



## Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) Round Two Questions and Answers

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The following document provides a running list of Questions and Answers to MAPES-related questions, listed in order by date received. This document will be continuously updated throughout MAPES Round Two as questions are received.

### 1. When will authorizers receive the USB flash drive in order to upload documents for MAPES? (9/9/2019)

The USB flash drive will be provided to authorizers at the MAPES welcome meeting for each cohort.

### 2. Does a school district authorizer have to go through MAPES? Do Performance Measures A apply for a school district? (9/9/2019)

Regarding MAPES and school district responsibilities, Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4 (Application content) indicates:

*(a) To be approved as an authorizer, an applicant must include in its application to the commissioner at least the following:*

- (1) how the organization carries out its mission by chartering schools;*
- (2) a description of the capacity of the organization to serve as an authorizer, including the positions allocated to authorizing duties, the qualifications for those positions, the full-time equivalencies of those positions, and the financial resources available to fund the positions;*
- (3) the application and review process the authorizer uses to decide whether to grant charters;*
- (4) the type of contract it arranges with the schools it charts to meet the provisions of section [124E.10](#);*
- (5) the process for overseeing the school, consistent with clause (4), to ensure that the schools chartered comply with applicable law and rules and the contract;*
- (6) the criteria and process the authorizer uses to approve applications adding grades or sites under section [124E.06, subdivision 5](#);*
- (7) the process for renewing or terminating the school's charter based on evidence showing the academic, organizational, and financial competency of the school, including its success in increasing student achievement and meeting the goals of the charter school agreement; and*

*(8) an assurance specifying that the organization is committed to serving as an authorizer for the full five-year term.*

***(b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), an authorizer that is a school district may satisfy the requirements of paragraph (a), clauses (1) and (2), and any requirement governing a conflict of interest between an authorizer and its charter schools or ongoing evaluation or continuing education of an administrator or other professional support staff by submitting to the commissioner a written promise to comply with the requirements. (emphasis added)***

In summary, in its application to become an approved authorizer, a school district may satisfy the following by submitting to the commissioner a written promise to comply with these requirements:

- How the organization carries out its mission by chartering schools;
- Description of the capacity of the organization to serve as an authorizer, including the positions allocated to authorizing duties, the qualifications for those positions, the full-time equivalencies of those positions, and the financial resources available to fund the positions;
- Any requirement governing a conflict of interest between an authorizer and its charter schools; and
- Ongoing evaluation or continuing education of an administrator or other professional support staff.

Regarding authorizer review by the commissioner (i.e., MAPES), Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 5 (Review by commissioner) indicates:

*(a) The commissioner shall review an authorizer's performance every five years in a manner and form determined by the commissioner, subject to paragraphs (b) and (c), 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.*

*(b) Consistent with this subdivision, the commissioner must:*

*(1) use criteria appropriate to the authorizer and the schools it charts to review the authorizer's performance; and*

*(2) consult with authorizers, charter school operators, and other charter school stakeholders in developing review criteria under this paragraph.*

*(c) The commissioner's form must use existing department data on the authorizer to minimize duplicate reporting to the extent practicable. When reviewing an authorizer's performance under this subdivision, the commissioner must not:*

*(1) fail to credit;*

*(2) withhold points; or*

*(3) otherwise penalize an authorizer for failing to charter additional schools or for the absence of complaints against the authorizer's current portfolio of charter schools.*

Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 5 does not provide separate provisions for school district authorizers in the commissioner's review process. As such, school district authorizers are to be held to the same evaluation process and performance measures, etc. as non-school district authorizers.

### **3. Will the external evaluator receive training on the nuances of Performance Measure B.1 so that the evaluation does not hurt authorizers who are not actively seeking new schools? (9/9/2019)**

Yes, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will train the external evaluator on all aspects of MAPES, including the rubric to ensure a clear understanding of the system. MDE will also post questions/answers asked by the external evaluator in this document.

### **4. Under Performance Measure B.2, if the authorizer has had no transfers and no expansions, you are not having to give up the 3.75 percent of weight for that measure, right? (9/9/2019)**

The authorizer will need to make the case that the authorizer's decision to not expand the portfolio is a strategy to authorize high quality charter schools and it results in high quality charter schools. The authorizer will need to provide evidence that not making interim accountability decisions was an informed and intentional decision. If an authorizer is not making interim accountability decisions and does not provide evidence that this was an informed and intentional decision, the external evaluator will make the final decision as to whether an authorizer has fulfilled the criteria or not.

### **5. Under Performance Measure B.2, regarding change in authorizer requests, is this about transferring to your portfolio or out of your portfolio? (9/9/2019)**

Specifically, the change in authorizer components of performance measure B.2 pertain to schools transferring to an authorizer's portfolio and that the authorizer followed its AAP throughout the process. That said, authorizers have an important role when a charter school is joining **or** leaving their portfolio and will need to address (as applicable) in their MAPES submission.

### **6. Under Performance Measure B.4, what is meant by "hold accountable" in the guiding question? (9/9/2019)**

An authorizer's commissioner-approved authorizer application (AAA)/commissioner-approved authorizing plan (AAP) outlines consequences for charter schools meeting or not meeting its academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards. MAPES evaluates if authorizer actions align with processes outlined in their AAA/AAP. Some examples include a notice of commendation, notice of intervention, shorter renewal contract terms, or termination of the contract. In renewal contracts, MDE ensures goals from prior contract are evaluated and reported on in the formal written evaluation report.

**7. Measure B.6: Authorizer Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints may contain private data. How do we respond to this question if that is the case? (9/9/2019)**

Please do not include private data in your narrative response or document submission. Instead, provide a summary and/or redact private data.

