



**Minnesota Authorizer Performance
Evaluation System (MAPES)
Round Two Summary Report
March 2022**

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF MAPES

An authorizer is a public oversight entity approved by the state to authorize one or more charter schools. An authorizer's fundamental role is to hold a school accountable for the terms of its performance contract – the “charter.” Authorizer responsibilities include approving, monitoring, evaluating, renewing, and, if necessary, closing charter schools when contract terms are not met. The primary purpose of Minnesota charter schools is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement ([Minn. Stat. 124E.01, subd. 1 \(2021\)](#)). Through effective oversight, authorizers hold charter schools accountable for realizing this purpose.

The Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) was established to review authorizers' performance per [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 5](#), “The commissioner shall review an authorizer's performance every five years in a manner and form determined by the commissioner and may review an authorizer's performance more frequently at the commissioner's own initiative or at the request of a charter school operator, charter school board member, or other interested party. The commissioner, after completing the review, shall transmit a report with findings to the authorizer.” MAPES was developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to identify high-quality authorizing practices to promote authorizer excellence in Minnesota.

MAPES objectives include:

- Setting clear expectations between authorizers and MDE regarding authorizer performance;
- Ensuring authorizer accountability and the fulfillment of approved authorizer applications;
- Promoting high-quality charter schools and authorizing excellence;
- Promoting national principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing; and
- Evaluating authorizer performance through a lens of continuous improvement.

The development of this evaluation system was funded in part by an Implementation Grant from the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's (NACSA) Fund for Authorizer Excellence. Through this grant, TeamWorks International was selected as the contractor to help MDE develop the initial plan and performance measures.

MAPES represents a key aspect of the comprehensive relationship MDE has with Minnesota's approved charter school authorizers. This relationship is broader than performance evaluation and includes multiple points of interaction between MDE and authorizers. The relationship begins when an organization is approved by MDE to authorize charter schools. Authorizers are evaluated at least every five years when their performance is evaluated through MAPES, and evaluation reports are published on MDE's [Authorizer Performance website](#).

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MDE first implemented MAPES between January 2015 - December 2016 (also referred to as MAPES Round One). With the second implementation of MAPES between January 2020 - December 2021 (also referred to as MAPES Round Two), MDE will begin to build a data set to identify promising and effective authorizing practices, which are discussed later in this report. Identified practices will then be disseminated to other authorizers to promote authorizer excellence across the state. Data gathered through performance evaluations will also position MDE to better understand general areas for continuous improvement and develop specific plans for training, development and technical assistance to support and further high-quality authorizing practices.

During MAPES Round Two, 12 authorizers were evaluated between January 2020 and December 2021 (the evaluation process is described in the next section). The authorizers are identified in Table One below.

TABLE ONE

Authorizer Name	Authorizer Type	Operational and Preoperational Schools*
Bethel University	College/University	3 operational
Chisago Lakes School District	School District	1 operational
Friends of Education	Charitable Organization	12 operational
Innovative Quality Schools	Single-Purpose	30 operational, 6 preoperational
Minnesota Guild of Public Charter Schools	Single-Purpose	15 operational, 2 preoperational
Northfield Public School District	School District	2 operational
Novation Education Opportunities	Single-Purpose	20 operational, 8 preoperational
Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	Charitable Organization	34 operational
Pillsbury United Communities	Charitable Organization	20 operational, 1 preoperational
Student Achievement Minnesota	Single-Purpose	2 operational
University of St. Thomas	College/University	13 operational
Volunteers of America – Minnesota	Charitable Organization	17 operational

** Based on the number of operational and preoperational schools at the time of the authorizer's MAPES evaluation.*

ABOUT THE EVALUATOR

With recognized expertise in authorizing practices, SchoolWorks has conducted hundreds of performance-based authorizer evaluations – providing clear, actionable reviews based on national standards. As an education consulting organization, SchoolWorks is dedicated to advancing all aspects of student learning and well-being by building the capacity of educators and educational institutions to assess, plan for, and achieve student success. The company’s consulting services support sustainable school improvement through five key areas: Accountability and Authorizer Supports, Quality Reviews, Instructional Supports, Leadership Supports and School Developer Supports.

In the realm of Accountability and Authorizer Supports, SchoolWorks provides both thought leadership and capacity-building support to ensure that authorizing practices are effectively and consistently administered with transparency and fidelity to uphold State and authorizer-defined performance standards. The company has provided over 20 consistent years of authorizer support and works with authorizers in over half of the states that have enacted charter school laws.

SchoolWorks has also engaged with several state agencies that oversee authorizers to support performance oversight and development. The company has conducted summative authorizer evaluations on behalf of both the Ohio Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education since 2014 and 2015, respectively. In addition, SchoolWorks has supported several other state agencies (including the Indiana Department of Education, the Maryland State Department of Education and the Tennessee State Board of Education) in establishing criteria to evaluate effective authorizing practices and providing technical assistance and support to authorizers to foster improvement.

DISCLAIMER

This report was authored by SchoolWorks in accordance with the terms of its contract with MDE and the provisions of MDE’s Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant. The views expressed in this report are those of SchoolWorks based on the results of MAPES Round Two.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

For the MAPES evaluations, authorizers were grouped into four cohorts, each with a designated five-year review term based on each authorizing organization’s effective approval date. The cohorts and review terms are outlined in Table Two below.

TABLE TWO

Cohort	Review Term	Authorizer Name
Cohort 1	July 2015 – June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Education • Novation Education Opportunities • Student Achievement Minnesota • Volunteers of America – Minnesota
Cohort 2	January 2016 – December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chisago Lakes School District • Innovative Quality Schools • Northfield Public School District • Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center • Pillsbury United Communities • University of St. Thomas
Cohort 3	July 2016 – June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethel University
Cohort 4	January 2017 – December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Guild of Public Charter Schools

The evaluation process consisted of four phases:

- 1) Welcome and Data Collection;
- 2) Data Review;
- 3) Interviews; and
- 4) Performance Reports.

PHASE ONE – WELCOME AND DATA COLLECTION

AUTHORIZER WELCOME MEETING

The Authorizer Welcome Meeting provided time for authorizers to review MAPES and ask questions about the evaluation process.

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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WELCOME MEETING

The School Leadership Welcome Meeting provided time for school leaders to review MAPES, ask questions about the evaluation and understand the ratings and outcomes of MAPES, expectations for school involvement in the review process, and its impact on charter schools within an authorizer's portfolio.

MAPES DOCUMENT SUBMISSION GUIDE

The MAPES Document Submission Guide was a resource provided to authorizers and evaluators that identified evidence to submit to address MAPES performance measures. Authorizers were also allowed to submit other documentation not included in the guide if they felt it addressed a performance measure.

MAPES ROUND TWO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)

The MAPES Round Two Q&A document was a resource provided to authorizers and evaluators that documented a running list of questions and answers to MAPES-related questions, listed in order by the date received. The document was continuously updated throughout MAPES Round Two as questions were received.

