

***STANDARDS FOR  
QUALITY SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
OF CHARTERED SCHOOLS***

**Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network  
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# **Standards for Quality Sponsoring/Authorizing of Chartered Schools**

**Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network**  
**351 East Kellogg Boulevard...Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101**  
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The Minnesota Assistance Network is a project of Education/Evolving which is a joint venture of the Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network is funded by the Minnesota Department of Education to assist the 60 plus sponsors of chartered schools in Minnesota conduct quality work with the schools they sponsor.

The document, *Standards for Quality Sponsoring/Authorizing of Chartered Schools* is the center-piece of an effort to significantly improve the sponsoring role in Minnesota. Sponsors that demonstrate the attainment of these standards can be certified as “Quality Sponsors.”

The leadership for the Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network is provided by Robert Wedl who is a veteran educator and education policy leader. Bob served as the Commissioner of Education for Minnesota and held several senior leadership positions in the Minneapolis Public Schools including Executive Director of Planning and Policy.

The development of the *Standards for Quality Sponsoring/Authorizing of Chartered Schools* was provided by:

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Special recognition and appreciation is given to Arnie Weimerskirch, Vice President for Quality (Retired) Honeywell Corporation for his consultation and commitment to the development of these standards. Mr. Weimerskirch’s work in quality management is recognized both nationally and internationally. He has written and spoken extensively on this topic. His assistance with the development of this document was invaluable.

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*The Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network is a project of Education Evolving which is a joint venture with the Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University. The Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network is funded primarily with a charter school grant from the Minnesota Department of Education.*

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Of Chartered Schools***

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# *Standards for Quality Sponsoring/Authorizing Of Chartered Schools*

## **Introduction**

The Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network, initiated in October 2004, assists Minnesota's sponsors of chartered schools in an effort to improve the sponsoring function. It has become clear during the past year that having quality sponsors of charter schools is a crucial component to assuring quality schools. Proactive action on the part of sponsors would likely have helped to prevent some of the issues with the few charter schools that have had difficulty during the past several years.

The Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network (MSAN) is providing services to Minnesota's sponsors in an effort to improve the quality of charter sponsoring in the state. Laws, regulations, workshops and guidelines, while always necessary, are not sufficient to assure quality. Quality cannot be "enacted" or "mandated." Quality is the result of work done well. Therefore, the purpose of the *Standards for Quality Sponsoring/Authorizing of Chartered Schools* and the *Charter School Quality Sponsoring Self-Evaluation Rubric* is:

1. Identify the indicators for quality charter school sponsoring in Minnesota;
2. Specify the criteria that defines each indicator;
3. Identify the incentives for why a sponsor would want to meet the quality sponsoring indicators;
4. Develop a process by which sponsors can ascertain whether they are meeting these quality indicators;

## **Why should I participate in the *Charter School Quality Sponsoring Self-Evaluation*?**

Organizations that sponsor chartered schools are coming under increased scrutiny from the legislature and the Department of Education as to how effectively they are carrying out their responsibilities. The recent work of MSAN and NACSA provides much-needed guidance and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of an effective charter school sponsor and this evaluation will give your organization a firm understanding of how well you are fulfilling these responsibilities. You may also use the results of your self-evaluation to spur discussion within your organization on opportunities for improvement as a charter school sponsor. Participation in the self-evaluation also gets you access to free technical assistance from MSAN in the development of an improvement plan and ongoing help, if needed.

## **The development of high quality standards**

Over 20,000 children in Minnesota attend charter schools, an impressive number considering that charter schools have only been in existence for 13 years and when one understands that each student is attending a chartered school because they or their parents chose to do so. No students are assigned to chartered schools. As the charter school movement continues to grow, the importance of strong charter school sponsorship is increasingly clear. Until recently, however, the specifics on the role of the sponsor have

been anything but clear, leaving many sponsors to do their best with limited resources and guidance.

When the Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network was first established, it facilitated the development of a document titled, *Sponsoring Charters: A Resource Guide for Minnesota Chartering Agencies*. This document was the first in the nation that clearly identified the roles of sponsors/authorizers. It was accepted as the Minnesota policy guide for sponsoring by the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota.

In 2004, shortly after the publication of the Minnesota sponsoring document, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) appointed a blue-ribbon panel to define quality charter school sponsorship. These authorizers (called “sponsors” in Minnesota), policy makers and school leaders developed NACSA’s *Principles and Standards of Quality Charter School Authorizing*. This document parallels the Minnesota guide and provides a functional framework for quality charter school sponsorship and clearly presents the importance of the sponsor’s role-- “Charter school authorizers play a pivotal role in the school development process, keeping the focus on results, and upholding the public trust.”

The development of the “Quality Standards and Rubric” relies heavily on the above two documents as a starting point in the development of the Evaluation Rubric. The standards were edited to be Minnesota-specific and a scoring method based on organizational systems alignment was created. The result is a comprehensive evaluation system that will allow sponsors to measure their performance against a set of quality standards. The tool establishes standards and measurements in the five core areas of responsibility for charter school sponsors:

1. *Agency Capacity and Infrastructure:* A quality authorizer creates organizational structures and commits human resources and financial resources necessary for conducting its authorizing duties effectively and efficiently.
2. *Application process:* A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria and grants charters only to those developers who demonstrate strong capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school.
3. *Performance Contracting:* A quality authorizer negotiates contracts with charter schools that clearly articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, expected outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences and other material terms.
4. *Ongoing oversight and evaluation:* A quality authorizer conducts contract oversight that evaluates performance, monitors compliance, informs intervention and renewal decisions, and ensures autonomy provided under applicable law.

5. *Renewal decision-making:* A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses multiple indicators to make merit-based renewal decisions.

### **The Process**

A sponsor initiates a self-evaluation of its primary responsibilities. The results of the self-study are shared with Minnesota Sponsor Assistance Network cadre member during a planning meeting. An action plan is developed jointly at the meeting. A written summary of the planning session, action plan and additional recommendations are generated by the MSAN cadre member and delivered to the sponsor within a week. All information gathered from the self-study, discussed during the planning meeting and included in the final report is only shared with the sponsor.

The steps in the process are:

1) The review of the sponsor's organization and systems through self-study. The review includes the observation and documentation of the sponsor's performance on the five critical responsibilities: capacity, applications, oversight and evaluation, contracting and renewal. During this stage the sponsor evaluates its activities and what are the results of these activities on its charter schools and students. The data collected is from a variety of reports, surveys, observations, interviews, assessments and the MSAN Standards modeled after the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Principles and Standards.

