the authorizer regularly evaluates its internal ability to oversee the portfolio of charter schools by analyzing these results and completing a self-reflection.
- Self-evaluations are intentional and planned to build the authorizer's capacity, infrastructure and practices to oversee its portfolio of charter schools. According to the authorizer's website, and as the authorizer's annual reports confirm, "the annual self-evaluation process provides Northfield Public Schools with feedback about its performance as a charter school authorizer." According to the MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric, the authorizer submitted a 2016 Self-Reflection, and a 2018 Authorizer Self-Reflection is posted on the authorizer's website; however, the authorizer did not submit documentation of having completed the 2017 or 2019 Authorizer Self-Reflection.
- The A.9 narrative states, "This promissory letter should serve as compliance for the MAPES elements: A.9: Measure: Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices;" however, there was no documented evidence to show how the authorizer develops and implements continuous improvement plans to address findings of self-evaluation.

Key Evidence:

- A.9 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- 17.03-03 MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric
- Authorizer Website
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

A.10 Measure: Authorizer High-Quality Authorizing Dissemination

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer disseminate best authorizing practices and/or assist other authorizers in high-quality authorizing?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1-Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer rarely disseminates best authorizing practices or assists other authorizers in high-quality authorizing.

- The authorizer rarely engages with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice. NPSD's annual reports provide an overview of the authorizer's engagement with other authorizers. For example, the FY 2019 annual report states, "the Superintendent(s) of Schools and the Director of Teaching and Learning have attended multiple MACSA meetings to discuss best practices and specific issues related to successful charter school authorization and operation. Documentation of attendance at MACSA meetings can be found via the meeting sign-in sheets maintained by MACSA." Additionally, the authorizer stated in the interview that authorizing staff regularly attend MACSA trainings and monthly meetings; however, the authorizer did not submit evidence of attendance at these meetings, except in the case of responding to its CAP, with an attendance verification of one authorizing staff at a November 2016 MACSA meeting and Charter School Authorizing Conference in January 2017. Review of MDE agendas and sign-in sheets indicate that NPSD representatives participated in MDE's authorizer conference in January 2017, July 2018, September 2019 and December 2019.

Key Evidence:

- A.10 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- 17.02-02 B.8 MACSA Meeting Agenda
- 17.01-09 Authorizer Conference PM
- MDE Trainings – Agendas and sign-in sheets
- NPS charter school best practices website
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

A.11 Measure: Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer comply with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statutes?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: The authorizer did not comply with reporting submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statutes.

- According to MDE, since the start of the review term, the authorizer was 79 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin. According to the MDE compliance spreadsheet, over the term of the review, the authorizer was 100 compliant in the submission of renewed charter contracts, 80 percent compliant in the submission of authorizer annual reports and income and expenditure statements, and 50 percent compliant in attendance at MDE required trainings. The authorizer did not have any new school applications, supplemental affidavits, change in authorizers, change in authorizer contracts or merger charter contracts.

Key Evidence:

- A.11 Narrative
- MAPES Compliance Data Spreadsheet – NPSD

Performance Measures A: Rating (25 Percent Weight of Overall Rating)

MAPES Performance Measures A Rating for Northfield Public School District is 0.85

Performance Measures A: Rating Drivers

- The authorizer has a clear mission that aligns with state statute and is understood by all stakeholders.
- School leaders all noted that the authorizer asks for feedback, is responsive to their needs and works to meet their needs through an annual self-reflection process.
- The authorizer lacks organizational goals specific to its role as an authorizer.
- While the authorizer has developed authorizing policies and processes since the last MAPES review and in response to its CAP, there was no documentation to show that these processes are happening with regularity throughout the review term.
- While both authorizer and school leaders stated that there was sufficient staffing, authorizing roles and responsibilities are not documented.
- The authorizer has not complied with Minnesota Statutes regarding submission of key documents.