MAPES REVIEW PROCESS

The MAPES Review Process document was a resource provided to authorizers and evaluators that provided an overview of the MAPES review process and other key information such as the purpose of MAPES, the evaluation timeline, roles and responsibilities, phases of activities during the MAPES review and ratings and outcomes.

CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SURVEYS

MDE created and distributed a survey to key charter school personnel for each charter school in an authorizer's portfolio, and the data collected from the surveys were used as a data source for MAPES. Surveys were submitted to MDE and could be completed by staff individually or as a group. In the survey, participants were asked questions that gauged and/or verified their knowledge and understanding of various authorizer practices such as development and implementation of policies and procedures, contracting, decision-making, new school application review, etc.

In Cohort One, authorizers submitted documents and narratives to MDE via flash drives by a designated due date based on their cohort timeline. Due to the pandemic, authorizers in Cohorts Two through Four submitted documents and narratives to MDE via a SharePoint site by a designated due date based on their cohort timeline. The flash drives and SharePoint site were set up with a folder for each performance measure and a narrative template was provided in each folder. Authorizers were encouraged to fill out the narrative template describing how the guiding question(s) were met and how the submitted documents applied to the specific performance measure.

PHASE TWO – DATA REVIEW

Prior to the start of each cohort evaluation, evaluators were required to participate in trainings which included an overview of MAPES, a discussion of each phase, evaluator guidance, norming exercises, etc., in order to develop and ensure consistency across the evaluations. Once the evaluation began, evaluators reviewed all data for 20 performance measures against the criteria defined in the MAPES rubric (*see Appendix A*), assigned a rating level for each performance measure based on the assessment of the submitted documentation and developed evaluative comments supporting each rating.

The rating levels were as follows:

- Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete
- Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory
- Level 2: Satisfactory
- Level 3: Commendable
- Level 4: Exemplary

Performance standards were grouped into two main categories: 1) Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure (Performance Measures A); and 2) Authorizer Processes and Decision-Making (Performance Measures B). Each category was further broken down into the following performance measures:

TABLE 1

Performance Measures A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure	Performance Measures B: Authorizer Processes and Decision-Making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.1: Authorizing Mission • A.2: Authorizer Organizational Goals • A.3: Authorizer Structure of Operations • A.4: Authorizing Staff Experience • A.5: Authorizer Knowledge and Skill Development of Authorizing Leadership and Staff • A.6: Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools • A.7: Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest • A.8: Ensuring Autonomy of the Charter Schools in the Portfolio • A.9: Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices • A.10: Authorizer High-Quality Authorizing Dissemination • A.11: Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.1: New Charter School Decisions • B.2: Interim Accountability Decisions (i.e., site/grade level/early learning expansions, ready to open, and change in authorizer) • B.3: Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution • B.4: Performance Outcomes and Standards • B.5: Authorizer’s Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio of Charter Schools • B.6: Authorizer’s Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints • B.7: Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance • B.8: High-Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices • B.9: Charter School Renewal and Termination Decisions

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As part of the evaluations, evaluators reviewed two types of data – existing data and new data.

EXISTING DATA REVIEW

Evaluators reviewed existing authorizer data shared by MDE including: commissioner-approved authorizing applications (AAA); commissioner-approved authorizing plans (AAP); authorizer annual reports; authorizer income and expenditures reports; new charter school affidavits; supplemental affidavits; early learning program requests; change in authorizer requests; executed charter contracts; final review rubrics (including continuous improvement notes); final affidavit approval/disapproval letters; formal correspondence between MDE and authorizer; MDE review and compliance data; and other data maintained by MDE (including divisions outside of the Charter Center). Any data held by MDE prior to the document submission deadline was subject to evaluation.

NEW DATA REVIEW

Evaluators reviewed charter school leadership surveys submitted to MDE as well as documents submitted by authorizers.

PHASE THREE – INTERVIEWS

AUTHORIZER AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Evaluators conducted interviews with key decision makers, governing board members, directors, coordinators and other staff members of the authorizing and charter school organizations to clarify authorizer performance and review data submitted by authorizers and MDE. Standard questions were disseminated to authorizers and charter school leaders prior to the interview. Additional questions were asked to seek verification/validation based on evaluators' review of documents submitted. Evaluators also had the opportunity to request additional documentation during the authorizer interviews, which had to be received no later than one week following the authorizer interview.

Interviews served as a verification/validation process of the measures of an authorizer's MAPES document submission and were not considered stand-alone evidence. Thus, information provided during the interviews was cross-referenced by evaluators against submitted documentation, and any relevant updates (if any) were made to the draft performance report.

PHASE FOUR – PERFORMANCE REPORTS

MDE REVIEW OF DRAFT PERFORMANCE REPORTS

MDE reviewed draft performance reports for accuracy; however, in order to preserve the fidelity of the external evaluation process, the evaluator reserved the right to make final edits.

AUTHORIZER REVIEW AND COMMENT ON DRAFT PERFORMANCE REPORTS

In the interest of producing as accurate a report as possible, MDE offered authorizers an opportunity to review draft performance reports and submit additional documentation using a specified template. Authorizers were encouraged to review draft report ratings, findings and key evidence and submit a

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response identifying and explaining any errors or inaccuracies. Authorizers had 10 business days after they received the draft report to review and comment on the draft performance report.

Evaluators then reviewed the submitted documentation and made relevant updates (if any) to the draft performance report prior to finalization.

FINALIZE PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Final performance reports were issued to authorizers according to their cohort timeline. MDE disseminated the final MAPES performance report to authorizers' portfolios of charter schools and published the finalized performance reports under each [authorizer's performance profile page](#) on MDE's website.

RATINGS AND OUTCOMES

Authorizer ratings were determined based on authorizers' overall final MAPES numerical scores, and consist of the following categories (along with their respective outcomes):

Exemplary (overall rating of 3.60-4.00)

- "Exemplary" authorizer performance recognition (certificate and publicity)
- Expedited review of authorizing plan updates for the next five years
- Expedited review of affidavits and other requests
- Eligible to be identified for best practices in authorizing
- Invited by commissioner to share authorizer practices at MDE
- Other recognitions as determined by MDE

Commendable (overall rating of 2.80-3.59)

- "Commendable" authorizer performance recognition (certificate)
- Expedited review of authorizing plan updates for the next five years
- Expedited review of affidavits and other requests
- Eligible to be identified for best practices in authorizing
- Other recognitions as determined by MDE

Satisfactory (overall rating of 2.00-2.79)

- Eligible to submit authorizing plans for the next five years
- Other recognitions as determined by MDE

(continued on the following page)

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Approaching Satisfactory (overall rating of 1.00-1.99)

or

Unsatisfactory/Incomplete (overall rating of 0.00-0.99)

- Ineligible to submit authorizing plans for the next five years
- May be subject to corrective action status (*see the following page*)
- Does not have authority to charter new schools, accept transfers or initiate expansion requests while in corrective action

CORRECTIVE ACTION STATUS

As required by statute, the commissioner must notify the authorizer in writing of any findings that may subject the authorizer to corrective action. The authorizer will receive a letter from MDE with the final MAPES report indicating a notice of findings. The authorizer then has 15 business days to request an informal hearing before the commissioner takes corrective action per [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 6](#).

