



## **Charter School Authorizing Program Manual**

**Revised February 2023**

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## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

*Our organization mission and values call us to act in the face of oppression and to promote inclusion, striving to create a more equitable society and vibrant workplace.*

### **A Journey of Inclusion**

*We believe that building communities where all lives are uplifted is possible when we can all bring our full, authentic selves to the effort. Each of us is unique and deserves to feel valued, respected, seen, and included. We also recognize the continuing opportunity to make progress in our journey of inclusion, to honor our differences, listen, learn, and use our resources to be a positive voice for change. This journey takes place throughout our community, within our workplace and inside each of us.*

### **Centering Equity**

*Achieving equity is fundamental to our work. Every day, we see how disparities in health, housing, education, family support, and criminal justice harm the people and communities we serve. We also understand that “one-size fits all” solutions and strategies will never create the beautiful, fair, and vibrant communities in which we all thrive. To create meaningful change, we must be adaptive and resilient, and center equity in all that we do.*

### **Our Commitments in Action**

*Our work to honor diversity, build equity, and foster inclusion is on-going. Be sure to check this page regularly to see where our journey takes us and how we continue to do the work.*

Source: [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Volunteers of America Minnesota and Wisconsin \(voamnwi.org\)](https://voamnwi.org)

## Why We Authorize Charter Schools

Charter schools offer teachers, parents and community members the opportunity to create new public schools in response to community needs. In return, these chartered schools agree to be held accountable by their authorizer for student performance outcomes. If the charter school fails to produce the promised student outcomes the authorizer may intervene in a variety of ways, and as a last resort can close the school. Quality charter school authorizing is the linchpin of the charter promise of accountability for results and the creation of quality educational opportunities. While charter authorizers are not responsible for the ultimate success or failure of a charter school, they can have a major impact on that outcome by providing strong oversight and accountability.

In 2000 the Minnesota state legislature made it possible for non-profit organizations with a \$2,000,000 fund balance and membership in the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits to authorize charter schools. At this time, Volunteers of America-Minnesota became the first non-profit charter school authorizer in the nation. VOA-MN became an authorizer because we recognized it as a new and effective way of carrying out our mission. This decision was the result of a number of factors. Through our experience as an operator of two contracted alternative schools in the Minneapolis Public Schools we witnessed the significant positive impact that small, personalized learning environments can have on students and their families. The opportunity to assist teachers, parents and community members to create and sustain small schools in their communities was a natural extension of our positive experience with our alternative schools. Thus, we had both the vision and experience to assume this role.

In the years that we have been authorizing, VOA-MN has developed and practices a model of charter school authorizing that goes beyond the compliance-based role vaguely outlined in state statute. We engage in pro-active relationships and add value to the schools with which we work. During the start-up phase VOA-MN works closely with founding groups to ensure that tasks necessary to a successful opening (facility, finance, human resources, marketing/recruitment, curriculum development) are accomplished in a timely manner. Once operational, VOA-MN vigilantly monitors the financial and academic performance of its schools through frequent communication and site visits and regular review of financial and program documents. When signs of trouble arise, we work closely with the school's board to problem solve and identify resources that may be helpful. This is a departure from the traditional reactive relationship between charter school authorizers and schools.

VOA-MN has much to offer charter schools in the way of expertise in non-profit management and board governance. Our track record of responding to *emerging* community needs with effective social service programs and experience starting and operating two alternative schools makes our organization particularly qualified to authorize charter schools. We recognize the great challenges and difficulties in starting a charter school and can help school developers navigate this complex process while respecting the autonomy and uniqueness of each school.

## **Authorizing Program Vision**

Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will authorize high quality charter schools that improve all pupil learning, all student achievement, and promote service to others.

## **Authorizing Program Mission**

Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement with service to others as its core.

**GOAL 1: High Quality School Choice: Build a portfolio of charter schools committed to excellence in education, financial management, and governance.**

### Related Strategies and Activities

Improve currently authorized schools:

- Provide oversight of professional development plans, including alignment that:
  - Schools have adopted a formal teacher evaluation process and adheres to the requirements set forth in state statute (Minn. Stat. 122A.40).
  - All teachers are supported through a school-wide professional development plan that is based on analysis of assessment data and directly linked to improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.
- Monitor compliance with financial and governance laws as well as oversee implementation of CSAP expectations for quality in both areas per the charter school contract.
- Utilize Intervention plans to facilitate improvement and ultimately close charter schools that are not making necessary progress in meeting contract performance standards.

Support successful schools:

- Within CSAP capacity, increase the number of charter schools in the VOA-MN network by 1-2 schools per year starting in FY22 and extending through FY26, as long as applicant meets the VOA-MN performance standards. This would bring the number of schools up from 17 to 22-27 by FY26. In addition:
  - consider charter school applications that show the greatest potential for immediate high performance, especially those replicating existing quality school models.
  - consider schools that seek VOA-MN for change in authorizer when they have a track record of success and meet the rigorous standards in our change of authorizer application.
  - support and promote replication and expansion of our currently authorized high performing schools.

CSAP team members will hold at least one public meeting annually that includes a presentation on the role of an authorizer and an introduction of the VOA-MN authorizing program as a means of outreach.

*PLAN FOR MEASURING/MONITORING PROGRESS: The CSAP team will discuss this goal, including strategies and activities as needed, during regularly scheduled team meetings. Documentation (ex. Analyst Monthly Logs) of the team meeting will demonstrate that the CSAP is*

*progressing on this goal. The authorizer will also determine the extent to which the authorizer is “building a portfolio of schools committed to excellence” in academic, finance, and board governance through ongoing data collection and analysis in preparation for our annual VOA-MN School Network Performance Reports. These reports are specifically designed to measure school progress meeting our performance standards.*

**GOAL 2: Quality School Performance: Create and maintain systems of charter school performance review that support analysis, reflection and planning, and implementation of continuous improvement measures for the charter schools we authorize.**

Related Strategies and Activities

Utilize the charter school network to create a culture of continuous improvement among charter school leaders:

- Charter School Authorizing Program (CSAP) will continue to utilize the Charter School Network as a tool to build organizational and operational capacity among charter schools in our portfolio.
- CSAP will continue to encourage collaboration and mentoring between leaders of VOA-MN Authorized charter schools.
- The CSAP annual conference will include opportunities for both school leaders and board chairs to access training and network with other schools authorized by VOA MN. The annual conference will also include an opportunity for discussion and strategies for dissemination of “best practices.”

Revise systems to support the balance of accountability and autonomy:

- Consistently communicate expectations to school leaders.
- Increase oversight and support for struggling schools.

Provide public transparency and acknowledge high performance.

- Maintain the VOA-MN Network Performance Reports on the CSAP website.
- Encourage schools to achieve the VOA-MN Awards of Excellence in the three pillars: academic program, financial management, and school board governance.

*PLAN FOR MEASURING/MONITORING PROGRESS: The CSAP team will evaluate this goal annually and include analysis in the annual performance reports concluding whether the goal has been met. In addition, the team will reflect on this goal annually at the retreat held in the spring. The goal will be met if each school achieves at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and has met the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance). This is described more fully below in the School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System section of this manual. The CSAP leadership will update the authorizing website to include the most recent Network Performance Reports and examples of “best practices.” The CSAP leadership will use the contract renewal rubric to determine charter contract length depending on the level of school quality and compliance during the contract term.*

**GOAL 3: Service-Learning: Build a portfolio of charter schools committed to service learning and “uplifting all lives.”**

Related Strategies and Activities

- All VOAMN authorized charter schools are contractually required to have a schoolwide plan for service learning tied to outcomes and include student/school outcomes in their Annual Reports.

*PLAN FOR MEASURING/MONITORING PROGRESS: The Senior Program Manager will review school service-learning plans during school site visits and note compliance in school Formal Site Visit reports.*

**GOAL 4: Voice in state public policymaking: Maintain a strong public presence in state education policymaking.**

Related Strategies and Activities

VOA-MN team members will:

- Participate in state and national charter school organization meetings at least six times annually to influence public policy and to advocate for the charter schools.
- Continue to collaborate with local charter school stakeholders to build a community of authorizers.
- Share VOA-MN oversight tools and offer assistance to other authorizers, locally and nationally.
- Help educate the legislature and public about the role of the authorizer and its benefits to improving quality public education.
- Maintain relationships among charter school authorizers

Team member updates will be reflected in VOA-MN team meeting minutes.

*PLAN FOR MEASURING/MONITORING PROGRESS: The CSAP leadership will share knowledge regarding authorizing and opinions on charter-related legislation with members of the legislature and legislative staff. The CSAP leadership will also maintain current information pertaining to our authorizing program on the-VOAMN website.*

**GOAL 5: National presence and collaboration: Build excellence in the field of authorizing in Minnesota and nationally through participation in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and collaboration with colleagues in our field.**

Related Strategies and Activities

Actively develop and utilize national best practices and resources:

- A VOA-MN representative will annually attend a national meeting and/or conference.
- Seek opportunities to share quality practices with colleagues, locally and nationally.
- Adapt applicable best practices to fit the Minnesota authorizing environment and the VOAMN CSAP.

*PLAN FOR MEASUREMENT/MONITORING: The CSAP leadership will maintain quality authorizing tools on our authorizing website so other authorizers can access them. The CSAP leadership will participate in state and national charter school organization events and report back to the CSAP team members to be reflected in meeting minutes and/or the authorizer annual report.*



## WHY CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHOOSE VOA-MN AS AN AUTHORIZER

### *The VOA-MN School Network Approach*

Our authorizer cooperative oversight is ongoing and intended to help charter schools live up to the promise of increased autonomy in exchange for increased accountability. In addition, to be authorized by VOA-MN means you are not just a charter school, but a part of the bigger VOA-MN Charter School Network, which promotes relationships between schools and the larger charter school community by creating professional development opportunities for participants—whether as a board member, school leader, or community member. VOA-MN authorized school's pride themselves on being a part of the high quality of the schools that comprises the VOA-MN Network of Authorized Charter Schools. Being authorized by VOA-MN means being a part of a strong network of charter schools that meets at least annually, regularly shares ideas on effective educational and operational strategies, offers peer mentoring to new leaders, and together broaden individuals' understanding of the charter school community throughout Minnesota.