2) A feedback meeting is scheduled with a MSAN cadre member to verify the sponsor's perception of its performance against national quality standards. In the meeting, the participants review the information gathered from the self-study as representative of the sponsor's current processes. The sponsor's processes are then compared with self-study ratings for each standard. Adjustments and clarifications are made to arrive at a verified rating of the sponsor's implementation of the standard. The sponsor then identifies the strengths, as well as the opportunities for improvement in each of the five critical responsibilities.

3) An action plan is developed. At the feedback meeting, an action plan is drafted. The plan identifies the strengths and opportunities for improvement. The action items can include one process within each responsibility categories or the most critical regardless of responsibility category. The final list, however, needs to reflect the sponsor's belief of what can be realistically achievement during the timeline.

4) The development of recommendations for specific changes based on the feedback report. From the feedback meeting and action plan a written document is develop for the sponsor and delivered within a week. The document focuses on what is working, what is not working and what needs to be deleted, revised or added as identified during the feedback meeting. Additionally, the plan will identify strategic drivers- the very critical one or two things which must happen first in order to advance the other planned

activities. Using the rubrics from the self-study, indicators are suggested to gauge the pace, strength, depth and breadth of improvement progress.

### **Instructions for using the Evaluation Rubric**

#### ***Time to complete***

The Evaluation Rubric is divided into five subsections, each of which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete (or a total of 2 ½ hours to complete the entire evaluation). It is helpful to have ready access to of the organization’s documents related to charter sponsoring as the evaluation is completed.

#### ***Scoring***

The scoring system is inspired by the Baldrige National Quality Programs, which encourages a systems perspective.

“Successful management of overall performance requires organization-specific synthesis, alignment, and integration. Synthesis means looking at your organization as a whole and builds upon key educational requirements, including your strategic objectives and action plans. Alignment means using the key linkages among requirements...to ensure consistency of plans, processes, measures, and actions. Integration builds on alignment so that the individual components of your performance management system operate in a fully interconnected manner.”<sup>1</sup>

Each standard is assigned a score of one, two, or three, which describes the level of implementation and systems alignment and integration. Choose the score which best describes the organization’s performance and note the guiding document(s) that are related to that standard. At the end of each subsection are several open-ended questions to complete to help summarize the organization’s strengths and opportunities for improvement in that area. These questions will also help prioritize areas of greatest importance for improvement planning. Finally, each subsection is followed by a listing of resources that can be use for additional guidance and support.

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<sup>1</sup> *Education Criteria for Performance Excellence*, Baldrige National Quality Program, 2004

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A quality authorizer creates organizational structures and commits human and financial resources necessary for conducting its authorizing duties effectively and efficiently

	<b>Reacting to Problems (1)</b>	<b>Early Systematic Approaches (2)</b>	<b>Aligned Approaches (3)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Document</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES</b>					
<i><b>Implements plans, policies and processes that streamline and systematize our work</b></i>					
1. Our office is guided by a clear and articulate mission statement approved by our governing board about the organization’s role as a charter school authorizer that all staff know and understand.	The sponsor/authorizer responds to requests to partner from the community around common missions and visions of the two organizations to sponsor/authorizer a proposed charter school.	The sponsor/authorizer continually assesses the alignment between its own mission and the mission of its current and future charter schools. The sponsor/authorizer limits its involvement in creating the structure of the school to monitoring of the school’s mission for “mission drift”.	The sponsor/authorizer develops design characteristics that it advertises in the community for groups interested in submitting a proposal that share a common mission with the sponsor. The sponsor/authorizer may determine the program model, seek out the best operators to develop the model and sets the expected performance expectations for the operators.		
2. We have a clear delineation and understanding of the roles and responsibilities within our organization of our board and our staff as a sponsor/authorizer.	The sponsor’s board and staff have a general understanding of the responsibilities of a sponsor. The sponsor/authorizer works from a “hands off” approach, gives full autonomy to the charter school and views its role as limited to providing a renewal decision at the end of the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer views its roles as providing continuous oversight of the financial, the learning and the leadership of the charter school during the contract, a renewal review at the end of the contract and developing an agreement to the conditions of the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer views its role as providing continuous oversight of the financial, the learning program and the leadership of the charter school during its contract, a renewal review at the end of the contract, development of an agreement to the conditions of the contract and organizational practices that represent stewardship of the public trust. Improvement processes		

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			for unsatisfactory performance in specific areas are in the charter school contract.		
3. We have articulated annual goals, expected outcomes, and methods for achieving our goals.	The sponsor/authorizer uses general goals for its charter school responsibilities.	The sponsor/authorizer uses specific annual goals, outcomes and strategies for achieving its goals concerning its sponsor/authorizer responsibilities.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a required continuous improvement process by its administration to set the goals, outcomes and strategies to obtain the results of its sponsoring activities.		
4. Our office is guided by a strategic plan that we regularly revisit and use as a tool for ongoing self-assessment and long-term planning.	The sponsor's staff uses the organization's strategic plan to perform its sponsorship responsibilities.	The sponsor's staff uses a sponsor/authorizer specific set of strategic goals and outcomes.	The sponsor's staff uses a sponsor/authorizer specific set of strategic goals and outcomes. The staff and leadership of the sponsor/authorizer meet to set long-term plans and goals for sponsoring charter schools.		
<b><i>Defines external relationships and lines of authority to protect its authorizing functions from conflicts of interest and political influence.</i></b>					
5. We adhere to a written conflict of interest policy that protects our authorizing practices from real and perceived conflicts of interest.	The sponsor/authorizer is directed by the organization's general conflict of interest policies.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a policy on conflict of interest with procedures to assure transparency of decision-making.	The sponsor/authorizer uses policies to prevent conflicts of interest, operate with transparency of decision-making and assure decisions based on merit.		