If an authorizer is placed in corrective action after the informal hearing, MDE will set up a meeting with the authorizer to review the corrective action process, provide the template for a continuous improvement plan (CIP) and explain the CIP submission timeline. An authorizer's corrective action status will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature and scope of deficiencies. An authorizer will only be evaluated on deficient measures while in corrective action.

Authorizers will not have the authority to charter new schools, accept transfers or initiate expansion requests while in corrective action. Authorizers will have up to one year to satisfactorily address all performance measures in order to be eligible to submit their AAP. If identified deficiencies remain unaddressed one year from the date the authorizer was placed in corrective action, further corrective action, which may include termination of an authorizer's approval to charter schools, may occur per Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 6(a).

Once an authorizer satisfactorily addresses identified deficiencies, they exit corrective action status and are eligible to submit their next five-year AAP to MDE.

TREND ANALYSIS AND PROMISING AUTHORIZING PRACTICES

TREND ANALYSIS

In MAPES Round Two, 9 out of 12 authorizers received an overall rating of *Satisfactory*, *Commendable* or *Exemplary*. Additionally, for Performance Measures A, 10 out of 12 authorizers received an aggregate rating of 2.25 (*Satisfactory*) or above, while for Performance Measures B, 9 out of 12 authorizers received an aggregate rating of 2.15 (*Satisfactory*) or above.

A review of ratings for individual performance measures across authorizers reveals trends around both collective strengths and areas for growth.

STRENGTHS

Based on aggregate data given the number of authorizers who received a rating level of *Satisfactory*, *Commendable* or *Exemplary* on individual performance measures, collective strengths include:

- ***Clear and compelling missions for charter school authorizing (A.1):*** Almost all authorizers provided evidence of establishing and carrying out clear and compelling missions that were fully aligned with Minnesota charter school statute and focused on improving the education and achievement of all students. They also demonstrated that their missions drive their priorities and guide their work. Examples of this are highlighted below in *Promising Authorizing Practices*.
- ***Commitment to building the knowledge and skill base of authorizing leadership and staff (A.5):*** The majority of authorizers demonstrated having a professional development plan that was intentionally developed to build the knowledge and skill base of their leadership and staff, and aligned with their operations, mission and organizational goals for overseeing their portfolios. Additionally, their professional development plans allowed for regular, ongoing participation in trainings, as well as customization based on individual and collective needs of leadership and staff. For instance, authorizers administered tools such as surveys and staff evaluations to assess and identify individual and collective needs in regard to authorizing knowledge and skills.
- ***Intentional replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charter schools (B.8):*** Almost all authorizers demonstrated having an intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices, and also provided evidence that they have identified models/practices which either have been realized or are moving toward replication/dissemination. For instance, authorizers' plans included steps such as holding annual meetings/retreats for their schools during which best practices were shared and providing exemplars of best practices via Epicenter (e.g., policies, templates, guidance documents). Additionally, authorizers provided evidence of encouraging and/or supporting existing, high-performing schools in their portfolios through the replication process. Examples of intentional replication are highlighted below in *Promising Authorizing Practices*.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

Based on aggregate data given the number of authorizers who received a rating level of *Approaching Satisfactory* or *Unsatisfactory/Incomplete* on individual performance measures, some collective areas for growth were also identified, including:

- **Authorizer organizational goals (A.2):** Establishing organizational goals is important as authorizers strive for continuous improvement, and defining clear criteria, metrics and timelines helps authorizers hold themselves accountable and measure their progress along the way. Some authorizers articulated clear organizational goals and timeframes for achievement aligned with their authorizing mission and Minnesota charter school statute. However, other authorizers presented unclear or broad organizational goals that were not always clearly aligned with Minnesota charter school statute, and/or lacked specific criteria for achievement and timelines for measuring progress and/or tracking goal achievement. In addition, some authorizers presented organizational goals that were inconsistent with their AAA/AAP.
- **Authorizer self-evaluations (A.9):** In the spirit of continuous improvement, administering self-evaluations is an important part of authorizing, so that authorizers can assess their internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practices) to oversee schools in their portfolio, and identify strengths and areas for growth. Multiple authorizers did not provide evidence of regularly and intentionally self-evaluating their internal ability to oversee their portfolios of schools. For instance, some authorizers indicated having informal discussions about capacity and quality of practices, but no formal mechanism to self-evaluate their internal ability. Or, while some authorizers used surveys or self-evaluations to inform some actions (such as professional development sessions), they did not always provide evidence of using results to analyze their internal ability and inform the establishment of an improvement plan in order to build their capacity, infrastructure and practices.
- **Contract terms, negotiation and execution (B.3):** Because contracting is a critical part of authorizing, it is imperative that authorizers ensure their contracts are in compliance with all relevant rules, regulations, and laws. Additionally, as a best practice, it is essential for authorizers to clearly define their contracting practices and implement them in a consistent manner. While authorizers generally provided evidence of executing contracts that defined material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer, multiple authorizers had contracts with schools in their portfolio which did not meet current statutory requirements, and/or did not demonstrate having consistent or clear contracting practices across their portfolio.

RECOGNIZING EXEMPLARY AUTHORIZER PERFORMANCE

During MAPES Round Two, the following authorizers received an overall rating of *Exemplary*:

- ◇ Friends of Education
- ◇ Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

◇ University of St. Thomas

PROMISING AUTHORIZING PRACTICES

Based on the results of MAPES Round Two, it is evident that while there are some collective areas for growth, authorizers in Minnesota are largely effective and implementing strong authorizing practices. A review of the authorizers' practices as defined and evaluated through MAPES Round Two identifies some promising practices that will be shared in this section.

MISSION

Some authorizers presented clear and compelling missions that defined specific focus areas which went beyond student learning and achievement. For example, Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (OWELC) focuses on environmental education, as seen in its mission to “ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for Minnesota students through effective charter school authorizing”.¹ It fulfills its mission in multiple ways, such as through contracting (e.g., including both academic and environmental goals); new school applications (e.g., requiring applicants to discuss both student achievement and how the school will incorporate students' environmental awareness); annual reports (e.g., requiring schools to report on both academic and environmental education activities), etc.

Similarly, Volunteers of America – Minnesota (VOA-MN) focuses on service learning in addition to student learning and achievement, as seen in its mission to “improve all pupil learning and all student achievement with service to others”.² It carries out its mission through its emphasis on chartering schools that provide students with alternative opportunities for academic success and supporting students in being successful both at home and in their communities. Additionally, schools in VOA-MN's portfolio are required to incorporate service learning into their education programs.

CONTRACTING

Some authorizers have established clear contracting practices that help them consistently implement contracts across their portfolios of schools, while also ensuring that contracts define appropriate terms and outcomes for each individual school. For example, while all authorizers have a standard contract template for all of their schools that include performance frameworks, some authorizers have performance frameworks that allow for customization during the contracting process. While the performance frameworks are organized into similar categories, the authorizers collaborate with each school to define and agree upon school-specific expectations to ensure schools are held accountable to appropriate outcomes.