**8. Under Performance Measure B.8, what if the authorizer hasn't replicated? (9/9/2019)**

The level 2 satisfactory criteria is "There is an intentional plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices and models/practices have been identified." Replication does not need to be whole school replication, it can be specific practices. Replication does not need to be specific to charters. It can be about informing the broader educational landscape; it can be academic, financial and/or operational.

**9. Will authorizers and school leaders attend the same welcome meeting? (10/28/2019)**

No. While the welcome meetings for both authorizers and schools will be held on the same date, they will be hosted in separate sessions at MDE.

**10. Previously, if you had a new school process established but you didn't use it and you didn't implement it, the highest rating you could get was "Satisfactory." How would an authorizer get an "Exemplary" rating in the new B.1 measure if they are not considering any new schools? (10/28/2019)**

The authorizer would make the case that their decision to not authorize new schools is a strategy to promote high-quality charter schools. If the strategy results in high-quality charter schools, the authorizer would provide evidence that the decision to not authorize new schools was an informed and intentional decision. If the authorizer is not making new school decisions and does not provide evidence that this was an informed and intentional decision, the external evaluator makes the decision on whether an authorizer has fulfilled the performance criteria in measure B.1.

## **11. Regarding NACSA standards, does alignment with national standards serve Minnesota best, since our law and charter landscape differs from most other states? (10/28/2019)**

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Principles and Standards are comprehensive and we are confident in their applicability to Minnesota.

## **12. Are there any significant changes on Part A or B measures from Round One to Round Two in terms of the weighting? (10/28/2019)**

- Regarding changes in weights from Round One to round two:
  - The following measures increased by 1.25 percentage points: A.1, A.5, A.11
  - The following measures decreased by 1.25 percentage points: A.2, A.3, A.8
  - B.4 increased by 3.75 percentage points
  - B.6 decreased by 3.75 percentage points
- Ratings and outcomes based on an authorizer's overall evaluation score included the following changes:
  - In Round One, Exemplary rating ranged from 3.80-4.00. In Round Two, it is now 3.60 to 4.00.
  - In Round One, Commendable rating ranged from 3.00-3.79. In Round Two, it is now 2.80-3.59.
  - In Round One, Satisfactory rating ranged from 2.00-2.99. In Round Two, it is now 2.00-2.79.
  - Approaching Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory/Incomplete ranges have not changed (1.00-1.99 and 0.00-0.99, respectively).
- In MAPES Round One, authorizers receiving an "Approaching Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" in any one measure were unable to achieve an overall "Commendable" or "Exemplary" rating. This caveat has been removed for MAPES Round Two. Authorizers can receive "Commendable" or "Exemplary" ratings based on their overall evaluation score.

In addition:

- In measure B.2, the vision component has been removed because vision is not in statute and not all authorizers have a vision along with their mission.
- The definition of expertise has been updated to align with the work of authorizing. We expect qualifications for everyone including the authorizing board, to be addressed in the authorizer's document submission.
- In A.6, evaluation of school finances has been removed.
- In MAPES Round One, for A.11, meeting compliance deadlines was the percentage compliant over the authorizer term to date versus 100 percent compliant each year. In MAPES Round Two, in A.11, the denominator is every applicable deadline and the numerator is the number of deadlines that were met.
- In B.4, the indicators were expanded upon. Before, just performance standards applied. Now, a second guiding question has been added: "To what degree does the authorizer hold charter schools in its portfolio accountable to its academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards?" The measure has been expanded to capture authorizer decision-making as well as processes.
- In general, changes to the rubric involved the clarification of language, aligning to updated statutory language and NACSA principles, and adjustments of the weights.

**13. One standard is “performance outcomes and standards are consistent across portfolio schools,” but, outcomes in the contract are tailored to the schools based on a variety of factors (high school v. elementary, new school v. 3rd contract, credit recovery, etc.). How can authorizers address this without getting dinged in MAPES? (10/28/2019)**

Some authorizers have a performance framework they use for their entire portfolio of schools (no matter the school’s program), some have a performance framework they use for their portfolio with an added measure or two that is specific to each school’s program while another authorizer may have different performance measures for each school. MAPES is looking for authorizers, no matter how they measure performance outcomes and standards, to be consistent across its portfolio in its *implementation* of its performance outcomes and standards.

**14. For measures that say “at least three years” does that mean consecutive years? (10/28/2019)**

No. The authorizer needs to demonstrate that level of performance to receive a satisfactory rating for three years in the last five years. This may account for interruptions that may occur during an authorizer’s term (including staff changes or corrective action).

**15. Regarding the AAA/AAP, what version(s) will the evaluator use to evaluate an authorizer’s performance? (10/28/2019)**

The evaluator will look at the period of time under different versions of an authorizer’s AAA and/or AAP. The evaluator will consider what AAA/AAP was in place at the time and if the authorizer actions and processes were consistent with what was in place.

**16. The authorizer may be implementing something better than its current AAP but not yet approved and updated in the AAP with MDE. If it’s better and more engaging to standards, will that be taken into account, even if practice is not consistent with the current plan? (10/28/2019)**

As outlined in Guidance on Updates/Revisions to Approved Authorizing Plan, performance measures A.3, A.6 (portfolio size changes only), A.7, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.6 and B.9 require MDE’s review prior to implementing. MDE expects changes made to any performance measure are at least as rigorous as what was initially approved in the AAP and consistent with statute and MAPES. The measures not requiring interim review will be looked at carefully during an authorizer’s five-year performance evaluation. If updates are made to measures not

requiring interim review, an authorizer is responsible for documenting those changes and submitting them during their next MAPES evaluation.