### **VOA-MN Network of Authorized Charter Schools**

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Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, Dist. #4250 Approved grades K-12, St. Cloud	Lakes International Language Academy, Dist. #4116 Approved grades PK-12, Forest Lake
Athlos Leadership Academy, Dist. #4011 Approved grades PK-8, Brooklyn Park	Naytahwaush Community Charter School, Dist. #4155 Approved grades K-6, Naytahwaush
Birch Grove Community School, Dist. #4145 Approved grades K-5, Tofte	New Century School, Dist. #4240 Approved grades PK-12, St. Paul
Bluffview Montessori School, Dist. #4001 Approved grades Preschool -8, Winona	PACT Charter School, Dist. #4008 Approved grades K-12, Ramsey
FIT Academy, Dist. #4244 Approved grades K-12, Apple Valley	Schoolcraft Learning Community, Dist. #4058 Approved grades K-8, Bemidji
Green Isle Community School, Dist. #4144 Approved grades K-6, Green Isle	Southside Family Charter School, Dist. #4162 Approved grades K-8, Minneapolis
Harbor City International School, Dist. #4085 Approved grades 6-12, Duluth	Spectrum High School, Dist. #4160 Approved grades 6-12, Elk River
Heartland Lakes Community School Grades K-12, Park Rapids	Tesfa International School, Dist. #4239 Approved grades K-6, Columbia Heights
Kaleidoscope Charter School, Dist. #4118 Approved grades K-12, Otsego	TrekNorth Jr. and Sr. High School, Dist. #4106 Approved grades K-12, Bemidji
KIPP: North Star Academy, Dist. #4191 Approved grades K-12, Minneapolis	Woodbury Leadership Academy, Dist. #4228 Approved grades PK-12, Woodbury

## CORPORATE SUPPORT AND AUTHORIZING PROGRAM POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

<b>CORPORATE LEVEL POSITIONS / SENIOR LEADERSHIP</b>	
<b>VOA-MN PRESIDENT / CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION</b>	<b>.10 FTE division support variable</b>
DIVISION-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES: Legal authority to approve/affirm decisions of the Charter Authorizing Program Manager pertaining to new charter contracts, contract renewals/non-renewals/terminations, signing contracts and legal documents, approval of the authorizing program budget.	
<b>VICE PRESIDENTS POSITIONS</b>	<b>.10 FTE division support variable</b>
VOA-MN has four Vice President positions. The VP positions work collaboratively to provide oversight and support the work of the corporation directors and managers and report to the Pres/CEO position. The VP positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ VP of Finance / CFO</li> <li>○ VP of Program Services and Mission Advancement</li> <li>○ VP of Program Services and Information Systems</li> <li>○ VP of Human Resources</li> </ul>	
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, PUBLIC RELATIONS, FINANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES, REAL ESTATE, LEGAL</b>	<b>.10 FTE authorizing program</b>
DIVISION-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES: These Divisions within VOA-MN support the authorizing program in various ways as needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IT Division: monitors and assists with IT related needs and challenges, including providing annual required FERPA and Data Practices training.</li> <li>○ Public Relations Division: provides website design and support with content as well as being the point of contact for any press inquiries. The division also distributes a monthly newsletter to all VOA-MN/WI faculty and board members that often includes information and celebrations regarding the Authorizing Program and schools.</li> <li>○ Finance Division: provides assistance with financial related matters including, but not limited to: paying invoices, assisting with the annual Revenue and Expenditure Report, approving and monitoring adherence to the annual Authorizing Program budget, supporting the fund raising campaign for the annual charter school conference, assisting with annual charter school billing and collections, etc.</li> <li>○ Human Resources: provides assistance with employee and contractor on-boarding, conducting quarterly manager and director leadership meetings that often include training on a legal, employment, data practices, &amp;/or supervisor best practices related topics, like diversity and inclusion / identifying and preventing bias in the workplace and decision-making.</li> <li>○ Real estate and legal support are available to the Authorizing Program as needed and approved by the Senior Leadership.</li> </ul>	
<b>PROGRAM SPECIFIC POSITIONS</b>	
<b>VOA-MN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION &amp; MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES</b>	<b>.25 FTE authorizing</b>
RESPONSIBILITY: Oversight of the activities of the entire division, one of which is the Charter Authorizing Program. Oversight includes ensuring employee adherence to VOA-MN Corporate personnel policies, annual budget, time-off requests, and VOA-MN Program Manual and AAP. This position <u>cannot</u> block a charter contract renewal determination/ recommendation from progressing to the President/Chief Executive Officer. The position is an added layer of accountability mostly to oversee the Program Manager employee performance.	
<b>VOA-MN CHARTER AUTHORIZING PROGRAM MANAGER</b>	<b>1.0 FTE authorizing</b>
Position is responsible for leadership and day-to-day management of the Charter School Authorizing program. Reports to the Director of VOA-MN Mental Health and Education Services. Manage charter school application and renewal processes. Develop and implement a plan for ongoing oversight of each charter school. Provide oversight of the monitoring of charter school Board of Directors activity at each site and provide technical assistance when appropriate. Communicate VOA-MN expectations and processes to school boards. Ensure fiscal viability of each charter school and works with charter school board to resolve any issues. Provide technical assistance to VOA-MN-authorized charter schools, including through facilitating professional development and training opportunities for school leaders. Manage the VOA-MN Charter School Network and facilitate interaction between schools. Establish policies and procedures to ensure that VOA-MN works with high-quality charter schools. Represent VOA-MN at charter school authorizer functions/trainings, and organizational meetings. Participate in state	

<p>and federal charter school policy discussions. Responsible for strategic planning for program. Responsible for internal and external communications, i.e. program website, brochures, newsletters, etc. Develop and manage program budget in collaboration with the Education Division Director and VOA-MN corporate leadership positions detailed above. Recruit, lead, manage, train, supervise, recognize, and develop staff/independent contractors to achieve established objectives; provide quality services in a work environment reflecting teamwork, mutual respect, and accountability. This position is generally the main point of contact for the Minnesota Department of Education, authorized schools, and constituent correspondences.</p>	
<b>VOA-MN CHARTER AUTHORIZING PROGRAM FIELD REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>FY23 = .25 FTE</b> <b>FY24 = .50 FTE</b> <b>FY25+ TBD</b>
<p>The role and responsibilities of this position are anticipated to expand overtime. The position title may change in future years as the position evolves. The Field Representative position will be our team lead on new charter school development. This position will provide oversight and technical support for <i>newly developing charter school(s)</i>, namely Heartland Lakes Community School. Oversight involves attending monthly school board meetings; meeting monthly with the School Development Coordinator(s) regarding progress meeting the VOA-MN Authorizing Program “Ready to Open” standards; monitoring the newly developing school(s) application and use of the federal Charter School Program grant. Technical assistance involves helping build connections between the management and board of the newly developing school(s) and other VOA-MN authorized charter schools.; helping the management and board of the newly developing school(s) understand and utilize the VOA-MN Charter School Collaboration Website. Additional duties of the position include, providing supplemental oversight and technical support of VOA-MN operational schools, specific to newly employed school leaders in VOA-MN authorized charter schools and school boards with significant turnover in membership in recent school years. The position attends state agency or association meetings on behalf of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program as requested by the Senior Program Manager (SPM) or Designee.</p>	
<b>VOA-MN CHARTER AUTHORIZING PROGRAM MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT</b>	<b>.25 FTE</b>
<p>The Program Management Assistant Position works under independent contract and reports to the Charter Authorizing Program Manager. Responsibilities include the facilitation of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and activities, managing the Minnesota Authorizer Annual Report project, management of the VOA-MN Revenue and Expenditure Report project, and other duties as assigned. This position also attends meetings on behalf of the Senior Program Manager when needed.</p>	
<b>VOA-MN CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE ANALYSTS (3)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Finance, Governance, Academic Performance</b>	<b>1.5 FTE Total</b>
<p>The school performance analyst position works under independent contract to evaluate the performance of the network of VOA-MN authorized schools. Areas of annual analysis will include: Fiscal, Board Governance, &amp; Academic Performance. Oversight of the performance analysts is provided by the Program Manager. As charter school experts, Analysts also perform additional program duties as assigned, including constituent services, new school recruitment, research, document preparation, etc.</p> <p>Oversight of the performance analysts is provided by the Program Manager. The three contracted performance analysts’ positions provide oversight of the three essential questions that drive VOA-MN’s accountability of authorized charter schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic Program Performance – Are the VOA-MN Charter Schools Learning Programs a Success?</li> <li>2. Financial Viability – Do the VOA-MN Charter Schools Exhibit Strong Financial Health?</li> <li>3. Board Governance and Operations – Are the VOA-MN Charter School Organizations Effective and Well Run? (<i>This question is jointly covered by the Governance Analyst and Authorizing Program Manager positions.</i>)</li> </ol> <p>As charter school experts, Analysts also perform additional program duties as assigned, including constituent services, new school recruitment, research, document preparation, etc.</p>	
<b>VOA-MN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ANALYST &amp; CULTURE, DIVERSITY, AND EQUITY LEAD</b>	<b>.10 FTE</b>
<p>The school Special Education Analyst is responsible for oversight of the compliance of the special education programs and services of VOA-MN Authorized Schools. The Analyst will work collaboratively with the Senior Program Analyst on oversight. Analyst oversight duties will include interviews with school special education directors at least annually, review of MDE audit materials, and facilitation of special education faculty collaboration virtual meetings at least monthly.</p> <p>This position will also serve as the “Team Lead” providing guidance on culture, diversity, and equity, which will include ensuring that VOA-MN Authorizing Program policies, procedures, and publications are consistent with VOA-MN values of diversity, equity and inclusion.</p>	
<b>VOA-MN CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM PEER REVIEWERS</b>	<b>As needed</b>
<p>Peer reviewers work as evaluators under independent contract as needed to advise VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program Manager with determinations related to new charter school applications, expansion applications, and change of authorizer requests. The majority of peer reviewers are drawn from the pool of existing highly qualified and experienced VOA-MN charter school leaders. Oversight of peer reviewers is provided by the Authorizing Program Manager. All peer reviewers are required to sign forms assuring VOA-MN that they do not have any real or perceived conflicts of interest before they can participate in a review process.</p>	

**VOA-MN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM and CHAIR**

Membership on the School Leadership Team is appointed by VOAMN school leadership peers annually during the Network Conference. This group advises the Authorizing Program Manager on conference topics and the Collaboration Website. It also leads Network leadership collaboration efforts and the sharing of best practices.



