

## 2019 Application to Authorize Charter Schools in Minnesota

### Introduction

A charter school authorizer is a public oversight organization approved by the state to authorize one or more charter schools. An authorizer's fundamental role is to hold a school accountable for the terms of its performance contract – the “charter.” The primary purpose of Minnesota charter schools is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement ([Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, subdivision 1](#)). Through effective oversight, authorizers hold charter schools accountable for realizing this purpose. Authorizer responsibilities include approving, monitoring, evaluating, renewing and, if necessary, closing charter schools when contract terms are not met. To determine an organization's eligibility to authorize one or more charter schools in Minnesota, please review [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 1](#).

This document provides guidance and instructions to eligible organizations who are interested in becoming an approved charter school authorizer in Minnesota. Per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 3\(a\)](#), “An eligible authorizer under this section must apply to the commissioner for approval as an authorizer before submitting any affidavit to the commissioner to charter a school. The application for approval as a charter school authorizer must show the applicant's ability to implement the procedures and satisfy the criteria for chartering a school under this chapter.” [A list of approved authorizers is available on MDE's website.](#)

The authorizer standards and expectations in this application are aligned with the [performance measures, indicators and specifications in the Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System \(MAPES\)](#). MAPES was developed per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 5](#) and is used to review an authorizer's performance every five years.

As organizations seek to become approved authorizers of charter schools in Minnesota, they join a history of school choice, autonomy and innovation. MDE applauds those who apply to become approved authorizers as the application itself demonstrates commitment to the students of Minnesota and to improved outcomes for students and high-performing charter schools.

As provided by [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4\(b\)](#), an authorizer that is a school district may satisfy the application requirements of: 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, and 3) 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.

## Application Timeline and Process

Key stages and dates in the new authorizer application review process are as follows:

Application Stage	Date
Intent to Apply Notice due to MDE	Submitted by applicant at any time
Information Session	Scheduled after the Intent to Apply Notice is received to review application instructions
Check-in Meeting (optional)	Two weeks after the information session, MDE will reach out to applicant to schedule a check-in meeting
Applicant Submits Application to MDE	Submitted by applicant at any time
Applicant Interview	Scheduled prior to initial decision
Initial Approval/Disapproval Decision and Notification	45 business days from application submission date
Response to Deficiencies (if applicable)	20 business days from notice of initial disapproval
Final Approval/Disapproval Decision (if applicable)	After the 20 business days expire, the commissioner has 15 business days to make a final decision

### Intent to Apply Notice and Information Session

Organizations that are interested in learning more about the Application to Authorize Charter Schools in Minnesota are encouraged to submit an Intent to Apply Notice via email to [mde.charterschools@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.charterschools@state.mn.us). Please use the form provided in this instruction document. Once the Intent to Apply Notice is received, MDE will contact applicants to schedule a two hour meeting to review the components of the application, answer questions and provide technical assistance. MDE will contact the applicant two weeks after the information session to schedule a check-in meeting, if desired by the applicant.

## New Authorizer Application Instructions

The applicant will need to provide a narrative response for Part A and Part B elements as outlined below. The narrative response should clearly respond to the essential element(s) of the measure. The narrative should include measure headings organized to the narrative response. Attachments may be used to provide additional information. Clearly identify the attachment and reference the page(s), section(s), etc. where the information is located within the attachment.

Please note that it is not necessary to restate information in the application. Specifically, we ask that you do not repeat information in the narrative that is provided in an attachment. For example, if a performance framework is included as an attachment, please do not duplicate information in the narrative, simply reference where the information can be found in the attachment.

### Definitions:

- **Measure:** Indicates title of measure and provides a guiding question; the measures align with MAPES' performance measures.
- **Essential Element(s):** The applicant must clearly address all essential elements in the application.
- **Advanced Element(s) (optional):** Shows applicant is addressing high quality authorizing standards. Advanced elements are not required to be addressed for application approval.

## Part A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure

The purpose of Part A is to provide applicants an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity and commitment to further the purposes of [Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E](#). This portion of the application directly aligns with Part A performance measures in MAPES.

Provide a narrative response for each Part A measure and include attachments as necessary to address the applicant's capacity and infrastructure.

