

Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) Performance Report

Authorizer Information

Authorizer: University of St. Thomas

Authorizer Type: College/University

Evaluation Period: January 2016 – December 2020

Report Issue Date: December 7, 2020

Characteristics of the Authorizer

- The authorizer's mission is to advance the common good by using quality authorizing practices to oversee and promote the health of a portfolio of charter schools that demonstrably assist students in reaching their full academic and human potential. Its vision is to authorize excellent charter schools in order to increase quality educational opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities metro area.
- UST was approved to act as an authorizer by the state of Minnesota in 2010. It currently has 13 schools in its portfolio, with six of the schools having transferred from other authorizers.
- The authorizing staff consists of three positions: Director of Charter School Authorizing, Assistant Director of Charter School Authorizing and Program Coordinator. The authorizer operates within the University of St. Thomas (UST), with the Director of Charter School Authorizing reporting to the Dean of the School of Education, who in turn reports to the President of UST. Additionally, the Director of Charter School Authorizing collaborates with the University's Charter Accountability Board (CAB), which also reports to the Dean of the School of Education.
- The authorizer has implemented a strategic plan focusing on three main organizational goals: 1) expand impact by increasing school performance, growing the size of its portfolio in alignment with rigorous standards and promoting the dissemination and replication of best practices; 2) solidify a sustainable infrastructure that includes the financial and human resources needed to effectively elicit and maintain quality authorizing, oversight, growth and strategic support; and 3) increase visibility, collaboration and contributions to the UST and the broader education ecosystem.

Overall Performance Rating

MAPES Overall Performance Rating for University of St. Thomas is 3.86: Exemplary

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

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

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

B.1: New Charter School Decisions (11.25 percent)*	4
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)	4
Ready to Open Standards (3.75 percent)	4
Change in Authorizers (3.75 percent)	4
B.3: Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution (7.5 percent)	3
B.4: Performance Outcomes and Standards (11.25 percent)	4
B.5: Authorizer's Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio of Charter Schools (7.5 percent)	4
B.6: Authorizer's Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints (3.75 percent)**	4
B.7: Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance (3.75 percent overall weight)**	4
B.8: High-Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices (3.75 percent)**	4
B.9: Charter School Renewal and Termination Decisions (15 percent)	4
Total Performance Measures B Rating:	3.90

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

***Continuous Improvement Measure*

A.1 Measure: Authorizing Mission

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

Performance Level Rating: Level 4-Exemplary

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

- The authorizer’s mission (as seen in documentation such as the commissioner-approved authorizing plan [AAP], a website screenshot, presentation materials, etc.) is to advance the common good by using quality authorizing practices to oversee and promote the health of a portfolio of charter schools that demonstrably assist students in reaching their full academic and human potential. In the AAP, the authorizer explained that the mission expresses the expectation that its schools are accountability-based and data-driven and that it results in effective learning for all children, which directly aligns with Minnesota Statute, section 124E.05 Subd. 4(1) to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.
- In the narrative, the authorizer breaks down its mission and explains how it carries out each piece (confirmed by documentation). For example, it states that it carries out its mission by using quality authorizing practices and engaging in continuous improvement in order to ensure excellence. This is evidenced by the authorizer’s active participation in the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) and National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), as well as an evaluation report conducted by NACSA in December 2017.
- The authorizer is implementing the mission stated in its AAP, as evidenced by the inclusion of the mission in documentation such as a website screenshot indicating that the mission is publicly available in presentation materials, an authorizing brochure, etc. Additionally, an evaluation report conducted by NACSA in December 2017 states that the authorizer’s mission guides their decision-making processes and day-to-day interactions.
- The mission is verified internally as seen in its inclusion in documentation such as Charter Accountability Board (CAB) presentation materials, university staff meeting presentation materials, an authorizing program brochure and a website screenshot indicating that the mission is publicly available on the authorizer’s website.
- During the authorizer interview, authorizing staff reiterated and verified the authorizing mission. Authorizing staff stated that the mission, vision and core values work in concert to provide a transparent view of how the authorizer operates. For instance, authorizing staff noted that the mission mentions using quality authorizing practices, which they say drive the operations of the authorizer, as they strive to be a nationally-recognized model for authorizers.
- As previously noted, a 2017 NACSA evaluation report states that the authorizer’s mission guides its decision-making processes and day-to-day interactions, demonstrating that the mission is verified by external references.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are familiar with the authorizer’s mission. During the school leader interviews, the authorizer’s mission was consistently verified externally by all participants, who were able to describe and articulate the authorizer’s mission statement.

Key Evidence:

- A.1 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A1-03 2019 Authorizer Annual Report
- A1-04 CAB Presentation 12.2.15
- A1-05 CAB Strategic Planning Presentation 4.27.16
- A1-06 CAB Presentation 9.18.19
- A1-07 CAB Presentation 6.17.20
- A1-08 CAB Presentation 3.16.16
- A1-09 2016 AC meeting presentation
- A1-10 Presentation to Dr. Campbell 05.30.18
- A1-11 St. Thomas Authorizing Brochure
- A1-12 St. Thomas Authorizing Website Screenshot
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter School Leader Interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer has clear organizational goals and timeframes for achievement that are aligned with its authorizing mission and Minnesota charter school statute.

- In documentation such as the narrative, the AAP, CAB meeting minutes and presentation materials, the authorizer identifies three main organizational goals: 1) expand impact by increasing school performance, growing the size of its portfolio in alignment with rigorous standards and promoting the dissemination and replication of best practices; 2) solidify a sustainable infrastructure that includes the financial and human resources needed to effectively elicit and maintain quality authorizing, oversight, growth and strategic support; and 3) increase visibility, collaboration and contributions to the University of St. Thomas and the broader education ecosystem. Each of these goals has specific criteria (or sub-goals) and an associated timeframe. For example, one criteria (or sub-goal) is that the authorizer will receive a Commendable or higher rating on the 2020 MAPES evaluation.
- Review of the organizational goals in the AAP finds that they are being implemented, as they align with the three main organizational goals which are discussed at CAB meetings (as seen in CAB meeting minutes and presentation materials). For example, CAB presentation materials from October 2019 include a discussion around the authorizer's progress toward each of the organizational goals over multiple years.
- In the narrative (and as verified by the AAP), the authorizer explains how its mission aligns with its organizational goals. For example, the mission emphasizes the use of quality authorizing practices and a goal around solidifying a sustainable infrastructure speaks to a quality authorizing practice (as defined by NACSA) around creating organizational structures to effectively and efficiently conduct authorizing duties.
- Review of CAB meeting minutes and presentation materials shows that the authorizer actively measures progress toward its organizational goals. For instance, CAB presentation materials from an October 2019 meeting includes discussion of the authorizer's progress toward organizational goals in SY2017, SY2018 and SY2019.
- In the narrative, the authorizer states that it regularly evaluates its work against its mission and organizational goals. For example, in 2017, the authorizer contracted with NACSA to conduct an evaluation of its practices and in the evaluation report, NACSA indicates that the authorizer is actively working toward achieving its organizational goals. Presentation materials from a CAB meeting in April 2016 also include discussion about the creation and approval of the authorizer's strategic plan, which outlines plans for improvement including goals. Additionally, as indicated previously, during an October 2019 CAB meeting, the authorizer reviews progress toward organizational goals established in its strategic plan in SY2017, SY2018 and SY2019 (as seen in CAB presentation materials).

Key Evidence:

- A.2 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A1-05 CAB Strategic Planning Presentation 4.27.16
- A1-07 CAB Presentation 6.17.20
- A2-1 FY2015 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-2 FY2016 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-3 FY2017 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-4 FY2018 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-5 FY2019 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-6 CAB Presentation 10.16.19
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- A2-8 CAB Presentation 5.20.20
- A2-9 CAB Minutes 6.17.20
- NACSA Principles and Standards, 2018 Edition
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently operates with a clear structure of duties and responsibilities and sufficient resources to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools.

- The authorizer's AAP, organizational chart and job descriptions define a clear structure of duties and responsibilities that meets the needs of the portfolio of charter schools. For example, the Director of Charter School Authorizing is responsible for the leadership and day-to-day management of the authorizing office and reports to the Dean of the School of Education. The Dean of the School of Education reports to the President of the University of St. Thomas, who has the final authority to make high-stakes decisions in areas such as new school applications and termination/non-renewal of underperforming schools. Currently, the authorizer employs three staff members (equal to 2.375 FTE) to serve its 13 operational charter schools, as well as external consultants as needed. This staffing plan allows for a ratio of approximately one FTE per six schools (0.17 FTE per school), which meets the needs of the portfolio and aligns with its AAP.
- In the narrative and the capacity change table, the authorizer explains how the structure of duties and responsibilities have been updated when necessary. For example, the capacity change table shows that in SY2016, the authorizer added a full-time Program Coordinator and a NACSA fellow (during the summer) to support the addition of two charter schools. Additionally, in the narrative, the authorizer states that NACSA phased out the fellowship program in SY2017, which eliminated the summer fellow position. As a result, in SY2018, the authorizer added a Program Coordinator (0.8 FTE) to ensure that it maintained appropriate capacity to oversee its portfolio of schools. Review of the capacity change table shows that with the addition of the Program Coordinator in SY2018, the authorizer had 2.55 FTE, which exceeds the minimum staffing identified in the AAP.
- The authorizer appropriately manages, retains and safeguards school and student information as well as records relating to authorizing, as evidenced in the narrative and the AAP. More specifically, the authorizer states that it receives in-kind support from the broader University of St. Thomas staffing structure, including access to its network, hardware, software and Information Technology Services (ITS) staff. It adds that the ITS staff provides assistance with areas such as identity and access management, secure computing, etc. Additionally, in the narrative, the authorizer outlines its filing structure (which is further evidenced in the description of filing structure document) which supports efforts to consistently and systematically organize and manage school data and authorizing records with the use of codes (e.g., A = accountability).
- During the authorizer interview, authorizing staff indicated that the structure of duties, responsibilities and staffing levels have been sufficient. For example, they explained that as their portfolio of schools grew, they were able to add staff (e.g., Program Coordinator) in order to maintain their ability and capacity to provide effective oversight.
- The evidence provided above demonstrates that the authorizer has operated with a clear structure of duties and responsibilities that is sufficient to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools over the authorizer term to date. For example, the authorizer has consistently met or exceeded the staffing structure established in its AAP (2.375 FTE) as seen in the capacity change table.

- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer’s staffing level is sufficient to meet their school’s needs. During the school leader interviews, all participants stated that they believe the authorizer has sufficient capacity to effectively oversee the portfolio. For example, participants explained that the authorizer is very responsive and open to meeting with school leaders. They added that they regularly communicate with the authorizer via email, phone and/or in-person meetings. Furthermore, participants outlined the staffing structure of the authorizing office and noted that each school has a dedicated main point of contact from the authorizing office.

Key Evidence:

- A.3 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A3-1 Organizational Chart
- A3-2 Director Job Profile
- A3-3 Assistant Director Job Profile
- A3-4 Program Coordinator Job Profile
- A3-5 Capacity Change Table
- A3-6 Description of Filing Structure
- A3-7 Example of Filing Structure
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter School Leader Interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently has appropriate experience, expertise and skills in academics, finance, operations and law to sufficiently oversee its portfolio of charter schools.

- The authorizing staff have experience, expertise and skills in charter school academics, finance, operations and law as evidenced by resumes, biographies, transcripts and licenses. For example, the Director of Charter School Authorizing has held her position since 2011 and previously worked in Volunteers of America – Minnesota’s authorizing office and also served as a teacher. Additionally, in the narrative, the authorizer explains that because of its affiliation with the University of St. Thomas, it is able to obtain support from other departments as needed, as well as from the CAB, which provides expertise in areas such as curriculum, instruction, special education, finance, governance, school leadership, etc., as evidenced in resumes and bios. Furthermore, the authorizer states in the narrative that it receives legal advice and expertise as needed from the University of St. Thomas’ Office of General Counsel.
- The authorizing staff are able to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools, as evidenced by the extensive experience outlined in resumes and biographies and described above. The authorizer employs three staff members (equal to 2.375 FTE) to serve its 13 operational charter schools, as well as external consultants as needed. This staffing plan allows for a ratio of approximately one FTE per six schools (0.17 FTE per school), which meets the needs of the portfolio. Additionally, in the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer’s staffing level is sufficient to meet the needs of their schools.
- In the narrative, the authorizer states that the experience, expertise and skills demonstrated by authorizing staff (and discussed above) align with NACSA’s Principles and Standards, citing standards such as enlisting of “expertise and competent leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight.” Additionally, in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report, NACSA notes that the authorizer scored 12 out of 12 possible points in NACSA’s 2016 Essential Practices Survey, demonstrating a commitment to implementing quality authorizing practices.
- As noted, a review of resumes and biographies shows that the authorizer’s staffing holds appropriate experience to effectively oversee the portfolio of charter schools and a summary of authorizer human capital resources since SY2016 demonstrates that this expertise has been provided for the authorizer term to date. For example, two out of three staff members have worked in the authorizing office for at least five years.
- A review of credentials such as a Charter Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, teaching licenses and law degrees, demonstrates that the authorizing staff has experience, expertise and skills in charter school academics, finance, operations and law. For example, the University of St. Thomas’ associate general counsel has served in her position since 2013 and was a practicing lawyer for eleven years prior to that.

Key Evidence:

- A.4 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- UST Staff and CAB Resumes and Biographies
- UST Staff Transcripts and Licenses
- A4-14 Charter Board Member Bios
- A4-15 Summary of Authorizer Human Capital Resources
- A4-16 NACSA Principles and Standards
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter School Leader Interviews, September 24, 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 3-Commendable

Finding: The authorizer builds the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development that is aligned with its operations, mission and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools.

- In the AAP, the authorizer states that professional development is intentional and planned to build the knowledge and skill base of authorizing leadership and staff through a combination of individual and staff-wide professional development. For example, the authorizer contracted with an organization to provide financial accountability training and support to all authorizing staff in June 2019 in order to strengthen its fiscal oversight capacity (as verified by reimbursement requests, approvals and invoices). Additionally, review of emails between authorizing staff and NACSA show that authorizing staff attended a NACSA session about balancing autonomy with equity and access, in February 2018.
- The professional development sessions align with the authorizer's operations, mission and organizational goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools. The authorizer's mission includes using quality authorizing practices and its vision is to authorize excellent charter schools in order to increase quality educational opportunities. Review of documentation such as registration confirmations, presentation materials, meeting agendas, etc., demonstrate that authorizing staff regularly attend sessions that promote quality authorizing practices such as NACSA Leadership Conferences.
- Review of documentation such as annual reports, registration confirmations, presentation materials, meeting agendas, etc., confirm that authorizing staff attended professional development sessions that fulfill the commitments outlined in the AAP. For example, in the AAP, the authorizer states that it will ensure professional development informs and enhances its authorizing practices; strengthens skills that contribute to effective oversight; better understands the key components that drive student achievement; better understands school operational requirements; and remains up-to-date on legislative and policy changes that impact or could impact the authorizer and its schools. The documentation shows that authorizing staff attended professional development sessions that focused on topics such as quality authorizing practices, finance, special education oversight, etc., which align with what is stated in the AAP.
- The professional development summary chart, along with corresponding documentation (e.g., registration materials, emails), demonstrate that the Director and Assistant Director of Charter School Authorizing participated in at least two professional development sessions each year of the current authorizer term, indicating that professional development is regular and ongoing. The Program Coordinator, who was hired in 2018, participated in at least two professional development sessions each year she has been employed by the authorizer.

- In the narrative and in the authorizer interview, the authorizer states that professional development is customized for authorizing staff and individual goals, which are developed annually via a review process and an annual staff retreat (evidenced by a June 2019 staff retreat agenda that includes personal goals as an agenda item). Authorizing staff explained that the results of annual staff reviews and collaborative team goals identified by authorizing staff can inform what professional development sessions they attend. For example, they noted that based on the Director of Charter School Authorizing annual review, a goal was identified to further developing management skills, which informed her participation in and completion of a mini MBA for Nonprofit Organizations certificate (evidenced by the certificate of completion).
- During the authorizer interview, authorizing staff explained that they do not collect formal professional development feedback forms and instead, debrief on professional development sessions during team meetings and annual staff retreats (as confirmed by review of CAB and authorizing team meeting agendas and materials that find professional development included as an agenda item). However, documentation (e.g., meeting minutes or notes) is not provided to confirm that the discussion during these meetings was around the measurement and evaluation of the professional development attended and additional documentation was not provided to demonstrate how/if professional development is measured and evaluated.

Key Evidence:

- A.5 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2021 MACSA Committee Structure
- MACSA Founding Board Members
- MACSA Principles and Standards
- MACSA Effective Practices Committee Proposal
- MACSA Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes (August 2019, February 2020, March 2020)
- UST Team Meeting and Retreat Agendas (June 2019, July 2019, November 2019)
- UST Onboarding Materials
- CAB SY2020 Calendar
- UST Mini MBA Certificate of Completion (for Molly McGraw Healy)
- NACSA Equity Workshop Scholarship Notification
- A9-4 Dana Peterson Annual Review Self Review SY2020
- 19.06-11 Pre-Approved UST Training
- 17.01-09 MDE Authorizer Conference AM Sign-In Sheet
- 17.01-09 MDE Authorizer Conference PM Sign-In Sheet
- 17.01-10 MDE Authorizer Conference Sign-In Sheet

- 18.07-19 MDE Authorizer Conference Attendees
- 19.09-09 MDE Authorizer Conference Sign-In Sheet
- 19.12-13 MDE Authorizer Conference Sign-In Sheet
- 19.06-11 Pre-Approved UST Training
- A5-PD Summary Chart
- A5-Staffing PD Evidence Summary Chart
- UST Staff Session Registration Confirmations (NACSA Conference, NACSA Alumni Convening, Convening of Higher Education Authorizers, Regional Turnaround Strategy Group)
- A5-2017.11.27 CAB Meeting Presentation Slides
- A5-2019.06.18 UST Team Finance Training
- A5-2019.07.08 UST Team Retreat Notes
- A5-2019.07.22 UST Team Meeting Agenda
- A5-2019.08.06 UST Team Meeting Agenda
- A5-2019.10.29 UST Team Meeting Agenda
- A5-NACSA Leadership Journey PowerPoint Presentation
- A5-PCS Board Meeting Agenda, February 2016
- A5-CAB Meeting Presentation Slides, October 2015
- A5-Charter School Financial Board Training Certificate 2016
- A5-Minnesota Comeback Facility Emails and Meeting Materials, 2016
- A5-SY2016 APS Authorizer Evaluation
- A5-SY2018 NACSA Conference Debrief Email
- A5-SY2018 South Carolina Authorizer Evaluation
- A5-SY2019 Finance Training
- A5-SY2019 NACSA Conference Notes and Presentation Slides
- A5-Emerging Leaders Program Materials, 2017
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer’s actual resource allocation is consistently commensurate with its stated budget and the needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools.

- The AAP states that the authorizer will maintain at least 0.17 FTE per school and review of the capacity change table finds that the authorizer currently allocates 0.18 FTE per school, which exceeds the ratio committed in the AAP and demonstrates that resource allocations for authorizing are consistent with the AAP.
- In the narrative, the authorizer states that the authorizing program is funded through authorizer fees and that the budget is sufficient to cover overhead fees and any additional programmatic costs or unanticipated expenses. This is substantiated by the FY2016-FY2020 budget to actuals spreadsheet, which shows a surplus at the end of each year, demonstrating that resource allocations are sufficient to fulfill authorizing responsibilities and are commensurate with the needs and scale of its portfolio (e.g., income, expenditures, number and size of the charter schools in the portfolio).
- As indicated above, the capacity change table shows that some authorizer staff changes occurred in relation to portfolio size and the FY2016-FY2020 budget to actual spreadsheet reflects increases in expenses related to personnel salaries and benefits. For example, in SY2016, the authorizer added a full-time Program Coordinator and a NACSA fellow (during the summer) to support the addition of two charter schools.
- In the narrative, the authorizer describes how its resource allocations align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards for financial resource commitments. More specifically, the authorizer aligns its own practices with three of NACSA’s Principles and Standards. For example, it identifies NACSA’s standard for determining the “financial needs of the authorizing office and devot[ing] sufficient financial resources to fulfill its authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national standards and commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio.” The authorizer explains in the narrative that all of the authorizer’s revenues come from the authorizer fees from its schools, which is deposited into the authorizer’s budget through the University of St. Thomas (as verified by the deposit index verification). As previously noted, review of the FY2016-FY2020 budget to actuals spreadsheet finds that there is a surplus at the end of each year, which confirms that that authorizer has sufficient financial resources to fulfill all of its authorizing responsibilities. Additionally, in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report, NACSA states that the authorizer’s budget aligns with its strategic goals and supports effectiveness.
- The AAP, FY2016-FY2020 budget to actuals spreadsheet and capacity change table, which cover the authorizer term to date, demonstrate that the authorizer’s actual resource allocation is commensurate with its stated budget and the needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools. For example, the AAP states that the authorizer will allocate at least 0.17 FTE per school in order to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools and the capacity change table indicates that throughout the authorizer term to date, the authorizer has allocated between 0.17 and 0.3 FTE per school.