If an authorizer implements changes prior to acceptance and submits an affidavit/request reflecting the changes before MDE acceptance, the authorizer runs the risk of lower performance ratings in MAPES due to reduced rigor in their authorizing practices or lack of alignment with statute or MAPES performance measures.

## **17. Can we hear an update on incorporating school performance into MAPES, and the department's decision not to include it in Round Two? (10/28/2019)**

In MAPES Round Two, school performance is not a factor. For Commissioner Cassellius, it was important to have school performance pulled in as a specific measure or measures. MDE held some stakeholder engagement around what that might look like. Commissioner Ricker determined specific measure(s) regarding school performance would not be incorporated as separate measures in MAPES Round Two. However, in B.9, the authorizer's decisions based on school performance is included at the time of contract renewal. The authorizer may not have direct control over how a school is performing, but we do hold the authorizer accountable to the B.9 decisions based on school performance. The same applies for measure B.4, which has been updated to include criteria related to this additional guiding question: "To what degree does the authorizer hold charter schools in its portfolio accountable to its academic, financial and operational performance outcomes and standards?"

## **18. The state of Minnesota released a new accountability system (North Star System). How is that going to play out? How could it potentially inform a performance indicator in MAPES or other systems? (10/28/2019)**

This is a topic of conversation across the country and very few states have high stakes authorizer accountability. The few that have a system (Minnesota, Ohio, Missouri, and Tennessee) differ widely on how school performance impacts authorizer evaluation. For example, Ohio's department of education includes automatic closure provisions for poor performing schools and authorizers.

The commissioner was clear in this round of MAPES to move forward with the current structure which does not include separate school performance measures; however the commissioner may consider inclusion in future MAPES rounds.

The evaluator will have access to North Star accountability data as it conducts its evaluation of authorizers.

## **19. Regarding conflicts of interest, shouldn't that be a deal-breaker with much higher weighting? (10/28/2019)**

Authorizers are required to have process/policies in place regarding conflict of interest including:

- The authorizer's policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.
- A description of the process and procedures for implementing and executing the authorizer's conflict of interest policy to avoid conflicts of interest that might affect the authorizer's capacity to make objective, merit-based application and renewal decisions and avoid decisions and interventions that hold the charter school accountable for its performance.

MAPES reviews if the authorizer followed its processes. If there is a legal issue with conflict of interest, the commissioner may take other action. When clear violations of law are involved, the commissioner always has the ability outside of MAPES to put authorizers in corrective action.

## **20. Can authorizers from a different cohort attend another cohort's welcome meeting? (11/26/2019)**

MDE limits the welcome meetings to the authorizers and charter schools within each cohort. The MAPES documents are posted to our [website](#), including the document submission guide which can be used to start gathering necessary information for MAPES.

## **21. You may have sent us the [charter school leadership] survey questions, but could you please send them again. Also, you may have also sent us when you will send the survey to the leaders, but could you please let me know again? Finally, is there a list for us to review to ensure you have the current/correct contacts? (12/2/2019)**

The link to the SurveyMonkey site for the charter school leadership survey is not live; however, all who attended the welcome meetings received a PDF version of the questions asked. The survey questions are also available upon request.

MDE plans on distributing the charter school leadership survey during the welcome meetings. The responses to the survey for Cohort One will be due Friday, February 21.

We have not generated a list of charter school leader contacts (charter school director and board chair) from MDE-Org at this time. This will be distributed to Cohort One authorizers for verification, additions, changes, etc. on or around the day of the welcome meetings. You can encourage authorized schools to make sure their contact information is updated and accurate on MDE-Org in advance of the welcome meetings.

Further details about the review process for Cohort One are provided in the MAPES Review Process document available on [MDE's website](#).

## **22. Can authorizers decline an interview? (12/17/2019)**

The interview is the authorizer's opportunity to highlight its work to the evaluator. Declining an interview may result in the evaluator not being able to verify reported data, and may result in a lower MAPES rating.

## **23. Will interviews have no time limit? (12/17/2019)**

Interviews will be scheduled to last approximately two hours.

## **24. Will all interviews be conducted in person? (12/17/2019)**

Every effort will be made to hold in-person interviews. MDE's MAPES' Review Process indicates interviews will happen in-person; however, this will be left to the evaluator's discretion under extenuating circumstances.

## **25. How will SchoolWorks know ahead of interviews if interpreters will be needed? How will interpretation services be arranged? (12/17/2019)**

MDE will provide the evaluator with a list of authorizer and school leader contacts. The evaluators will coordinate the interview arrangements. MDE will provide information to the evaluators about interpreter services, and interpreters will be arranged by the evaluator as needed.

## **26. Can an attorney be present at the interviews? (12/17/2019)**

The purpose of the interview is to obtain information from the authorizing staff about the nature of their authorizing. An attorney may be present to observe the interview, but the evaluator will be seeking feedback and validation from authorizing staff who are actually doing the work of authorizing in Minnesota. Additionally, the MAPES evaluation process seeks information, feedback and validation from charter school staff.

## **27. In MAPES measure A.10, how do you define "regularly"? (12/17/2019)**

Generally, what an authorizer indicates in the AAP will provide the baseline for the expectation of "regularly." Regularly is generally annually, or more frequently than annual as outlined by the authorizer.

**28. After the evaluation, when will continuous improvement begin?  
(1/8/2020)**

Data gathered through MAPES will 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. After Round Two of MAPES is complete, following the review of Cohort Four in December 2021, SchoolWorks will produce a final, summative evaluative report that will highlight strengths and areas of improvement, provide comprehensive analysis of the state of authorizing in Minnesota, and make recommendations.