**Measure A.1 - Authorizer Mission:** *The applicant has a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing.*

### Essential Elements:

- Identify the applicant's clear and compelling mission and indicate how it fully aligns with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E.
- Describe how authorizing charter schools realizes the applicant's mission.

*Applicants that are school districts may satisfy measure A.1 requirements by submitting a written assurance (Form 3) promising to comply with the requirements for this measure, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(b).*

**Measure A.2 - Authorizer Vision and Organizational Goals:** *The applicant has a comprehensive vision for charter school authorizing with clear organizational goals and time frames for achievement that are aligned with the purposes of Minnesota law.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Identify the applicant’s comprehensive vision for charter school authorizing and indicate how it fully aligns with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E.
- Identify the applicant’s measurable organizational goals that align with the applicant’s chartering vision including the criteria and timeframe for achievement.

**Advanced Elements:**

- Explain how the applicant will regularly evaluate its work against its chartering vision and organizational goals.
- Explain how the applicant will implement improvement plans if falling short of its vision and organization goals.

**Measure A.3 - Authorizer Structure of Operations and Measure A.4 - Authorizer Staff Expertise:** *The applicant has a clear structure of duties and responsibilities and sufficient resources to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools. The applicant has appropriate experience, expertise and skills to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools.*

**Definitions:**

- **“Expertise”** is defined as having knowledge, education, training, etc. in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.
- **“Experience”** is defined as length of time working in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.
- **“Skills”** is defined as effective application of experience and expertise in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe the capacity of the applicant to serve as an authorizer, including the positions (e.g. employees, contractors, volunteers; both paid and unpaid positions) allocated to authorizing duties, the qualifications for those positions (expertise, experience and skills), the full-time equivalencies of those positions and the financial resources available to fund the positions.
- Describe how the applicant will manage and safeguard information, data and records related to authorizing.
- Provide an organizational chart that shows clear lines of reporting and authority/decision-making and, if applicable, showing projected organizational changes due to proposed expansion over the five-year term.

*Applicants that are school districts may satisfy measure A.3 and A.4 requirements by submitting a written assurance (Form 3) promising to comply with the requirements for these measure, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(b).*

**Measure A.5 - Authorizer Capacity and Skill Development of Leadership and Authorizing Staff:** *The applicant has a plan to build the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development. The applicant has a plan to provide professional development aligned with its operations, vision and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe the applicant’s plan to offer professional development to authorizing leadership and staff.
- Describe the frequency and nature of potential professional development as well as personnel expected to attend.
- Describe how professional development will align with the applicant’s operations, vision and goals for its portfolio of charter schools.

**Advanced Element:**

- Describe how professional development will be measured, evaluated and customized to meet the needs of the authorizing leadership and staff.

*Applicants that are school districts may satisfy measure A.5 requirements by submitting a written assurance (Form 3) promising to comply with the requirements for this measure, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(b).*

**Measure A.6 - Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools:** *The applicant has a plan to allocate resources commensurate with its stated budget, needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Include the applicant’s anticipated five-year budget (for example, FY 2020-FY 2024) outlining the following:
  - Anticipated revenue sources such as fees collected annually from schools and additional funds from outside sources.
  - Anticipated expenditures such as staff, travel, consultants, office costs (e.g. equipment, supplies), etc.
  - Anticipated staff expenditures and personnel budget increases in relation to portfolio growth. *Applicants that are school districts may satisfy this specific requirement by submitting a written assurance (Form 3) promising to comply with this specific requirement, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(b).*
- Provide the target number and size of schools for the portfolio of charter schools for a five-year period. **(Important note: This establishes the maximum portfolio size for the applicant’s five-year term.)**

**Advanced Element:**

- Describe how the applicant’s budget shows resource allocations dedicated to achieving nationally recognized quality authorizing standards.

**Measure A.7 - Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest:** *The applicant implements a clear policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Include the applicant's policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.
- Describe the process and procedures for implementing and executing the applicant's conflict of interest policy to avoid conflicts of interest that might affect the applicant'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.