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<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>					
<i><b>Enlists competent leadership and required content knowledge through staff, contractual relationships, and/or intra- or inter-agency collaborations</b></i>					
6. Our staff has sufficient time allocation, knowledge, and skill to execute our authorizing responsibilities effectively.	The sponsor/authorizer identifies staff that is responsible for performing sponsoring activities by adding the sponsoring responsibilities to an existing position.	The sponsor/authorizer identifies staff that is responsible for performing sponsoring activities, has a job description and percentage of time allocated to complete basic sponsor/authorizer responsibilities.	The sponsor/authorizer identifies staff that is responsible for performing sponsoring activities, has a job description and percentage of times allocated to complete its full range of responsibilities. A yearly review of the time allotted for sponsoring/authoring responsibilities occurs. The stage of development of its charter schools, the responsibilities assumed by the sponsor/authorizer and a comparison to other sponsor/authorizer organizations' best practices guide the decision for more or less resource allocation.		
7. We seek and make effective use of quality sources of external support, through cross-agency collaboration and contracting.	The sponsor/authorizer uses internal sources to support its sponsorship functions.	The sponsor/authorizer uses internal sources to support its sponsorship functions. It increases its capacity to perform quality oversight and review through cross-agency collaborations.	The sponsor/authorizer scans the availability of internal sources, cross-agency collaborations and contracting for services to provide quality sponsorship functions. The decision to use external sources creates an		

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			opportunity to enhance the sponsor’s role and effectiveness.		
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>					
<b><i>Determines the financial needs of the office and secures sufficient financial resources to adequately fulfill its authorizing responsibilities</i></b>					
8. We use a formal process for preparing and submitting our budget request that clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the office.	The sponsor/authorizer sets yearly budgets for sponsor/authorizer activities based on the previous year’s expenditures.	The sponsor/authorizer sets yearly budgets based on the needs identified for sponsor/authorizer activities.	The sponsor/authorizer identifies financial needs in both the short and long term to reflect the requirements for the number and type of charter schools it is sponsoring.		
9. We pursue public and private sector revenue streams to support the quality and efficiency of our authorizing practices.	The sponsor/authorizer uses only the administrative fees collected from charter schools to perform whatever possible sponsoring activities the resources support.	The sponsor/authorizer combines internal resources and the administrative fees to fully-fund the essential responsibilities of a sponsor.	The sponsor/authorizer seeks grants to enhance the sponsor’s role while using internal resources and a charter school administrative fee to provide essential sponsorship responsibilities.		

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<b><i>Deploys funds effectively and efficiently</i></b>					
10. Our administration generates a financial report that identifies all the expenditures and revenues related to the charter school authorizing activities. Examples: costs of staff assigned, administrative fees assessed, services purchased and infrastructure investments.	The sponsor/authorizer uses an informal accounting system to record the time and resources required to perform its sponsor/authorizer roles.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a financial report that identifies the revenues received from administrative fees, grants for sponsorship and the expenditures for sponsor/authorizer roles.	The sponsor/authorizer organization’s accounting department produces and verifies on both demand and periodic reports of the expenditures and revenues of the sponsor/authorizer roles.		
11. Our charter school office staff has access to staff development to maintain or gain competence in performing core oversight roles in academic and school operational domains.	The sponsor/authorizer staff has minimum knowledge of budgets, governance, curriculum, assessments and legal elements of charter schools to perform the core responsibilities. They can access training opportunities to increase their skills.	The sponsor/authorizer staff has a working knowledge of budgets, governance, curriculum, assessments and legal elements of charter schools to perform the core responsibilities. They participate in a few opportunities to maintain their skills.	The sponsor/authorizer staff has a working knowledge of budgets, governance, curriculum, assessments and legal elements of charter schools to perform the core responsibilities. They participate in multiple staff development opportunities. New staff receives mentoring and training when starting the position.		

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**Questions**

1. Based on the list created above, what have you identified as your agency's greatest weakness in this core authorizer responsibility?
2. How might you work to strengthen this weakness?
3. What resources will you need?

**AGENCY CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES**

Buckingham, Marcus and Curt Coffman. *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*. Simon & Schuster: 1999.

Druker, Peter. *Managing the Non-Profit Organization: Principles and Practices*. HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1990.

Bryson, John. *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement, 3rd Edition*. Jossey-Boss: 2004.

Dropkin, Murray and Bill LaTouche. *The Budget-Building Book for NonProfits: A Step-By-Step Guide for Managers and Boards*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc: 1998

Herdman, Paul and Nelson Smith. National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Issue Brief No. 3 – Agency Capacity and Infrastructure](#). “Built for Quality: The Capacity Needed to Oversee Charter Schools.” June, 2004. <

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Smith, Nelson. National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Issue Brief No. 7 – Agency Capacity and Infrastructure](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/IssueBriefNo7.pdf). “Square Pegs: Charter Authorizers in Non-Charter Agencies.” Jan., 2005. <<http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/IssueBriefNo7.pdf>>

STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
**APPLICATION PROCESS**

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria and grants charters only to those developers who demonstrate strong capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school.

	<b>Reacting to Problems (1)</b>	<b>Early Systematic Approaches (2)</b>	<b>Aligned Approaches (3)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Documents</b>
<b>FAIR PROCEDURES</b>					
<i>Communicates chartering opportunities, processes, and decisions openly to the public.</i>					
1. We clearly explain the process for applying for a charter and make our application materials readily available to the public	The sponsor/authorizer responds to requests of a new applicant based on “how I think it was done last time”.	The sponsor/authorizer gives a procedure manual to new applicants. The manual describes the application process and includes materials to complete an application.	The sponsor/authorizer gives a procedure manual to a new applicant. The manual describes the application process, includes materials to complete an application and is available through the sponsors/authorizer’s web site or upon request through the mail.		
2. When we have capacity to authorize/sponsor a new school, we target low-income families, communities, and students of color for the dissemination of information on how to form and operate a charter school.	Upon request, the sponsor/authorizer provides information to targeted groups.	The sponsor/authorizer contacts low-income communities to identify potential parties.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a communication system to provide information to agencies who deliver services to low-income families and students of color.		
3. We release application materials in a timely manner in order to provide ample time for developing a strong application.	The sponsor/authorizer distributes application materials without a specific timeline in place.	The sponsor/authorizer provides application materials within a week of a written request from a new applicant group.	Multiple sources exist in the organization to distribute application materials within a week upon request and are available online for immediate access.		