## VOA-MN AUTHORIZING SELF-EVALUATION OF CAPACITY

This tool is used to: 1) evaluate individual performance and, 2) measure the extent to which the team member contributed to authorizer capacity.

### VOAMN Charter School Authorizing Program

#### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

*INTERNAL USE ONLY PRIOR TO CONTRACT RENEWAL*

Contractor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

JOB DUTY	MET EXPECTATIONS	PARTIALLY MET EXPECTATIONS	DID NOT MEET EXPECTATION

ANALYST STRENGTHS:

ANALYST AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

ANALYST GOALS FOR FYXX:

DESIRED OR REQUIRED FYXX PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

CONTRACT RENEWAL: YES NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
AUTHORIZER PROGRAM MGR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Other self-evaluation practices include:

- The CSAP team meeting agendas include an item on self-evaluation for every member's monthly reports. Team members are expected to tie monthly oversight log discussion to authorizer capacity, infrastructure, and practices.
- The CSAP team also reviews school survey results to reflect on the extent to which the CSAP provides quality oversight and service to network schools.

## **School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System**

### **Introduction**

As a leading authorizer, Volunteers of America–Minnesota builds its portfolio of high-performing charter schools by only selecting proposals with a strong potential for success. It then ensures that such potential is realized through a unique system of accountability that begins even before a school opens its doors.

VOA-MN is committed to fulfilling its role as a charter school authorizer by holding its schools accountable for a range of results. The accountability system presented in this document ensures that VOA-MN will uphold its legal obligation to make sure the schools it authorizes are reaching (or making adequate progress toward) the goals and benchmarks outlined in its charter contract and Minnesota statute.

VOA-MN uses a standard charter contract with unique school-specific terms that capture different approaches to achieving student success. The individuality of each school will be preserved in the “Academic Program Description” addendum to the charter contract.

### **Volunteers of America of Minnesota Accountability Plan**

According to Minnesota Statute 124E.01, subd.1, *The primary purpose of charter schools is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.* VOA-MN holds the schools it authorizes accountable in five major areas: academic performance, fiscal management, board governance, management and operations, and legal compliance. Each area may have multiple indicators of success and the charter school’s performance on each indicator will be rated as:

- Does Not Meet Standard
- Partially Meets Standard
- Meets Standard

### **Rating Scale: For each standard, a school earns points for contract renewal as follows:**

2 = Meets Standard

1 = Partially Meets Standard

0 = Does Not Meet Standard

### **Weighting of Performance Measures used during the contract renewal process is as follows:**

50% weighting: Academic Program (statutory purposes, including primary purpose)

20% weighting: Financial Sustainability

30% weighting: Organization

15% governance

15% management & compliance

### **Combining Data Over the Contract Term**

Annual school performance results will be combined each successive year of the contract term wherever possible so that fluctuation due to small group size will be minimized and overall performance is accurately reflected.

### **Contract Renewal Eligibility**

VOA-MN schools must achieve at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal and at least an Exemplary Rating (80% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

If a school is performing below standard to receive a three-year renewal contract but has agreed to the authorizer terms and conditions set forth in the School Improvement Plan to correct areas of deficiency, VOA-MN may agree to extend a school's contract (not to exceed five years) to provide additional time for a school to improve performance as an alternative to termination. If sufficient school improvement is not being made by the end of the 1st year of the extension, termination proceedings will commence.

### **Intervention and Corrective Action**

VOA-MN schools that, prior to their year of contract renewal, fall below a Satisfactory Rating in the Performance Framework overall and/or in any performance area (Academic, Finance, Governance, Management/Operations) must enter into a School Improvement Plan that addresses the specific standards in the Performance Framework where the school performance is below Satisfactory.

### **Closure Plan**

If the school does not meet the terms of the School Improvement Plan and attain a Satisfactory Rating by the end of the contract term, the school is a candidate for nonrenewal. If the school's contract is not renewed, the school must implement the Closure Plan as described in the school's charter contract.

### **School Performance Accountability**

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and Authorizer VOAMN are aligned on the three pillars of authorizing:

- Maintain high standards for schools
- Uphold school autonomy
- Protect student and public interests

VOAMN and NACSA agree that performance standards enable schools and authorizers to know the outcomes for which authorizers will hold schools accountable. VOA-MN's performance standards form the basis for school evaluation and are incorporated in the charter contract. Academic, financial, and organizational (including governance) performance standards include clearly defined and measurable indicators, measures, metrics, and targets. (Source: <https://www.qualitycharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NACSA-Principles-and-Standards-2018-Edition.pdf>)

In the area of Academic Performance, VOA-MN:

- Sets expectations for student academic achievement status or proficiency, including comparative proficiency.
- Sets expectations for student academic growth, including adequacy of growth toward state standards.
- Incorporates state and federal accountability systems, including state grading and/or rating systems.



- Sets expectations for postsecondary readiness, including graduation rates (for high schools); and
- Provides schools an option to incorporate mission-specific performance measures for which the school has presented valid, reliable, and rigorous means of assessment approved by the authorizer.<sup>11</sup>

In the area of Financial Performance, VOA-MN:

- Monitors and evaluates the school's financial stability and viability based on short-term performance, and
- Monitors and evaluates the school's long-term financial sustainability.
- Provides oversight based on standards of generally accepted accounting principles;

In the area of Governance Performance, VOA-MN:

- Holds school governing boards accountable for meeting statutory and board-established operating and reporting requirements.

In the area of Organizational Performance, VOA-MN:

- Holds school accountable for essential elements of the educational program.
- Ensures school compliance with student and employee rights and obligations; and
- Monitors how the school is meeting expectations related to the school environment, including health and safety, transportation, facilities, and appropriate handling of records.

**Three essential questions guide our VOA-MN authorizer oversight and charter school accountability plan.**

- **Academic Program Performance - Is the school's Learning Program a Success?**

**Academic Performance-** All public schools, including charters, must fully participate in the state assessments - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Data from state assessments as well as Title 1 Designation consistent with the state North Star system will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are required to meet the academic performance standards for which they agree to be held accountable in their charter contract. The extent to which a school is meeting their World's Best Workforce requirements and additional statutory purposes are also measured in the Learning program section.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually an Academic Performance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The report serves as a single annual source of academic program and performance information for all of our VOA-MN operational charter schools. The report contains an analysis of annual and cumulative academic program, performance, and professional development data for each school.

Content from the annual Academic Performance Report also serves as the basis for the school academic performance analysis contained in the statutorily required Contract Renewal Evaluation Reports, including evaluation of the extent to which the school has met their primary purpose, "to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement" during the contract term.

- **Financial Sustainability – Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial Health?**

Charter schools receive public funds and must meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. It is VOA-MN's duty to ensure that the schools are responsible stewards of public funds. The charter school shall provide VOA with a copy of its draft and final annual budgets and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA-MN shall use submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan for the current year. VOA-MN shall use the financial statements presented in the charter school's annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior-year. Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Financial Oversight Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The parties acknowledge that the Minnesota Charter Schools Law requires a charter school to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. This requirement has two underlying purposes: to monitor the financial health of the school and compliance with state and federal laws, including proper use of public funds. The report will contain an evaluation of school performance meeting the VOA-MN financial standards.

### **Governance - Is the organization effective and well run?**

Effective board governance is essential to the successful start-up and operation of a public charter school. The diversity of charter school board memberships – teachers, parents, community leaders, and volunteers – heightens the importance of consistent expectations and development activities.

The authorizer regularly monitors the performance quality of the school board based on authorizer observations; interviews with the director, board and faculty; and the review of school policies, reports and board meeting minutes. A school must have a governance model that provides quality oversight by ensuring that there are checks and balances between the board and the school administrators.

A school board is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing policy; defining sound employee relations; conducting open meetings; recognizing and conforming to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws; and governing within the limits of a delegation of state authority – as a nonprofit and public-school board. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; inform the public of all deliberations and decisions; promote accountability; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Board Governance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source on the board operations and compliance of the eighteen VOA-MN-authorized charter schools. Authorizer VOA-MN also observes a minimum of two school board meetings annually.

**Management & Operations** - Effective day to day operations of a charter school support the Learning Program. A well-run school provides an environment in which staff and students can perform at the highest possible level and more effectively reach the school's goals. Management and operations of the school will be monitored and reported by the authorizer using the Formal Site Visit Rubric. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations.

**The VOA-MN Performance Standards for Academics, Finance, Governance and Management & Operations** are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The performance standards and indicators are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school performance and contract renewal determinations.