- The authorizer allocates resources to achieve nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically NACSA’s Principles and Standards) and revises its budgets as necessary. For example, as indicated above, in SY2016, the authorizer increased its budget and added a full-time Program Coordinator in anticipation of opening two additional schools, which is reflected in the personnel salaries and benefits category in the FY2016-FY2020 budget to actuals spreadsheet in FY2016. Additionally, the authorizer aligns its own practices with three of NACSA’s Principles and Standards. For example, in the narrative, UST identifies NACSA’s standard for “deploy[ing] funds effectively and efficiently with the public’s interest in mind,” and explain that as part of the greater university, it benefits from in-kind donations in areas such as faculty time and expertise and staff development and training opportunities, which allows them to effectively allocate resources and funds toward authorizing responsibilities. Furthermore, in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report, NACSA indicates that the authorizer’s budget reflects its desire to expand staff in relation to portfolio growth, demonstrating that it revises its budgets as necessary.

Key Evidence:

- A.6 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A6-1 FY2016-FY2020 Budget to Actuals
- A6-2 Deposit Index Verification
- A2-2 FY2016 St. Thomas Statement of Expenditures
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- A3-5 Capacity Change Table
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently implements a policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.

- The authorizer has a conflict of interest policy that is included as Attachment C in the AAP and it outlines steps taken to identify and address conflicts of interest. For example, the policy states that CAB members who have an actual identified conflict of interest will be excluded from deliberating and voting on any issues related to the charter school with which there is a conflict. Additionally, completed conflict of interest forms for application reviewers in 2016 demonstrate that the policy is intentionally implemented, as application reviewers are required to disclose any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- Aforementioned completed conflict of interest forms for application reviewers in 2016 demonstrate that the authorizer avoids conflicts of interest that might affect its capacity to make objective, merit-based application decisions (e.g., involvement in school's performance). For example, the form states that its purpose is to identify real or apparent conflicts of interest and determine whether they are significant enough to prohibit the evaluator from participation. Additionally, in the authorizer interview, authorizing staff explained that renewal applications are reviewed by internal UST staff (e.g., authorizing staff, CAB members), who are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- In the AAP, the authorizer states that a conflict of interest form must be completed by application reviewers. As indicated above, completed conflict of interest forms for application reviewers were provided, demonstrating that the authorizer has successfully implemented its conflict of interest policy. Additionally, review of a screenshot of authorizer orientation materials (including the conflict of interest policy) and screenshots of calendar invites and emails from the authorizer to an incoming CAB member shows that the authorizer shared and discussed the policy with the incoming CAB member.
- As noted, the authorizer provided completed conflict of interest forms for new school application reviewers in 2016 that confirm that the authorizer ensures that application review and decision-making processes are free of conflicts of interest and that it requires full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between reviewers or decision-makers and applicants. For example, one form indicates that the application reviewer discussed special education and English Language Learner (ELL) programming with a member of the applicant team, but did not receive any payment or other type of personal gain and did not have further communication. Therefore, an actual conflict of interest did not exist and the reviewer was allowed to continue.
- Review of completed conflict of interest forms for new school application reviewers in 2016 finds that the authorizer's implementation of its policy has successfully prevented or resolved conflicts of interest in a timely, fair and appropriate manner. For example, a 2016 application timeline overview for Carroll High School shows that evaluators received materials on January 6 with reviews needing to be completed by January 20. It also shows that they were asked to submit completed forms prior to beginning the review, which was verified by review of completed conflict of interest forms. Review of completed forms also indicates that no conflicts of interest were identified.
- During the evaluation, MDE did not inquire about a specific conflict of interest.

- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed both that they are familiar with the authorizer’s conflict of interest policy and that they have not experienced an authorizer’s conflict of interest. During the school leader interviews, all participants affirmed that UST has a conflict of interest policy and noted that they have not experienced a conflict of interest with the authorizer. They added that the authorizer is very deliberate and thoughtful around avoiding conflicts of interest through its policy.

Key Evidence:

- A.7 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A7-1 UST Conflict of Interest Policy
- A7-2 UST Conflict of Interest Form
- A7-3 UST Conflict of Interest Policy Example
- A7-Confirmation of Dean COI Orientation
- UST Application Evaluator Conflict of Interest Questionnaires
- Carroll High School Application Timeline Overview, 2016
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter School Leader Interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

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

- In the conflict of interest policy, which is included in the AAP as Attachment C, the authorizer demonstrates ensuring school autonomy, stating that it does not operate or manage schools and instead focuses on its primary authorizing function to evaluate and oversee the academic, financial and organizational health of its schools. Additionally, the authorizer ensures school autonomy in sections 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4 of its charter contracts. For example, Section 11.2 states that the authorizer has no authority, control, power, or administrative or financial responsibility over the school.
- Through the AAP and charter contracts, the authorizer establishes and recognizes the schools' authority over academics, financials and operations and respects the school's authority over the schools' day-to-day operations. For example, as indicated previously, Section 11.2 of the charter contracts states that the authorizer has no authority, control, power or administrative or financial responsibility over the school and Section 11.4 states that the school assumes full responsibility for its activities and operations.
- The authorizer's practice aligns with policy. Per the AAP, the authorizer provides autonomy to its schools in exchange for accountability for performance outcomes aligned with its accountability framework, and does not operate or manage schools. Documentation such as emails between the authorizer and its schools demonstrates that it upholds and respects schools' autonomy. For example, a March 2020 email from the authorizer to its schools shows that while schools are required by the state to post distance learning plans on their websites, the authorizer offers a sample distance learning plan template as an example, but affirms that it is not requiring schools to use a specific format. Additionally, review of complaint responses finds that the authorizer aligns with its policy and upholds school autonomy. For example, one complaint notes concerns about St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists in 2018 and in the authorizer's response, it refers the complainant back to the school's grievance policy and indicates that based on its review of the grievance policy and steps taken by the complainant and the school, it finds that the school followed its policy and no violation occurred.
- The authorizer's policy and contracts align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically, NACSA's Principles and Standards) as they ensure autonomy over areas such as governance, personnel, school vision and culture, programming and budgeting (as seen in charter contracts). In the narrative, the authorizer states that this is one way in which NACSA indicates authorizers can uphold school autonomy (which is one of NACSA's principles). For example, as mentioned, Section 11.2 of the charter contracts states that the authorizer has no authority, control, power or administrative or financial responsibility over the school and Section 11.4 states that the school assumes full responsibility for its activities and operations. Additionally, in NACSA's 2017 evaluation report, it states that UST authorizing staff clearly understands and respects charter school autonomies, reporting requirements for schools are not overly burdensome and UST authorizing staff continually work to improve and streamline submission requirements.

- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer preserves the autonomy of its charter schools' boards over policy matters related to operating the school. Additionally, 100 percent of respondents replied that they felt the authorizer supported their schools' autonomy over the past five years. During the school leader interviews, all participants strongly affirmed that the authorizer emphasizes and preserves the autonomy of its charter schools. When asked, participants stated that the authorizer regularly demonstrates and communicates its commitment to school autonomy. For example, participants explained that the authorizer will offer resources and trainings through UST, but clearly state that schools are not obligated to use the resources or attend the trainings and will not be penalized if they choose not to accept. Additionally, participants stated that the authorizer has a diverse portfolio of schools that encompass a wide variety of learning approaches and foci and works with each school to make sure they are supported in executing a successful school model, but never tells a school what they should do.

Key Evidence:

- A.8 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- A7-1 UST Conflict of Interest Policy
- A8-1 Contract Template New School
- A8-2 Contract Template Renewing School
- A8-3 Sampling of Email Communications
- A8-4 Board Accountability Plan Presentation
- A8-5 UST School of Education Presentation
- A8-6 2018 Orientation Slides
- A8-7 2019 Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Presentation
- 19.02-25 St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists Complaint Response Letter
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter School Leader Interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

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

- According to the AAP and the FY2016 to FY2019 annual reports, the authorizer conducts annual self-evaluations in three ways: CAB surveys; staff evaluations; and policy, procedure and operations reviews. Documentation such as the 2017 NACSA evaluation report, completed 2018 NACSA Quality Practices Project (QPP) self-evaluation, CAB presentation materials between FY2016 and FY2019 and a sample staff annual review demonstrate that the authorizer regularly evaluates its internal ability to oversee the portfolio of charter schools. For example, CAB presentation materials from October 2019 include a discussion of the authorizer's progress over multiple years towards organizational goals established in its strategic plan, with one of the goals being to solidify the authorizer's infrastructure.
- Self-evaluations are intentional and used to build the authorizer's capacity, infrastructure and practices to oversee its portfolio of charter schools. Review of documentation such as CAB presentation materials and an authorizer staff retreat agenda shows that the authorizer regularly (annually) discussed its progress toward organizational goals established in its strategic plan and used results from self-evaluations to inform continuous improvement efforts. For example, the authorizer engaged in a strategic planning process in 2016 (as seen in CAB presentation materials) in which it identified strengths and weaknesses and established three main organizational goals, including one to solidify its infrastructure. CAB presentation materials between FY2016-FY2019 show that the strategic plan and progress toward the main organizational goals were regularly discussed.
- Documentation such as self-evaluations, memos, emails, project plans and presentation materials demonstrate that the authorizer develops and implements continuous improvement plans to address findings of self-evaluations. For example, in the 2017 NACSA evaluation report, NACSA identifies the authorizer's performance framework as an area of improvement. A subsequent memo from NACSA to the authorizer defines a series of recommendations for strengthening the performance framework (e.g., considering the establishment of some absolute academic performance standards or expectations) and a project plan shows that the authorizer defined action steps (e.g., review other authorizer performance frameworks) and deadlines for revising and finalizing an updated performance framework.
- In the narrative, the authorizer states that it evaluates its work regularly against nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically NACSA's Principles and Standards) and implements continuous improvement plans that result in more effective authorizing practices. For example, as noted above, based on findings and recommendations from NACSA's 2017 evaluation, the authorizer created a project plan (seen in documentation) in which it defined action steps and deadlines for improving its performance framework. Additionally, documentation such as CAB presentation materials, a completed QPP self-evaluation, the 2017 NACSA evaluation report and a new school application crosswalk confirm that the authorizer evaluated its work against NACSA's Principles and Standards regularly (at least annually) over the current authorizer term.