Performance Measures A: Recommendations

- Develop clear organizational goals related to charter authorizing and in alignment with the AAA, including criteria and timeframes for achievement.
- Create a clear structure of duties and responsibilities related to authorizing and update when necessary.
- Create a system by which to document the skills and expertise of authorizing staff, including expertise in academics, finance, operations, and law.
- Develop a professional development plan aligned with NPSD's operations, mission, and organizational goals for overseeing the portfolio of charter schools, which includes participation of identified authorizing staff at a minimum of one training annually.
- Ensure resource allocation is reflected in payroll expenses (e.g., specific staff, hours devoted to authorizing responsibilities) within the authorizer operational budget.
- Update the conflict of interest policy to include evaluation team members. Collect signed conflict of interest statements for all authorizing staff, charter school board members, and evaluation team members, and create a process for updating conflict of interest statements annually.
- Document evidence of engaging with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice (e.g., agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes); and ensure that each identified authorizing staff attends at least one event each year.
- Ensure full compliance with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statutes.

Performance Measures B: Authorizer Processes and Decision-Making

B.1 Measure: New Charter School Decisions

Guiding Questions: *To what degree does the authorizer have clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals? To what degree did the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align to its stated approval and process standards and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1-Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: Although the authorizer has a written application, it does not have clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals.

- While the authorizer's application is comprehensive, the process and approval criteria are unclear. The authorizer's charter school application includes questions regarding the applicant's mission and vision, education plan, performance management plan, leadership and staffing plans, governance and management plans, and budget; however, it does not have current timeline (the submitted charter application references dates in 2015) or evaluation metrics. The narrative notes that no additional charter schools have expressed a desire to locate within the geographical boundaries of NPSD. During the interview, when asked about the new charter school application process, the authorizer stated that staff would need to update timelines if there was a potential applicant. While, the authorizer's application includes an application checklist, it does not include a rubric or comprehensive, transparent approval criteria. Finally, the authorizer does not currently post an application on its authorizer website.
- As noted above, the authorizer did not receive any new charter school applications during the term of the review. Therefore, the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions were consistent across the portfolio of charter schools and in alignment with the AAA.
- Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years. As noted above, the authorizer's timeline included dates from 2015 (prior to start of the review term). There is no documented evidence that the authorizer has a current new charter school application available. During the interview, the authorizer indicated that it would need to update its application in the event that there was a potential applicant.

Key Evidence:

- B.1 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

B.2 Measure: Interim Accountability Decisions (i.e., site/grade level/early learning expansions, ready to open, and change in authorizer)

Guiding Questions: *To what degree does the authorizer have clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate proposals of existing charter school expansion requests and other interim changes? To what degree did the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions regarding charter school expansion and other interim changes align to its stated approval and process standards and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer has established clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate proposals of existing charter school expansion requests and other interim changes; however, these have not been consistently in place throughout the review term.

- The authorizer's established application processes include: a site/grade level/early learning expansion review process, ready-to-open checklist/determination, and change in authorizer review process. Applications are comprehensive and include clear questions and guidance, timelines, and rigorous criteria with associated scoring forms. For example, the site expansion application includes evaluation criteria including: the need for expansion with supporting long-range enrollment projections; a longitudinal record of demonstrated student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments and/or on other academic assessments that measure longitudinal student performance and growth benchmarks identified in its annual report; approval by the charter school's Board of Directors and agreed upon with the authorizer; a history of sound school finances and a plan to add grades or sites that sustains the school's finances; and board capacity to administer and manage the additional grades or sites.
- NPSD's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools. Across the review term, the authorizer received no charter applications for site or grade-level expansion, early learning programs or authorizer transfer. Additionally, no school openings were scheduled. This was confirmed by annual reports and by the authorizer during the interview. NPSD did not receive any charter expansion requests or any other interim changes over the course of the review period. During the interviews, the authorizer noted that Prairie Creek had explored an early learning expansion but did not move forward with the application after consulting with the authorizing team. As the authorizer did not receive any applications to expand or transfer, it did not utilize its ready to open checklist.
- According to a letter from MDE to the authorizer, NPSD exited corrective action in March 3, 2017. Indicators have been in place for all of 2018, 2019 and 2020; therefore, indicators were met for at least three but not four years.