One example of this is University of St. Thomas (UST), which has customized performance frameworks for some of its schools, such as those whose student populations consist of greater than 90% special education students and a school serving over-aged and under-credited students. UST has taken this into

¹ Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center Final MAPES Round Two Report, December 2020

² Volunteers of America – Minnesota Final MAPES Round Two Report, July 2020

consideration in order to establish rigorous performance expectations that are also appropriate given the specialized nature of the schools. Another example is demonstrated by OWELC, which has alternative accountability measures in its Academic Performance Framework for schools serving a high population of students at risk of dropping out of high school based on several criteria.

OVERSIGHT

Oversight is a key area of authorizing, and as part of it, authorizers have the opportunity to not only define clear oversight processes and practices, but also establish ways of ensuring they are documenting their oversight activities in a way that is easily readable and accessible. This is especially important for authorizers with larger portfolios, as they should be able to easily access and track information about all of their schools. For instance, Novation Education Opportunities (NEO), which had 20 operational schools and 8 preoperational schools at the time of its review, utilizes a data tracker to consistently monitor and assess each of its schools. The data tracker includes information about the oversight activities for each school (e.g., learning walks, board observations, etc.) as well as the academic performance level of each school, which is highlighted in green, yellow, orange, or red depending on the school's status (with red indicating low performance). The data tracker compiles information about oversight activities which makes it accessible and easier to track where individual schools are at any given point in time.

REPLICATION

As authorizers consider expanding their portfolios, having an intentional plan for replication can help them define the standards a school should demonstrate in order to be considered for replication, and set expectations and criteria for how to determine whether or not a school should be approved to replicate. For example, in its AAP, Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) identifies priorities for replication as it seeks to promote model replication of schools currently focused on instructional innovations (e.g., project-based learning, school-wide application of the multi-tiered system of supports, experiential learning, language immersion) and operational innovations (e.g., teacher-led schools, models that employ multi-site school governance).

Another example of intentional replication is demonstrated by NEO. NEO initially identifies potential replication candidates among its schools through criteria such as schools that are achieving exemplary ratings as assessed by its performance framework, the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance criteria, document review, and site visits. After identifying potential replication candidates, NEO provide schools with support in determining whether or not they are ready for replication.

STATE OF AUTHORIZING IN MINNESOTA

AUTHORIZER REFLECTIONS

At the conclusion of the authorizer interviews, authorizers were asked two questions about the state of authorizing in Minnesota:

1. What is working well in terms of the systems and processes in place for authorizing in Minnesota?
2. What are the challenges that you face as an authorizer?

These questions were asked in the spirit of continuous improvement, as MDE strives to collect feedback from authorizers and identify trends to gain a deeper understanding of authorizing conditions and concerns, which will help inform future conversations and further establish the partnership between MDE and authorizers.

In regard to what is working well, authorizers noted that Minnesota charter school statute provides them with the flexibility to create and adjust their performance frameworks in order to ensure schools in their portfolio are appropriately serving their communities. For instance, authorizers can adjust their performance frameworks (e.g., performance goals) for schools that serve specific student populations or implement a specialized educational model. Authorizers relayed that this allows them to hold each of their schools accountable while also addressing any special considerations.

Additionally, authorizers reported that over the years, MDE Charter Center staff have generally been responsive to their comments, questions, and concerns. They stated that in recent years, MDE Charter Center staff have become more communicative and have provided more guidance than in the past. Authorizers indicated there is two-way communication between themselves and MDE Charter Center staff, and they appreciate the open lines of communication. They also voiced appreciation that MDE Charter Center staff possess knowledge and understanding of charter schools, which allows them to have more productive conversations without having to explain every nuance of authorizing.

Further, authorizers stated that the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) has been an invaluable resource, and provides them with opportunities for collaboration, thought partnership, and networking. They noted that MACSA conducts regular meetings and establishes committees to review and share best practices, and MACSA has also developed its own set of principles and standards which mirrors those established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) but takes local context into consideration.

When asked about the challenges of authorizing, a few trends stood out across authorizers' responses. One challenge that consistently surfaced was that while authorizers reported having open lines of communication with MDE Charter Center staff, there is a general feeling that authorizers are cut off from main communication lines with other MDE departments, and they do not believe their voices are always included or considered. Authorizers also reported that while MDE Charter Center staff are knowledgeable

about charter schools, other MDE departments are not as knowledgeable about charter schools, so they do not necessarily know how to best support charter schools and/or authorizers. Additionally, authorizers indicated having minimal contact with MDE executive leadership (particularly the Commissioner) and voiced a desire to have the opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with MDE executive leaders and discuss how authorizing fits within the state's overall vision for education.

In addition, authorizers relayed that MDE's expectations are either not always clear or are frequently updated (but not clearly communicated), which can make it difficult to remain in compliance and meet standards in all areas. For instance, some authorizers referenced contract reviews conducted by MDE, in which authorizers received feedback around statutory language that needed to be updated and/or addressed in their contracts with schools. Some authorizers also relayed that the feedback in reviews conducted by MDE (e.g., contracts, new school affidavits, renewals) did not always seem to be consistent, which has led to confusion about expectations and what is required to be in compliance.

Further, authorizers consistently reported challenges around the perceived inconsistency around approvals of new charter schools by MDE. They noted that there have been approved charter schools that delayed opening for multiple years, or opened and closed almost immediately for various reasons (e.g., staffing, finances). They added that some new school affidavits were approved even though there are already charter schools in the proposed area and demand was not clear. But, other new school affidavits were denied by MDE because of lack of demand even though authorizers had determined there was clear evidence of demand. Thus, authorizers stated that it would be helpful to better understand how MDE defines demand, so that they can appropriately incorporate and consider it within their application evaluation cycles.

Overall, authorizers generally spoke positively about the systems and processes in place for authorizing in Minnesota and noted an improvement in the quality and depth of the partnership between themselves and MDE in recent years. However, as seen above, they also continue to face challenges and barriers which can impede their work.

EVALUATOR REFLECTIONS

Through its work, SchoolWorks has gained a strong understanding of the varying educational landscapes and state charter school laws across the country. Based on the MAPES Round Two evaluation results, it is apparent there are strong authorizing practices happening across the state, and there is a shared culture of continuous improvement.

Minnesota charter school statute generally supports high-quality authorizing, which authorizers voiced during the authorizer interviews. As previously mentioned, authorizers indicated that Minnesota charter school statute provides them with the flexibility to create and adjust their performance frameworks, which they appreciate. This flexibility is important and beneficial for authorizers, as it allows them to establish high expectations for all schools that are appropriate and customized based on factors such as the school's model, student population, etc.

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Additionally, just as authorizers hold their schools to high expectations, MDE holds authorizers to high expectations through the MAPES evaluation process. By administering MAPES every five years (rather than annually or bi-annually), MDE provides authorizers with time to develop, implement, and refine policies and procedures in the spirit of continuous improvement and to ensure alignment with established expectations.