During MAPES, The Charter Center will continue to provide technical assistance, training and recommendations regarding authorizing improvements in processes and practice.

**29. For the Charter Leadership Survey, is there an anticipated response rate? Will lack of compliance or survey completion be judged negatively?  
(1/8/2020)**

There is no anticipated response rate, and the authorizer will not be judged according to whether or not charter school leaders submit responses.

**30. Will MDE assist with encouraging responses to the surveys, and/or follow up with schools that haven't yet completed the survey? [Cohort One authorizers requested that MDE please follow up with schools and encourage leaders to complete the surveys and participate in interviews.]  
(1/8/2020)**

Two weeks prior to the survey due date, MDE will send out an email reminder to contacted school leaders to encourage survey completion.

**31. Can authorizers be copied when surveys are sent out, so that authorizers can also encourage response from portfolio schools?  
(1/8/2020)**

Yes, MDE will include authorizers on the email to charter school leaders regarding the Charter School Leadership Survey.

**32. Will charter school leader answers be compared with the school's standing with the authorizer, for example if a negative response comes from a school operating under an improvement plan? To what extent are responses put in context that allows for potential bias or color of responses if the school is in corrective action? (1/8/2020)**

The methodology of review looks at trends in the data to identify how the majority of schools are responding, and recognizes there may be outliers. The interviews may also provide opportunity to pursue responses in more depth.

**33. Will charter school surveys be shared with authorizers without a data request? Will authorizers receive access to data that schools have raised? (1/8/2020)**

An authorizer would need to submit a [data request](#) to MDE to receive survey results and the request would be processed according to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13](#), which will determine what information would be provided in response to the request.

**34. In the charter school leadership survey, regarding transparency of process, authorizers do not have to entertain change in authorizer requests according to statute. Where there isn't a statutory obligation to transfer, why go deeper into this in the survey as if it's a requirement? (1/8/2020)**

The charter school leadership survey seeks information on denied change in authorizer requests to ensure the authorizer's decisions and resulting actions align to its stated approval and process standards and promote the growth of high-quality charter schools.

**35. Question #27 in the survey is about the school's previous authorizer in the change in authorizer process. How will that be used regarding the current authorizer? (1/8/2020)**

SchoolWorks will not use that information to evaluate the school's current authorizer. The responses may be used to inform the summative evaluation of authorizing in Minnesota.

**36. Question #34 in the survey is about the authorizer responding to complaints. Would it make more sense to change the language to “complaints they have received about the school?” (1/8/2020)**

The evaluator will review how authorizers address complaints more deeply in the interview.

**37. In the MAPES Document Submission Guide, what are examples of “other data maintained by MDE (including divisions outside of the Charter Center),” that may be used in MAPES?  
[See Document Submission Guide, p. 2]. (1/8/2020)**

This could include information related to special education, food and nutrition, school finance, lease aid, etc.

**38. Regarding other documents that MDE may provide to the evaluator, will authorizers have the opportunity to review that content, to ensure that the other documents are not inaccurate? Will there be evidence the department provides that authorizers don’t know about? (1/8/2020)**

In order to review content that MDE would provide to the evaluator, an authorizer would need to submit a [data request](#) to MDE. The request would be processed according to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13](#), which will determine what information would be provided in response to the request.

**39. The MAPES Document Submission Guide references “any data held by MDE prior to the document submission deadline could be used for evaluation purposes” (MAPES Document Submission Guide, p. 2). What is the submission deadline referenced, since the Review Process for Cohort One document provides a timeline with three document submission deadlines: February 21, April 10 and May 22? (1/8/2020)**

Any data held by MDE prior to May 22 will be provided to the external evaluator for MAPES.

**40. Regarding authorizer USB flash drive submission, in MAPES Round One the USB flash drive was left dropped in a box at the MDE front desk. Is there a way to make the submission more secure? (1/8/2020)**

Authorizers could request the MDE front desk staff to contact a member of the Charter Center so that the authorizer can hand the USB flash drive to Charter Center staff.

**41. How will MDE resolve issues with the evaluation if an error of a factual nature is identified in the final report? If there is truly an error in a final report, how will MDE resolve this? (1/8/2020)**

MDE reviews both the draft report and the final report. It's important to note, the external evaluator is conducting the evaluation and has ultimate responsibility over the content of the report.

**42. Could MDE plan to attend every interview with authorizers and school leaders? (1/8/2020)**

MDE will not attend authorizer and school leadership interviews unless requested by the organization being interviewed, if requested to attend, MDE will listen but not actively participate.

**43. Will all interviews be conducted in person? (1/8/2020)**

See response in #24.

**44. Will the evaluator be interviewing contractors? Please exercise caution in including contractors as authorizing staff, because there are IRS implications of referring to contractors as authorizing staff. (1/8/2020)**

As defined in the MAPES Rubric, for the purpose of MAPES, staff includes individuals both paid (e.g., staff) and unpaid (e.g., board members) as well as contractors hired by the authorizer.

**45. Will the evaluation take into account the barriers or obstacles authorizers face in doing the work? For example, how the challenges to access to data from MDE impacts authorizing? It might be useful to have a question about challenges in the interview, or to address issues of timing of data provided, and to evidence barriers, such as consistency of reporting, measures changing (like attendance). How will external factors that make the work uniquely challenging be addressed or captured in the MAPES review process? (1/8/2020)**

The authorizer interview would be an opportunity for authorizing staff to share challenges. Via the evaluation of individual authorizers, the evaluator may notice challenges which may inform the summative evaluation report. In the summative evaluation, one of the areas the evaluator will look at is trends in authorizing which could include challenges authorizers are facing.