*Applicants that are school districts may satisfy measure A.7 requirements by submitting a written assurance (Form 3) promising to comply with the requirements for this measure, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 4(b).*

**Measure A.8 - Ensuring Autonomy of the Schools in the Portfolio:** *The applicant implements a policy to preserve and support the essential autonomies of the portfolio of charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Include the applicant's policy to ensure school autonomy and indicate how it fully aligns with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E.
- Describe how the applicant's policy on school autonomy establishes and recognizes the school's authority over academic, operational and financial needs and respects the school's authority over the schools' day-to-day operations.
- Describe the process and procedures for implementing and executing the applicant's policy to ensure school autonomy.
- Describe how the applicant will hold schools accountable for outcomes rather than processes and operations.

**Advanced Element:**

- The applicant describes how its policy to ensure school autonomy aligns with nationally recognized quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure A.9 - Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices:** *The applicant plans to self-evaluate its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practices) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe the applicant's plan to regularly review its internal ability to oversee its portfolio of charter schools.
- Describe the applicant's process to implement continuous improvement plans which will result in more effective authorizing practices.

### **Advanced Elements:**

- Describe the process the applicant will use to evaluate its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practices) regularly against its mission, vision and organizational goals.
- Describe the applicant's framework(s) for addressing any needs for improvement if falling short of its mission, vision or organizational goals.

**Measure A.10 - Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination:** *The applicant plans to disseminate best authorizing practices and/or assist other authorizers in high quality authorizing.*

### **Essential Elements:**

- Describe the applicant's process to share best practices and/or provide assistance to other authorizers to promote high quality authorizing.
- Describe the applicant's intent to engage with other professionals (such as state or national associations) in order to improve the authorizing community of practice in the state including sharing best practices and/or providing technical assistance to other authorizers.

**Measure A.11 - Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute:** *The applicant intends to comply with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statute.*

### **Essential Element:**

- Describe the applicant's internal process to ensure compliance with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statutes.

## **Part B Measures: Authorizer Processes and Decision Making**

The purpose of Part B is for the applicant to describe its standards, practices and processes for determining high stakes decisions regarding a charter school's academic, operational and financial performance. This portion of the application directly aligns with Part B performance measures in MAPES.

Provide a narrative response for each Part B measure and include attachments as necessary to address the applicant's processes and decision making.

**Measure B.1 - New Charter School Decisions:** *The applicant has clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals. The applicant outlines new charter school decision-making processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

### **Essential Elements:**

- Submit comprehensive new charter school application, instructions, evaluative criteria, procedures, timelines and review process that address the following elements:
  - Mission/Vision
  - Need/Demand

- Primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement (Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, subdivision 1) and how the school will report the implementation of it to the applicant.
  - Additional purpose(s) and how the school will report the implementation of said purpose(s) to the applicant.
  - A charter school must design its programs to at least meet the outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students, including world's best workforce goals under [section 120B.11, subdivision 1](#). In the absence of the commissioner's requirements governing state standards and benchmarks, the school must meet the outcomes contained in the contract with the authorizer. The achievement levels of the outcomes contained in the contract may exceed the achievement levels of any outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students ([Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1\(c\)](#).)
  - Academic plan: description of the school program, specific academic and nonacademic outcomes that students must achieve, educational philosophy and approach, school culture, curriculum and instruction, assessment and services for special populations
  - Operational plan: governance and management structure, administration, human resource recruitment and development, student recruitment and enrollment, admission policy, school calendar, parent and community involvement, operational outcomes, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, facilities and location
  - Financial plan: short and long-term financial projections, budget(s), business management procedures, financial outcomes, facility planning
  - A “statement of assurances” of legal compliance prescribed by the commissioner
  - Any other information the authorizer requests
- Develop the applicant’s review process including clear and transparent procedures and rigorous criteria to evaluate new charter school applications.
  - Describe the new charter school application process timeline consistent with statutory deadlines per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06](#).