Further, though MAPES is a formal, high-stakes evaluation, MDE is supportive of all authorizers, including those that receive overall ratings of *Approaching Satisfactory* and *Unsatisfactory/Incomplete*, as reflected in the corrective action process following MAPES. Through this process (described in *The Evaluation Process* section), MDE collaborates with authorizers to establish a continuous improvement plan (CIP) that includes information such as action steps, responsible parties, timelines, deliverables, etc. Authorizers have up to one year to address identified deficiencies, and if identified deficiencies remain unaddressed after that time, termination may occur. Thus, authorizers receiving overall ratings of *Approaching Satisfactory* and *Unsatisfactory/Incomplete* have an opportunity to improve upon their policies and procedures after the conclusion of MAPES and demonstrate growth prior to any consideration of termination.

It is evident from the MAPES Round Two evaluations that authorizers in Minnesota are committed to implementing and improving upon effective practices as they strive to ensure schools in their portfolio are providing a high-quality education to all students. This commitment should be acknowledged, and authorizers and MDE should continue to find ways to strengthen their partnership as they collectively work toward a common goal of improving student learning and achievement across the state. Based on SchoolWorks' national perspective and the reflections expressed by authorizers, two key recommendations have been identified and will be defined in the following section.

CONCLUSION

Based on an aggregate review of the MAPES Round Two evaluation reports and the reflections voiced by authorizers during the authorizer interviews, the following key recommendations have been identified:

- **Communication:** A common denominator in the authorizing challenges voiced by authorizers is communication. Challenges such as unclear and/or inconsistent guidance and expectations, not feeling like they always had a voice, etc., could be remedied by establishing clear and regular communication between authorizers and MDE at all levels (and not only with the MDE Charter Center), both verbally and written. Some authorizers noted that communication has begun to improve in recent years, and efforts should be made to identify and establish processes and practices to ensure that it continues to improve.
- **Collaboration:** Authorizers are eager to collaborate, and it appears that MACSA serves as a main conduit for their opportunities for collaboration, thought partnership, and networking. Some authorizers indicated that MDE periodically attends or presents at MACSA meetings, and it might be beneficial for MDE and MACSA to identify ways through which they can further collaborate and partner together to share and strengthen best practices for authorizing across the state.

Overall, the state of authorizing in Minnesota is in a strong position, as evidenced by 9 out of 12 authorizers earning an overall rating of *Satisfactory*, *Commendable* or *Exemplary* in MAPES Round Two. All Minnesota authorizers demonstrate a commitment to ensuring schools in their portfolios are providing high-quality educational opportunities to students, and they exhibit an eagerness and openness to continuous improvement and learning.

APPENDIX A: MINNESOTA AUTHORIZER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM (MAPES)

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Summary of Authorizer Performance Measures

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

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

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

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

**Continuous Improvement Measures*

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MAPES Measures and Indicators Overview

MAPES was established to review authorizers' performance per [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 5](#), and to identify high-quality authorizing practices to promote authorizer excellence in Minnesota.

Evaluation system objectives include:

- Setting clear expectations between authorizers and MDE regarding authorizer performance;
- Ensuring authorizer accountability and the fulfillment of approved authorizer applications;
- Promoting high-quality charter schools and authorizing excellence in order to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement;
- Promoting national principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing; and
- Evaluating authorizer performance through a lens of continuous improvement.

Authorizers are evaluated against:

- Nationally recognized standards and state expectations for high-quality authorizing;
- Established standards and processes stated in their commissioner-approved authorizer application (AAA) or commissioner-approved authorizing plan (AAP); and
- How they applied standards and processes with fidelity across their portfolio of charter schools over the current five-year term.

There are two elements to each measure, the Performance Measure and the Indicators. These elements set clear expectations of performance levels for measures in Part A and Part B to apply consistent criteria across all measures for evaluation. The Performance Measure includes:

- **Measure:** Title of the measure.
- **Guiding Question(s):** Defines what is being evaluated.
- **Measure Origin:** Identifies source from which the measures originate. These sources are used as reference documents in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation Data Source:** These key sources contribute fundamental data when evaluating authorizers on a particular measure. These are used as the primary evaluation data sources for the evaluation process; however, review documents are not limited to those stated. Review documents are any type of documentation that is available and exists to verify the measure rating.
- **Level Ratings:** Refers to criteria listed in Performance Measure levels. An authorizer will receive one of five performance ratings for each measure:
 - **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - **Level 3: Commendable**
 - **Level 4: Exemplary**

Timeframes are applied to certain measures in Part A and Part B to clearly delineate among the performance indicator levels. In general:

- Authorizers must meet Satisfactory (Level 2) performance indicator(s) in at least three years to receive a Level 2 rating for a measure;

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- Authorizers must meet Satisfactory (Level 2) performance indicator(s) in at least four years to receive a Level 3 rating for a measure; and
- Authorizers must meet Satisfactory (Level 2) performance indicator(s) for the authorizer term to date to receive a Level 4 rating for a measure.

Definitions

Nationally recognized quality authorizing standards:

- NACSA’s Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, 2018 Edition
- NACSA’s Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, 2015 Edition
- NACSA’s Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, 2012 Edition
- Other nationally recognized quality standards for authorizing established by a reputable external organization as vetted by the evaluator

Current statutory performance standards: Per [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1\(c\)](#): “A charter school must design its programs to at least meet the outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students, including world’s best workforce goals under section [120B.11, subdivision 1](#). In the absence of the commissioner’s requirements governing state standards and benchmarks, the school must meet the outcomes contained in the contract with the authorizer. The achievement levels of the outcomes contained in the contract may exceed the achievement levels of any outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students.”

High-quality charter school:

- A charter school that has been identified by MDE as a “high-quality charter school” through Minnesota’s [Federal Charter Schools Program Grant Project’s methodology and process](#)
- A charter school that has been recognized by a reputable external organization for achieving the primary purpose of charter schools and for exceptional performance in the areas of academics, finance and operations as vetted by the evaluator

Continuous Improvement Measure: A performance measure that focuses on ongoing efforts to improve authorizer operations to increase the quality of authorizing and charter schools in the state.

Internal verification at authorizing organization: May include the primary decision maker(s) and/or other employees, board members, officers, volunteers and contractors of the authorizing organization.

External verification with school representatives: May include charter school representatives within the authorizer’s portfolio such as charter school leaders and staff and/or board chair and other board members. If responses from external interviews are inconsistent, MDE may seek responses from additional charter school representatives within the authorizer’s portfolio.

Authorizing staff: Individuals both paid (e.g., staff) and unpaid (e.g., board members) as well as contractors hired by the authorizer.

Expertise: Having knowledge, education, training, etc. in the areas of charter school academics, finance, operations and law.

Experience: Length of time working in the areas of charter school academics, finance, operations and law.

Skills: Effective application of experience and expertise in the areas of charter school academics, finance, operations and law.

Credentials: Certificates or other documentation awarded by a reputable external organization demonstrating a person's expertise, experience, and/or skills.

Income: Examples include fees collected annually from charter schools and additional funds from outside sources.

Expenditures: Examples include staff, travel, consultants and office costs.

Conflicts of interest: As defined in [MDE's Guidance on Conflict of Interest for Authorizers and Charter Schools](#) document.