- In the narrative, the authorizer reports that it has multiple means of using reflective practices to maintain an organizational focus on purposeful improvement and provides four examples over the contract term. For example, as previously indicated, NACSA's 2017 evaluation report identified the authorizer's performance framework as an area of improvement and documentation (e.g., a memo from NACSA to the authorizer in which it identified recommendations for how to improve the performance framework and a project plan defining action steps and timelines for revising and finalizing the updated performance framework) demonstrates that the authorizer reflected on the results of the evaluation report and made intentional steps toward purposeful improvement of the performance framework.

Key Evidence:

- A.9 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- A9-1 Sample CAB Self-Evaluation Document
- A9-2 Quality Practice Project CAB Self Evaluation Document
- A9-3 CAB Presentation 5.20.20
- A9-4 Dana Peterson Annual Review Self Review SY2020
- A9-5 Team Retreat Agenda SY2018
- A9-6 NACSA Evaluation Framework Memo
- A9-6.1 NACSA Contract Review Documentation
- A9-7 New School Application Crosswalk
- A9-8 Data Working Group Presentation 7.27.20
- A9-9 2017 Project management Plan for Refresh
- A1-04 CAB Presentation 12.2.15
- A1-05 CAB Strategic Planning Presentation 4.27.16
- A2-6 CAB Presentation 10.16.19
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- A5-2017.11.27 CAB Meeting Presentation Slides
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 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 4-Exemplary

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

- Review of documentation finds that the authorizer engages with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice. For example, the authorizer is a board member of the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) meetings, as verified by the AAP and MACSA board meeting minutes between August 2019 and August 2020. Furthermore, the authorizer is a member of MACSA's effective practices committee, as evidenced by a 2020 effective practices committee proposal, in which the committee outlines three formats on how they can identify and share best practices with other authorizers in Minnesota.
- The authorizer regularly shares best practices with and/or provides technical assistance to other authorizers both locally and nationally (at NACSA conferences). For example, as noted, MACSA's effective practices committee (of which the authorizer is a member) created a proposal in 2020 which outlines how best practices will be identified and shared. Additionally, emails, presentation materials and screenshots between the authorizer and other authorizers such as Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods [ACNW]), the Minnesota Guild, the Minnesota Office of Charter Authorizing (MOChA) and the Illinois Network of Charter Schools show that the authorizer shared documentation such as its onboarding framework, accountability systems and a school support needs survey between 2016 and 2020. Additionally, an email between the authorizer and Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) shows that the authorizer has served on PUC's Advisory Council since 2018.
- Communication between the authorizer and other authorizers demonstrates how its assistance has been sought out. For example, as discussed above, the authorizer shared documentation (as seen in emails) such as its onboarding framework, accountability systems and a school support needs survey with these authorizers in response to specific requests for these items. Additionally, as previously mentioned, an authorizing staff member has served on PUC's Advisory Council since 2018, as evidenced by an email between the authorizer and PUC. Furthermore, an SY2019-20 charter school evaluator agreement between an authorizing staff member and ACNW shows that it was contracted by ACNW to support processes such as charter school evaluations, renewal site visits, new school application reviews, board meeting observations, etc.

Key Evidence:

- A.10 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- A10-1 Effective Practice Proposed Format
- A10-2 MACSA Meeting Minutes SY2019-2020
- A10-3 Sojourner Truth Observations
- A10-4 Nelson Mandela Academy Rubric
- A10-5 World Learner Email Request
- A10-6 Resources to MOChA
- A10-6 World Learner Site Visit Summary
- A10-7 Resources to Audubon
- A10-8 Resources to Illinois Network
- A10-11 PUC Advisory Council Notice
- A10-12 Osprey Agreement
- A10-SY2016 Resource Sharing NACSA Handout
- A10-SY2016 Resource Sharing Screenshot
- A10-SY2017 NACSA Special Ed Workshop Sharing Resources
- A10-SY2017 Resource Sharing with NACSA Cohort 6
- A10-SY2018 New School Opening Checklist Collaboration Emails
- A10-SY2019 Authorizer Conference Follow-Up Email RTO Sharing
- A10-SY2019 Authorizer Conference Presentation Sharing RTO Slide
- Authorizer Interview, September 23, 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 3-Commendable

Finding: The authorizer regularly complies with the majority of reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota statutes.

- According to MDE’s MAPES compliance data spreadsheet, since the start of the current term, the authorizer was 97 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin including: MDE required training; statement of income and expenditures; new school affidavits; supplemental affidavits; merger charter contracts; new/renewed charter contracts; change in authorizers, and authorizer annual reports. More specifically, the MAPES compliance data spreadsheet indicates that the authorizer received zero percent in the merger charter contract category because the contract was not received by the statutory deadline (within ten business days of execution).

Key Evidence:

- A.11 Narrative
- MAPES Compliance Data Spreadsheet – University of St. Thomas

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

MAPES Performance Measures A Rating for University of St. Thomas is 3.75.

Performance Measures A: Rating Drivers

- The authorizer has clear organizational goals and associated timelines that are aligned with its authorizing mission and Minnesota charter school statutes.
- The authorizing staff and CAB members demonstrate extensive experience and expertise in areas such as academics, operations, finance and law.
- The authorizer consistently and strongly preserves and honors the autonomy of its portfolio of schools while also providing support and guidance.
- The authorizer consistently maintains a budget that is sufficient to oversee and monitor its portfolio of schools.
- The authorizer is committed to promoting high-quality authorizing practices as evidenced by its active participation and membership in MACSA and NACSA and regular sharing of best practices with both in-state and out-of-state authorizers.

Performance Measures A: Recommendations

- Ensure that professional development attended by authorizing staff is measured and evaluated and that the evaluations are documented.

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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently implements clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals and its decisions and resulting actions consistently align with its stated approval and process standards and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools.

- The authorizer has a comprehensive application process (outlined in the AAP) that includes clear application questions and guidance and fair, transparent procedures and timelines as well as rigorous criteria. The new school application includes questions and criteria regarding essential areas such as school foundation; academic success; governance and operations; budget and financial sustainability; and a pre-operational action plan. Additionally, in the new school application, the authorizer notes that applicants must first submit a completed letter of intent (LOI) form. Following a pre-application meeting and interview, applicants are notified whether or not they are invited to submit a full application. The application process also includes applicant interviews after the full application is submitted and the CAB makes recommendations to the Dean of the School of Education and the President for final approval. Additionally, review of the new school evaluation rubric (included in the AAP) finds that the authorizer has rigorous criteria and ratings (e.g., meets the standard, partially meets the standard). For example, in order to meet the standard (rating level 3) for a criterion, the applicant's response must reflect a thorough understanding of the given criterion.
- The authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools, as seen in documentation such as completed application consensus rubrics, recommendation reports for Carroll High School and Northern Voices and communications between the authorizer and these two applicants. For example, the compiled evaluation rubrics and recommendation reports for the two applicants identify strengths and areas of improvement that inform the overall recommendations and the recommendation reports show that reviewers had significant areas of improvement for each applicant (in academics, finance and operations) which led to a recommendation of denial for both applicants.
- Review of documentation such as the new school application, completed application consensus rubrics and recommendation reports for Carroll High School and Northern Voices, and communications between the authorizer and these two applicants, demonstrate that the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align with its AAP. For example, in the new school application (included in the AAP), the authorizer states that all applicants will receive notification and feedback (regardless of whether an application is approved or denied) and emails between the authorizer and the two applicants confirm that notification and feedback explaining their denials were provided.

- The authorizer's new charter school application and decision process aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (more specifically, NACSA's Principles and Standards), as evidenced by NACSA's 2017 evaluation report for the authorizer. In it, NACSA identifies a key strength as being that new school application decisions focus on rigorous evaluation of academic, financial and organizational plans. Additionally, NACSA finds that the authorizer has clear and transparent application materials and reasonable process timelines, as well as application questions and evaluation criteria that generally align with application components recommended by NACSA.
- The application and decision process reflects a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. In the AAP, the authorizer states that the new school application process is designed to fully align with NACSA's Principles and Standards in order to ensure that only applications that are most likely to produce successful, high-quality schools are approved. Additionally, in the AAP, the authorizer indicates that in order to ensure its new school application process is rigorous and promotes high-quality charter schools, it reviewed the processes of authorizers recognized by NACSA as having high-quality application processes (e.g., State University of New York, District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, Denver Public Schools and the Indianapolis Mayor's Office). Review of the new school application finds that it asks for comprehensive academic, operational and financial plans from the applicant and the evaluation rubric outlines a thorough review and rating of the applicant's academic, operational and financial plans, with evaluators providing ratings (0-3) for each criteria.
- As noted above, according to the AAP and the narrative, the new school application has been in place over the contract term and the authorizer only accepted new school applications in SY2015-16. The authorizer explains in the narrative that between SY2016-17 and SY2018-19, it chose not to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for new schools for four main reasons: (1) the closure of Sankofa Underground North Academy after only one year of operations; (2) the large number of transfer school applications; (3) the desire to grow at a manageable rate; and (4) a concern about charter school saturation in the Twin Cities metro area. The narrative adds that based on the authorizer's research into effective new school application and opening practices (both locally and nationally) and reflection on lessons learned, the new school application and process were amended in SY2019-20 (as seen in the updated new school application) to include changes such as an extended timeline for application submission and approval (aligned with the state CSP grant timeline) and a reorganization of content to match key oversight areas. The authorizer also notes that while the RFP process was opened in SY2019-20, no new school applications were received.
- During the school leader interviews, all participants indicated that they have not gone through the authorizer's new school application process, as their schools all transferred into the authorizer's portfolio. However, when asked about the new school application criteria and process, they stated that the authorizer is transparent about the process, noting that all new school application materials and information is available on the authorizer's website. They added that the criteria and process for new schools are similar to those for transfer (change in authorizer) schools, which are rigorous and comprehensive. Participants also stated that the authorizer has a very rigorous decision-making process that includes high standards, which they believe promote the growth of high-quality schools.
- The authorizer's decisions have resulted in high-quality charter schools, as demonstrated by its schools' consistent inclusion on MDE's high-quality charter schools and expansion-replication initial eligibility lists between 2016-2020. More specifically, over the review term, eight schools in the authorizer's portfolio have been identified by MDE as high-quality, with some schools achieving this status for multiple years. For example, Twin Cities German Immersion School has been identified as a high-quality charter school each year from 2016-2020, while Face to Face Academy has been identified by MDE as a high-quality school in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Additionally, Twin Cities Academy is included on these lists from 2016-2019.