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the applicant’s new charter school application process is designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.2 - Interim Accountability Decisions (i.e. site/grade level expansions, official early learning program(s) recognition, ready to open and change in authorizer):** *The applicant has clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate school opening decisions as well as proposals of existing charter school expansion requests and interim changes. The applicant outlines interim accountability decision-making processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- For each interim accountability decision below, submit comprehensive application instructions, evaluative criteria, procedures, timelines and review processes that are aligned with statute and includes academic, operational and financial conditions upon which the applicant approves or denies:
  - Adding grades or sites per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 5](#)

- Official early learning program(s) recognition per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3\(b\)](#) and [Minnesota Statutes, sections 124E.03, subdivision 7\(b\)](#)
- Change in authorizer requests per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 5](#)
- Ready to open per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3\(h\)](#)

**Note:** Please provide a response for each accountability decision above that reflects its unique requirements.

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the interim accountability decision-making processes are designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.3 - Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution:** *The applicant has contracts that clearly define material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Submit a charter contract template that meets the following elements:
  - All current statutory requirements per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1\(a-b\) and 3\(c\)](#). (See [MDE’s Charter Contract Guidance document](#) for additional guidance.)
  - Clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer.
- Describe a plan to establish contract outcomes/goals that are specific and strategic, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound. (See [MDE’s Setting Useful Goals guide](#) for additional guidance.)
- Describe the process for how the applicant’s new charter school contract(s) will be completed within 45 business days of the commissioner’s approval of the applicant’s affidavit and the applicant will submit to the commissioner a copy of the signed contract within 10 business days of its execution.
- Describe how existing contract(s) will be fully executed no later than the first date of the renewal period and submitted to the commissioner within 10 business days of its execution.
- Describe how contract(s) will be amended for material contract changes, when applicable, and submitted to the commissioner within 10 business days of its execution.

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the applicant’s contract term, negotiation and execution decision-making processes are designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.4 - Performance Standards:** *The applicant has a performance framework under which it executes contracts with clear, measurable and attainable performance standards.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Develop a performance framework addressing the following elements:

- States the primary purpose of the charter schools in its portfolio is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement and identifies additional purposes per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, subdivision 1, and Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivisions 1(a)(1) and 1(a)(2).
- The performance framework defines clear, measurable and attainable academic, operational and financial performance standards for all schools in its portfolio per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10 and consequences for meeting or not meeting performance standards.
- The performance framework is designed to at least meet the outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students, including world’s best workforce goals under section 120B.11, subdivision 1 per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(c).
  - The commissioner’s outcomes for public school students are the five goals of World’s Best Workforce:
    - All children are ready for school.
    - All third-graders can read at grade level.
    - All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
    - All students are ready for career and college.
    - All students graduate from high school.

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the performance framework is designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.5 - Authorizer’s Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio of Charter Schools:** *The applicant has processes to monitor and oversee the schools in its portfolio in the areas of academic, operational and financial performance.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe the criteria, processes and procedures the applicant will use to monitor and evaluate the fiscal, operational and academic performance, consistent with subdivision 3, paragraphs (a) and (b) per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(7).
- Describe the charter schools’ required academic, financial and operational reporting to the applicant.
- Describe an oversight plan that clearly establishes the criteria, processes and procedures the applicant will use to evaluate performance and monitor compliance, ensure school autonomy and protect student rights.
- Describe how the applicant’s ongoing oversight informs its standards and processes for intervention, termination and renewal decisions for its portfolio of charter schools (i.e. performance measures B.6 and B.9).

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the applicant’s ongoing oversight of the portfolio of charter schools is designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.6 - Authorizer’s Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints:** *The applicant has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, interventions and corrective action.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe the standards, procedures and processes to address and resolve complaints, including forms if applicable.
- Describe the standards, procedures and processes for intervention and corrective action.
- Describe how the applicant’s standards and processes for intervention, corrective action and response to complaints align with its ongoing oversight of the portfolio of charter schools (i.e. performance measure B.5).

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the applicant’s standards and processes for interventions, corrective action and response to complaints are designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

**Measure B.7 - Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance:** *The applicant has an established process to support its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings.*

**Essential Element:**

- Describe the plan to provide proactive support, development and technical assistance to charter schools.
- Describe how the support, development and technical assistance will be provided in a variety of areas and in a manner to preserve school autonomy.

**Measure B.8 - High Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices:** *The applicant has an established process to promote, within its portfolio, the model replication and dissemination of best practices of high performing charter schools.*

**Essential Element:**

- Describe a clear plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices of high performing charter schools, including how models/practices will be identified.