**46. If an authorizer is placed in corrective action as a result of MAPES, can one of their charter schools seek a new authorizer without mutual agreement from the authorizer? (1/8/2020)**

Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 5 allows for mutual nonrenewal or a change in authorizer if an authorizer withdraws. If the commissioner takes the action via corrective action to terminate a contract between an authorizer and a charter school, the commissioner may assist the charter school in acquiring a new authorizer, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 6.

**47. To get an overall satisfactory rating, could MDE provide the math of how the measures interact overall? If an authorizer gets a 2 in A.1, does that work out to only earning 2 percent of the 2.5 percent possible? (1/8/2020)**

MDE will share the calculator (which is embedded in an Excel spreadsheet) upon request.

**48. Will leaders of all of an authorizer’s portfolio of schools be interviewed together at the same time? Will that discourage truthful negative responses? (1/8/2020)**

The goal is to hold one in-person meeting for school leaders to meet with the external evaluator. One of the objectives of MAPES is to promote high-quality charter schools and authorizing excellence in order to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. One way to accomplish this is through open and honest feedback regarding authorizer performance which ultimately provides a better chartering environment for charter schools and the students they serve.

**49. Do all schools have to attend the interview? (1/8/2020)**

Participation in an interview is not mandatory, but is preferable to help the evaluator verify data.

**50. When sending out the charter school leadership survey, will you provide guidance about how many responses per school? (1/8/2020)**

Charter school leaders are asked to complete the charter school leadership survey pertaining to their experience with their authorizer(s). Surveys may be completed individually or by the school staff as a group. Charter school leaders may forward to other individuals, as appropriate, with sufficient knowledge and experience to complete the survey.

**51. Since the MAPES instructions say that any data held by MDE prior to the document submission deadline could be used for evaluation purposes. Are contract renewal revisions to bring contract in compliance, once received, eligible to be included in MAPES? (1/15/2020)**

MDE requests authorizer to submit any documentation they want included in MAPES by the first document submission date outlined in the Review Process (e.g., cohort one deadline for submissions is February 21, 2020).

**52. Many of the Level Ratings are time-bound, e.g. “Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date”. When, exactly, does “the authorizer term” begin? (1/15/2020)**

Please refer to the following table:

Cohort	Beginning Term Date
Cohort One	July 1, 2015
Cohort Two	January 1, 2016
Cohort Three	July 1, 2016
Cohort Four	January 1, 2017

**53. I have not been a charter school leader since 2016. I am assuming you are seeking feedback only from current leaders in the Charter Leadership Survey? (1/16/2020)**

The MAPES evaluation is seeking feedback from all charter schools leaders in schools authorized by Cohort One authorizers from July 1, 2015 to the present. (The evaluation period is approximately five years.) We welcome your feedback and participation in the evaluation.

**54. The USB flash drive provided does not work with Macs because of a Windows/Mac compatibility issue. Is there a workaround? (1/21/2020)**

Yes, there is a compatibility issue with Macs not being able to view the USB flash drive. A proposed fix is to format the USB flash drive in FAT format in order for Windows to be able to read it. The [Format a disk for Windows computers in Disk Utility on Mac](#) support article from Apple describes the process. Please reach out to MDE Charter Center at [mde.charterschools@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.charterschools@state.mn.us) if this does not address the problem.

**55. How do we get judged if we have no evidence of an authorizer new charter school review process (B1)? Do we just get judged on the process contained in the AAP? (2/18/2020)**

The authorizer will be evaluated based on the indicator criteria provided by the measure. This does not mean that the authorizer had to have run a new school application process, but decisions (such as decisions not to run the process) would still have to be consistent, aligned with AAA/AAP, etc.

## **56. Could you clarify the definition of “high-quality charter school” beyond those identified by MDE through the Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) High-Quality Charter School methodology and process? Were there any “reputable external organizations” in mind? (2/26/2020)**

The MAPES rubric provides two definitions:

- 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

MDE did not have any external organizations in mind in developing the second definition, but included this definition so that authorizers can make their case that a charter school be acknowledged as “high-quality” for MAPES despite not being identified by MDE through the CSP methodology and process. The evaluator would determine if the external organization is reputable and that the organization’s evaluation of the charter school indicates the school has achieved the primary purpose of charter schools and has exceptional performance in the areas of academics, finance and operations. All these criteria must be met under the second definition.

## **57. Can we submit responses to the charter school leadership survey after the deadline? (3/4/2020)**

No, response will not be accepted after the deadline for the Charter School Leadership Survey has passed. Any responses received after the deadline will not be included as a data source in MAPES. That said, school leaders still have the opportunity to provide feedback through the charter school leader interview.

## **58. How is “consistency” across the portfolio defined? (3/6/2020)**

The authorizer, through its narrative and supplemental documentation, should define how its processes and decision-making have been consistent, and then be able to demonstrate this across the portfolio of charter schools. The evaluator’s responsibility is to review and verify the authorizer’s response to determine if indicator criteria are met.

## **59. Measure A.7 – Will MDE be supplying reviewers with specific examples of conflict of interests for interview? (3/6/2020)**

Yes, if known to the department.

**60. Measure A.7 – In the review rubric, level 2 refers specifically to staff training. What is the expectation for authorizers to demonstrate this? (3/6/2020)**

Staff training is one way in which an authorizer can implement its conflict of interest policy, but it is not the only way. Staff training could be evidenced by training materials and sign-in sheets/evidence of completion. Implementation of the conflict of the interest policy does not need to include staff training; it can be evidenced by other means.