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4. We provide a clear timeline for the application process and abide by that schedule	The sponsor/authorizer develops a separate application review timeline for each application.	The sponsor/authorizer establishes a process and timeline each year to review new applications.	The sponsor/authorizer establishes a process and timeline each year to review new applications. The process aligns with the state’s charter approval timeline.		
5. Our application clearly details the required content and format.	The sponsor/authorizer disseminates an application form that outlines the content areas the applicant must complete.	The sponsor/authorizer disseminates an application form that lists all required content areas and uses a question format to structure an applicant’s final application.	The sponsor/authorizer engages in periodic discussions with the applicant to answer questions during the development of the application. Applicants may receive the sponsor/authorizer’s application decision rubric to use in their application development. Previous applicants and application reviewers complete an evaluation or interview to provide feedback on the process.		
<b><i>Explains how each stage of the application process will be evaluated</i></b>					
6. We explain the evaluation methods for each stage of the application process.	The sponsor/authorizer tells applicants how the application applications are processed.	The sponsor/authorizer shares a written document that outlines the criteria used to make a decision on sponsorship, the format of responses and the expected length of the application.	The sponsor/authorizer shares a scoring rubric for the different stages of the application process and review of an application to the applicant.		
7. We articulate how each stage in the	The sponsor/authorizer decides to enter into a	The sponsor/authorizer makes the decision to	The sponsor/authorizer makes the decision to		

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application process informs the decision to charter.	contract with a school if the application reads well and describes an interesting education program.	sponsor/authorizer an applicant’s proposal if it meets predetermined criteria that include academic program, governance, financial and organizational quality.	sponsor/authorizer an applicant’s proposal if it meets predetermined <u>weighted</u> criteria that include an assessment of developer’s capacity to start a school, academic program, governance, financial and organizational quality.		
8. We articulate our organization's mission and vision as an authorizer/sponsor to determine the alignment with the proposal's mission/vision.	The sponsor/authorizer looks for a general match with the sponsor’s mission.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a clear statement that describes the sponsor’s purpose, mission and vision that align with the schools it charters.	The sponsor/authorizer knows what types of schools best aligns with it and may actively seek out like-minded organizations.		
<b><i>Defines clearly how the requirements of the application are met.</i></b>					
9. We have staff responsible for fielding and responding to questions from applicants throughout the application process.	A sponsor/authorizer staff member responds to questions about the application process.	A sponsor/authorizer staff member with a title that communicates their role as charter school liaison responds to questions.	A staff member of the organization with a charter school liaison’s title and time allocated for charter school responsibilities, answers questions.		
<b>RIGOROUS CRITERIA</b>					
<b><i>Requires the applicant to provide a clear and compelling mission, a quality educational program, a solid business plan, effective governance and management structures, an accountability plan, and evidence of the applicant’s capacity to carryout the plan.</i></b>					
10. We require applicants to provide a clear and compelling mission statement that articulates a purpose for the school.	On the application, the applicant must provide a mission statement of the school. .	The application requires the applicant to describe how the school’s mission integrates into the design.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a written description of how the applicant’s mission integrates into the design. The sponsor/authorizer shares a		

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			rubric with the applicant that judges the degree of mission integration.		
11. We require applicants to provide a plan for a quality educational program that can successfully serve all children at the school, based on sound educational philosophies and gives evidence of prior success.	The sponsor/authorizer evaluates the design based on merits of the evidence and research provided in the proposal.	The sponsor/authorizer evaluates the design based on merits of the evidence and research provided in the proposal to meet the targeted students of the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requests specific research based designs or a focus incorporated into the proposal. A pre-application discussion with the applicant determines the quality and kind of research the school design uses.		
12. We require, regardless of the program model used at the school, a detailed plan of how the school will serve children and youth with disabilities and children whose first language is not English.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a general statement concerning the accommodation of special education and ELL students at the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a general statement concerning the accommodation of special education and ELL students at the school. The sponsor/authorizer looks for how the accommodations relate to the instructional model.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the applicant throughout the program description integrate the services to special education and ELL within the program model.		
13. We require applicants to demonstrate a solid business plan that includes realistic enrollment projections, realistic budget	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to include a budget, enrollment and facilities projections for multiple years.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to include budget plans, enrollment projections and facilities for multiple years and provides for different scenarios if enrollment	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to include budget plans, enrollment projections and facilities for multiple years, provision for different		

STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
**APPLICATION PROCESS**

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria and grants charters only to those developers who demonstrate strong capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school.

	<b>Reacting to Problems (1)</b>	<b>Early Systematic Approaches (2)</b>	<b>Aligned Approaches (3)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Documents</b>
assumptions, balanced budgets, positive cash flows and an adequate and achievable facilities plan.		projections changed significantly. The sponsor/authorizer gives guidance concerning areas of expertise such as a school district providing assistance in developing a school budget.	scenarios if enrollment projections changed significantly, and description of the monitoring system to determine needed changes in the plan. The applicant shows how the business plan is align with the education plan and model.		
14. We require applicants to provide an accountability plan that details the primary assessment tools and evaluation design that will be in place when the school opens.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to identify general goals of the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to identify the areas to assessment, assessment instruments, frequency of measurement and expectation levels to determine the success of school during the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the application to identify the areas to assessment, assessment instruments, frequency of measurement and expectation levels to determine the success of school during the contract. The application describes the integration of a continuous improvement and evaluation process for the school’s staff with the accountability plan.		
15. We require applicants to provide a plan for effective governance including a skilled, experienced board that is void of conflicts of interest and maintains appropriate oversight of the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requires no board member or family receive financial benefits from the school. Board members bring a range of general skills and experience for oversight of the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requires no board member or family receive financial benefits from the school. Board members bring a range of skills and previous experience with school boards or administration for oversight of the school. A plan for secession to a majority	The sponsor/authorizer requires no board member or family receive financial benefits from the school. Board members bring a range of skills and previous experience with school or nonprofit boards or administration for oversight		

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**APPLICATION PROCESS**

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria and grants charters only to those developers who demonstrate strong capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school.