Key Evidence:

- B.2 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Application for a Site Expansion
- Change in Authorizer Transfer Procedures
- Change in Authorizer Transfer Request Application
- Change in Authorizer Transfer Scoring Sheet
- PreK Expansion Application
- Ready to Open Packet
- School Application Scoring Form
- Site Expansion Application Form
- Transfer Change in Authorizer Request Application
- Transfer Request Procedures
- Transfer Request Scoring Sheet
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

B.3 Measure: Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer execute contracts that clearly define material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1- Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer executes contracts that clearly define material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and authorizer; however contracting practices are unclear.

- Contracts in the authorizer's portfolio of charter schools meet current statutory requirements. According to MDE records, 100 percent of the authorizer's renewal contracts were statutorily compliant. As stated above and confirmed by MDE, the authorizer did not have new charter school contracts, change in authorizer contracts or merger contracts. The authorizer's charter contracts clearly state that the school's primary goal is to improve student achievement in alignment with Minnesota Statute 124E.10 Subd. 1. paragraph (a) (11).
- Contracts clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer. The two contracts in NPSD's portfolio, Arcadia Charter School (2016-2021) and Prairie Creek (2017-2022), include Article II: Relationship Between the School and the District. This article outlines the independent status of the school, separate financial obligations, voluntary authorization, and a statement that neither party has authority to obligate or bind the other. In addition, Article III articulates the role of the district, and Articles IV and V provide permitted activities, assumption of liability, and legal status of the school.
- 100 percent of NPSD's contracts were executed no later than the first day of the renewal period. According to MDE, contracts for Arcadia Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School were executed by the contract execution deadline.
- The authorizer's contracting practices are not clearly documented. In Article XI of the contract, NPSD's indicates that renewal contracts will be determined substantially on the school's attainment of its academic outcomes/goal and that five year terms will be awarded only if warranted by school performance. Exhibit N (Performance Evaluation of School) provides a comprehensive summary of the school's academic performance, financial performance, and governance and management. Contracting practices are consistent, using a collaborative approach described by the schools and in line with the performance evaluation of the school, which are included in Exhibits N and O of the executed contracts. During interviews, both the authorizer and school directors described the collaborative approach to contracting. Yet, the authorizer did not demonstrate what the contracting process looks like (e.g., board meeting minutes, examples of contracting negotiations from beginning to end and data to support the contracting decision).

Key Evidence:

- B.3 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2022
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

B.4 Measure: Performance Outcomes and Standards

Guiding Questions: *To what degree does the authorizer execute contracts with clear, measurable and attainable performance standards? To what degree does the authorizer hold charter schools in its portfolio accountable to its academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer executes contracts with clear, measurable and attainable performance standards and holds the charter schools in its portfolio accountable to these outcomes.