Performance Measures A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure

A.1 Measure: Authorizing Mission

Guiding Question

- Does the authorizer have a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(1)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Evidence of mission documented at the authorizing organization
- Documentation of external references to authorizing mission

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Mission is missing or vague
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Mission is stated, but inadequately aligns with Minnesota charter school statute *and/or*
 - The response inadequately describes how the authorizer carries out its mission by chartering schools *and/or*
 - Mission being implemented is not consistent with AAA/AAP
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Mission is stated and fully aligns with Minnesota charter school statute *and*
 - The response adequately describes how the authorizer carries out its mission by chartering schools *and*
 - Authorizer implements mission from AAA/AAP
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - Mission is verified internally in practice and documentation at authorizing organization *and*
 - Authorizer's mission is verified internally with consistent responses from interviewed individuals
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Mission is verified by external references *and*
 - Authorizer's mission is consistently verified externally by school representatives

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Evidence of measurable organizational goals documented at the authorizing organization
- Evidence of authorizer engaged in evaluating its work against authorizing mission and progress towards organizational goals, including strategic plan and/or continuous improvement plans

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Organizational goals are not clearly related to charter school authorizing or aligned to state statute **and**
 - Organizational goals implemented are not consistent with AAA/AAP
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Organizational goals are not clearly related to charter school authorizing or aligned to state statute **or**
 - Organizational goals implemented are not consistent with AAA/AAP
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer has clear organizational goals, criteria and timeframes for achievement **and**
 - Authorizer implements organizational goals from AAA/AAP **and**
 - Authorizer's organizational goals align with authorizing mission
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 **and**
 - Authorizer is actively measuring progress on its organizational goals
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Authorizer evaluates its work regularly against its authorizing mission and organizational goals, and implements plans for improvement

A.3 Measure: Authorizer Structure of Operations

Guiding Question

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

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(2)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Job descriptions of authorizing staff (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Organizational chart that shows clear lines of reporting and authority/decision-making (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- If applicable, authorizer staffing changes since the AAA/AAP was approved including staffing size (FTE) compared to portfolio size

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Structure of duties and responsibilities is unclear, inconsistent and/or at a level insufficient to meet the needs of the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Structure of duties and responsibilities exists, but staffed at a level that does not sufficiently meet the needs of the portfolio of charter schools **or**
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Clear structure of duties and responsibilities is defined, charted and sufficiently meets the needs of the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Structure of duties and responsibilities are updated when necessary **and**
 - Authorizer appropriately manages, retains, and safeguards school, student information, and records relating to authorizing
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Structure of duties, responsibilities and staffing levels are verified internally at authorizing organization as being sufficient

- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date *and*
 - Authorizer practices are consistently verified externally by school representatives as being sufficient

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(2)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Resumes/vitae of authorizing personnel including contracted individuals with employment/contract terms (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- If not included in the resumes: conference or workshop certificates of completion or participation; licenses; certifications; degrees; etc. documenting staff expertise
- Documentation on how the authorizing staff's experience, expertise and skills align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizing staff is underqualified to oversee the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizing staff has limited experience, expertise and skills in charter school academics, finance, operations and law *and/or*
 - Authorizing staff are not able to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools *or*
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Authorizing staff has appropriate experience, expertise and skills in charter school academics, finance, operations and law *and*
 - Authorizing staff are able to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools

- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years *and*
 - Authorizing staff experience, expertise and skills align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date *and*
 - Authorizing staff has credentials demonstrating experience, expertise and skills in charter school academics, finance, operations and law

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 authorizer’s operations, mission and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding questions and at least Level 2 criteria (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)
- Documentation of professional development offered to authorizing staff during current five-year term, date of professional development, who attended, how the professional development addressed a necessary skill base for authorizing leadership and staff and how the professional development aligns with operations, mission and organizational goals
- If not included in the resumes submitted for A.4: conference or workshop certificates of completion or participation, etc. for authorizing staff

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Professional development is rarely offered or not offered to authorizing leadership and staff
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Professional development for authorizing leadership and staff is sporadic *and/or*
 - Professional development is only incident specific *and/or*

- Professional development attended is insufficient to fulfill professional development commitments provided in authorizer’s AAA/AAP
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Professional development is intentional and planned to build the knowledge and skill base of authorizing leadership and staff **and**
 - Professional development aligns with authorizer’s operations, mission, and organizational goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Professional development attended is sufficient to fulfill professional development commitments provided in authorizer’s AAA/AAP
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 **and**
 - Professional development is attended regularly by authorizing leadership and staff, is ongoing and occurs more than once a year
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Professional development attended by authorizing leadership and staff is customized to meet the needs of the authorizing leadership and staff **and**
 - Professional development is measured and evaluated

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(2)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 3
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Income and Expenditures Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Updated five year budget with actuals for years since approval
- Documentation that resource allocations align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards for financial resource commitments
- Documentation that resource allocations are designed to achieve nationally recognized quality authorizing standards

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Resource allocations for authorizing fall short of resources committed in its AAA/AAP **and**
 - Resource allocations are insufficient to fulfill authorizing responsibilities
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Resource allocations for authorizing fall short of resources committed in its AAA/AAP **or**
 - Resource allocations are insufficient to fulfill authorizing responsibilities **or**
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Resource allocations for authorizing are at least consistent with resources to portfolio size ratio committed in its AAA/AAP **and**
 - Authorizer demonstrates 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) **and**
 - Authorizer staff changes occurred in relation to portfolio size
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Resource allocations align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards for financial resource commitments
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date **and**
 - Authorizer allocates resources to achieve nationally recognized quality authorizing standards, revising budgets as necessary

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.07, subdivision 3(d)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys

- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Authorizer conflict of interest policy (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Authorizer conflict of interest processes and procedures for implementation and execution (could include forms, checklists, etc.)
- A fully documented example of how the authorizer successfully implemented its conflict of interest policy

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Conflict of interest policy for authorizing does not exist or is not implemented **and/or**
 - Numerous conflicts exist between the authorizer and its charter schools (e.g., staff and board may overlap, authorizer may require school to purchase services from authorizer, funds may be comingled, etc.) **and/or**
 - Schools are offered incentives by the authorizer (e.g., may only contract with an authorizer for various services) **and/or**
 - Authorizer's decisions are improperly influenced by a management company or the school board
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Conflict of interest policy for authorizing exists, but implementation is unclear or does not effectively address conflicts of interest **and/or**
 - Authorizer does not follow its conflict of interest policy as outlined in its AAA/AAP **and/or**
 - Decision-making is not transparent and/or it is unclear what criteria are used by the authorizer to make decisions
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Clear conflict of interest policy for authorizing exists and is intentionally implemented **and**
 - Authorizer avoids conflicts of interest that might affect its capacity to make objective, merit-based application and renewal decisions (e.g., involvement in school's performance) **and**
 - Authorizer is able to provide at least one fully documented example of how it has successfully implemented its conflict of interest policy (includes training staff) **and**
 - Authorizer ensures that application review and decision-making processes are free of conflicts of interest, and requires full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between reviewers or decision-makers and applicants
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 **and**
 - Implementation of policy has successfully prevented or resolved conflicts of interest in a timely, fair and appropriate manner **and**
 - If MDE/evaluator inquires about a specific example known to the department, authorizer is able to provide evidence concerning the situation that demonstrates satisfactory resolution
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - The implementation and effectiveness of the authorizer's conflict of interest policy is verified externally with consistent responses from school representatives