**Legal and Contractual Compliance** - Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. VOA-MN expects compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a Compliance Binder on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed Annual Submission Calendar. Management and operations of the school will be monitored by the authorizer and reported in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. *This section is not scored individually. The compliance binder and submission calendar are systems for ongoing monitoring of school performance and compliance and compliance requirements are imbedded in previous sections.*

## **ONGOING AUTHORIZER SCHOOL MONITORING**

### **SITE VISITS**

One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school and engage in discussions with school management. VOA-MN conducts two different types of site visits: Formal and Informal.

- **Formal Site Visit-** Formal Site Visits are typically conducted once per year by a member of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Leadership Team who interviews key stakeholders and conducts observations. Written feedback is provided to the Board of Directors and school leadership guided by the Site Visit Rubric. VOA-MN staff will provide formal written feedback summarizing observations. The feedback will identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement. If a more serious issue arises from a site visit, VOA-MN may implement an intervention based upon the “Range of Interventions” table.
- **Informal Site Visit-** VOA-MN may conduct informal site visits at any time to fulfill its duties as an authorizer. Reasons for informal site visits may include: investigation of a complaint, determination of readiness to open, follow up on implementation of improvement plans, or documentation of best practices. These visits are typically less formal and may be without notice.

### **BOARD MEETINGS**

Another important component of VOA-MN authorizer oversight is board meeting observations conducted at least twice per year and more often for schools within their first two years after initial charter approval. Authorizer VOA-MN uses the Board Meeting Observation Rubric and provides timely feedback to the school boards. VOA-MN also closely monitors the monthly board meeting minutes and financials of each authorized school and provides feedback to the school as needed.

### **SCHOOL PUBLISHED ANNUAL REPORTS**

The Charter School Law (Minn. Stat. 124E.16) includes requirements for a charter school annual. Additionally, VOA-MN requires that annual reports include specific elements defined by VOA-MN annually. VOA-MN required elements include how the school is performing based on the three

essential questions: Is the student learning program a success? Does the school exhibit strong financial health? Is the organization effective and well-run? The final draft be board approved and posted to the school's official website. The VOA-MN Annual Report criteria may contain the World's Best Workforce Report.

### **AUTHORIZER PUBLISHED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

In addition to the Formal Site Visit Report that each school is provided, VOA-MN will also annually publish three VOA-MN Charter School Network Reports: Academic Performance, Board Governance, and Financial Management. The cumulative purpose of these reports is to assess the ongoing performance of VOA-MN authorized schools regarding academic success, financial sustainability, and organizational effectiveness.

The combination of school performance based on the three VOA-MN Annual School Performance Reports, annual Formal Site Visit Reports, informal site visit observations, authorizer observations of board meetings, and ongoing monitoring of school reporting and compliance provides an accountable oversight mechanism for the authorizer, schools, and other organizations. This collective body of evidence will also form the basis for contract renewal decisions.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL PRE-OPERATIONAL STAGE (Start-up Checklist)**

A charter school's ability to successfully fulfill the three primary components of its contractual agreement with VOA-MN – academic success, financial sustainability, and organizational aptitude – depends on what happens well before the doors of the school open. While a Start-Up Coordinator is often hired by the interim board to handle many functions, the volunteer efforts of board members and parents are often necessary to absorb much of the work and provide direction to any pre-operational staff.

VOA-MN has organized a charter school's start-up year, contained in the Ready-To-Open standards organized by month. Progress and completion of Ready-To-Open standards for preoperational school development are checked every trimester of the development year, in a meeting between the authorizer and school. The official RTO meeting and authorizer determination occurs in June prior to being approved, or not approved, to open.

## **Charter School Contract Renewal and Revocation Process**

### **Renewal Process**

Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) views contract renewal as an on-going process that is engaged in by the Board of Directors, school leadership, and the authorizer throughout the entire life of the school's contract with its authorizer. This process culminates in the authorizer publishing an end of contract evaluation report.

### **End-of-Term Evaluation**

VOA-MN publishes an end-of-contract evaluation report based on information, observations and documentation accumulated throughout the length of the contract. The evaluation is an opportunity to determine the extent to which the school is meeting VOA-MN's expectations of a high-quality charter school. More specifically we assess the school based on the following three central questions:

- 1) Is the student learning program a success?
- 2) Does the school exhibit strong financial health?
- 3) Is the organization effective and well-run?

VOA-MN will complete a draft of its end-of-term evaluation of the school and submit the draft for review and comment by school leadership and the board. VOA-MN will then make changes, if necessary, and resubmit a final evaluation and decision of renewal to the school's board. Through ongoing monitoring and the renewal evaluation process, VOA-MN determines whether to renew its contract with the charter school and if so, for what length of time. Contracts can be renewed for up to five years.

### **Termination or Nonrenewal of a Contract**

Per Minn. Stat. 124E.10, VOA-MN may act to terminate or not renew a charter under the following grounds:

- (1) failure to meet the requirements for pupil performance contained in the contract;*
- (2) failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;*
- (3) violations of law; or*
- (4) other good cause shown.*

*At least 60 days before not renewing or terminating a contract, the authorizer shall notify the board of directors of the charter school of the proposed action in writing. The notice shall state the grounds for the proposed action in reasonable detail and that the charter school's board of directors may request in writing an informal hearing before the authorizer within 15 business days of receiving notice of nonrenewal or termination of the contract. Failure by the board of directors to make a written request for a hearing within the 15-business-day period shall be treated as acquiescence to the proposed action. Upon receiving a timely written request for a hearing, the authorizer shall give ten business days' notice to the charter school's board of directors of the hearing date. The authorizer shall conduct an informal hearing before taking final action. The authorizer shall take final action to renew or not renew a contract no later*

*than 20 business days before the proposed date for terminating the contract or the end date of the contract.*

Minn. Stat. 124E.10, Subd.4

The School will complete and submit their proposed Program Description (contract Addendum A) for review by VOA-MN. Once the content of the document is agreed upon - including curriculum, interim assessments contract academic performance goals, facility and staffing it will be incorporated into the renewal contract.

### **Example VOA-MN Timeline for Contract Renewal Process**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
School Program Description Completed Charter School	Renewing School	February-March
Authorizer formal end-of-term evaluation draft completed and submitted to renewal school for review	Authorizer	April-May
End-of-term evaluation comments completed	Renewing School/Bd	April-May
Draft contract submitted to renewing school for comment	VOA-MN	May-June
Contract approved and signed	Renewing Board & VOA-MN	May-June

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#### **If Terminating/Not Renewing**

Request a public hearing	Board	Within 15 business days of termination/nonrenewal notice
Final contract termination/renewal decision	VOA-MN	Within 20 business days of the contract end date if not renewing or terminating

**POLICY**  
**COMPLAINTS - STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES, PARENTS, OTHER PERSONS**

**I. PURPOSE**

The Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program (VOA-MN) takes seriously all concerns or complaints by students, employees, parents or other persons. If a specific complaint procedure is provided within any other policy of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program, the specific procedure shall be followed in reference to such a complaint. If a specific complaint procedure is not provided, the purpose of this policy is to provide a procedure that may be used.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. Students, parents, employees or other persons, may report concerns or complaints to the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program. While written reports are encouraged, a complaint may be made orally. Any Volunteers of America-Minnesota leadership member or authorizing team member or contractor receiving a complaint shall advise the Education Division Director and Senior Program Manager of the receipt of the complaint. The Education Division Director or Senior Program Manager shall make an initial determination as to the seriousness of the complaint and whether the matter should be referred to the charter school board of directors, administration, MDE, or other authorities. A person may file a complaint at any level of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program Leadership (i.e., President/CEO, Education Division Director, and Senior Program Manager). However, persons are encouraged to file a complaint at the building level of the charter school first (school director or board chair) when appropriate.

B. Depending upon the nature and seriousness of the complaint, the Education Division Director or Senior Program Manager of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program shall determine the nature and scope of the investigation or follow-up procedures and, if needed, designate the person(s) responsible for the investigation or follow-up relating to the complaint. The designated investigator shall ascertain details concerning the complaint and respond promptly with a written correspondence to the Education Division Director and Senior Program Manager concerning the status or outcome of the matter.

C. The response to the complaining party shall be consistent with the rights of others pursuant to the applicable provisions of Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act) or other law.

D. Anonymous complaints may not expect the same treatment contained in this policy.

## Complaint Filing Instructions

Before filing a complaint to the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program, we encourage you to contact the charter school director by phone, email or in writing. You may be able to resolve the concerns at the local level without filing a complaint with the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program. If you are not able to resolve your concerns at the local level, the following process must be followed to submit complaints to VOA-MN.

### **Your written complaint must contain the following: Basic Information:**

- Current date, your name, address, email address (if applicable) and a phone number to reach you if the complaint investigator needs to ask for additional information.
- Student's name and grade.
- Charter school name.

### **Statement of Violation:**

- State why you believe a policy, practice, or state or federal law was violated and that it occurred during the last calendar year (12 months from current date).
- Keep your focus on facts, events and specific people involved.
- Make a list of each violation you believe the school committed.
  - Include specific dates and the names of board member, school administration, teacher, or other school personnel, with corresponding dates, that you have previously dealt with regarding your complaint.

### **Statement of Facts:**

For each violation, list the facts to support your claim.

- Describe events with specific dates, names of individuals involved or contacted and a brief description of what happened.
- Include any additional facts to support your claim.

### **Proposed Solution:**

Identify proposed solutions to your complaint.

- List solutions that would be acceptable to you in resolving the complaint.
- Sign and date the complaint.