- Contracts in NPSD's portfolio of charter schools meet current statutory performance standards. According to the MDE Contract Compliance Renewal Rubrics, both of the authorizer's renewal contracts met the statutory performance standards. Contracts with Arcadia Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School show goals for academic performance (including whether the school is improving pupil learning), financial performance, operational performance and legal compliance.
- NPSD's contracts define clear, measurable and attainable academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards, and describe consequences for meeting or not meeting performance outcomes and standards. Current contracts with Prairie Creek Community School and Arcadia Charter School define clear, measurable and attainable academic goals that include absolute proficiency, comparative proficiency (including comparisons to charter schools of similar size and mission), growth, achievement gap and performance on annual goals set in World's Best Workforce Plan. For example, the Prairie Creek Community School contract outlines five goals in state assessments, nationally normed assessments including NWEA, reading growth goals, World's Best Workforce Goals, and academic governance, with corresponding sub-goals and weighted values for each category. In addition to the academic goals, the contracts include a governance and management plan (Exhibit H) and an administration and operations plan (Exhibit I) with specific performance measures aligned with fiscal management (external audit, fund balance, state finance award, and governance) and operations and legal compliance. The contract outlines remediation steps that will be taken by the authorizer in the event that the school fails to make adequate progress toward achieving its academic outcomes or financial targets, or if the school fails to comply with applicable law or other requirements. The steps include: providing notice to the school leader or board chair noting areas of concern for correction; providing formal notice to the board chair asking for an improvement plan if the situation remains uncorrected; providing notice to the board of charter revocation/termination to inform of the withdrawal of the charter authorization.
- The authorizer's performance outcomes and standards are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools. Review of NPSD's contracts with Prairie Creek Community School and Arcadia Charter School shows that the performance outcomes and standards are consistent, including academic, financial, operational and legal targets listed above. Both contracts include an exhibit titled "Supplemental Continuing Oversight Criteria, Processes, Procedures" that outlines key performance measurements. For example, the policy states that for external audits, "the District evaluates external audits and expects its schools to work toward the elimination of deficiencies."

- The authorizer's contracts align with the performance standards of its AAA. According to the AAA, the expectation of the authorizer is "that any new charter school will open and operate with a focus on equitable opportunities and access for all students and an expectation of academic, financial and operational accountability." Additionally, the authorizer's AAA refers specifically to indicators in the charter schools' contracts around academic, financial and operational performance.
- NPSD holds charter schools accountable to academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards defined in the contract. Review of annual reports between FY 2016 and FY 2020 shows that the authorizer included academic, operational and financial performance information. For example, for academic performance, the authorizer included comparative data on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment between its school and state results over a three year period to show trends. Additionally, the academic section includes strengths and areas for improvement. For operational performance, the authorizer notes the school's capacity and annual work. Furthermore, the financial performance references the school's fund balance. Site visit reports for Arcadia Charter School in 2017 and 2019, and Prairie Creek in 2018 and 2019 include a narrative description of the academic, operational and financial status of each school.
- The authorizer did not provide documentation to show how its practices are aligned with nationally recognized quality performance standards. It should be noted that one of NPSD's two authorized schools, Arcadia Charter School, was on the High-Quality Charter School List in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Key Evidence:

- B.4 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- 16.05-18 NPSD -PCCS Review Rubric for Executed Renewal Contract -FINAL
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- 17.05-31 NPSD -Arcadia Contract Review-FINAL
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2022

B.5 Measure: Authorizer's Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio of Charter Schools

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer monitor and oversee the charter schools in the areas of academics, operations and finances according to the processes outlined in the contract and the AAA/AAP?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 1-Approaching Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer inconsistently monitors and oversees the charter schools in the areas of academics, operations and finances according to the processes outlined in the contract and AAA.

- The authorizer outlines its processes for oversight and monitoring in its contracts Exhibit M: Continuing Oversight-Accountability that states, “the district evaluates effective operations through annual site visits, reviews of board minutes, discussions with staff and stakeholders, MDE audit results, and adherence to charter requirements.” Additionally, the AAA includes a section that describes monitoring and oversight processes.
- NPSD’s oversight and monitoring activities misalign with its stated oversight and monitoring processes in its AAA. According to the AAA, NPSD will use the following performance indicators to review each charter school:
 - documented evidence of success in meeting the state standards;
 - documented evidence of student success using other nationally normed assessments;
 - documented evidence of achieving success in state standards using nationally normed assessment measures;
 - documented evidence of compilation of annual academic and non-academic goals or outcomes;
 - documented evidence of the charter school’s efforts to achieve its stated mission and purpose;
 - completion of an annual audit indicating a positive fund balance; and
 - demonstration that the school is providing a safe and secure physical environment.