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.07, subdivision 6
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Policy on charter school autonomy (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Charter school autonomy processes and procedures for implementation and execution
- Documentation on how the authorizer's policy aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer policy for ensuring autonomy is missing or vague **and**
 - In practice there is confusion regarding appropriate levels of autonomy with the charter schools in the portfolio **and**
 - Authorizer policy does not clearly relate to charter school authorizing **and**
 - Authorizer oversteps the authority vested in the charter school board to decide and be responsible for policy matters related to operating the school
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer policy for ensuring autonomy exists but is vague **or**
 - In practice there is confusion regarding appropriate levels of autonomy with the charter schools in the portfolio **or**
 - Authorizer policy does not clearly relate to charter school authorizing **or**
 - Authorizer oversteps the authority vested in the charter school board to decide and be responsible for policy matters related to operating the school
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer has a clear policy to ensure school autonomy **and**
 - Authorizer's policy on school autonomy establishes and recognizes the schools' authority over academics, financials and operations and respects the school's authority over the schools' day-to-day operations **and**
 - Authorizer's practice aligns with policy; authorizer holds charter schools accountable for performance outcomes and compliance with statute rather than on processes and inputs

- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - Authorizer’s policy aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Authorizer’s policy and practices to ensure school’s autonomy is verified externally with consistent responses from interviewed individuals

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)
- Authorizer self-evaluation tool(s), tracking and progress development
- An example of authorizer strategic plan(s), continuous improvement plan(s) and/or staff development based on self-evaluations
- Documentation of how authorizers evaluates its work against nationally recognized quality authorizing standards
- Documentation that continuous improvement plans have resulted in more effective authorizing practices

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer does not engage in self-evaluation to improve capacity, infrastructure and practices to oversee its portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer self-evaluations occur but are not intentional or planned to build its capacity, infrastructure and practices to oversee its portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer regularly evaluates its internal ability to oversee the portfolio of charter schools *and*

- Self-evaluations are intentional and planned to build the authorizer’s capacity, infrastructure and practices to oversee its portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - Authorizer develops and implements continuous improvement plans to address findings of self-evaluation
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Authorizer evaluates its work regularly against nationally recognized quality authorizing standards and implements continuous improvement plans that result in more effective authorizing practices *and*
 - Authorizer utilizes reflective practices to maintain an organizational focus on purposeful improvement

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Documentation of best practice sharing, engagement or technical assistance with/to other authorizers (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer does not engage with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer rarely engages with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer engages with other authorizers to improve the authorizing community of practice
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - Authorizer regularly shares best practices with and/or provides technical assistance to other authorizers

- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Authorizer best practices and/or technical assistance are sought out by other authorizers

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 2 (MDE required training)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 8 (statement of income and expenditures)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 4 (new school affidavit)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 5 (supplemental affidavit)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 7(a) (merged charter contract)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a) (new/renewed charter contract)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 5 (change in authorizers)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.16, subdivision 2(b) (authorizer annual report)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- MAPES Compliance Data Spreadsheets
- Authorizer document submissions
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Since the start of the current term, the authorizer was less than 85 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Since the start of the current term, the authorizer was at least 85 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Since the start of the current term, the authorizer was at least 90 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Since the start of the current term, the authorizer was at least 95 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin
- **Level 4: Exemplary**

- Since the start of the current term, the authorizer was 100 percent compliant in all the areas stated in the measure origin

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(3)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.17(b)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Final MDE Analysis of Submissions
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding questions and at least Level 2 criteria
- New charter school application, policies, procedures, timelines, and processes (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Documentation or summary of applications and authorizer decisions since the start of the current term
- An example of a new charter school application review process, if applicable (from beginning to end)
- Documentation of alignment with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards designed to promote and/or have resulted in high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer's application process is not comprehensive; does not include clear application questions and guidance; or does not include fair, transparent procedures and rigorous criteria **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer's application process is not comprehensive; does not include clear application questions and guidance; or does not include fair, transparent procedures, timelines and rigorous criteria **or**

- Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **or**
- Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP **or**
- Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Authorizer’s application process is comprehensive; includes clear application questions and guidance; and includes fair, transparent procedures, timelines and rigorous criteria **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions align with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Authorizer’s new charter school application and decision process aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards **and**
 - The application and decision process reflects a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date **and**
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question **and**
 - Authorizer decisions have resulted in high-quality charter schools

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.03, subdivision 7(b)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(6)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 3(b)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 3(h)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.06, subdivision 5
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 5
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Final MDE Analysis of Submissions
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding questions and at least Level 2 criteria
- Site/grade level/early learning expansion request, ready to open, and change in authorizer standards, policies, processes, and timelines (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- An example of the following, if applicable (from beginning to end):
 - 1) site/grade level/early learning expansion review process
 - 2) ready to open determination
 - 3) change in authorizer review process
- Documentation of alignment with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards designed to promote and/or have resulted in high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - The authorizer's application processes are not comprehensive; do not include clear application questions and guidance; or do not include fair, transparent procedures and rigorous criteria **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - The authorizer's application processes are not comprehensive; do not include clear application questions and guidance; or do not include fair, transparent procedures, timelines and rigorous criteria **or**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **or**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP **or**
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Authorizer's application processes are comprehensive; include clear application questions and guidance; and include fair, transparent procedures, timelines and rigorous criteria **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Authorizer's interim accountability processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards **and**
 - Interim accountability processes reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools

- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date *and*
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question *and*
 - Authorizer decisions have resulted in high-quality charter schools

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(4)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Final MDE Analysis of Submissions
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- An example of contracting negotiations (from beginning to end) and data to support the contracting decision
- An example of a contract amendment, if applicable, including communications to the school regarding those amendments

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools do not meet current statutory requirements *and*
 - Contracts do not clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer *and*
 - Authorizer’s contracting practices are inconsistent across the authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools do not meet current statutory requirements *or*
 - Contracts do not clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer *or*
 - Authorizer’s contracting practices are inconsistent across the authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools *or*
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools meet current statutory requirements *and*
 - Contracts clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer *and*

- Authorizer’s contracting practices are consistent across authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Contracts were executed no later than the first day of the renewal period
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Authorizer executes contract amendments for material changes to current school plans when necessary and not in lieu of conducting renewal evaluations
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date **and**
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question

B.4 Measure: Performance Outcomes and Standards

Guiding Questions

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

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Final MDE Analysis of Submissions
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding questions and at least Level 2 criteria
- Authorizing framework for school academic, financial, and operational performance outcomes and standards (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Documentation of data collected and decisions made in response to charter schools meeting/not meeting academic, financial, and operational performance outcomes and standards
- Documentation of authorizing performance standards that align with nationally recognized quality performance standards designed to promote and/or resulted in high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools do not meet current statutory performance standards **and**
 - Contracts misalign with the performance standards of the authorizer’s AAA/AAP **and**