	<b>Reacting to Problems (1)</b>	<b>Early Systematic Approaches (2)</b>	<b>Aligned Approaches (3)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Documents</b>
		teacher board is in place.	of the school. A plan for recruitment, training and secession to a majority teacher board is in place.		
16. We require applicants to provide a plan for effective management including clear position descriptions, delineation of duties, an organizational chart, and administrative policies.	The sponsor/authorizer requires general job descriptions, an organization chart and policies in the application.	The sponsor/authorizer requires that job descriptions clearly identify responsibilities, report lines and a set of general administrative polices.	The sponsor/authorizer requires that job descriptions clearly identify responsibilities, report lines, a set of general administrative polices and how the administrative structure supports the program design.		
17. We require applicants to provide information about prior achievements, employment histories, and ties to the community the school will serve in order to determine the applicant’s capacity to implement the plan.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a general listing of resources and experiences the applicants will bring to the school.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the applicants to describe in the application the designers’ capacity to provide effective leadership, a clean work history and commitment to the school mission.	The sponsor/authorizer requires the applicants to articulate in a pre-application meeting the available resources, knowledge of the model, effectiveness of their leadership and commitment to the school mission.		
18. We require applicants to present a sound plan to start the school on time with the resources available.	The sponsor/authorizer asks for a general timeline of activities of the applicant from their approval to the opening day of school.	The sponsor/authorizer asks for a specific timeline of activities and benchmarks for all areas of the startup process. This includes enrollment status, financial reporting, hiring, ordering of materials, facilities readiness and training of staff.	The sponsor/authorizer asks for a flow chart of activities and outcomes for all areas of a school startup.		

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19. We require that the proposal clearly describe the grade organization of the school with a plan for the numbers of students by grade level expected for the next six years.	The sponsor/authorizer accepts the identification of a grade /age level configuration.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a detailed plan for the number of students by grade/age level for the school during the contract and in future years.	The sponsor/authorizer requires a needs assessment upon which the number of students by grade/age level for the school during the contract and in future years is projected.		
<b>CHARTER DECISIONS</b>					
<b><i>Conducts a thorough evaluation of the applicants using reviewers with educational, organizational, legal, and financial expertise.</i></b>					
20. We enlist review teams, including external reviewers if necessary, with expertise in the content areas of the application and knowledge of new schools.	The sponsor/authorizer uses internal staff that have a general understanding of school functions.	The sponsor/authorizer develops an internal team with expertise in school functions and includes external reviewers for the areas it lacks expertise.	The sponsor/authorizer develops the internal review team by recruiting members who are experienced with oversight of charter schools or by contracting with external sources for the expertise related to the focus of a school’s application.		
21. We ensure the transparency of information that informs a decision to sponsor/authorize a new school.	The sponsor/authorizer records minimal information on a decision to sponsor/ authorize.	The sponsor/authorizer provides oral feedback on the strengths and limitations of the application for a charter.	The sponsor/authorizer meets with the applicant or provides written feedback on what areas of the application need improvement to meet the sponsor’s expectation.		

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**APPLICATION PROCESS**

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	<b>Reacting to Problems (1)</b>	<b>Early Systematic Approaches (2)</b>	<b>Aligned Approaches (3)</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Documents</b>
<i>Grants charters only to applicants that have met the established criteria.</i>					
22. We grant charters only to applicants that meet our criteria.	The sponsor/authorizer grants charters based on the recommendation of staff with little knowledge of the criteria used to make the recommendation.	The sponsor's board sets the criteria used by staff to make a judgment on a proposal's merit.	The sponsor's board agrees on a list of criteria as a standard to evaluate proposals and knows how well an application meets the standard.		
<i>Provides prompt notification of decisions and informs applicants of their rights and responsibilities.</i>					
23. We explain the process for negotiating the terms of the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer explains the process when asked.	The sponsor/authorizer provides a timeline and written process for negotiating a contract.	The sponsor/authorizer outlines the timeline and process it wishes to follow with the applicant to negotiate a contract after the state approves the sponsor's request to grant the chartered status to the school. A discussion of essential components of the contract is scheduled.		
24. We demonstrate our commitment to the applicants by supporting them through the state agency's approval process.	The sponsor/authorizer provides written letters of support when asked by the applicants as needed.	The sponsor/authorizer attends state agency's approval meetings with the applicant when requested.	The sponsor/authorizer sets the expectation in their application requirements that the sponsor/authorizer will be present at all the state agency's approval hearings.		

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**APPLICATION PROCESS**

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**Questions**

1. Based on the list created above, what have you identified as your agency's greatest weakness in this core authorizer responsibility?
2. How might you work to strengthen this weakness?
3. What resources will you need?

**APPLICATION PROCESS RESOURCES**

Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network. [Sponsoring Charters: A Resource Guide for Minnesota Chartering Agencies](http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/SponsoringCharters.pdf). "The Sponsors role." Pages 14-19. 2003. <<http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/SponsoringCharters.pdf>>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Critical Design Issues for Charter School Authorizers](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/criticaldesigns-issues&illustrations.pdf). "Application Process." Pages 19-29. 2003. <<http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/criticaldesigns-issues&illustrations.pdf>>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Online Resource Library](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=120). "[Application Process](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=120)." <[http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category\\_id=120](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=120)>

**STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING**

A quality authorizer negotiates contracts with charter schools that clearly articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, expected outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences and other material terms.

Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
<b>NEGOTIATION</b>					
<i>Utilizes a collaborative process to ensure mutual agreement over the terms of the contract.</i>					
1. We establish a contract template that defines and addresses the material terms of the charter.	The sponsor/authorizer asks the charter school to develop a template of a contract to meet the requirements of the state and the mission of the sponsor/authorizer.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a “best practices” template contract.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a “best practices” template contract. Modifications include the accountability measures, reporting schedules, intervention continuum, process for collaboration, level of technical assistance, and models of operation desired by to the sponsor/authorizer.		
2. We discuss the terms of the contract with each school and consider possible modifications or improvements to the template.	The sponsor/authorizer presents the contract for the first time at the final meeting for the parties signatures.	The sponsor/authorizer holds several discussions about the contract with opportunities for the charter school board to question the sponsor/authorizer on specific points. The school and sponsor/authorizer share drafts of the contract until consensus from all participants.	The sponsor/authorizer and school thoroughly discuss the contract with the sponsor/authorizer providing detailed explanations for each section of the contract and checks for the mutual understanding.		

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<b>Standard</b>	<b>(1) Reacting to problems</b>	<b>(2) Early systemic approaches</b>	<b>(3) Aligned approaches</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Guiding documents</b>
3. We provide ample guidance about and a detailed explanation of the parameters of the sponsor/authorizer/ school relationship.	The sponsor/authorizer provides resource materials to the charter school that described the sponsor/authorizer-charter school relationship in response to an issue or problem.	Upon agreeing to sponsor/authorize a charter school, the sponsor/authorizer meets to discuss and gain mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities held by the sponsor/authorizer and the school.	Upon agreeing to sponsor/authorize a charter school, the sponsor/authorizer meets to discuss and gain mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities held by the sponsor/authorizer and the school. Sections of the contract provide clarification of the roles.		
4. We follow a mutual agreement process for amending the terms of the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer, when requested to amend a contract by the school, decide whether to make the changes.	The sponsor/authorizer establishes a collaborative process for annual reviews of the contract for possible changes.	The sponsor/authorizer establishes a collaborative process for annual reviews of the contract for possible changes that aligns with the school's accountability/continuous improvement system.		