**Measure B.9 - Charter School Renewal or Termination Decisions:** *The applicant has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to make high stakes renewal and termination decisions. The applicant outlines charter school renewal and termination decision standards and processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

**Essential Elements:**

- Describe comprehensive evaluative standards, procedures, timelines and review processes to evaluate a school’s academic, operational and financial performance for high-stakes merit-based renewal and termination decisions consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivisions 1(a)(7), 1(a)(8), 1(a)(13), 1(a)(14), 1(c) and subdivision 3(a) and include the following:
  - The criteria, processes, and procedures the authorizer will use to monitor and evaluate the fiscal, operational, and academic performance, consistent with subdivision 3, paragraphs (a) and (b) per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(7).
  - The formal written performance evaluation that is a prerequisite for reviewing a charter contract under subdivision 3 per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(8).
  - The specific conditions for contract renewal that identify the performance of all students under the primary purpose of section 124E.01, subdivision 1, as the most important factor in determining whether to renew the contract per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(13).
  - The additional purposes under section 124E.01, subdivision 1, and related performance obligations under clause (7) contained in the charter contract as additional factors in determining whether to renew the contract per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(a)(14).
  - Standards and process to evaluate the school’s performance to at least meet the outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students, including world’s best workforce goals under section 120B.11, subdivision 1 per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(c).
  - Standards for determining consequences for meeting or not meeting performance standards.
  - The authorizer shall provide a formal written evaluation of the school’s performance before the authorizer renews the charter contract per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 3(a).
- Describe the school closure plan and describe the applicant’s role in the orderly closure of a school in the event of revocation, non-renewal or voluntary relinquishment of the charter per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, subdivision 1(b), subdivision 4 and subdivision 6.

**Advanced Element:**

- Identify how the applicant’s charter school renewal and termination decision-making processes are designed to promote high quality charter schools and align with national quality authorizing principles and standards.

## Application Submission Instructions

Applicants are to submit one electronic copy of the application, including attachments, as PDF documents in an organized fashion including page numbers. Email electronic copies to [mde.charterschools@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.charterschools@state.mn.us). Please do not send unsolicited information to the application following its initial submission. Structure your submission as follows:

- Form 1 – Assurances
- Form 2 – Applicant Contacts
- *For school districts only:* Form 3 – School District Applicant Assurances (optional)
- Part A: Narrative responding to each performance measure (A.1 - A.11) as one PDF
- Part B: Narrative responding to each performance measure (B.1 - B.9) as one PDF
- Attachments clearly labeled with titles that are specific to the document (e.g. Program Manual) as separate PDFs

## Disposition of Responses

Once an application is received, MDE may release to the public the name and mailing address of the applicant. All materials submitted will become property of the State of Minnesota and will become public record in accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, [Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13](#), after the evaluation process is completed.

The evaluation process is complete when the commissioner has notified the applicant of final approval or disapproval. If the applicant submits information that it believes to be trade-secret materials as defined by [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.37](#) the responder must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its response at the time the response is submitted;
- Include a statement justifying the trade-secret designation for each item; and
- Defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be a trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the state, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the state in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense. This indemnification survives the state's award of a contract. In submitting a response to this request for proposals, the responder agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade-secret materials are in possession of the state.

## Applicant Interview

The purpose of the applicant interview is to gain clarity on questions or concerns that arise from the review of the application. In addition, it provides an opportunity for the applicant to clearly articulate the overall authorizing plan, including the philosophy, policies, processes and short and long-term goals. Individuals relevant to the applicant's authorizing duties will be interviewed. The interview will be conducted at MDE.

The communication and implementation of the applicant's proposed practices are of vital importance to charter school authorizing. Following the desk review of Parts A and B, MDE will generate interview questions to reflect points of interest and areas for clarification or concerns that emerged from the review process.

The interview is designed to reveal the applicant's understanding of and ability to clearly articulate the proposed authorizing plans. This includes displaying clarity and comprehension as well as a commitment to becoming an effective authorizer:

- **Clarity:** The applicant's responses are precise, effective, thoughtful and direct.
- **Comprehension:** The applicant is well-informed and demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the written application.
- **Commitment:** The applicant conveys a genuine interest and commitment to becoming a quality authorizer.