Key Evidence:

- B.1 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- B1-1 NACSA Core Performance Framework and Guidance
- B1-2 MDE CSP Grant Application Cycles
- B1-3 CAB Meeting Minutes, February 3, 2016
- Carroll High School Application Materials, Recommendations and Communications
- Northern Voices Application Materials, Recommendations and Communications
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently implements clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate existing charter school expansion requests and other interim changes and its decisions and resulting actions regarding charter school expansion and other interim changes consistently align with its stated approval and process standards and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools.

- The authorizer has a comprehensive application process for expansions, change in authorizer and interim changes that include clear application questions and guidance and fair, transparent procedures, timelines and rigorous criteria. For example, the authorizer's expansion application must be submitted by the first business day in June and includes questions and criteria in essential areas such as demonstration of need and projected enrollment; evaluation of academic and other performance areas; evaluation of legal and fiscal performance; evaluation of governance and management; and key components of the proposed pre-kindergarten/preschool instructional program (if applying for a pre-K/preschool expansion). Additionally, review of the authorizer's ready to open processes finds that they are comprehensive and include rigorous criteria, timelines and benchmarks. For example, the authorizer identifies eight areas of critical importance as the primary ready to open benchmarks (e.g., enrollment, funding, transportation, etc.). Finally, review of the authorizer's change in authorizer application shows that the process requires a letter of intent, a full application and a site visit.
- The authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across its portfolio of charter schools. For example, in the AAP, the authorizer outlines steps for the expansion process (e.g., application submission, request for additional information, application evaluation, etc.) and documentation was provided for Hiawatha Academies (2018) and Global Academy (2019) that shows they submitted full applications, responded to requests for additional information and received completed evaluation rubrics (aligned with rubrics in the AAP), which informed the CAB board's recommendations (as seen in CAB board meeting minutes).
- The authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align with its AAP. The interim accountability processes and rubrics are included in the AAP and outline process steps and criteria for expansions, change in authorizer and interim changes. For example, the AAP states that a decision around change in authorizer requests will be made based on a letter of intent, a site visit and a full application. Documentation such as letters of intent, change in authorizer applications and site visits for Face to Face Academy (2016) and Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (2018) demonstrate that they completed each step and both were recommended for approval (as seen in CAB board meeting minutes), thus demonstrating that the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align with its AAP.

- The authorizer’s interim accountability processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically NACSA’s Principles and Standards), as seen in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report of the authorizer. For example, NACSA finds that the authorizer’s changes in authorizer application decisions appropriately focus primarily on the school’s track record of performance and its expansion application is streamlined in order to allow high-performing schools to more easily apply to serve additional students.
- The interim accountability processes reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. For example, in the expansion application, the authorizer states that past performance is a strong indicator of future performance, thus the review process is based on clear and comprehensive academic, financial and organizational criteria and includes an internal examination of historical information and data (e.g., annual reports). Additionally, the ready to open criteria identified in the AAP are comprehensive and rigorous and include criteria for critical areas such as the learning program, financial management/oversight and governance/operations. Furthermore, review of Hiawatha Academies’ 2018 pre-K expansion application materials and documentation finds that it received a “2” rating (partially meets standard) in 11 out of 19 categories and despite being an existing school in the authorizer’s portfolio, was recommended for denial, citing capacity concerns (as seen in August 2018 CAB board meeting minutes), demonstrating that the authorizer has high expectations and promotes high-quality charter schools.
- The authorizer has implemented its interim accountability processes as defined in the AAP over the review term; thus, Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date as confirmed by documentation such as the AAP, expansion application and materials, change in authorizer application and materials and ready to open materials.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer has a clear application, review process, timeline and approval criteria for site and/or grade expansion requests and early learning program requests. Additionally, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the transparency of the decision-making process. 100 percent of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that for change in authorizer requests, the application, review process, timeline and approval criteria were clear. Furthermore, in the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 70 percent of respondents indicated that their school applied for a site and/or grade expansion within the past five years and 71 percent of respondents stated that the school’s site and/or grade expansion replicated a high-quality charter school. During the school leader interviews, several participants discussed their experiences going through the change in authorizer application process and the early learning program application process, stating that the processes, criteria and expectations were very clear and were articulated by the authorizer throughout the process. They added that the processes are extremely rigorous and robust and the authorizer provided transparency throughout the process, including the decision-making process, which they note includes the CAB.
- The authorizer’s decisions have resulted in high-quality charter schools, as demonstrated by its schools’ consistent inclusion on MDE’s high-quality charter schools and expansion-replication initial eligibility lists between 2016-2020. More specifically, over the review term, eight schools in the authorizer’s portfolio have been identified by MDE as high-quality, with some schools achieving this status for multiple years. For example, Twin Cities German Immersion School has been identified as a high-quality charter school each year from 2016-2020, while Face to Face Academy has been identified by MDE as a high-quality school in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Additionally, Twin Cities Academy is included on these lists from 2016-2019.

Key Evidence:

- B.2 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- Cornerstone Montessori Transfer Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- Face to Face Transfer Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- Spero Academy Transfer and Expansion Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- Global Academy Pre-K Expansion Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- Hiawatha Academies Pre-K Expansion Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- Hiawatha Academies Site Expansion Application Materials, Documentation, CAB Board Meeting Minutes and Communications
- SUN Academy Ready to Open Documentation
- UST Record of Interim Accountability Decisions
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 3-Commendable

Finding: The authorizer regularly executes contracts that clearly define material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer.

- Most contracts in the authorizer's portfolio of charter schools meet statutory requirements, as evidenced by MDE statutory compliance review rubrics, statutory crosswalks and the MAPES compliance data spreadsheet. More specifically, the MAPES compliance data spreadsheet indicates that 89 percent of the contracts in the authorizer's portfolio of charter schools meet current statutory requirements. However, while MDE's renewal contract compliance review rubric for Metro Deaf School was updated on November 10, 2020 and indicates that Metro Deaf School's contract is in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(4), the school's bylaws included in the contract are not compliant with Minnesota Statutes (specifically section 124E.07, subdivision 5 and chapter 13D, Open Meeting Law). In the authorizer review and comment submission form, the authorizer states that it is working with Metro Deaf School to have the amended bylaws approved, and will complete the contract update following approval; however, at the time of the review, the bylaws are not compliant per MDE.
- A review of the authorizer's contracts with its charter schools shows that the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer are clearly defined. For example, Section 8 of the contract details the authorizer's duties (e.g., provide ongoing oversight). Additionally, the contract states that the school will file an annual report with the authorizer and the Commissioner that is consistent with the provisions set forth in state statute. Furthermore, in NACSA's 2017 evaluation of the authorizer, it finds that the authorizer's contracts appropriately define the material elements of a school's program.
- The authorizer's contracting practices are consistent across the authorizer's portfolio of charter schools, as evidenced by review of individual school contracts. In the narrative (and as individual school contracts and contract templates confirm), the authorizer states that it uses a contract template as the basis for each school, which can be seen in the consistency of contract language when reviewing individual school contracts. The authorizer adds in the narrative that while all schools have similar categories in terms of performance expectations, two schools (Metro Deaf School and Spero Academy) have more school-specific templates, as their student populations consist of over 90 percent special education students. Face to Face Academy also has some modifications in its contract, as it serves over-aged and under-credited students. A Metro Deaf School contract negotiation example outlines how the authorizer and Metro Deaf School collaborated to customize a more school-specific contract. For example, in one email, the authorizer identifies requested action steps from the school such as rewording a behavior accountability goal and a post-secondary readiness accountability goal.
- Review of the MAPES compliance data spreadsheet indicates that contracts were executed no later than the first day of the renewal period.