### **Submission:**

- Make two (2) copies -one to keep for your files and one for the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program.
- Send one copy electronically to the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program Manager Stephanie Olsen at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).
- A copy of the complaint will be shared with your child's charter school consistent with the rights of others pursuant to the applicable provisions of Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act) or other law.
- The school and/or the VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program will complete an investigation. They will consider your proposed solution and respond in writing.
- If this is a Special Education written complaint, Federal law requires that a copy of the complaint be sent to the charter school at the same time it is filed with the Minnesota Department of Education.
- If this is a Special Education complaint, mail the complaint or deliver to: Due Process Supervisor Minnesota Department of Education Division of Compliance and Assistance 1500 Highway 36 W. Roseville, MN 55113-4266 (651)582-8725 (fax).
- Submit complaints in writing to the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program, c/o Stephanie Olsen, Program Manager at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org). If you have any questions, the VOA-MN Authorizing Program can be reached at 612-270-1998.



## **POLICY CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

This policy serves to protect the Volunteers of America (VOA-MN) Authorizing Program's interest when it is considering entering into transactions or arrangements that might benefit the private interest of a responsible person or immediate family members.

Minnesota authorizers must work to deliberately avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of interest related to oversight of authorized schools and review of new school and expansion applications at both the individual and organizational levels. When a conflict of interest concerning an application exists, transparency shall be the guiding principle in addressing it.

Authorizers must take affirmative actions to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate the impacts of actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

### **II. DEFINITION:**

A conflict of interest, actual or perceived, occurs when a person has actual or apparent duty or loyalty to more than one organization and the competing duties or loyalties may result in actions which are averse to one or both parties. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical, improper or illegal act results from it.

## **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

### **A. VOA-MN AUTHORIZING PROGRAM EMPLOYEES**

All VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program employees, in the course of their duties on behalf of the VOA-MN, are expected to refrain from placing themselves in a position that could possibly produce a conflict between his or her self-interest and the best interest of VOA-MN. It is the responsibility of each employee to act in good faith and not exploit his or her employment position for private or professional gain.

All VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program employees shall, in the course of their duties on behalf of the VOA-MN, act with strict loyalty and fidelity to the best interests of Authorizer VOA-MN, exercise the utmost good faith in all matters and transactions involving Authorizer VOA-MN, and adhere to the highest ethical standards as a charter school authorizer and an employee of VOA-MN.

All VOA-MN Authorizing Program employees shall endeavor to avoid, to the best of his or her ability, any situation which may result in a compromise of his or her duty to VOA-MN and employees shall endeavor to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest which may have an adverse effect on the Charter School Authorizing Program and employer VOA-MN.

If an employee of the VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program has a potential conflict of interest, he/she is required to annually disclose these conflicts to the VOA-MN Education Division Director or to the VOA-MN President/CEO. Such disclosure shall be made in writing and shall identify any material, financial, or other beneficial interest held by such employee or his or her immediate family, including any affiliation with a VOA-MN Authorized Charter School or

new charter school applicant. All disclosures of potential conflicts of interest will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

(Addl. Ref. VOA-MN Corporation Employee COI Policy)

## **B. VOA-MN CONTRACTED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE ANALYSTS (SPA)**

All VOA-MN SPA'S, in the course of their duties on behalf of the VOA-MN, are expected to refrain from placing themselves in a position that could possibly produce a conflict between his or her self-interest and the best interest of VOA-MN. It is the responsibility of each SPA Contractor to act in good faith and not exploit his or her position.

VOA-MN Authorizing Program SPA Contractors shall endeavor to avoid, to the best of his or her ability, any situation which may result in a compromise of his or her duty to the VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program and shall endeavor to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest which may have an adverse effect on the Charter School Authorizing Program and VOA-MN.

A SPA Contractor cannot otherwise be affiliated with a VOA-MN Authorized Charter School through employment or independent contract unless otherwise requested and approved in writing by the Senior Program Manager.

(Add. Ref. Independent Contractor Contracts)

## **C. VOA-MN APPLICATION PEER REVIEWERS**

All VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program Application Contracted Peer Reviewers (Application Peer Reviewers), in the course of their duties on behalf of the VOA-MN, are expected to refrain from placing themselves in a position that could possibly produce a conflict between his or her self-interest and the best interest of VOA-MN. It is the responsibility of each Contracted Peer Reviewer to act in good faith and not exploit his or her position.

VOA-MN Application Peer Reviewers shall endeavor to avoid, to the best of his or her ability, any situation which may result in a compromise of his or her duty to the VOA-MN Application Peer Reviewer and shall endeavor to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest which may have an adverse effect on the Charter School Authorizing Program and VOA-MN.

As part of the Application Peer Review Process, the VOA-MN Authorizing Program requires all peer reviewers to sign a Conflict of Interest Identification and Confidentiality (COIC) Form. This form gives reviewers an opportunity to disclose any conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest that may exist during a review process.

Every Application Peer Reviewer shall be responsible for identifying where an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists and for informing appropriate parties. It is the peer reviewer's obligation to be familiar with the Peer Reviewer Conflict of Interest Policy and to immediately disclose any conflicts of interest to the Senior Program Manager in writing. A disclosure does not automatically result in the reviewer being removed from the review process.

(Addl. Ref. Application Peer Reviewer COI Form)

**Charter School Authorizing Program  
Application Reviewer Procedure  
Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality**

The VOAMN Conflict of Interest policy applies to all application peer reviewers under independent contract with Volunteers of American of Minnesota.

Conflicts of interest may be actual or perceived. An actual conflict of interest occurs when a decision or action would compromise a duty to a party without taking immediate appropriate action to eliminate the conflict. A perceived conflict of interest is any situation in which a reasonable third party would conclude that conflicting duties or loyalties exist.

**Identifying Individual Conflict of Interest:**

An individual conflict of interest occurs when any of the following conditions is present:

- (a) A reviewer uses his/her status or position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to the applicant's time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, badge, uniform, prestige, or influence.
- (b) A reviewer receives or accepts money or anything else of value from an applicant or has equity or a financial interest in or partial or whole ownership of an applicant organization.
- (c) A reviewer is an employee or board member of an applicant or is an immediate family member of an owner, employee or board member directly affiliated with the applicant organization.
- (d) Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:
  - a reviewer is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to VOA-MN due to competing duties or loyalties
  - a reviewer's objectivity in carrying out the review is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

**Procedures to Avoid Individual Conflicts of Interest:**

1. All reviewers involved in the review of applications must sign a conflict of interest disclosure form for each application review in which they participate. On the conflict of interest disclosure form, each reviewer must identify any applicant with which they have an actual or perceived conflict of interest, although they do not need to provide the reason for the conflict.
2. Additionally, a reviewer must act immediately upon any suggestion, inquiry, or intimation that a conflict of interest exists at any other point in the application review process. Upon identification, such matters are referred to the Authorizing Program Manager.
3. If it is determined that an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists, as defined by this policy or relevant law, the reviewer may be deemed ineligible to continue the review process.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

At no time when reviewing applications, during or after, is a reviewer to discuss the applications, comments, recommendations, reviewer ratings, names of applicants or names of other reviewers with anyone outside the review panel and VOA-MN Authorizing Program. Applicants/responders should not be contacted before, during or after the review process by reviewers.

**Application Peer Reviewer**  
**Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality (COIC) Form**  
\*\*\* BEFORE REVIEWING THE APPLICATION RETURN SIGNED FORM (via e-mail scan) \*\*\*

**Reviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

We appreciate your willingness to volunteer to serve as a reviewer. As part of our process, we require all reviewers to sign this Conflict of Interest Identification and Confidentiality (COIC) Form. This form gives reviewers an opportunity to disclose any conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest that exist during a review process. It is the reviewer's obligation to be familiar with the Conflict of Interest (see attached) and to **immediately disclose any conflicts of interest to [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org) or (612) 270-1998.** *A disclosure does not automatically result in the reviewer being removed from the review process.*

**Please read the Conflict of Interest Policy. Mark the appropriate boxes that pertain to you and your status as an application peer reviewer.**

**Description of conflicts of interest:** A conflict of interest shall be deemed to exist when a review of the situation by the reviewer or other authorizing program personnel determines any one of the following conditions to be present:

- (a) A reviewer uses his/her status or position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to the applicant's time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, badge, uniform, prestige, or influence.
- (b) A reviewer receives or accepts money or anything else of value from an applicant or has equity or a financial interest in or partial or whole ownership of an applicant organization.
- (c) A reviewer is an employee or board member of an applicant or is a family member of anyone involved in the application.

**FY \_\_\_\_ Applicant (s)**

<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>Actual or Perceived COI Y/N</b>	<b>Reviewer Initials</b>

I certify that I have read and understand the description of conflict of interest and (check one of the three boxes below):

☐ I do not have any conflicts of interest relating to this program's applicants and I will participate fully in the review process. OR

OR

**Be sure you have contacted [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org) before checking the next box.**

☐ I have reviewed the list of applicants, and I have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the applicant identified.

Reviewer's printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **POLICY CHARTER SCHOOL AUTONOMY**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

This policy serves to preserve and support the essential autonomies of Volunteers of America (VOA-MN) authorized charter schools according to MN Statute 124E.09 subd.(d).

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

VOA-MN oversees the school board's management and operations of the school. Specifically, VOA-MN monitors and evaluates the fiscal, operational, and student performance of its authorized schools and holds schools accountable for their performance. Following are VOA-MN's guiding principles in furtherance of this statutory duty:

- A. VOA-MN does not manage or operate any charter school. VOA-MN monitors and evaluates school performance and takes no action making it responsible for school performance.
- B. No member of VOA-MN or any individual working on behalf of VOA-MN in any aspect of charter school oversight or decision-making, excluding school application peer reviewers and peer mentors, may be on the board of an authorized charter school.
- C. No member of VOA-MN or any individual working on behalf of VOA-MN in any aspect of charter school oversight or decision-making, excluding school application peer reviewers and peer mentors, may be employed by, does contracting work with, or volunteer at an authorized charter school.
- D. Any technical assistance offered by VOA-MN to its authorized schools is voluntary and not required.
- E. VOA-MN strives to minimize burdens on charter schools in conducting oversight.
- F. VOA-MN oversight decisions are merit-based.
- G. VOA-MN strongly encourages collaboration between the VOA-MN Network of charter schools.