**61. Measure B.2 – Where does Ready to Open fit into the context of application processes? (3/6/2020)**

Most authorizers will likely not have a formal application component of the ready to open process. MDE expects that the process itself includes fair and transparent procedures, timelines, and rigorous criteria.

**62. Measure B.9 – What happens if an authorizer has not renewed a school in the five year term? (3/6/2020)**

All authorizers will have renewed at least one school during the five year evaluation period.

**63. How will feedback gathered during the interview process regarding the state of authorizing in Minnesota be collected and shared with MDE? (3/6/2020)**

Feedback will be shared through the final summative report of the state of authorizing in Minnesota following the completion of each individual authorizer's performance report. If an authorizer wants MDE to be aware of feedback generated during the interview before the final summative report is shared with MDE, the authorizer should contact the Charter Center directly.

**64. For Measure B.3 regarding rights and responsibilities, if contracts spell out responsibilities but not rights, but have been deemed compliant by MDE, does the evaluator need to highlight that rights are not included? (3/9/2020)**

The contract establishes the right to operate a charter school, even if the terminology "right" is not used. If MDE deems it compliant, then it is compliant.

**65. Are videoconference interviews going to be used for MAPES Cohorts Two, Three and Four moving forward? (3/12/2020)**

Not necessarily. The response to the COVID-19 has necessitated the evaluator response to offer interviews with authorizers and school leaders in Cohort One via videoconferencing. This is a unique circumstance. The plan for authorizer and school leader interviews allows for videoconferencing under extenuating circumstances even though face-to-face in-person interviews is the preference.

**66. Is MDE tracking the number of RSVPs that were initially arranging to participate in in-person interviews versus the number planning to participate in videoconferences, to know if the videoconference format has less participation? (3/12/2020)**

No, MDE does not track this number. SchoolWorks arranges the interviews directly with charter school leadership and has informed MDE that more school leaders/board chairs have responded to attend videoconference interviews than had planned to attend in-person interviews.

**67. How is a policy defined? Does it need to contain certain notation or be board-approved (4/3/2020)**

A policy does not need to contain any specific notation, but should be approved by the organization's board of directors. The board could have approved a larger document in which the policy is embedded, and thus approved the policy. Inclusion of the policy in the authorizer's AAA or AAP might provide evidence of board approval.

**68. Measure A.7 – If an authorizer provides a fully documented example of training in regards to conflict of interest, and provided training to authorized schools but did not provide evidence of staff training, if the training provided to schools is in alignment with the authorizer's AAP, is this sufficient? (4/14/2020)**

If staff training is not included, and the authorizer has followed its AAP, this would be sufficient for a satisfactory rating, assuming all other indicator criteria have been met. If the AAP indicates the authorizer would provide training to its staff as well as its authorized schools regarding conflict of interest, and staff training has not been documented, this would not be sufficient.

## **69. Measure B.6 – Please clarify the difference between an intervention and corrective action. Do standards for intervention need to be clearly laid out in documented form? (4/14/2020)**

Corrective action is a type of intervention. Corrective action is a prescribed form of intervention that may be required by an authorizer under certain circumstances or in accordance with standards laid out by the authorizer (e.g., in response to a breach of contractual performance expectations, legal issues, etc.) in the charter contract and/or AAP. An intervention need not prescribe a specific corrective action (e.g., notice of concern alerting school board of directors of an issue, but not prescribing to the school how to resolve the concern).

## **70. Measure B.8 – Regarding model replication and dissemination of best practices, what qualifies as an intentional plan? (4/14/2020)**

Satisfactory fulfillment of this measure requires two steps: 1) planning and 2) identification of practices. MDE is looking for proactive planning on the part of authorizers to generate/enable/discover effective or promising practices. The plan should be included in the AAP. The authorizer would then identify practices to be disseminated or replicated, and the plan would identify how the authorizer can facilitate dissemination. Exemplary performance on this measure can demonstrate instances of dissemination or replication of practices/models that they have identified and shared.

## **71. Measure A.11 – If an authorizer was 98 percent compliant, would that be commendable or exemplary? (4/22/2020)**

98 percent would be commendable. Exemplary is 100 percent, or missing no compliance items.

## **72. For MAPES measures that require “Level 2 indicators were met for the authorizer term to date” in order to receive an Exemplary rating, how could an authorizer who scored “Approaching Satisfactory” in MAPES Round One achieve Exemplary in MAPES Round Two? (5/20/2020)**

Authorizers must meet Satisfactory (Level 2) performance indicator(s) for the authorizer term to date to receive an Exemplary (Level 4) rating for MAPES measures A.3, A.4, A.6, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, and B.9. If any indicators for any of these measures received ratings below “Satisfactory” in Round One, the reviewers check when the authorizer’s AAP was submitted and when updates to address the deficiencies were put into effect. For example, in order for MAPES Round Two, Cohort One authorizers to establish satisfactory performance term to date, the measure would need to be satisfactory by July 1, 2015. The authorizer would then have to

demonstrate satisfactory performance for the term to date, in order for an authorizer to receive an Exemplary rating in the same measure in Round Two.

**73. Can authorizers have their MDE contact provide advice along the way to determine if we are on track to achieve satisfactory and avoid corrective action? (7/1/2020)**

MDE will provide compliance data to the authorizers and the reviewers. At the draft report stage, authorizers will have the opportunity to respond to and correct information that appears in the draft report, and authorizers will receive information about their status at that time. Authorizers may contact MDE with questions throughout the process.