- The authorizer executes contract amendments for material changes to current school plans when necessary and not in lieu of conducting renewal evaluations. In the AAP, the authorizer states that contracts are typically updated during the renewal process as it strives to maintain consistency over the contract term, but acknowledges that contract amendments are sometimes necessary and outlines a five-step contract amendment process. In the narrative, the authorizer indicates that it has not yet had to employ the contract amendment process as schools have not requested substantive modifications, but it has had schools request changes to their annual testing schedule. The authorizer explains that in these instances, they discuss the implications of the change with the school and determine whether the request is reasonable. A review of NWEA modification notices from the authorizer to Academia Cesar Chavez (ACC) in 2015 and Community of Peace Academy in 2017 finds that the authorizer determined that the schools' request to change the NWEA testing schedule from twice a year to once a year was reasonable and did not violate any contractual provisions.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer's contracts have clear provisions and terms, includes terms the school negotiated for and clearly outlines the responsibilities of both the school and the authorizer. During the school leader interviews, all participants consistently verified that the authorizer executes contracts that clearly define material terms and the rights and responsibilities of both the school and the authorizer. They noted that there are sections within the contract that specifically identify the school's and authorizer's responsibilities (e.g., legal compliance, oversight). Additionally, participants explained that during the contracting process, the authorizer worked collaboratively with the school to define performance measures that meet the authorizer's expectations while also taking the school's academic focus and model into consideration.
- In the narrative, the authorizer explains that in 2017, UST legal counsel conducted an in-depth review of the contract and also engaged NACSA to make recommendations for strengthening the contract (as evidenced by a memo from NACSA). As a result, it made a number of changes: 1) adding further detail to Section 3 that describes the school program; 2) adding timelines for submission of modifications to the Articles of Incorporation and proposed changes to the school's bylaws; 3) adding a provision related to Affiliated Building Companies; 4) adding further detail related to a school's location and any potential location changes; 5) adding governance provisions regarding affiliations, co-mingling, student entry and exit and right to remain; 6) adding financial management provisions related to procedures and controls and no encumbrances, transactions with affiliates and third-party providers; 7) adding additional conflict of interest protections; and 8) adding a provision related to English Learners (ELs). The authorizer notes that the updated contract template went into effect during 2018 for schools going through renewal and change in authorizer and continue to be updated as schools come up for renewal and apply for a change in authorizer.
- While the aforementioned changes have been made, review of school contracts and the evidence provided above demonstrate that Level 2 indicators have been met for at least four years, but not for the authorizer term to date. As previously mentioned, not all schools in the authorizer's portfolio of schools currently meet statutory requirements. More specifically, Metro Deaf School's renewal contract which was executed in June 2020 does not meet all current statutory requirements, as evidenced by MDE's updated renewal contract compliance review rubric for the Metro Deaf School dated November 10, 2020.

Key Evidence:

- B.3 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- School Contracts and Contract Cover Letters
- MAPES Compliance Data Spreadsheet – University of St. Thomas
- NACSA Review of UST Contract
- Metro Deaf School Negotiation Example
- ACC NWEA Test Modification Letter SY2016
- Community of Peace Academy NWEA Test Modification Letter SY2018
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- 20.11-10 UST-MDS Renewal Contract Compliance Review Rubric
- 20.05-08 Authorizer Review and Comment Form
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

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

- According to a review of statutory crosswalks, MDE statutory compliance review rubrics and contracts between the authorizer and its schools, all current contracts meet current statutory performance standards. Additionally, each school contract includes a performance framework that outlines goals for academic, financial and operational performance and measures progress via a four-point scale.
- The authorizer's performance framework is incorporated into each school's contract and defines clear, measurable and attainable academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards via a four-point scale, as well as consequences for not meeting performance outcomes and standards. For example, the contractual performance framework identifies academic measures such as the school's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) proficiency data, with a "4" or "Exceeds standard" rating defined as exceeding the comparison group by more than five percentage points. Additionally, all reviewed contracts include the authorizer's range of interventions policy, which identifies the triggers (e.g., failure to meet multiple performance targets) and consequences (e.g., school improvement plan) for not meeting performance outcomes and standards.
- Performance outcomes and standards are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools, as evidenced by review of individual school contracts, which contain similar performance standards. For example, all school contracts include academic measures (e.g., performance on the North Star Excellence and Equity System, at least one mission-specific academic goal); financial measures (e.g., findings on the annual financial audit); and operational measures (e.g., compliance).
- Contractual performance standards align with the performance standards of its AAP. A review of the individual school contracts and the AAP shows that the contracts have the same performance standards in place as are defined in the AAP.
- The authorizer holds charter schools accountable to academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards defined in the contract. For example, intervention notices from the authorizer to some of its schools show that the authorizer identifies deficiencies (e.g., not meeting contractual academic expectations) and defines follow-up requirements (e.g., develop a school improvement plan). Additionally, in its 2017 evaluation report, NACSA stated that the authorizer holds schools to high standards for academic, financial and organizational performance and intervenes when necessary.

- The authorizer’s oversight processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically NACSA’s Principles and Standards), as seen in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report of the authorizer. As indicated previously, NACSA identifies a key strength as being that the authorizer holds schools accountable to high standards for academic, financial and organizational performance, and intervenes when necessary, thus demonstrating that the authorizer holds its schools accountable and enforces consequences when necessary. Additionally, in the narrative, the authorizer indicates that the academic template goals are aligned with best practices identified by NACSA (as verified by review of NACSA’s Core Performance Framework and Guidance). For example, NACSA recommends including mission-specific academic goals, which can be found in the authorizer’s individual school contracts.
- The authorizer’s performance standards reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. In the narrative, the authorizer explains that while it had a comprehensive performance framework, it enhanced the framework based on feedback from NACSA (as verified by NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report) and an internal review of best practices (as seen in a June 2018 Evaluation Refresh PowerPoint) in order to strengthen the expectations for its schools. For instance, in the updated performance framework, the authorizer added a measure regarding college and career readiness. A June 2018 memo from MDE to the authorizer indicates that the updated performance framework was approved and added to the AAP and the authorizer began to implement it for transfer schools and renewing schools beginning in July 2018 and will continue to implement it for all schools. Additionally, in the AAP, the authorizer states that the performance outcomes and standards are designed to meet/exceed the expectations set forth in Minnesota Statute.
- Both the original performance framework which was part of the AAP at the beginning of the authorizer term and the revised performance framework that was implemented beginning in July 2018 have comprehensive performance outcomes and standards in academics, finance and operations. This, coupled with the comments above, demonstrate that Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the contractual performance standards are clear, measurable, attainable and time-bound and that the authorizer holds their schools accountable. As indicated above, during the school leader interviews, participants explained that during the contracting process, the authorizer worked collaboratively with the school to define performance measures that meet the authorizer’s expectations while also taking the school’s academic focus and model into consideration. They added that the contractual performance standards are clear, rigorous and measurable and the authorizer regularly assesses their progress against the performance standards through mechanisms such as quarterly reports, annual reports, site visits, compliance checks, etc.
- The authorizer’s practices have resulted in high-quality charter schools, as demonstrated by its schools’ consistent inclusion on MDE’s high-quality charter schools and expansion-replication initial eligibility lists between 2016-2020. More specifically, over the review term, eight schools in the authorizer’s portfolio have been identified by MDE as high-quality, with some schools achieving this status for multiple years. For example, Twin Cities German Immersion School has been identified as a high-quality charter school each year from 2016-2020, while Face to Face Academy has been identified by MDE as a high-quality school in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Additionally, Twin Cities Academy is included on these lists from 2016-2019.

Key Evidence:

- B.4 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- School Contracts
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- UST Evaluation Refresh PowerPoint (June 2018)
- UST Terms and Definitions Guide
- ACC Notice of Level 3 Intervention
- HOPE Release from Intervention
- PIM Notice of Level 1 Intervention
- Hiawatha Academies Notice of Level 1 Intervention
- B3-02 St. Thomas Contract Template Updated
- B3-03 St. Thomas Contract Original
- B9-01 SUN Academy Notice of Revocation Level 5
- B9-01.1 SUN Academy Notice of Intervention Level 1
- B9-01.2 SUN Academy Notice of Charter Closure
- 18.06-27 AAP Update – UST Authorizing Program Manual
- NACSA Core Performance Framework and Guidance
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 2020

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 4-Exemplary

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

- Review of the narrative and the authorizer's oversight plan (outlined in the AAP and in school contracts) shows that it has clear, comprehensive processes for oversight and monitoring. For example, the oversight plan indicates that the authorizer conducts oversight and monitoring activities such as a formal site visit in the fall and an informal site visit in the spring, a board packet review and an annual school evaluation using the evaluation rubric included in each school's contract, which describes how each activity is executed.
- The oversight plan, which consists of activities such as site visits, board packet reviews and annual school evaluations, includes the evaluation of academic, financial and operational performance (including compliance with applicable law). For example, a review of site visit write-ups finds that site visits are focused on collecting evidence for and responding to three main questions: 1) is the student learning program a success; 2) does the school exhibit strong financial health; and 3) is the organization effective and well run.
- The authorizer's oversight and monitoring activities align with its stated oversight and monitoring processes in its AAP. For example, the oversight plan in the AAP indicates that the authorizer will conduct activities such as site visits, board packet reviews, quarterly reports and annual school evaluations and documentation such as completed site visit write-ups, board packet filings, quarterly reports and annual school evaluation rubrics, demonstrate that the authorizer fulfilled these responsibilities.
- The authorizer's oversight plan and performance framework are included in its AAP and as part of each of its contracts with its schools, demonstrating that oversight and monitoring practices are consistent across its portfolio of charter schools. For example, a reporting flow chart and timeline shows how the authorizer collects information for each of its schools (e.g., site visits in the fall and spring, board packets submitted monthly, quarterly reports due every three months, etc.), which culminates in an annual school evaluation at the end of each year.
- The authorizer's oversight processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically NACSA's Principles and Standards), as seen in NACSA's 2017 evaluation report of the authorizer. In it, NACSA identifies a key strength as being that the authorizer holds schools accountable to high standards for academic, financial and organizational performance. Additionally, in the narrative, the authorizer describes its alignment with NACSA's Principles and Standards. For example, one of NACSA's Principles and Standards is the implementation of a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined by the charter contract and provides the information necessary to make rigorous and standards-based renewal, revocation and intervention decisions. The authorizer asserts that its comprehensive performance framework and oversight plan are included in all of its contracts with its portfolio of schools and through its oversight and monitoring processes, it collects information to inform decisions around renewal, revocation and interventions.