## **POLICY**

### **REPLICATION OF HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

#### **I. PURPOSE:**

Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Authorizing Program believes in the creation of more high-quality charter schools based on the replication of successful school models, especially replication of models within its existing network of authorized charter schools.

#### **II. DEFINITION:**

Aligned with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), VOA-MN defines ‘replication’ as *the practice of a single charter school board opening additional school sites based on the same academically successful school model*. VOA-MN expands the NACSA definition of ‘replication’ to include leaders of an existing successful charter school “franchising” their school model by serving on the start-up board of a separate new charter school planning to develop an identical school model.

#### **III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

VOA-MN measures the quality of a school by conducting longitudinal data analysis of its academic, financial, governance and operational performance. Another important part of the analysis is determining if a school has the capacity to replicate or franchise successfully while sustaining the results of its existing school.

VOA-MN encourages replication through its New Charter School Application and School Expansion Application documents which both contain a preference weighting for the replication and expansion of a high-quality charter school.

Replication proposals are required to participate in the same rigorous VOA-MN application review process as all new school or expansion proposals before a determination is rendered on approval. VOA-MN determines when consecutive replication proposals require separate applications and separate governance boards.

**POLICY**  
**DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

**I. PURPOSE:**

Consistent with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), VOA-MN believes that great charter schools don't just happen. They evolve through smart collaboration between charter operators and charter authorizers. Therefore, Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Authorizing Program believes in the dissemination of information from high quality charter schools, especially within its existing network of authorized charter schools.

**II. DEFINITION:**

Dissemination is defined as the act of sharing quality, proven policies or practices of one charter school or authorizer widely to others.

**III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

VOA-MN measures the quality of a school by conducting longitudinal data analysis of its academic, financial, governance and operational performance.

VOA-MN encourages the dissemination of quality, proven school policies and practices, especially within the network of VOA-MN authorized charter schools. VOA-MN pairs leaders of high-quality charter schools (on a voluntary basis) to mentor new charter school leaders within the Network. VOA-MN routinely serves as a conduit for dissemination of best practices and quality policies between schools. Quality policies or practices are also recognized in Annual Network Performance Reports, for the purposes of school recognition and dissemination to all VOA-MN authorized charter schools. Finally, dissemination is a topic for Annual VOA-MN Network of Authorized Charter School's Annual Workshops.

As an authorizer, VOA-MN disseminates authorizing tools through our authorizing website and, upon request, during state and national meetings and conferences.

## Annual Authorizer Formal Site Visit Compliance Rubric

**School Name:**

**Visitation Date:**

**Report Prepared By:**

One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school, hear directly from key stakeholders, and corroborate school-reported information and data. VOA-MN conducts two different types of site visits: Formal and Informal. School site visits help inform the extent to which the school is meeting the charter school contract provisions contained in the body of the contract as well as contract Addendum B.

Formal Site Visits are typically conducted once per year by a member of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Leadership Team who interviews key stakeholders and conducts observations. Written feedback is provided to the Board of Directors and school leadership using the Formal Site Visit rubric. The Formal Site Visit rubric follows the same standard scale as the School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System:

- Meets Standard
- Partially Meets Standard
- Does Not Meet Standard

Formal School Site Visit Rubric				
Scale		Meets Standard	Approaching Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Section I</b>	<b>School Mission and Vision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes.</li> <li>• The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.</li> </ul>			
Evidence suggests that the school's mission and vision are central to the school's learning program and decision-making process (contract Article 6 and 9).				
SCHOOL VISION:				
SCHOOL MISSION:				
DESCRIPTION OF HOW MEETING THE MISSION/VISION:				
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>Section II</b>	<b>School Culture &amp; Learning Environment</b>			



<b>II.A</b>	<b>School provides evidence of meeting its primary statutory purpose to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.</b>	Discussion only.		
Spring ____ Percent of Students Proficient (schoolwide) on MCA Exams – <b>School &amp; Comparison School</b> Math: % Reading: % Science: %  <b>NOTE: There were no state exams administered during the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID Pandemic.</b>  Spring ____ Percent of Students Proficient (schoolwide) on MCA Exams Math: % Reading: % Science: %				
<b>Scale</b>		<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Approaching Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>
<b>II.B.1</b>	<b>Observations indicate that classrooms are clean and conducive to learning. (Contract Article 8 and Addendum B).</b>			
<b>II.B.2</b>	<b>Observations indicate that shared spaces like hallways, gym, cafeteria, and bathrooms, are clean and safe (contract Article 8).</b>			
<b>II.B.3</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with state and federal health and safety laws (e.g., facility /ADA, building inspections, school liability insurance, student medical / health matters, school drills) (contract Article 8).</b>			
faculty have received required back-to-school training on health and safety procedures. ____ Yes ____ No  List of present school year back-to-school health and safety related professional development training:  • • •  School complies with MS 121A.035 – Crisis Management Policy. ____ Yes ____ No Policy # - Policy Title  Number of fire drills completed previous school year _____. (req. five annually)  Number of lockdown/safety drills completed previous school year _____. (req. five annually)  Number of tornado drills completed previous school year _____. (req. one annually) April  Number of bus evacuation drills completed previous school year: _____. (req. one annually)  Designated crisis management person / team members: Head of School, Assist Head of School, Administrative Assistant, Building Manager, HR Coordinator, and BOD Executive Member (chair, secretary, or treasurer)  Classrooms & shared spaces contain evacuation plans / procedures. ____ Yes ____ No • <i>NOTE: Drill logs reviewed by authorizer representative</i>  • <i>Location of emergency drill log ____</i>  School complies with MS 299F.47 - School Inspections. ____ Yes ____ No Date of most recent facility inspection by fire department: _____ (must be a minimum of every three years)  SCHOOL DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED: <u>Yes</u> . Filed in Head of School's Google Drive.				

School maintains a log of all visitors. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

- Location of visitor log: \_\_\_\_\_

School complies with MS 144.29 Health Records; Children of School Age. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Responsible employee: School Employee - School Administrative Assistant Position

School complies with MS 121A.15 - Health Standards; Immunizations; School Children. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Designated responsible employee:

School Nurse and License Number:

License #

Frequency of school visits:

School complies with MS 121A.22 – Administration of Drugs and Medicine. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Designated responsible health aid/employee:

School Nurse License # \_\_\_\_\_

Authorizer representative verified that the school has a system by which to record and store medicine and medical supplies.

School complies with MS 121A.21 – School Health Services (if applicable). \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ NA

The school contracts with a licensed school nurse or organization. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ NA

Name/Organization:

School has a designated 504 Coordinator:

504 Coordinator Name & Position:

School has a process to ensure that student accommodations are consistent with 504 Plans. \_\_\_\_\_

Number of enrolled students during the 20XX-20XX school year on a 504 plan: \_\_\_\_\_

School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:

<b>II.B.4</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school engages parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child's learning (contract Addendum B).</b>			
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School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:

<b>II.B.5</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school teachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards (contract Article 7).</b>			
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Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for language arts:

Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for math:

Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for science:

Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for social studies:

NOTE:

Management requires that lesson plans and student learning targets are aligned to the state standards. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

- Description of school requirement as provided by the school:

School has a well-defined plan for ensuring that teachers engage in data-driven instruction to ensure student mastery of state standards. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

- Description of school plan provided by the school:

School Evidence Provide for Authorizer Review:

<b>II.B.6</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school has designated an Assessment Coordinator and process for ensuring compliance with state examination administration (contract Article 7).</b>			
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School DAC Name:

School Explanation of State Assessment Compliance Oversight:

<b>II.B.7</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school is adhering to their plan for standardized interim assessments and utilizing that student performance data (contract Article 7).</b>			
20XX-20XX School Plan for Standardized Assessments:  Authorizer representative was able to verify that the testing calendar is on website per state statute ____ Yes ____ No  SCHOOL WEBSITE URL CODE FOR CALENDAR:				
<b>Section III</b>	<b>Compliance</b>			
<b>III. A</b>	<b>Documents and Processes</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Approaching Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>
<b>III.A.1</b>	<b>The school's VOA-MN Compliance Binder is complete (contract Addendum B).</b> <i>NOTE: The school should obtain a copy of their Renewal Notice from the MN Office of the Attorney General.</i>			
<b>III.A.2</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school adheres to their human resources policies and procedures (contract Article 6 and Article 8).</b>			
Explanation:				
<b>III.A.3</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363, which prohibits unfair discriminatory practices in employment, public accommodations, public service, or education (contract Article 8).</b>			
LIST OF APPLICABLE SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES: (Name <u>and</u> Number) • • •  School Designated Human Resources Person: EEO Grievance Designee: School District Human Rights Officer:  School Evidence Provide for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.4</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that staff and volunteers have completed criminal background checks per state law and school policy (contract Article 6).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Background Check Policy # Frequency:				
<b>III.A.5</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that faculty have current job descriptions delineating roles, responsibilities, and qualifications (contract Article 6 and Addendum B).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.6</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school only employs and contracts with teachers, as defined by Minn. Stat. 122A.15, Subd. 1, who hold valid teaching licenses issued by the State to perform the particular service for which they are employed at the school (contract Article 6).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.7</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that faculty performance observations and evaluations are conducted according to established policy/manual and consistent with state</b>			