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Expected Outcomes:		
<i>Define clear, measurable, and attainable student achievement and organizational performance goals against which the authorizer will evaluate the school on an ongoing basis and for renewal.</i>		
	Yes	No
1. Our contracts clearly delineate the student achievement and organizational performance goals for which we hold the school accountable.		
2. We ensure that the goals for which we hold schools accountable are measurable and can be objectively determined.		
<i>Articulate rigorous performance indicators and standards relative to each of the stated goals.</i>		
3. Our contracts identify the level of performance that the school commits to attain to achieve its goals.		
Evaluation Process:		
<i>Stipulate the process for evaluation, including but not limited to: the types of academic, organizational, financial, and compliance data that will be reviewed, and the process and frequency for gathering and reporting such data.</i>		
4. Our contracts describe the accountability system's method for collecting data.		
5. Our contracts affirm our authority to require data that are needed from the school for accountability purposes.		
6. -Our contracts include specific descriptions of the type and frequency of the school's reporting.		

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<b>Performance Consequences:</b> <i>Explain the conditions under which the authorizer may intervene in the school's operation or revoke the contract as well as procedures/protocols by which such interventions may occur; and define the criteria for renewal.</i>		
	Yes	No
7. We provide written descriptions of our expected responses to and the possible consequences for a school's failure to meet agreed upon requirements and outcomes.		
8. Our contracts clearly indicate the standards and levels of performance that a school must attain for charter renewal.		
<b>Other Material Terms:</b> <i>Include the statutory, regulatory, and procedural terms and conditions of operation.</i>		
9. Our contracts identify the statutory, regulatory, and procedural requirements of operation that the school must meet.		

**Questions**

1. Based on the list created above, what have you identified as your agency's greatest weakness in this core authorizer responsibility?
  
2. How might you work to strengthen this weakness?
  
3. What resources will you need?

STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
**PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING**

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**PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING RESOURCES**

Minnesota Sponsors Assistance Network. [Sponsoring Charters: A Resource Guide for Minnesota Chartering Agencies](http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/SponsoringCharters.pdf). “The Sponsors role.” Pages 20-21. 2003. <<http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/SponsoringCharters.pdf>>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Critical Design Issues for Charter School Authorizers](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/criticaldesigns-issues&illustrations.pdf). “Charter Contract or Performance Agreement.” Pages 29-37. 2003. <<http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/criticaldesigns-issues&illustrations.pdf>>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Online Resource Library](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=121). “[Performance Contracting](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=121).” <[http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category\\_id=121](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/pubnacsa/library/index.php?page=library&category_id=121)>

**STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
ONGOING OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION**

A quality authorizer conducts contract oversight that evaluates performance, monitors compliance, informs intervention and renewal decisions, and ensures autonomy provided under applicable law.

Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
<b>PERFORMANCE EVALUATION</b> <i>Implements an accountability system that generates all the information needed to determine whether a school is meeting the goals and standards articulated in the contract.</i>					
1. We establish a comprehensive, transparent accountability system for gathering specific data to assess a school's performance against its student achievement and organizational performance goals.	The school's accountability system identifies a few fragmented areas to collect data on the performance of the school. The sponsor/authorizer minimally involves itself in the selection of measures. The school is responsible for collecting and reporting the results.	The school's accountability system identifies multiple areas to collect data on the performance of the school. The sponsor/authorizer involves itself in the selection of measures and understands how to make comparisons of the results to an appropriate standard. The school is responsible for collecting and reporting the results.	The school's accountability system collects multiple types of information to create a comprehensive picture of the schools performance across core evaluation questions about the success of the school and its organization. The five core questions to determine the success of the school are: Is the school faithful in implementing the mission and terms set forth in the contract? Is the board performing its governance responsibilities and providing leadership? Is the school's learning program a success? Is the school using its revenue to focus on its core mission? Is the school a viable organization?		
2. We evaluate academic performance data, including	The sponsor/authorizer primarily uses standardized assessments and state tests	The sponsor/authorizer uses both standardized "status" assessments of students'	The sponsor/authorizer uses multiple measures of academic performance by		

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<b>Standard</b>	<b>(1) Reacting to problems</b>	<b>(2) Early systemic approaches</b>	<b>(3) Aligned approaches</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Guiding documents</b>
absolute, value-added, and comparative measures, from multiple sources.	given to a sample of the students or grades that represent the academic performance of the entire school.	proficiency levels on state or national standards in a few grade levels at the school and value-added assessments for all students in the school across all grade levels to determine growth towards standards proficiency.	implementing standardized “status” assessments of students proficiency levels on state or national standards in a few grade levels at the school, value-added standardized measures across all grades to determine growth towards standards for all students, curriculum based content standards of grade level mastery and school developed assessments of performance.		
3. We evaluate organizational performance data from multiple sources.	The sponsor/authorizer responds to concerns raised by community, staff or parents about the school’s organizational practices- leadership, governance or planning.	The sponsor/authorizer observes board meetings, the director evaluation process, strategic planning, and the school’s improvement goal setting process.	Multiple measures such as observation, surveys, self-assessments and external evaluations provide information on the organizational health of the school.		
4. We evaluate financial performance data from multiple sources.	The sponsor/authorizer reviews the official audit and the state-required end of year financial reports.	The sponsor/authorizer requests monthly financial reports on cash flow, expenditures and reviews compared to the current budget and the official audit. The school provides assurance of multiple checks and signs-off procedure on transactions and payments.	The sponsor/authorizer requests monthly financial reports on cash flow, expenditures and reviews compared to the current budget and the official audit. The school provides assurance of multiple checks and signs-off procedure on transactions and payments. The sponsor/authorizer		