- Authorizer’s performance standards are inconsistent across the authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools do not meet current statutory performance standards *or*
 - Contracts misalign with the performance standards of the authorizer’s AAA/AAP *or*
 - Authorizer’s performance standards are inconsistent across the authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools *or*
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Contracts in authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools meet current statutory performance standards *and*
 - Contracts define clear, measurable and attainable academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards, and consequences for meeting or not meeting performance outcomes and standards *and*
 - Performance outcomes and standards are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools *and*
 - Contracts align with the performance standards of its AAA/AAP *and*
 - Authorizers hold charter schools accountable to academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards defined in the contract
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years *and*
 - Authorizer executes contracts that align with nationally recognized quality performance standards *and*
 - Authorizer’s performance standards reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date *and*
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question *and*
 - Authorizer’s performance standards have resulted in high-quality charter schools

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 charter schools in the areas of academics, operations, and finances according to the processes outlined in the contract and the AAA/AAP?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(5)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(7)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Authorizer oversight plans, including required academic, financial and legal/organizational reporting by schools to the authorizer (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- An example of one school's ongoing oversight including oversight/monitoring report(s) (from beginning to end of a contract term)
- Documentation of authorizing oversight processes that align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards designed to promote and/or have resulted in high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer does not have clear processes for oversight and monitoring **and**
 - Authorizer's oversight and monitoring activities misalign with its stated oversight and monitoring processes in its AAA/AAP **and**
 - Authorizer's oversight and monitoring practices are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer does not have clear processes for oversight and monitoring **or**
 - Authorizer's oversight and monitoring activities misalign with its stated oversight and monitoring processes in its AAA/AAP **or**
 - Authorizer's oversight and monitoring practices are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **or**
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Authorizer has clear processes for oversight and monitoring **and**
 - Authorizer conducts charter oversight that competently evaluates academic, financial and operational performance and monitors compliance with applicable law **and**
 - Authorizer's oversight activities align with its stated oversight and monitoring processes in its AAA/AAP **and**
 - Authorizer's oversight and monitoring practices are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Authorizer's oversight processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards **and**
 - Authorizer's processes for ongoing oversight of the portfolio of charter schools reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools

- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date *and*
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question *and*
 - Authorizer’s oversight has resulted in high-quality charter schools

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 corrective action?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria
- Authorizer’s standards and processes for interventions, corrective action and response to complaints (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- Documentation of data collected and decisions made regarding complaints, intervention and corrective actions
- Documentation of one complete example of a charter school’s school improvement plan or notices of interventions put in place by authorizer (if applicable)
- Documentation of authorizing standards and processes for interventions, corrective action and response to complaints that align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Authorizer does not have clear standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action *and*
 - Authorizer’s standards and processes for complaints, intervention and corrective action misalign with its stated standards and processes in its AAA/AAP *and*
 - Authorizer inconsistently implements standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer does not have clear standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action *or*

- Authorizer’s standards and processes for complaints, intervention and corrective action misalign with its stated standards and processes in its AAA/AAP **or**
- Authorizer inconsistently implements standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer implements clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, intervention and corrective action **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are consistent across the portfolio of charter schools and align with its stated standards and processes in its AAA/AAP **and**
 - Decisions made regarding complaints, intervention and corrective action are aligned with data generated under oversight and monitoring practices
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 **and**
 - Authorizer’s standards and processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - School representatives consistently verify authorizer’s response to guiding question

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)
- Documentation showing extent to which authorizer provided support and technical assistance, how the assistance addressed a need and/or helped prevent future problems
- Documentation of how support, development and technical assistance are designed to promote high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**

- Support and technical assistance are not available
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Support and technical assistance are provided only in response to problems *and/or*
 - Support and technical assistance are provided in a manner that does not preserve school autonomy *and/or*
 - Support and technical assistance are provided in a manner that is inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Support and technical assistance are proactive *and*
 - Support and technical assistance are provided in a variety of areas *and*
 - Support and technical assistance are provided in a manner to preserve school autonomy *and*
 - Support and technical assistance are provided in a manner that is consistent across the portfolio of charter schools
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - Support and technical assistance are regularly offered, based on demonstrated need and designed to prevent problems
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - Support and technical assistance are designed to promote high-quality charter schools

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.17(b)
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards
- Continuous Improvement Measure

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding question and at least Level 2 criteria (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)
- Plan for promoting the model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charter schools

Updated September 2019

- Documentation of models being replicated and practices being disseminated

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - There is no intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - There is an intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices, but models/practices have not been identified
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - There is an intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices and models/practices have been identified
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 *and*
 - One or more identified models/practices are moving toward replication/dissemination
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 *and*
 - One or more identified models/practices have been realized at or disseminated to one or more schools beyond the original

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?

Measure Origin

- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(a)(7)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(8)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(11)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision. 1(a)(13)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision. 1(a)(14)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 3(a)
- Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 124E.10, subdivision 4
- Minnesota Authorizer Application Standards
- NACSA Principles and Standards

Evaluation Data Source

- AAA/AAP
- Final MDE Analysis of Submissions

- Interviews and surveys
- State Charter School Performance Data
- Authorizer Annual Reports
- Brief narrative response addressing guiding questions and at least Level 2 criteria
- Documentation of authorizer’s renewal standards and processes (if not already provided in AAA/AAP)
- An example of contract renewal review process and determination (from beginning to end)
- An example of contract termination decision, if applicable, including intervention processes (from beginning to end)
- Documentation of authorizing renewal and termination standards and processes that align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards designed to promote and/or resulted in high-quality charter schools

Level Ratings

- **Level 0: Unsatisfactory or Incomplete**
 - Renewal standards and processes are incompletely or insufficiently stated **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 1: Approaching Satisfactory**
 - Authorizer does not have transparent and rigorous standards and processes designed to use comprehensive academic, financial, operational and student performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions and terminate charters when necessary to protect student and public interests **or**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are inconsistent across the portfolio of charter schools **or**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions misalign with its AAA/AAP **or**
 - Level 2 indicators were not met for at least three years
- **Level 2: Satisfactory**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least three years:
 - Authorizer has transparent and rigorous standards and processes designed to use comprehensive academic, financial, operational and student performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions and terminate charters when necessary to protect student and public interests **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions are consistent across its portfolio of charter schools **and**
 - Authorizer’s decisions and resulting actions align with its AAA/AAP
- **Level 3: Commendable**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for at least four years **and**
 - Authorizer’s renewal standards and processes align with nationally recognized quality authorizing standards **and**
 - Authorizer’s renewal standards and processes reflect a clear strategy to promote high-quality charter schools
- **Level 4: Exemplary**
 - Level 3 **and**
 - Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date **and**

- Decisions resulted in high-quality charter schools **and**
- School representatives consistently verify authorizer's response to guiding question