**74. The overall MAPES rating is calculated to the hundredth decimal place. To what level are indicators measured? (7/1/2020)**

Each indicator receives a whole number rating (0-4), representing unsatisfactory (0), approaching satisfactory (1), satisfactory (2), commendable (3), and exemplary (4). There are no fractions used for the ratings in each measure.

**75. Can authorizers submit data that duplicates information that MDE is providing in MAPES, so that we can name the file and refer to that exact document in our narrative? (7/1/2020)**

Yes.

**76. Did information in the MAPES Rubric change from the version provided to authorizers in September 2019 that was introduced as final but going to be checked for accessibility? (7/1/2020)**

The formatting of the rubric changed to meet accessibility standards, but the information contained in the rubric is the same.

## **77. Will authorizers receive updated information about A.11-B.3 compliance data? (7/1/2020)**

During MAPES, the goal is for MDE to update this information every six months so that authorizers are kept informed. As soon as the compliance data spreadsheets are updated, they will be shared with authorizers and the external evaluators.

## **78. In the MAPES Draft Report review by MDE, how much feedback is MDE giving to the evaluators? (7/1/2020)**

MDE's review of the report provides technical edits and a factual review. If the report states something that is not accurate, does not appear consistent with the MAPES rubric, or for which contradictory evidence exists, MDE will provide more information. While MDE may provide feedback, SchoolWorks, as the external evaluator, has final evaluative determination authority based on their review of all evidence.

## **79. Can authorizers review the information that MDE provides to SchoolWorks at the Draft Review stage? (7/1/2020)**

MAPES is an ongoing evaluation and authorizers can submit a data request regarding MAPES data after the final reports are made public.

## **80. What ratings did the members of MAPES Round Two, Cohort One receive? (7/1/2020)**

Friends of Education: Exemplary; Novation Education Opportunities: Commendable; Student Achievement Minnesota: Commendable; Volunteers of America-Minnesota: Satisfactory

## **81. Regarding the use of SharePoint to submit MAPES documents, should authorizers edit the templates provided in SharePoint, or save them elsewhere. Does SharePoint save automatically? (7/1/2020)**

MDE suggests downloading the template, composing, and re-uploading the finished document and supporting materials into SharePoint. For security purposes, please retain a copy of all submissions in your organization's files.

## **82. Once authorizer information is in SharePoint, do we click “Submit” or will the information stored just be there? (7/1/2020)**

Any changes in SharePoint are live after a few seconds. Authorizer access will be removed after the initial document submission deadline (i.e., after 4:30 p.m. Central Time on August 13, 2020 for Cohort Two authorizers). After that time, MDE will double-check folders to make sure the submission data appears, and confirm with authorizers prior to submission to SchoolWorks.

## **83. Is there any particular way we need to name our files in SharePoint? (7/1/2020)**

When naming files, be consistent with how the files are referenced in the narrative.

## **84. Will interviews be held in person in September? (7/1/2020)**

All interviews with authorizing staff and charter school leaders for Cohort Two will be virtual, on account of COVID-19. Georgia Lieber of SchoolWorks will reach out to authorizers and school leaders to schedule interviews.

## **85. In the last round of MAPES, authorizers had two separate interviews, with authorizing staff and with authorizing board members and advisors. What is the structure for this round? (7/1/2020)**

SchoolWorks will hold one interview with all authorizing staff, board, consultants, etc. SchoolWorks will plan to hold two charter school leader interviews: one with charter school directors, and one with charter school board leadership. Depending on portfolio size, charter leadership directors and board members may choose to combine into one interview with SchoolWorks. SchoolWorks will work with authorizers to determine the formatting of these interviews based on portfolio size.

## **86. What is the expectation for indicators that have language like “for three years” or “for four years”? (7/1/2020)**

MDE recommends submitting evidence for each year to help demonstrate consistency across the portfolio and over time.

**87. Will we have access to interview and survey data beyond what is included in the MAPES final report? (7/1/2020)**

See Question #33, above

**88. Will MDE be providing the recording of the Webex Welcome Meeting for Cohort Two so authorizers can review? (7/1/2020)**

The Webex was not recorded. The PowerPoint will be sent to all Cohort Two authorizers and the questions asked appear in the MAPES Q&A document.

**89. How can school leaders find out who are listed as the leadership contacts for their schools? (7/1/2020)**

Contact your assigned MDE contact and/or authorizer. Please note for Cohort Two, the assigned contacts are:

Chisago Lakes School District: Karen Calcaterra; Innovative Quality Schools: Karen Calcaterra; Northfield Public School District: Karen Calcaterra; Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods): Paula Higgins; Pillsbury United Communities: Mike Schultz; University of St. Thomas: Mike Schultz.

**90. For authorizer document submission in SharePoint, if our documents are Google Docs with links to other documents, will all of these have to be converted to PDFs to upload into SharePoint as part of our evidence for MAPES? (7/2/2020)**

Yes, documents will need to be converted to Word or PDF and uploaded to SharePoint.

**91. For Measure B.1, there is a reference in the list of documents that says "final MDE analysis of submissions." To what does this refer? (8/26/2020)**

For Measure B.1, this refers to the final MDE review rubric of the authorizer's most recent new school affidavit submission.

## **92. For Measure A.9, how is “continuous improvement plan” defined? (11/20/2020)**

One of the evaluation data sources indicated for measure A.9 in the MAPES rubric is “An example of authorizer strategic plan(s), continuous improvement plan(s) and/or staff development **based on self-evaluations**” (p. 14; emphasis added). One Level 3 indicator states, “Authorizer develops and implements continuous improvement plans **to address findings of self-evaluation**” (p. 15; emphasis added). One Level 4 indicator states, “Authorizer evaluates its work regularly against nationally recognized quality authorizing standards and implements continuous improvement plans that result in more effective authorizing practices” (p. 15). As such, a continuous improvement plan must be based on self-evaluations to address findings from those self-evaluations to meet Level 3 indicators. For Level 4, there must be evidence that the continuous improvement plan(s) implemented by the authorizer resulted in more effective authorizing practices.