Applicants have the opportunity to present to reviewers prior to the start of the interview. The presentation is optional and will be granted at the applicant's request. The topic and scope of the presentation is at the discretion of the applicant, although it is recommended that the presentation be connected to the applicant

organization (e.g., background, history, values) and/or highlighted elements of the application. The time limit for the presentation is 30 minutes to allow sufficient time for interview questions and applicant response.

## New Authorizer Approval Process and Rating Scale

The authorizer approval process is designed to assess how well an applicant proposes to fulfill the role of a charter school authorizer, based on the requirements set out in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E. Each element of the authorizer application directly aligns with the performance measures of MAPES.

Reviewers apply the following definitions to the review of performance measures.

- **Satisfactory:** The documentation evidences compliance with state law and fulfillment of Minnesota’s standards for authorizing.
- **Clarification and Action:** The documentation evidences compliance with state law and/or fulfillment of Minnesota’s standards for authorizing; however, it is unclear and warrants further clarification in the revised application. Specific requests for clarification will be provided.
- **Deficiency and Action:** The documentation does not evidence compliance with state law and/or fulfillment of Minnesota’s standards for authorizing. Specific deficiencies will be identified.
- **Continuous Improvement Note(s):** While the required element is compliant, MDE’s feedback is provided in alignment with the state’s authorizer performance standards and other guidance. Revisions based on continuous improvement notes are recommended but not required.

*In order to be approved as an authorizer, an applicant must receive a satisfactory rating on all rubric items.*

## Commissioner Approval or Disapproval and Response to Deficiencies

Per [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 3\(a\)](#), “The commissioner must approve or disapprove the application within 45 business days of the deadline for that application period. If the commissioner disapproves the application, the commissioner must notify the applicant of the specific deficiencies in writing and the applicant then has 20 business days to address the deficiencies to the commissioner’s satisfaction.”

If an application is initially disapproved, the commissioner’s notice will include reviewer feedback identifying any content that has been determined to be not satisfactory. Per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 3(a), “If the commissioner disapproves the application, the commissioner must notify the applicant of the specific deficiencies in writing and the applicant then has 20 business days to address the deficiencies to the commissioner’s satisfaction. After the 20 business days expire, the commissioner has 15 business days to make a final decision to approve or disapprove the application.”

The final decision will be one of the following:

- **Approval:** An approval by the commissioner means that MDE has found that the application meets the statutory requirements for authorizing and MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.
- **Disapproval:** A disapproval by the commissioner means that MDE has found that, in whole or in part, the application, including proposed practices, does not meet the statutory requirements for authorizing and/or MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.

Per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 3(a), “Failing to address the deficiencies to the commissioner’s satisfaction makes an applicant ineligible to be an authorizer.” A disapproved applicant may resubmit an application during a future application period, per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.05, subdivision 3(b). Applications are currently accepted on a rolling basis.

## Technical Assistance

Please contact [Karen Calcaterra](#) at (651) 582-8573 or [Mike Schultz](#) at (651) 582-8529 for technical assistance or if you have questions.

## Intent to Apply Notice and Applicant Eligibility Certification

**Name of Applicant Organization:**

**Name of Applicant's Primary Contact:**

**Applicant's Primary Contact Information** (include email, mailing address and phone number):

**Check the appropriate box** ([Minn. Stat § 124E.05, Subd. 1](#)):

Independent school district board, intermediate school district board, or education district organized under Minnesota Statutes, sections [123A.15](#) to [123A.19](#).

Charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (exclusions apply regarding nonpublic sectarian or religious organizations; see Minn. Stat § 124E.05, Subd. 1 for complete information.) Include the following documentation immediately after this form; clearly label each attachment:

- **Attachment A:** Documentation of the applicant's current status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. TIP: Search the [IRS website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment B:** Documentation of the applicant's active registration with the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General. TIP: Search the [Attorney General's website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment C:** Documentation to evidence the organization has been incorporated in the state of Minnesota and has been operating continuously as a nonprofit for at least five years from the date of application submission. TIP: Search the [Minnesota Business and Lien System on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment D:** Documentation to verify the organization does not operate a charter school. TIP: Include a signed letter, on organizational letterhead, to verify this requirement.