Although in the interviews the school leaders and authorizer referred to annual site visits following each audit, the authorizer submitted only four annual site visit reports, Arcadia Charter School on January 31, 2017 and January 10, 2019, and Prairie Creek on March 22, 2018 and January 18, 2019. Each of these reports include a narrative description summarizing the academic, operational and financial status of each school. While the authorizer stated in the interview that it monitors financial, academic and legal compliance, there was no documentation or monitoring tools submitted to verify other ways the authorizer provides charter oversight that competently evaluates academic, financial and operational performance outside of the schools’ submitted annual reports.

- There is insufficient evidence to verify that the authorizer’s oversight and monitoring practices are consistent across its portfolio of charter schools. As explained above, according to its contract, the authorizer monitors its schools through annual site visits, reviews of board meeting minutes, discussion with staff and stakeholders, MDE audit results and adherence to charter requirements. Reviews of the authorizer’s contracts with its schools confirmed that it conducted a site visit. However, there is no other documented evidence to verify that it met the other requirements listed in the contract.

Key Evidence:

- B.5 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2022
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

B.6 Measure: Authorizer's Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer have clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and/or corrective action?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer implements clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action.

- NPSD has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, interventions and corrective action. The authorizer has a policy to address complaints, which provides an overview with steps including speaking to the person of concern, discussing the issue with the charter school Director and bringing the issue to the charter school's board, before finally bringing the issue to the charter school's authorizer. The authorizer's website states that once a complaint is submitted, the authorizer will conduct an investigation and notify complainants on the status of their complaint upon completion of the investigation, within the parameters of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Additionally, the charter school contracts outline standards and processes for intervention and corrective action for a school's "failure to make adequate progress towards achieving its academic outcomes/goals or to meet financial requirements, or to comply with Applicable Law, or other requirements." Intervention includes 1) a notice to the school leader or board member, which includes area to be corrected and a targeted date for correction, and 2) a formal notice to the school leader or board member, which may ask the school to adopt a specific performance improvement plan or retain a third-party investigator to provide status reports to and communicate with the authorizer.
- According to the narrative and as confirmed by both school leaders and the authorizer during the interview, the authorizer did not need to intervene or implement corrective action during the review period. The authorizer indicated in the interview that if intervention was needed, the authorizer would begin with a phone call to the school director and then, in alignment with its stated process, work collaboratively with the school's team to develop a corrective action plan that included goals for improvement.
- Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools and align with its stated standards and processes in its AAA. The narrative states, and review of MDE data confirm, that corrective action was not needed for either school during the review period. As such, the authorizer has remained consistent with its AAA.
- Review of school performance outcomes aligned with state assessments, financial audits, and compliance measures confirms that the authorizer utilizes data to oversee its schools. As stated above, there is no documented evidence to show that the authorizer received complaints or needed to intervene with either of its schools for failure to meet performance standards.
- The authorizer did not provide documentation to show how its standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards.

Key Evidence:

- B.6 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2022
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

B.7 Measure: Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer support its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: The authorizer did not provide evidence that it supports its portfolio through intentional assistance and development offerings.

- Support and technical assistance are provided only in response to problems. In interviews, school leaders and the authorizer provided an overview of the types of technical support the authorizer provides its schools. For example, the authorizer has invited school leaders to teleconferencing meetings to provide COVID-19 planning support. In the interview, school leaders reported that the support is provided in response to their questions, and that the Superintendent, acting as the point of contact, directs them to the right person among district personnel. The narrative states, “the Superintendent makes regular connection with the director of each charter school and provides support for any identified needs. Based on these discussions, the Superintendent directs members of the charter school authorization leadership team to intentionally support the charter schools in our portfolio on an as-needed basis.” The authorizer’s annual reports also states, “We are able to provide the charter schools with a significant level of experience in student discipline, finance, human resources, buildings and grounds, assessment, teaching and learning, and general leadership. The district routinely invites the charter schools’ faculty, staff and leadership (usually at no cost) to attend district-wide trainings, such as active-shooter training, technology integration, cognitive coaching, relationship development and other topics as offered by Northfield Public Schools.” However, the authorizer did not submit documented evidence of providing proactive support or technical assistance, such as meeting minutes, examples of email correspondence or trainings.