	<b>law, including director evaluation (contract Article 6 and Addendum A).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.8</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with state and federal laws pertaining to data collection storage, and distribution (contract Article 8).</b>			
FY___ School Appointed DPA Responsible Authority (RA): FY___ School Appointed DPA Designated Authority (DA): FY___ School Data Practices Compliance Official (DPCO):  NOTE: Authorizer provided sample VOAMN school policies to the Head of School.  APPLICABLE BOARD POLICIES: (Titles <u>and</u> Numbers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft Policy #___ - Data Practices</li> </ul> Board minutes contain evidence of board appointment of RA/DA/DPCO? ___Yes ___ No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy is in progress.</li> </ul> Authorizer representative verified that the School has a data retention plan: ___Yes ___ No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Date of board approval? _____</li> <li>● Date of Historical Society Approval: _____</li> </ul> Authorizer representative verified that Student <u>academic</u> records are filed in a separate locked cabinet. ___Yes ___No Location: _____  Authorizer representative verified that Student / Employee <u>legal</u> records are filed in a separate locked cabinet. ___Yes ___No Location: _____  Authorizer representative verified that Student/Employee <u>health</u> records are filed in a separate locked cabinet. ___Yes ___No Location: _____  Authorizer representative verified that the school has Tennessee Warnings for both the enrollment and employment process. ___ Yes ___ No ___ Partial  School verified that only designated <u>school employees</u> have access to files containing student/employee records. ___ Yes ___ No  School has a board approved Data Request <u>Policy</u> / Procedures. ___ Yes ___ No School evidence provide for Authorizer Review: Policy #___ Policy Name:  Authorizer representative verified that the school maintains a detailed register/log of all data requests. ___ Yes ___ No				
<b>III.A.9</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with laws pertaining to student application process and enrollment (contract Article 6 and Addendum A).</b>			
School Evidence provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.10</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school is meeting its enrollment goals with stable to growing enrollment (contract Addendum A).</b>			
Number of students (head count) served in current year:   Present School Year Student Enrollment / Headcount by Grade:  K - 6 - 1 - 7 -				

2 -	8 -			
3 -	9 -			
4 -	10 -			
5 -	11 -			
6 -	12 -			
<p>Number of students (head count) served in previous year:</p> <p>Number of students (head count) served in second previous year:</p> <p>Authorizer also participated in brief classroom observations</p>				
<b>III.A.11</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with laws pertaining to student discipline and Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (contract Article 8).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.12</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school maintains and distributes annually a student/ family handbook <u>and</u> employee handbook (contract Addendum A).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.13</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school complies with statute regarding use of the authorizer's name (contract Article 3).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.14</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the Board of Directors maintains at least the amount and types of insurance coverage up to the applicable tort liability limits under Chapter 466.04 and Article six of the contract – Types and Amounts of Insurance. The School provide the Authorizer with certificates of insurance at least annually (contract Article 6).</b>			
<p>School Provided Authorizer with Proof of Insurance / Insurance Certificate    ____ Yes ____ No</p> <p>Insurance Policy Renewal Date:</p>				
<b>III.A.15</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school is only serving their authorized grades and approved school sites (contract Article 4 and 5).</b>			
<p>Grades Served Present School Year:</p> <p>Grades Served Past School Year:</p> <p>State Approved Grades:</p> <p>Number of Approved School Sites/Buildings:</p> <p>Number of School Sites/Buildings Operated:</p> <p>Evidence Provide by the School for Authorizer Review: walk through of the facility.</p>				
<b>III.A.16</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school is non-sectarian in its program, admission policies, and employment practices, and for all other purposes (contract Article 4 and 6).</b>			
<p>LIST OF APPLICABLE SCHOOL POLICY TITLES AND NUMBERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
<b>III.A.17</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that the school has a plan for Service Learning (contract Article 7 and Addendum A).</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>III.A.18</b>	<b>A review of extra-curricular activities verifies school compliance with Minn. Stat. 121A.04, equal opportunities for members of both sexes to participate in athletics (contract Article 8).</b>			

School Offered Extra-Curricular Activities:				
<b>III. B</b>	<b>School Website Content Requirements</b> (School will walk through website with a during visit to verify compliance)	<b>URL</b>		
<b>III.B.1</b>	Current Annual Report (required components in (MS 124E.16, Subd 2)			
<b>III.B.2</b>	World's Best Workforce Annual Report (using MDE template) (MS 120B.11)			
<b>III.B.3</b>	Identity of and contact information for the authorizer (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)			
<b>III.B.4</b>	Directory information for board <u>and</u> committee members (name, phone, email, affiliation) (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)			
<b>III.B.5</b>	Board and committee meeting minutes (if authority) for at least one calendar year. (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)			
<b>III.B.6</b>	Literacy plan including English Learners (for schools with grades K-3) (MS 120B.12, Subd 4)			
<b>III.B.7</b>	Collaborative Agreements (if they exist) (MS 124E.08 (c))			
<b>III.B.8</b>	Wellness Policy / Plan (MS 121A.215)			
<b>III.B.9</b>	Lottery and enrollment policy and process (MS 124E.11)			
<b>III.B.10</b>	Calendar of standardized tests to be administered during the year (with rationales) (MS 120B.301)			
<b>III.B.11</b>	School Bullying Policy (MS 121A.031) Policy 514			
<b>III.B.12</b>	Policy for group health (MS 124E.12, Subd 5)			
<b>III.B.13</b>	Early admission policy (comprehensive evaluation needed for under age 5 to kindergarten) (MS 124E.11)			
<b>III.B.14</b>	PSEO Dissemination of Information (124D.09, Subd 7)			
<b>III.B.15</b>	Name, mailing address, bylaws, minutes of board meetings, names of the current board of directors of the affiliated nonprofit building corporation (if exists) (MS 124E.13)			
<b>Section IV</b>	<b>Special Populations</b> Evidence suggests that the school is adhering to special education laws / IDEA. (Contract Article 8)	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Approaching Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>
<b>IV.1</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school has a Total Special Education System (TSES) plan and adheres to their defined "Child Find" process.</b>			
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>IV.2</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school trains employees on provisions pertaining to IDEA, special education laws and school's TSES plan, including "Child Find."</b>			
Faculty Training Topic(s) <u>and</u> Dates(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
Additional School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Discussion.				
<b>IV.3</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school consistently follows its own policies regarding special education and Child Find.</b>			
Brief description of school Child Find/Study Process:				
Child Study Team Members:				
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Discussion				
<b>IV.4</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school employs special education teachers with the necessary license to provide services</b>			

	<b>in accordance with IEP's. Number of special education teachers is consistent with caseload requirements.</b>			
Name of special education teachers & license/file number: • • • •				
Number of special education paraprofessionals: ____ FTE  Percent of special education students served in ____: % Percent of special education students served in ____: %				
<b>IV.5</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school has <u>not</u> been the subject of any investigations by the MDE Monitoring and Compliance or Program Finance Divisions related to special education services delivery or procedures in the past 12 months.</b>			
		None.		
If yes, Isolated incident/complaint: Program systems complaint: Resolved: Yes / No School Evidence for Authorizer Review:				
<b>IV.6</b>	<b>Evidence suggests that routine school special education audits (program and financial) are free of findings or has corrected findings.</b>			
Date of last special education program audit: Date of last special education financial audit: Current audit stage:				
<b>IV.7</b>	<b>Evidence suggests the school contracts with a special education director and is in "good standing."</b>			
Name of director <u>and</u> organization: Special Education Director License Number: School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:				
<b>IV.8</b>	<b>Evidence suggests school enrollment of students with disabilities does not lag behind that of the local school district.</b>			
School percentage: % Resident ISD percentage: %				
<b>IV.9</b>	<b>School retains the students with disabilities that are enrolled.</b>			
FY ____ = FY____ Student retention rate (all students): FY____ Student retention rate (special education students):				
<b>IV.10</b>	<b>Evidence suggest that the school has Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meetings.</b>			
<a href="#">Sec. 125A.24 MN Statutes</a> FY____ meeting date(s): FY____ meeting date(s): FY____ meeting date(s):				

**Authorizer signature and date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EARLY LEARNING OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS  
ANNUAL PROGRAM COMPLIANCE REVIEW RUBRIC**

**REVIEW DATE:**

#	Standard When Operational (Source: Commissioner Approved Early Learning Program Request/Affidavit and Charter Contract.	Documentation that will be used to verify compliance.
	Meets Requirement Y/N	If the school does not meet the standard, the school will be required to document what action the school will take to meet the requirement and the anticipated date that the standard will be met.
1	<b>STANDARD: The school plans to provide the program(s) for which it was approved.</b> <b>What type of early learning program is the school approved to operate?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening. ____ Yes ____ No</li> <li>• Preschool instructional program (not pre-K) for children ages 3-5 years. ____ Yes ____ No</li> <li>• Pre-K instructional program for four-year-olds to prepare children for entry into K the following year. ____ Yes ____ No</li> </ul>	Ex Roster with birthdates
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
2	<b>STANDARD: The school ensures the faculty are supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher.</b>	Ex. List of faculty and licensure FF#
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
3	<b>STANDARD: The school has plans to ensure a maximum group size of 20 children.</b>	Ex. Class Roster which includes faculty and student names.
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
4	<b>STANDARD: The school ensures faculty-child ratios of one-to-ten.</b>	Ex. Class Roster which includes faculty and student names.
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
5	<b>STANDARD: The school assesses each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument that measures at a minimum, children's progress in the domains of language and literacy and mathematical thinking, when the child enters and again before the child leaves the</b>	Ex. Assessment plans and samples of student work



	<p><b>program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.</b></p> <p><b>Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, social and emotional development, creativity and the arts.</b></p>	
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>6</b>	<b>STANDARD: The school provides curriculum and intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning standards (ECIPs) and kindergarten standards that is based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.</b>	Ex. Name of curriculum, scope and sequence, pacing guide, lesson plans
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>7</b>	<b>STANDARD: The school coordinates with Relevant Community-Based Services.</b>	Ex. Names of community-based services and evidence of coordination
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>8</b>	<b>STANDARD: The school employs teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction.</b>	Ex. Evidence of professional development faculty completed specific to the early-learning program
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>9</b>	<b>STANDARD: The school is aware of requirements related to how the program is funded (VPK, community education, SSP) and has a board approved, balanced budget aligned to their program.</b>	Ex. Evidence of financial training and approved budget.
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>10</b>	<b>STANDARD: The school ensures participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.16 to 121A.19</b>	Ex. evidence of completed health screening dates.
	Meets Requirement ____ Yes ____ No	Continuous Improvement Plans:
<b>AUTHORIZER SIGNATURE:                      DATE:</b>		



## BOARD OBSERVATION RUBRIC

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School: Meeting Type** (check one): ☐ Regular ☐ Special ☐ Emergency

**VOA Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Attendance of Board Members (note first & last names and affiliation)*

Board Members:

Ex-officio Members:

Others in attendance:

Board Member Early Departures:

**Codes:** **Yes (y)** – This item was addressed. **Partial (p)** – This item was partially addressed. **No (n)**–The item was not addressed. **Not applicable (na)** - The item was not addressed at this meeting but will be at another meeting. (#) VOA Standard Alignment.