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<b>Standard</b>	<b>(1) Reacting to problems</b>	<b>(2) Early systemic approaches</b>	<b>(3) Aligned approaches</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Guiding documents</b>
			monitors the school’s status towards meeting financial benchmarks outlined in a three to five year plan that may include assumptions for recruitment, expansion, facilities capacity, equipment and textbook replacement.		
5. We understand how to review and analyze required state assessment results for each school.	The sponsor/authorizer staff reviews the assessment reports generated by the state and prepares a report interrupting the results for the sponsor/authorizer’s board.	The school leadership reviews the results of individual state assessments and prepares a report interrupting the results for the sponsor/authorizer.	The school leadership, sponsor/authorizer staff or outside evaluator reviews the results of individual state assessments and prepares a report interrupting the results for the sponsor/authorizer’s board and the school community.		
6. We use the analysis of required state assessment results (under NCLB) as an integral source of evidence on the effectiveness of the school’s academic program	AYP is recognized and noted and but plays no role in the overall evaluation by the sponsor/authorizer.	AYP is recognized and noted and plays a limited role in the overall evaluation by the sponsor/authorizer.	The consequences and requirements of AYP are fully articulated and integrated into the school’s improvement plan.		
7. Our analysis of required state financial reports is an integral source of evidence on the effectiveness of the school’s financial	The school’s board and leadership team receive the state department of education’s evaluation of the school’s compliance with financial reporting formats	The school’s board and leadership team receive the state department of education’s evaluation of a school’s compliance with financial reporting formats	The school’s board and leadership team receive the state department of education’s evaluation of a school’s compliance with financial reporting formats		

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Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
management.	and timelines, indicators of statutory operating debt and accounting procedures. The school informs the sponsor/authorizer of the information.	and timelines, indicators of statutory operating debt and accounting procedures. The sponsor/authorizer routinely checks with the state on the status of the school's financial health.	and timelines, indicators of statutory operating debt and accounting procedures. The sponsor/authorizer routinely checks with the state on the status of the school's financial health. When the sponsor/authorizer sees a decline in a financial indicator or it does not meet an acceptable standard, an improvement plan is required from the school to correct the problem.		
8. We perform site visits several times per year to gather qualitative data to augment quantitative data on a school's performance.	The sponsor/authorizer's staff visits the school to observe the school's operation and interview staff, parents and students.	The sponsor/authorizer's staff gathers information during the year centered on the contractual agreements. The sponsor/authorizer staff discusses regularly with the teachers and students about the educational program, issues with the school business office and established times to receive questions from staff, parents and students concerning the school's operation.	The sponsor/authorizer has a formal site visit protocol. Multiple measures are used by the sponsor/authorizer staff to gather data on each objective. Improvements needed are identified. Recommendations for actions to address performance concerns are made. The site improvement plan's results are reviewed routinely for progress. The sponsor/authorizer staff attends board and parent meetings on a regular basis.		

**STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
ONGOING OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION**

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Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
9. We report our findings on school performance to the school and the public in a clear and timely manner.	The sponsor/authorizer’s oversight observations are shared in writing and verbally with the board and/or school leadership periodically and community, when requested.	The sponsor/authorizer’s staff develops a checklist of areas of the basic operations of the school that are observed during oversight visits.	The sponsor/authorizer provides the school written feedback on its success to meet improvement goals. The report contains the observations of the sponsor/authorizer, corrective plans, sponsor/authorizer’s assessment of the school’s progress towards meeting performance goals and status towards implementing quality organizational practices. The school and any interested party upon request receives the report.		
<b>MONITORS COMPLIANCE</b> <i>Monitors compliance requirements, including those legally mandated and those that are essential to fulfill the authorizer’s public oversight responsibility.</i>					
10. We have protocols for monitoring compliance requirements and report findings to the schools and the public.	The sponsor/authorizer expects the school to report periodically concerning the status of compliance with local, state, and federal regulations	The sponsor/authorizer uses a self-generated checklist at the end of each year along with school staff interviews concerning the status of the schools compliance with local, state and federal requirements for charter schools.	The sponsor/authorizer regularly uses a checklist of areas to direct its monitoring and data gathering of the school’s performance. The results of the sponsor/authorizer’s monitoring are communicated to the school’s board and leadership team immediately. After the school has had an		

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Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
			opportunity to review and respond to any corrective actions needed to address the findings, a press release may be used to inform the public of the school's actions.		
11. We understand that the department of education is responsible for monitoring special education program compliance and track the progress of any mandated program improvement plan.	The results of special education monitoring visits and corrective action plans are shared by the school with the sponsor/authorizer as part of the year-end report.	The results of special education monitoring visits and corrective action plans are forwarded to the sponsor/authorizer by the school. The sponsor/authorizer checks with the state special education department for findings of an audit by the state.	The sponsor/authorizer requires that the results of special education monitoring visits and corrective action plans are forwarded to the sponsor/authorizer by the school. The sponsor/authorizer a checks with the state special education department for findings and monitors the school's progress on any corrective action plans.		
12. We monitor the charter school for an internal process for monitoring special education due process and regulations.	The sponsor/authorizer receives an annual report from the school describing the efforts of the school to meet special education regulations.	The sponsor/authorizer receives information about the use of special education referral and service components that meet state approved guidelines.	The sponsor/authorizer receives data evaluating the level of compliance found by the school-initiated internal compliance review team of IEP implementation and due process timelines.		
13. We understand that state and local authorities are responsible for monitoring health and safety, and facilities	The sponsor/authorizer requests records and reports from the various monitoring agencies in response to a problem.	The sponsor/authorizer requests records and reports from the various monitoring agencies periodically.	The sponsor/authorizer routinely monitors the recommendations or concerns of state and local authorities as part of its oversight visits and renewal		

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<b>Standard</b>	<b>(1) Reacting to problems</b>	<b>(2) Early systemic approaches</b>	<b>(3) Aligned approaches</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Guiding documents</b>
compliance, and others and will monitor their reports regularly.			process.		
14. We understand that the department of education is responsible for monitoring student discipline compliance and reports any possible infractions that come to our attention.	The sponsor/authorizer requests records and reports from the department of education in response to a problem.	The sponsor/authorizer requests records and reports from the department of education periodically.	The sponsor/authorizer routinely monitors the recommendations or concerns of the department of education as part of its oversight visits and as part of its renewal process.		
15. Our non-compliance policies are clearly defined and identify the range of actions to be taken if the sponsor/authorizer find issues of noncompliance.	The sponsor/authorizer responds to incidences of non-compliance on a case-by-case base.	The sponsor/authorizer has a generic policy states that the charter school will notify the sponsor/authorizer of all non-compliance incidents found by other monitoring agencies.	The sponsor/authorizer has a detailed policy that lists a continuum of interventions that the charter school is to follow based on a finding of non-compliance incident found during either the sponsor/authorizer oversight activity or other monitoring agencies.		
16. We disseminate our non-compliance policies to all schools, and staff members are available to provide further explanation.	The sponsor/authorizer disseminates their non-compliance policies on request.	The sponsor/authorizer disseminates their non-compliance as part of a yearly review.	The sponsor/authorizer includes their noncompliance policies in the charter contract and reviews them with the board annually.		