Key Evidence:

- B.7 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

B.8 Measure: High-Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices

Guiding Question: *To what degree does the authorizer plan and promote model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 0-Unsatisfactory or Incomplete

Finding: The authorizer does not have clear plans to promote model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality schools.

- There is no intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices. In the interview, school leaders noted that the authorizer allows for their autonomy but does not actively promote dissemination or replication. According to a review of the Imagine Conference website, while Prairie Creek hosted Imagine conferences in 2016 and 2018, and disseminated its progressive approach to child-centered learning to a large audience at those conferences, the authorizer did not submit documentation of participating in the planning or coordination of the event. In the school leader interview, leaders noted that authorizing staff members attended the conference. While the authorizer has developed a best practices website that includes links to conferences, events, and workshops hosted by other authorizers or MACSA, the authorizer did not show that it has its own plan for successful model replication or dissemination.

Key Evidence:

- B.8 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Imagine Conference Website
- NPS charter school best practices website
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020
- Charter school leader interview, September 10, 2020

B.9 Measure: Charter School Renewal and Termination Decisions

Guiding Questions: *To what degree does the authorizer have clear and comprehensive standards and processes to make high stakes renewal and termination decisions? To what degree did the authorizer's renewal and termination decisions align to its stated renewal standards and processes and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools?*

Performance Level Rating: Level 2-Satisfactory

Finding: The authorizer has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to make high stakes renewal and termination decisions.

- The authorizer has transparent and rigorous standards and processes designed to use comprehensive academic, financial, operational and student performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions and terminate charters when necessary to protect student and public interests. Both renewal contracts include an exhibit "Supplemental Continuing Oversight Criteria, Processes and Procedures" that states that the district evaluates its charter schools in three primary areas: academic performance, fiscal performance and operations and legal compliance. Current contracts include performance evaluations that were submitted to the authorizer prior to charter renewal (Exhibit N for Prairie Creek Community School, Exhibit O for Arcadia). During the interview, the authorizer reported that it also conducts an annual site visit prior to renewal, as well as meeting with the school director to prepare for renewal timelines. In 2017, as a component of the authorizer's CAP, the authorizer developed a robust Charter Renewal Application that outlines the timeline for charter renewal activities, including a statement of intent to seek renewal, a self-study, an external site visitation, and an application preparation meeting to collect academic, financial, operational and student performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions. The application also outlines termination when necessary.
- The authorizer renewed each of its charter schools, Arcadia Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School during the review period, in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Review of the schools' contracts demonstrate authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools. For example, both schools' Qualitative Review Rubric (in Part Two of the contract) indicate the schools partially achieved some academic and nonacademic outcomes and were granted five year charter renewal terms.
- The Charter Renewal Application Packet submitted as part of the CAP in February 2017 outlines clear, comprehensive standards and processes for high-stakes renewal. The authorizer revised its standards for high-stakes renewal as part of its CAP. According to review of the 2017 CAP, NPSD exited corrective action March 2017; therefore, its renewal application process has been in place in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Level 2 indicators were met for at least three but not four years.

Key Evidence:

- B.9 Narrative
- AAA/CAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2017 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2018 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- FY 2019 Annual Report – Northfield Public School District
- Northfield Public Schools Charter Renewal Application
- Charter Contract Template December 2016
- Prairie Creek Charter School Contract Final 2016
- Arcadia Contract 2017-2022
- 17.03-03 MAPES Corrective Action Review Rubric-Northfield
- Authorizer interview, September 9, 2020

Performance Measures B: Rating (75 Percent Weight of Overall Rating)

MAPES Performance Measures B Rating for Northfield Public School District is 1.45.