## **93. Regarding authorizer mission, how to MDE ensure alignment or consistency across authorizer AAA/AAP documents? (3/12/2021)**

MDE reviews for consistency across AAA/AAP documents when documents are submitted for review. However, not all changes to AAA/AAP are submitted to MDE for review. It is the responsibility of the authorizer to ensure their documents are aligned. MDE will add a reminder to its Guidance on Updates/Revisions to AAP document in a future revision.

## **94. Regarding measure A.3, how is “charted” defined? (3/19/2021)**

“Charted” refers to the following evaluation data source: “Organizational chart that shows clear lines of reporting and authority/decision-making” (MAPES Document Submission Guide, p. 4; MAPES Rubric, p. 7).

## **95. What time is the deadline to submit additional documentation following the interview? (3/22/2021)**

All additional requested documents following the interview will be due to SchoolWorks by 5 p.m. Central Time one week following the interview.

## **96. What is the format for providing feedback on MAPES? Is it questions in the interview or a separate survey? (3/22/2021)**

When providing feedback on MAPES during the interview, SchoolWorks will conclude the formal MAPES portion of the interview, and then ask additional questions. These responses are separate from the individual authorizer’s evaluation and serve to help the Charter Center get feedback on what is working well and areas that

can be improved as it relates to authorizing in Minnesota. Authorizer responses and feedback will be summarized as part of a larger summative report back to MDE at the conclusion of this round of MAPES.

Following MAPES Round Two, MDE will hold meetings with authorizers and stakeholders to gather additional feedback about the entire MAPES process during this round, to pursue continuous improvements in planning for MAPES Round Three.

**97. Can MDE record this presentation as we have a staff member who is out of the office and unable to attend? (7/1/2021)**

Yes, we can record this presentation and send it out afterwards. Please know the information covered in this presentation is addressed in the supporting documents that were shared for this meeting.

**98. Are authorizers able to renew/revise/amend contracts while in corrective action? (7/1/2021)**

Yes. Corrective action does not affect an authorizer's ability to contract or engage in oversight activities. Authorizers will not have the authority to charter new schools, accept transfers or initiate expansion requests while in corrective action.

**99. How does the authorizer incorporate feedback to the survey in their narrative responses? (7/1/2021)**

MDE does not share survey results with the authorizer during their evaluation.

**100. If I am a new school and do not have an answer for a question on the charter school leadership survey, can I skip the question? (7/1/2021)**

The survey has skip logic built into it so you should not be asked questions you are not able to answer. For example, if your school has not been through an expansion, you will answer no and the survey applies skip logic so you do not receive additional questions about expansion. However, the survey does allow you to skip questions without answering them.

**101. What are the significant changes to MAPES from Round 1 to Round 2? (7/1/2021)**

Question 12 above addresses changes to the MAPES rubric. Other significant changes include a welcome meeting for charter school leaders, the ability for authorizer to submit new documentation after receiving the draft report, and updating the charter school leadership survey.

**102. While the start date of the MAPES Cohort Four renewal term is clear (January 1, 2017), what is the end date for the term? For instance, as we select examples (e.g.**

**contracting process), are we limited to contracts executed by June 30, 2021? December 31, 2021? Other? (7/9/2021)**

The end date for the Cohort Four review term is December 31, 2021. Documentation for the MAPES submission would be limited by the submission deadline (i.e., August 13, 2021 for the Cohort Four primary document submission).

**103. Was the Welcome Meeting with school leaders recorded? If so, where/how can they access it? (7/9/2021)**

The Welcome Meeting with charter school leaders was not recorded.

**104. The Operating Guide serves as the main portion of our AAA, and many of the MAPES indicators ask us to submit information if different from the AAA on file at MDE. Should we be considering the updated Operating Guide we recently submitted, or the originally-approved but out-of-date version we were using previously? (7/20/2021)**

While the updated Operating Guide is on file at MDE and will be provided to the evaluator, MDE suggests also submitting it as part of the authorizer's data submission and providing citation/commentary in the narratives (where applicable). The various iterations of the AAA (including past versions of the Operating Guide) will also be provided to the evaluator.

**105. The Evaluation Data Source sections of measures A.4 and A.5 reference certificates, etc. to be submitted "if not included in the resumes." Does that mean if staff expertise and authorizer knowledge and skill development are described in resumes, then certificates, etc. don't need to be submitted? (7/27/2021)**

Yes, if the resumes describe the staff expertise and authorizer knowledge and skill development and address the indicator criteria, then certificates, etc. don't need to be submitted with the initial document submission. As needed the external evaluator may request additional documentation during the authorizer interview to verify/validate the information provided in the initial document submission.

**106. The Evaluation Data Source section of measure A.10 includes, "Documentation of best practice sharing, engagement or technical assistance with/to other authorizers (if not already provided in authorizer annual report submissions)". Does that mean if best practice sharing, engagement or technical assistance with/to other authorizers**

**are described in authorizer annual reports, then additional documentation doesn't need to be submitted? (7/27/2021)**

Yes, if the authorizer annual reports describe best practice sharing, engagement or technical assistance with/to other authorizers and address the indicator criteria, then additional documentation doesn't need to be submitted with the initial document submission. As needed the external evaluator may request additional documentation during the authorizer interview to verify/validate the information provided in the initial document submission.