- The authorizer’s processes for ongoing oversight of the portfolio of charter schools reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. As mentioned in B.4, in its 2017 evaluation report, NACSA states that the authorizer demonstrates a clear commitment to providing access and ensuring quality programs for all students and actively monitors schools in these areas. Additionally, the authorizer’s oversight and monitoring processes are driven by the performance frameworks included in the school contracts, which rigorously evaluate the academic, financial and operational performance of schools.
- Documentation such as annual reports, the AAP and the school contracts, which have been in place over the duration of the review term, include the oversight plan, which comprehensively outlines the processes for overseeing and monitoring the charter schools in the areas of academics, finance and operations, thus demonstrating that Level 2 indicators have been met for the authorizer term to date.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer monitors school’s academic, financial and operational performance as outlined in the contract. During the school leader interviews, all participants affirmed that the authorizer regularly monitors and oversees their schools’ performance in academics, operations and finances toward the goals defined in their contracts through mechanisms such as quarterly reports, annual reports, site visits, compliance checks, etc.
- The authorizer’s performance standards, which are monitored through its oversight plan, have resulted in high-quality charter schools, as demonstrated by its schools’ consistent inclusion on MDE’s high-quality charter schools and expansion-replication initial eligibility lists between 2016-2020. More specifically, over the review term, eight schools in the authorizer’s portfolio have been identified by MDE as high-quality, with some schools achieving this status for multiple years. For example, Twin Cities German Immersion School has been identified as a high-quality charter school each year from 2016-2020, while Face to Face Academy has been identified by MDE as a high-quality school in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Additionally, Twin Cities Academy is included on these lists from 2016-2019. Furthermore, NACSA reports in its 2017 evaluation report that the authorizer demonstrates a clear commitment to providing access and ensuring quality programs for all students and actively monitors schools in these areas.

Key Evidence:

- B.5 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- School Contracts
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- UST Reporting Flow Chart and Timeline
- UST Authorizing Functions and Work Flow
- UST Quarterly Report Guidelines (2016-2020)
- UST SY2020 Welcome Email
- Community of Peace Site Visit Documentation (2016-2020)
- Community of Peace Evaluation Rubrics (2016-2020)
- Community of Peace Quarterly Reports (2016-2020)
- Community of Peace Annual Reports (2016, 2020)
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- B9-01 SUN Academy Notice of Revocation Level 5
- B9-01.1 SUN Academy Notice of Intervention Level 1
- B9-01.2 SUN Academy Notice of Charter Closure
- 18.06-27 AAP Update – UST Authorizing Program Manual
- CAB Board Meeting Minutes (February 2018)
- Evidence of NACSA Consulting on Evaluation Rubric
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently follows clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, interventions and/or corrective actions.

- The authorizer implements clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action, as seen in its range of interventions policy (which addresses both interventions and corrective actions) and complaint process policy (included in its AAP). For example, the complaint process policy includes a flow chart that outlines the steps taken when a complaint is received by the authorizer (i.e., authorizer acknowledges receipt of the complaint and notifies the school with a request for follow-up information). The range of intervention policy defines five intervention status levels with examples of triggers and consequences. For instance, a level two intervention (notice of deficiency) may be triggered for failure to meet multiple performance triggers and results in a letter to the school's board and the development of a School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- The authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools and align with its range of interventions policy and complaint process policy in its AAP, as seen in sample intervention notices and documentation of complaints. For example, an email from a parent at Twin Cities Academy identifies concerns with the academic rigor, teacher retention and lack of emphasis on the mission of the school and an email from the authorizer to the parent responds to each of the concerns and notes that questions about the mission of the school should be directed to the school leader. In the response email, the authorizer also requests clarification and further detail from the complainant (as outlined in the complaint process policy); however, the authorizer indicates in the narrative that the complainant did not reply to the request and the complaint was closed. Additionally, sample intervention notices show that the authorizer was consistent in its decisions and resulting actions as aligned with its AAP. For example, a November 2016 notice of intervention (level 1) was issued to Sankofa Underground North (SUN) Academy, citing concerns around enrollment/financial challenges and leadership transitions and identifying next steps (e.g., submit a leadership plan through the close of the school year, submit key financial documents reflecting the school's present financial situation, etc.). A May 2017 notice of revocation (level 5) to SUN Academy indicates that that school had not satisfied the requirements needed to be released from intervention and provided an assessment of the school's progress toward requested action steps (e.g., failure to provide updated financials) as well as ongoing conversations that had occurred. A July 2017 notice of charter closure from the authorizer to MDE indicates that prior to the closure hearing, SUN Academy's Board voted to close the school.

- The authorizer’s decisions made regarding complaints, intervention and corrective action are aligned with data generated under oversight and monitoring practices. For example, the range of interventions policy indicates that signs of weak performance as seen in observations and/or data made during routine monitoring, compliance, performance reviews, etc., may trigger a notice of concern. Documentation such as intervention notices also demonstrate that these decisions are aligned with oversight and monitoring data. For instance, a December 2019 notice of probationary status (level 3) to Academia Cesar Chavez (ACC) states that a notice of concern (level 1) was issued in June 2015 and provides proficiency data to show that the school has had mixed results and has performed below its resident district and demographically comparable schools in math for multiple years, which is triggering an escalation to the notice of probationary status.
- The authorizer’s standards and processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically, NACSA’s Principles and Standards), as evidenced by NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report for the authorizer. For example, in its 2017 evaluation report, NACSA finds that in practice, the authorizer holds schools to high academic, financial and organizational performance standards and intervenes when necessary. Additionally, one of NACSA’s Principles and Standards states that quality authorizers establish and make known to schools at the outset an intervention policy that states the general conditions that may trigger intervention and the types of actions and consequences that may ensue. Review of the authorizer’s contracts with its schools finds that they all include the range of interventions policy, demonstrating that it is shared with schools at the outset.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the authorizer holds their schools accountable and provides clear feedback when there is a concern. During the school leader interviews, all participants reported that the authorizer has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, interventions and/or corrective actions. For example, participants explained that the authorizer has an intervention chart that clearly defines each level of intervention (e.g., notice of concern) as well as potential triggers and required actions. An example was shared during the school leader interviews of a school receiving a notice of concern (as well as verbal communication of the concern by the authorizer at the school’s governing board meeting), which included a deadline for resolution. Once the issue was resolved, the authorizer sent a formal notification of release from the intervention. Additionally, all participants stated that the authorizer has a complaint policy which outlines the process for how complaints are addressed. They noted that in the complaint policy, the authorizer establishes very clear lines of what is and is not within the authorizer’s jurisdiction.

Key Evidence:

- B.6 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- B6-1 Twin Cities German Immersion School Expansion Complaint Emails
- B6-2 Twin Cities Academy Complaint and Response
- B6-3 SPCPA Complaint Response
- B6-4 NACSA Sample Intervention Protocols
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- B4-5 ACC Notice of Level 3 Intervention
- B4-6 HOPE Release from Intervention
- B4-7 PIM Notice of Level 1 Intervention
- B4-8 Hiawatha Notice of Level 1 Intervention
- B9-01 SUN Academy Notice of Revocation Level 5
- B9-01.1 SUN Academy Notice of Intervention Level 1
- B9-01.2 SUN Academy Notice of Charter Closure
- B9-28 Renewal Letter ACC SY2018
- 20.09-29 External Assistance Request, Hiawatha Academies
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently supports its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings.

- The authorizer provides proactive support and technical assistance to its schools, as evidenced by emails, network survey results, school leaders' meeting materials and end of year celebration materials. For example, review of emails from the authorizer to its schools finds that it proactively provided resources in response to COVID-19 developments, such as how to conduct legally compliant board meetings remotely, emotional support for students, etc. Additionally, in the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents affirmed that the authorizer provided support to their schools and 90 percent affirmed that the authorizer provided technical assistance.
- The authorizer provides support and technical assistance in a variety of areas, as seen in documentation such as emails, network survey results, school leaders' meeting materials and end of year celebration materials. For example, during a school leaders' meeting in November 2019, the authorizer had a panel in which best practices around multilingual learner education was shared (as verified by presentation slides). Additionally, as previously mentioned, the authorizer also shared resources in response to COVID-19 developments.
- The authorizer provides support and technical assistance in a manner that preserves school autonomy, as seen in the AAP (and as the narrative confirms), in which the authorizer affirms that participation by UST-authorized charter schools in support, development and technical assistance is optional and will not result in negative consequences for those who do not participate. Additionally, review of emails from the authorizer and its schools finds that the authorizer shares support opportunities and if applicable, the authorizer notes when an opportunity is optional and reiterates that there are no consequences for not participating.
- The authorizer provides support and technical assistance to all of its schools in a consistent manner, as the authorizer extends invitations to opportunities such as school leader meetings and end of year celebrations to all of its schools (as evidenced by emails and meeting materials) and shares opportunities and resources via email (as evidenced by emails from the authorizer to all of its schools and confirmed in the school leader interviews).
- Emails, network survey results, school leaders' meeting materials and end of year celebration materials that span each year of the review term demonstrate that support and technical assistance are regularly offered based on demonstrated need and that they are designed to prevent problems. For example, emails between the authorizer and Hiawatha Academies (HA) from 2018 show that at HA's request, the authorizer assisted them in establishing an account with Accuplacer. Additionally, in the school leader interviews, all participants stated that the authorizer regularly provides support and technical assistance, noting that they can contact the authorizer with questions and/or requests for resources and the authorizer will always respond, whether it is by connecting them with another school or organization as a resource, or by some other means.

- In the AAP, the authorizer states that it is working to create a network across its portfolio of schools that will enable the sharing of best practices, continuous improvement and ongoing learning. Review of emails and presentation materials finds that support and technical assistance provided by the authorizer are designed to promote high-quality charter schools, as the authorizer shares technical assistance around best practices in topics such as mental health, math, special education instruction, special education compliance, etc.

Key Evidence:

- B.7 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- UST Email Update Sample
- UST Network Survey and Results (SY2017, SY2019, SY2020)
- UST School Leaders' Meeting Materials (SY2016-SY2020)
- UST End of Year Celebration Materials (SY2019)
- B7-Cornerstone Math Resources 12.17.2018
- B7-2017 Effective Math Instruction Connection Emails
- B7-2019 CPA HIA Connection 3.21.2019
- B7-Hiawatha Accuplacer Updates (September and December 2018)
- B7-2019 Lynn Connecting Spero to Readings 3.21.2019
- B7-Assistance Chart
- B7-SY2018 Renewal Contract Presentation
- B7-TCGIS Special Education Updates (November 6, 2018; November 16, 2018; November 30, 2018)
- Registration and Invitation Emails (Education for Everyone; Fourth Annual Minnesota Charter School Conference; Teaching Live, Online)
- UST Welcome Back Email, SY2021
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

Finding: The authorizer consistently plans and promotes model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charter schools.