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Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
<i>Articulates the consequences for failing to meet compliance requirements.</i>					
17. We follow a process for handling complaints from parents and students.	The sponsor/authorizer refers parent and student complaints back to the charter school board and leadership staff.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a problem solving procedure when handling complaints from parents and students before referring the complaints to the charter school board.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a problem solving procedure identified in the contract to handle complaints from parents and students before referring complaints to the charter school board. The services of a third party mediation resource are available.		
18. We provide schools with direct, ongoing feedback on its performance against the goals and terms of their contract.	The sponsor/authorizer provides general feedback during the year on overall performance primarily focusing on immediate problems.	A mid-year review between the sponsor/authorizer staff and school leadership occurs reviewing the school’s improvement plan towards meeting its contracted goals.	At least twice a year the sponsor/authorizer meets with the board and school leadership to review the status of the schools performance towards its contracted goals and provide positive feedback on their successes.		
<i>Ensures schools fulfill its legal obligations to students and parents.</i>					
19. Our written intervention policy defines responses and potential consequences for findings of underperformance, which includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a school improvement plan (SIP).	The sponsor/authorizer documents the findings of underperformance and notifies the board and leadership.	The sponsor/authorizer meets with the charter school to discuss corrective actions for findings of underperformance.	The sponsor/authorizer uses a continuum of interventions and progressive steps towards resolving underperformance.		

**STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
ONGOING OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION**

A quality authorizer conducts contract oversight that evaluates performance, monitors compliance, informs intervention and renewal decisions, and ensures autonomy provided under applicable law.

Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
<i>Provides clear, adequate, and evidence-based notice of problems.</i>					
20. We give schools adequate time to address and correct performance deficiencies.	The sponsor/authorizer verbally requests findings of underperformance be address in a timely manner.	The sponsor/authorizer and board meet to discuss the areas of underperformance. An implementation timeline of corrective actions is mutually developed.	The sponsor/authorizer and board meet to discuss the areas of underperformance. An implementation timeline of corrective actions is mutually developed. The sponsor/authorizer monitors the benchmarks and implementation of the corrective plan.		
21. Our intervention policy clearly defines our role in providing intervention support and/or technical assistance.	The school has minimal understanding of the intervention policy of the sponsor/authorizer.	A set of procedures the sponsor/ authorizer follows to address concerns about a school’s performance is given to the school during startup.	An intervention continuum of sponsor/authorizer actions in response to school performance concerns are part of the contract. Technical assistance and resource support are options the sponsor/authorizer identifies.		
<i>Allows reasonable time for remediation.</i>					
22. We determine which information is necessary to collect on an annual, quarterly, or more frequent basis.	The sponsor/authorizer requests information on a need basis.	The sponsor/authorizer establishes a schedule of reports with a description of the data formats and information required for quarterly reports and inclusion in the annual report.	The sponsor/authorizer and school establish reports that eliminate redundancy with other reporting requirements and are compatible with the school’s board and staff information needs.		

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Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
<b>AUTONOMY</b>					
<i>Respects the school's authority over its day-to-day operations.</i>					
23. Our oversight responsibilities are consistent with the authority given us as sponsors, do not require unnecessary information and establish a report calendar as part of the contract.	The sponsor/authorizer requests information during the year from the school.	The sponsor/authorizer informs the school of its plan to conduct oversight responsibilities and identifies the kinds of information needed during the year.	The sponsor/authorizer maintains oversight policies and practices that are consistent with, and do not exceed, the authority granted to them by statute, regulations, or its contract with each school. The sponsor/authorizer informs the school of its plan to conduct oversight responsibilities and identifies the kinds of information needed during the year through the contract.		

**Questions**

1. Based on the list created above, what have you identified as your agency's greatest weakness in this core authorizer responsibility?
  
2. How might you work to strengthen this weakness?
  
3. What resources will you need?

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**ONGOING OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION RESOURCES**

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National Association of Charter School Authorizers. [Issue Brief No. 5 – Agency Capacity and Infrastructure](http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/IssueBriefNo5.pdf). “Charter School Authorizers and Oversight: Where is the Line Between Effectively Holding Schools Accountable and Overregulation?” Oct., 2005. <  
<http://www.charterauthorizers.org/files/nacsa/BECSA/IssueBriefNo5.pdf>>

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STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORING/AUTHORIZING  
**RENEWAL DECISION-MAKING**

A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive data to make merit-based renewal decisions.

Standard	(1) Reacting to problems	(2) Early systemic approaches	(3) Aligned approaches	Score	Guiding documents
TRANSPARENT PROCESS					
<i>Criteria is clearly articulated, timetables are published, communication between Sponsor/authorizer and school is clear, and rights of appeal are explained .</i>					
1. Our renewal criteria are clearly communicated to schools at the outset and throughout the term of the contract.	No materials exist, and the sponsor/authorizer does not initiate communication.	The sponsor/authorizer initiates communicates prior to renewal year, but the timeline and criteria are incomplete.	The sponsor/authorizer develops a complete timeline and criteria checklist that is communicated to the school at the beginning of the contract with a process described for changes.		
2. We thoroughly describe the process by which renewal decisions are made.	The sponsor/authorizer does not have a process for renewal decision making and can only orally describe how it intends to follow-through.	The sponsor/authorizer’s renewal process is written out but does not include details such as dates and all criteria to be considered.	The sponsor/authorizer renewal process is fully developed with all criteria and timelines articulated in writing in clear and precise terms. Requirements of the school to implement and collect data for evaluation and accountability plans are articulated.		
3. We provide guidelines and a timetable that details each stage of the decision making process.	No criteria guidelines or timetable exists.	The sponsor/authorizer’s guidelines and timetables are incomplete	The sponsor/authorizer’s criteria guidelines and timetables are fully developed.		

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**Questions**

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2. How might you work to strengthen this weakness?
3. What resources will you need?

**RENEWAL DECISIONMAKING RESOURCES**

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