Institution of higher education; check the sub-category the organization meets:

A Minnesota private college that grants two- or four-year degrees and is registered with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education under [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 136A](#)

A state college or university governed by the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

The University of Minnesota

Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Exchanges – A nonprofit corporation subject to [chapter 317A](#), described in [section 317A.905](#), and exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, may authorize one or more charter schools if the charter school has operated for at least three years under a different authorizer and if the nonprofit corporation has existed for at least 25 years. Include the following documentation immediately after this form; clearly label each attachment:

- **Attachment A:** Documentation of the applicant’s current status under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. TIP: Search the [IRS website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment B:** Documentation to evidence the organization has been incorporated in the state of Minnesota and has been operating continuously as a nonprofit for at least 25 years from the date of application submission. TIP: Search the [Minnesota Business and Lien System on the Minnesota Secretary of State’s website](#), print results screen with date.

Single-Purpose Authorizer (Check the sub-category the organization meets):

Charitable, nonsectarian organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and incorporated in the state of Minnesota under chapter 317A as a corporation with no members for the sole purpose of chartering schools.

Charitable, nonsectarian organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and incorporated in the state of Minnesota under [section 322C.1101](#) as a nonprofit limited liability company for the sole purpose of chartering schools.

For a single-purpose authorizer, include the following documentation immediately after this form; clearly label each attachment:

- **Attachment A:** Documentation of the applicant’s current status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. TIP: Search the [IRS website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment B:** Documentation of the applicant’s active registration with the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General. TIP: Search the [Attorney General’s website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment C:** Documentation to evidence the organization is incorporated in the state of Minnesota under section 317A or 322C.1101. TIP: Search the [Minnesota Business and Lien System on the Minnesota Secretary of State’s website](#), print results screen with date.
- **Attachment D:** Copy of the organization’s Articles of Incorporation endorsed by the Minnesota Secretary of State’s Office. Articles of incorporation are endorsed through a cover sheet that includes the filing date, filing number, and the secretary of state’s signature.

**Please note:** *Single-purpose authorizers “shall consider and approve charter school applications using the criteria under section 124E.06 and shall not limit the applications it solicits, considers, or approves to any single curriculum, learning program, or method” (Minn. Stat., § 124E.05, Subd. 1(h)).*

## Form 1 – Assurances

**Name of Applicant Organization:**

***LEGALLY BINDING***

By signing this form, I/we acknowledge that I/we am/are aware of authorizer responsibilities in their entirety as stated within the application materials and shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations and provisions stated therein, should the organization be approved to authorize charter schools in Minnesota. I/we hereby assure and agree to comply with all conditions of the approved application and submit required documents and certifications as required, should the organization be approved as an authorizer, and that the organization is committed to serving as an authorizer for the full five-year term.

**Applicant’s Identified Official with Authority**

*(Provide the name, title and signature of person with legal authority to certify on behalf of the applicant.)*

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Applicant’s Primary Authorizing Contact (if different from above)**

*(Provide the name, title and signature of applicant’s primary authorizing contact, if different from above.)*

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

## Form 2 – Applicant Contacts

**Name of Applicant Organization:**

Please list individuals involved in the development of this application.

Name	Role/Position	Email Address

## Form 3 – School District Applicant Assurances (optional)

### Name of Applicant Organization:

*Only for applicants that are school districts. Please initial the statements below for which the applicant is assuring to comply with the requirements of the selected measures in lieu of a narrative response.*

**Measure A.1:** The applicant assures it has a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing.

**Measure A.3 and Measure A.4:** The applicant assures it has a clear structure of duties and responsibilities and sufficient resources to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools. The applicant assures it has appropriate experience, expertise and skills to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools.

**Measure A.5:** The applicant assures it has a plan to build the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development, and that it has a plan to provide professional development aligned with its operations, vision and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools.

**Measure A.6 requirement for funding authorizing positions:** The applicant assures it has anticipated staff expenditures and personnel budget increases in relation to portfolio growth.

**Measure A.7:** The applicant assures it will implement a clear policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.

By signing this form, I/we agree to comply with all assurances stated above, should the school district be approved as an authorizer.

### Applicant's Identified Official with Authority

*(Provide the name, title and signature of person with legal authority to certify on behalf of the applicant.)*

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

### Applicant's Primary Authorizing Contact (if different from above)

*(Provide the name, title and signature of applicant's primary authorizing contact, if different from above.)*

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Title:**