Performance Measures B: Rating Drivers

- NPSD has established clear criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate proposals of existing charter school expansion requests and other interim changes; but has not yet done so for new school applications.
- The authorizer's contracts with its schools include a clear definition of the material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer, as well as measurable and attainable performance standards. Furthermore, NPSD has processes in place to hold schools to the performance standards within the contract.
- Although NPSD's AAA outlines clear monitoring and oversight standards and processes, there is no documented evidence that they are consistently implemented.
- NPSD has a clear complaint policy that is publicly available. Additionally, within its school contracts, it outlines its intervention and corrective action process.
- NPSD does not provide proactive technical assistance and support to schools within its portfolio on a regular basis.
- Although schools within its portfolio share best practices, NPSD does not have a plan in place to disseminate best practices or replicate successful models.
- Based on a revision of its renewal process, NPSD implements a high stakes renewal process that is based on rigorous criteria and standards.

Performance Measures B: Recommendations

- Update the new school application to include current timelines, application processes, evaluative rubrics and comprehensive, transparent approval criteria.
- Maintain documented examples of contract negotiations from beginning to end. Consider creating a resource document that outlines the contract negotiation process.
- Create mechanisms by which to retain data and documentation related to NPSD's monitoring and oversight of its schools (e.g., monthly financial reports, reviews of board meeting minutes, tracking documents) as outlined in its AAA and charter contracts.
- Create a spreadsheet to record all technical support and assistance provided to schools by the authorizer, including meetings, training, and individualized supports.
- Develop a clear plan to disseminate best practices of its charter schools.

Appendix A: Authorizer Portfolio Information

Operational Schools: Arcadia Charter School, Prairie Creek Community School

Preoperational Schools: N/A

Closed Schools: N/A

Never Opened Schools: N/A

Schools that have transferred into portfolio: N/A

Schools that have transferred out of portfolio: N/A

Merged schools over the term of the review period: N/A

Appendix B: Evaluation Methodology

SchoolWorks is committed to ensuring inter-rater reliability and consistency across all MAPES reports. In order to achieve this, SchoolWorks adopts the following methodology.

1. SchoolWorks assigned each authorizer a two-person evaluation team that includes a team lead and team writer.
2. All evaluators then engage in a training with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) during which they norm around ratings, evidence and report language.
3. The lead and writer review all submitted documents and rate the evidence submitted by the authorizer.
4. Teams participate in a pre-interview call. During this call, the team comes to consensus, deciding upon initial ratings. Also during this call, team members identify any standards for which they need additional clarification.
5. Team members lead in-person interviews with authorizing staff and representatives from the authorizer's portfolio of charter schools. Following the interview, evaluators may ask for additional documentation to be submitted by the authorizer.***
6. Team members use interview responses and any additional document submissions in alignment with the MAPES standards and, if applicable, revise their initial ratings.
7. Team members participate in a consensus call during which they finalize their ratings.
8. Draft reports are completed and reviewed by a SchoolWorks content editor. The content editor reviews ratings and evidentiary alignment with the MAPES rubric within each individual report, and
9. ensures consistency of ratings across all reports.
10. The SchoolWorks project manager reviews all reports to ensure consistency of ratings and sufficiency of evidence.
11. Draft reports are submitted to MDE for review.
12. MDE shares draft reports with authorizers for factual review. During the factual review, authorizers may submit additional documentation to clarify factual errors.
13. SchoolWorks evaluators review the factual corrections submitted by the authorizer and any accompanying documentation. Based on the authorizer's submissions, they consider whether additional evidence impacts the ratings identified in the final report.
14. Evaluators finalize their MAPES reports and submit to the SchoolWorks project manager.
15. The SchoolWorks project manager reviews all finalized reports.
16. Final reports are submitted to MDE for review.

***Due to COVID-19, interviews were conducted via videoconference.