- In the AAP, the authorizer describes an intentional, four-part plan for successful model replication and a five-part plan for dissemination of best practices. For example, one part of the authorizer's plan for dissemination of best practices is to identify best practices locally, statewide and nationally and share with its portfolio of schools through means such as authorizer updates, networking sessions and professional development offerings. In the narrative, the authorizer indicates that networking sessions (such as the school leaders' meetings) are a key part of its strategy for disseminating best practices, as are direct connections between the authorizer and its schools. For example, an April 2019 email from the authorizer that connects two of its schools (St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists [SPCPA] and Twin Cities Academy [TCA]) indicates that SPCPA is interested in learning more about TCA's model and the authorizer provides the connection in order to facilitate sharing.
- In the AAP and the narrative, the authorizer states its commitment not to pressure schools to expand, and instead, be prepared to guide and assist high-quality schools who indicate an interest in these paths (evidenced by expansion application materials, rubrics and communications for Hiawatha Academies and Spero Academy which show that these two schools chose and were approved to expand). But, in the AAP and the narrative, the authorizer also outlines its plan for disseminating best practices. During the authorizer and school leader interviews, authorizing staff and school leaders explained that best practices are often identified and shared during the authorizer's school leaders' meetings as well as through direct connections made by the authorizer between its schools. For example, an email from 2019 between the authorizer, Community of Peace Academy and Hiawatha Academies shows that Community of Peace Academy asked for guidance during a school leader search and the authorizer connected them with Hiawatha Academies, which had recently undergone a successful school leader search and could share best practices about the process.
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 70 percent of respondents stated that the authorizer had identified best or promising practices at their schools and 60 percent of respondents indicated that the authorizer shared promising practices from their school with another school or entity (40 percent of respondents indicated that they were not sure). During the school leader interviews, participants reported that the authorizer polls school leaders on topics that are of interest and last year, multilingual learner education was identified as a topic of interest. As a result, the authorizer included two of its schools who have excelled in multilingual learner education on a panel during a school leaders' meeting in November 2019, who discussed and shared best practices around multilingual learner education (verified by presentation slides).

Key Evidence:

- B.8 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- Hiawatha Academies Expansion Application Materials, Rubrics and Communications
- Spero Academy Expansion Application Materials, Rubrics and Communications
- CAB Board Meeting Minutes (September 2017, June 2020)
- Email Communications (April and November 2019)
- UST School Leaders' Meeting Materials (SY2016-SY2020)
- UST End of Year Celebration Materials (SY2019)
- B7-2017 Effective Math Instruction Connection Emails
- B7-2019 CPA HIA Connection 3.21.2019
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 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 4-Exemplary

- **Finding:** The authorizer consistently implements clear and comprehensive standards and processes to make high stakes renewal and termination decisions and its renewal and termination decisions consistently align with its stated renewal standards and processes and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools.
- In the AAP and school contracts, the authorizer outlines transparent and rigorous standards and processes that allow it to make merit-based renewal and termination decisions based on the school's performance framework. For example, as stated in the AAP, in order to achieve a full five-year renewal, a school must fully satisfy indicators such as receiving an average evaluation score of 2.5 or higher in each renewal application section (academic, financial, governance), receiving a "good standing" rating for all site visits within the past three years, meeting all contract terms, etc. Additionally, during the renewal year as part of the renewal process, the authorizer will conduct a formal site visit in the fall and a follow-up end of contract term visit in the winter.
- Review of the AAP, renewal application materials, evaluations and a summary of renewal decisions demonstrates that the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across its portfolio of charter schools. For example, the AAP states that one indicator of five-year renewals is that the school receives an average evaluation score of 2.5 or higher in each section and review of the summary of renewal decisions finds that schools that received a five-year renewal all received an average evaluation score that was higher than 2.5 in each section.
- In the AAP, the authorizer states that a school can receive a renewal term of one to five years or be non-renewed and outlines indicators for each term (e.g., a one year renewal will be recommended for schools who receive an average evaluation score of 1.75 or less in any renewal application section). Review of the summary of renewal decisions shows that over the review term, schools received appropriate renewal terms aligned with its AAP. For example, in 2018, the four schools (Community of Peace Academy, Global Academy, Spero Academy and Twin Cities Academy) who earned a five-year renewal had overall scores between 2.77 and 3.43 in each section (academic, financial, governance), which is in line with the AAP that states that one indicator of five-year renewals is that the school receives an average evaluation score of 2.5 or higher in each section.
- The authorizer's renewal standards and processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards (specifically, NACSA's Principles and Standards). In NACSA's 2017 evaluation report of the authorizer, NACSA finds that the authorizer runs a clear and well-structured renewal process and the renewal timeline generally aligns with NACSA's identified best practices.

- The authorizer’s renewal standards and processes reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools, as the renewal process incorporates best practices identified by NACSA (as noted in the AAP and in NACSA’s 2017 evaluation report), such as clearly communicating criteria for revocation, renewal, non-renewal decisions; requiring any school seeking renewal to submit a renewal application; and providing a meaningful opportunity and reasonable time to respond (as seen in the renewal timeline in the AAP). Additionally, the authorizer’s renewal process demonstrates a strategy to promote high-quality charter schools as evidenced by its thresholds for renewal that are defined in its AAP. For example, as indicated, in order to achieve a full five-year renewal term, a school must fully satisfy indicators such as receiving an average evaluation score of 2.5 or higher in each renewal application section (academic, financial, governance), receiving a “good standing” rating for all site visits within the past three years, meeting all contract terms, etc.
- Level 2 indicators were met for the review term to date. The AAP (which outlines the renewal process) has been in place since 2016 and the summary of renewal decisions and renewal application materials and evaluations confirm that renewal processes have been consistently implemented over the review term.
- The authorizer’s standards and processes have resulted in high-quality charter schools, as demonstrated by its schools’ consistent inclusion on MDE’s high-quality charter schools and expansion-replication initial eligibility lists between 2016-2020. More specifically, over the review term, eight schools in the authorizer’s portfolio have been identified by MDE as high-quality, with some schools achieving this status for multiple years. For example, Twin Cities German Immersion School has been identified as a high-quality charter school each year from 2016-2020, while Face to Face Academy has been identified by MDE as a high-quality school in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Additionally, Twin Cities Academy is included on these lists from 2016-2019. Furthermore, in the narrative, the authorizer states that its rigorous standards are also evidenced by schools achieving renewal evaluation scores of 3.0 and above that have also been identified by MDE as high-quality charter schools (e.g., Community of Peace Academy, Global Academy, Twin Cities Academy).
- In the MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the clarity of the contract renewal process, the transparency of the renewal decision-making process, the quality of the authorizer’s renewal evaluation and the quality of renewal communications between the authorizer and the school. During the school leader interview, all participants affirmed that the renewal process is very clear and transparent, as are the renewal expectations and standards. They explained that the renewal expectations and standards, which are rigorous and comprehensive, are articulated in the contract, so schools know exactly what is expected of them in order to merit a renewal. They added that the authorizer has different renewal term lengths and the criteria for each term length is also clearly defined so that at the time of renewal, it is evident what term length the school will receive based on their performance. Participants noted that these rigorous and high expectations demonstrate the authorizer’s focus on promoting high-quality schools.

Key Evidence:

- B.9 Narrative
- AAA/AAP
- 2016 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2017 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2018 High-Quality Charter School List
- 2019 Expansion-Replication Initial Eligibility List
- 2020 Initial Eligibility List for Charter School Expansion
- FY 2016 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2017 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2018 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- FY 2019 Annual Report – University of St. Thomas
- ACC Renewal Application Materials and Communications
- Metro Deaf School Renewal Application Materials, Evaluations and Communications
- PIM High School Renewal Application Materials, Evaluations and Communications
- UST Summary of Renewal Decisions
- UST Alignment of Actual to Stated Renewal Processes
- UST Renewal Team Emails, Orientation Agenda and Materials
- A2-7 NACSA 2017 Evaluation Report
- MAPES Cohort Two Charter School Leadership Survey – University of St. Thomas
- Authorizer interview, September 23, 2020
- Charter school leader interviews, September 24, 2020

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

MAPES Performance Measures B Rating for University of St. Thomas is 3.90.

Performance Measures B: Rating Drivers

- The authorizer has clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards, aligned with NACSA's Principles and Standards, to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals, existing charter school expansions and other interim changes and is consistent in its decisions and resulting actions.
- All of the authorizer's contracts with its schools consistently meet current statutory requirements and clearly state the rights and responsibilities of both the school and the authorizer. The contracts also define clear, measurable and attainable academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards, by which schools are held accountable.
- The authorizer has clear, comprehensive processes for oversight and monitoring that evaluate schools' academic, financial and operational performance (including compliance). These processes are included in the AAP and in individual school contracts, which ensure transparency and consistency in implementation.
- The authorizer has rigorous performance standards that reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. In the AAP, the authorizer states that the performance outcomes and standards are designed to meet/exceed the expectations set forth in Minnesota Statute. Based on a 2017 NACSA evaluation and a review of best practices, the authorizer updated its performance framework in order to strengthen its expectations (approved by MDE in June 2018).

Performance Measures B: Recommendations

- Not applicable.

Appendix A: Authorizer Portfolio Information

Operational Schools: Academia Cesar Chavez, Community of Peace Academy, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, Face to Face Academy, Global Academy, Hiawatha Academies, HOPE Community Academy, Metro Deaf School, PIM Arts High School, Spero Academy, St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, Twin Cities Academy, Twin Cities German Immersion School

Preoperational Schools: N/A

Closed Schools: Sankofa Underground North Academy

Never Opened Schools: N/A

Schools that have transferred into portfolio: Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, Face to Face Academy, Hiawatha Academies, St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, Twin Cities German Immersion School

Schools that have transferred out of portfolio: N/A

Merged schools over the term of the review period: Twin Cities Academy

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 ensures consistency of ratings across all reports.
9. The SchoolWorks project manager reviews all reports to ensure consistency of ratings and sufficiency of evidence.
10. Draft reports are submitted to MDE for review.
11. MDE shares draft reports with authorizers for factual review. During the factual review, authorizers may submit additional documentation to clarify factual errors.
12. 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.
13. Evaluators finalize their MAPES reports and submit to the SchoolWorks project manager.
14. The SchoolWorks project manager reviews all finalized reports.
15. Final reports are submitted to MDE for review.

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