



Change in Authorizer Application Process

A charter school currently in operation in Minnesota under *Minnesota Statutes* 124D.10 may apply to Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) for a change in authorizer under the following parameters.

A charter school board submits a Letter of Intent to Apply to VOA-MN for a change in authorizer. If a Letter of Intent to Apply is approved by VOA-MN, the charter school board may submit a full application for a change in authorizer to VOA-MN. Only complete applications will be considered. If an application is approved, VOA-MN will submit a supplemental affidavit to the Minnesota Department of Education with the intent to authorize the charter school, per Minn. Stat. 124D.10, Subd. 23(c). At any point in the process, VOA-MN may move to deny authorization of a charter school and may not provide a reason for denial.

Minn. Stat. 124D.10, Subd. 23(c)

(c) If the authorizer and the charter school board of directors mutually agree not to renew the contract, a change in authorizers is allowed. The authorizer and the school board must jointly submit a written and signed letter of their intent to the commissioner to mutually not renew the contract. The authorizer that is a party to the existing contract must inform the proposed authorizer about the fiscal, operational, and student performance status of the school, as well as any outstanding contractual obligations that exist. The charter contract between the proposed authorizer and the school must identify and provide a plan to address any outstanding obligations from the previous contract. The proposed contract must be submitted at least 105 business days before the end of the existing charter contract. The commissioner shall have 30 business days to review and make a determination. The proposed authorizer and the school shall have 15 business days to respond to the determination and address any issues identified by the commissioner. A final determination by the commissioner shall be made no later than 45 business days before the end of the current charter contract. If no change in authorizer is approved, the school and the current authorizer may withdraw their letter of nonrenewal and enter into a new contract. If the transfer of authorizers is not approved and the current authorizer and the school do not withdraw their letter and enter into a new contract, the school must be dissolved according to applicable law and the terms of the contract.

LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR CHANGE OF AUTHORIZATION

VOA-MN is committed to authorizing high quality charter schools with proven results. We will only consider a change in authorizer application from charter schools that are able to adequately illustrate historically strong academic performance based on the state assessment system, strong history of compliance, and fiscal sustainability. If a charter board is not able to meet any of the three requirements listed below then they are not eligible to apply to VOA-MN for authorization.

The charter school board must submit a letter to VOA-MN stating the reason for the request to submit an application for a change in authorizer. This letter should state how the school's mission and vision aligns with VOA-MN Authorizing Program mission and vision and why the school believes VOA-MN would be an appropriate authorizer for the school. **In the Letter of Intent to Apply for Change Authorization the board must demonstrate that they meet all of the VOA-MN Authoring Program required criteria for a change of authorizer. Required criteria include:**

- The school has a fund balance of at least 15 percent in the last audited fiscal year as illustrated in its most recent financial audit. The school's most recent audit is free of findings.
- The school is meeting their primary statutory purpose to "increase all pupil learning and all student achievement." The school demonstrates longitudinal growth on the state exams. The school is out-performing their local school district school with similar student demographics on the state exams. The school is meeting their present charter contract academic performance goals.

- The school has been compliant with all MDE reporting deadlines within the past two years.
- The school has a service learning component to their education program.
- The school’s website is compliant with all statutory requirements.

Additionally, applicants must provide the following documents with the Letter of Intent to Apply for Change Authorization:

- Letter of Mutual Agreement to terminate or not renew the charter contract. This must be a joint letter from both entities that is signed and dated by the authorizer and board chair.
- The authorizer’s formal written evaluation of the school's performance. The evaluation must report on the academic, financial, operational, and student performance of the school during the present contract term. The evaluation must also identify any concerns or deficiencies discovered during the evaluation of the school.

VOA-MN will review the Letter of Intent to Apply for Change Authorization and may choose to visit the school prior to determining whether to invite the board to submit a full application. If VOA-MN invites the board to submit a full application, the board must follow the process outlined below.

CHANGE OF AUTHORIZER APPLICATION

If invited to apply, the Change in Authorizer Application should address the following areas: academic program, financial management and oversight, and governance and organizational capacity following the criteria in the “Change of Authorizer Application.” If the outgoing authorizer identifies any concerns about the performance of the charter school or board in documentation to VOA-MN, the board must respond to those concerns.

SITE VISIT

VOA-MN will conduct a site visit to the school prior to a decision on the application. This site visit may be completed during the review of the Letter or Intent or full application. The purpose of a site visit is to observe the learning program and meet with key stakeholders like board members, teachers, parents, school leadership, and business office staff. VOA will use information provided in the Letter of Intent, Change In Authorizer Application and related attachments, and site visit to perform an evaluation using the VOA Annual School Evaluation Rubric.

SUBMIT MATERIALS *ELECTRONICALLY* TO:

VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program
c/o Stephanie Olsen, Program Manager
solsen@voamn.org

QUESTIONS

Contact Stephanie Olsen at solsen@voamn.org or 612-270-1998.



Change in Authorizer Application

(Revised September 1, 2015)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 30th.

DOCUMENTATION

Please provide the following information as part of your application for a change in authorizer:

- Two most recent annual reports
- Two most recent financial audits
- Complete board meeting packets from February through June of the most recent fiscal year.
- Board roster which includes: member names, positions, group represented, election term, and an explanation of the expertise each member brings to the board.
- Copy of the current board meeting calendar.
- Copy of the board meeting minutes from February through June of the most recent fiscal year.
- Previous and current year budget and year-to-date actuals
- Board's director evaluation policy and process
- Four years of school academic longitudinal data based on the state exams (can be pulled from the MDE website).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please provide a brief narrative explaining the school's history and highlighting the school's accomplishments over the previous charter contract period.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

- **Learning Program**

Describe the guiding educational philosophy of your school. Provide an overview of the curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy. Cite and explain research evidence demonstrating these curricula, tools, techniques and methods support all pupil learning and all student achievement. Describe the school's professional development plan.

- **Financial Management and Sustainability**

Describe how the school board appropriately oversees the school's financials. Explain the financial training the board members have received. How is the board structured to ensure that a significant body of people have strong working knowledge of the school's financials (e.g. describe the board's committee structure and treasurer's involvement in oversight).

- **Board Governance**

Describe the school's governance model (i.e. how is membership defined, board composition, etc.). Explain how the governance model provides quality oversight of the school.

- **School Management and Operations**

Describe the school's leadership structure and team and explain how the structure supports both the learning program and effective operations of the school.

Discuss how the learning program aligns with the school's mission, vision, and goals.

Provide a complete faculty roster with names, positions, and for classroom teachers their license number and assignment.

Discuss the school's facility and comment on the changes made over the course of the contract to improve the physical learning environment.