Code	Meeting Checklist	Comments/Explanation (if necessary)
<b><i>Before the Meeting</i></b>		
	The meeting is open to the public and the board meeting time, location, and agenda was posted publicly. (6)	
	Board agenda and materials were sent to board members and VOA 3 days in advance. (15)	
	Votes are recorded and the Journal of votes is available. (6)	
	Up to date minutes are posted to school board website. (6)	
	Board membership is observed to be compliant with Minnesota statute and the school's bylaws. (1)	
	One set of materials relating to the agenda was available for public inspection. (6)	
	The Board of Directors maintains a Board Documents Binder which includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements (16)	
<b><i>Meeting – Procedures and Content</i></b>		
	Board meeting attendance provides evidence that the school is meeting the requirements laid out in its bylaws and membership requirements as required by Minnesota Statute (1)	
	The meeting was started on time.	

	Quorum was established and maintained. Action on items is taken only with a quorum present. Arrivals and departures of members are noted during meeting and recorded in meeting minutes. (6)	
	An adopted agenda is followed after approval, and is adhered to during the meeting. (6)	
	Appropriate materials were available to board members to accompany agenda items. (6)	
	Conflict of interest is addressed in the agenda.	
	If used, a consent agenda was properly executed.	
	The board provided an opportunity for public input.	
	An orderly methodology guides the running of the meeting (e.g. Roberts Rules).	
	The mission and vision of the school are referenced and/or used in decision making.	
	The agenda contains an item(s) on finance (board reviews the school's finances). Finance reports include register, balance sheet, rev/exp, and cash flow. Enrollment is part of budget oversight (Pupil Units vs. head count).	
	The meeting included one or more of the board's annual responsibilities:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating the leadership. (9)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating and monitoring board elections. (8)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approving the WBWF annual report. (13)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing parent, teacher, or student satisfaction data. (14)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of bylaws. (7)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Practice procedures and responsibilities. (12)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New board members are provided orientation. (3)</li> </ul>	
	The meeting included a review and discussion of student academic performance (not merely activities). (13)	
	The meeting included policy review. (17)	
	The board references policies in decision making. (11)	
	The board addresses board development. The board references its strategic planning process (at least quarterly), continuous improvement plans, and goals to monitor and evaluate effectiveness (new schools- readiness to open checklist). (2)	
	Board training occurs and/or member training is documented. (4)	
	The board engages in reflection or self-evaluation at the end of the meeting. (5)	
	MN Stat 13D meeting conditions are met. (6)	
	If it is a special or emergency meeting, MN Stat13D conditions are met. (6)	
	If the meeting is closed or a portion of the meeting is closed, it met MN Stat 13D conditions - a public body shall state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed. (6)	

<i>Continuous Improvement Items</i>		
	Board member conduct is professional. Board members are engaged and strategic in their discourse.	
	All board members were on time and appeared prepared.	
	Board minutes and motions are easily understood and communicate the essence of topics. First and last names are recorded, not just first names.	
	The board stays on topic with minimal side or off topic talk. (6)	
	Committee reports are written, thorough and understandable.	
	The board focuses on governing and avoids micromanaging school administration.	



## **New Charter School Application Process**

**Submit To:**  
Stephanie Olsen, Manager  
Charter Schools Program  
[solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org)

## **New Charter School Application Process**

The Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program provides Minnesota students with high quality choices in public education through our portfolio of high-performing charter schools and is a model of excellence in authorizing throughout the state and nation.

- *Authorizing Program Vision: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will authorize high quality charter schools that improve all pupil learning, all student achievement, and promote service to others.*
- *Authorizing Program Mission: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement with service to others as its core.*

### **Minnesota Charter Schools**

Charter schools are independent public schools of choice for parents and students. The first charter school in the nation opened in Minnesota in 1992 and charter schools continue to be a popular choice for students seeking an alternative to traditional public schools. Teachers, parents and others begin charter schools when they see an educational need and want to design a school to meet that need. The primary purpose of a charter school is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. Additional purposes include: (1) increase learning opportunities for all pupils; (2) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; (3) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; (4) establish new forms of accountability for schools; or (5) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site. Charter schools employ Minnesota licensed teachers, offer services to special needs students and require students to take state and national tests to assure academic accountability and improvement. Charter schools are open to all, do not charge tuition and have no admission requirements to enroll.

**Eligible New Charter School Applicants:** An individual or group of individuals interested in starting a charter school are invited to apply to VOA-MN for authorization per state charter school statute. To apply to VOA-MN, applications **must:**

- Have submitted a “Letter of Intent to Apply” and received a positive determination to be invited to apply by VOA-MN.
- Have Certificates of Attendance at the required VOA-MN Pre-Application Meeting. The required meeting will be a half day and a minimum of three board members listed on the application must participate. The meeting will be offered in December with the specific date yet to be determined.
- Contain a minimum of five board members, including at least one Minnesota licensed teacher and strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location.
- Demonstrate alignment to the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program mission and vision.
- Intend to serve at least six grade levels K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school. Preference is given to K-12 proposals.
- Contain a well-defined service-learning component.

**Pre-Application Approval:** Developers must submit an “Intent to Apply” letter to VOA-MN at least 20 months before July 1 of the year the new charter school plans to serve students to qualify for consideration to submit a full application. The Intent to Apply letter content requirements include:

- The proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least six grades K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).
- The enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.
- The anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.
- The proposed location of the school with justification for that location.

- The names of a founding board, of a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, and has strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location of school development. Directory information must be included for each member. A majority of founding board members must live in the proposed geographic location and include at least one MN licensed teacher and one parent residing in the proposed school geographic service area.
- A brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.
- A brief explanation of program highlights and learning philosophy and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the target geographic location.
- A brief explanation of why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).
- The developers must disclose if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.
- The developers must disclose if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.
- The letter of intent should be no more than six pages.

An electronic copy of the Intent to Apply letter should be emailed to the CSAP Senior Program Manager at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).

The Intent to Apply letter will be reviewed by two-three peer reviewers and the CSAP Senior Program Manager. The decision will be made and communicated by the Program Manager. If a Letter of Intent to Apply is approved by VOA-MN, the charter school board may submit a full application. Within four weeks of receiving a Letter of Intent, VOA-MN will notify developers in writing as to whether, or not, the developers are invited to submit a full new school application to VOA-MN. If/when an Intent to Apply letter is approved by VOA-MN, an applicant does not have to repeat this phase of the review process.

**Application Deadline:** Developers must submit an application to VOA-MN at least 18 months before July 1 of the year the new charter school plans to serve students. The following is an estimated timeline upon receipt of the school's application:

- Approximately five business days for technical review and distribution of applications to peer reviewers
- Approximately 5-10 business days for peer desk review process
- Approximately 5-10 business days for applicant to provide additional clarification / information based on concerns expressed in desk review.
- Approximately five business days after the peer reviewers receive supplemental information in the form of an amended application from applicant, applicant interview occurs.
- Approximately 5-10 business days, final determination is issued from VOA-MN to applicant.
- Total estimated time span: 6-8 weeks.

**Application Submission:** Applicants must submit one electronic copy (in the form of both a PDF and Word document) to the VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).

**Application Review and Interview** - VOA-MN utilizes peer reviewers from high quality charter schools in the VOA-MN Network to review the application materials guided by the Application Review Rubric. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the review of the application (e.g., employee of an existing school that is reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). Once the initial peer desk review is completed, applicants and peer reviewers will participate in the

interview process. The applicant interview focuses on school alignment with the charter school authorizing program's vision and mission, the educational and financial viability of the proposal and the developing group's capacity to implement an idea into a reality. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process in order to further assess the quality of the application and developing team.

**Application preference will be given to:**

- Applicants with the majority of board members who have strong grassroots ties to the anticipated location of school development.
- Applicants replicating a successful charter school model and leadership representation on the founding board from the school being replicated.
- Applicants who plan to serve students grades K-12.

**Final Determination** - After the interview process the application peer reviewers make a recommendation to VOA-MN Authorizing Program leadership to approve or deny each charter school application. The VOA-MN Authorizing Program will communicate in writing the determination to the developers. Regardless of the determination, VOA-MN will provide the developing team with feedback from the application review process.

**APPLICATION FORMAT**

Directions for completion of the application materials should be carefully read and followed. Incomplete applications or those not following the required outline below will **NOT** be reviewed by VOA-MN. The completed forms below must be included in the application.

<b>FOUR COPIES: REQUIRED APPLICATION FORMS &amp; ELEMENTS</b>	
<b>FORM/ELEMENT</b>	<b># OF PAGES COUNTED AS:</b>
Cover Sheet	Does not count toward page limit
Founder Contact List	Does not count toward page limit
Table of Contents	Does not count toward page limit
Narrative/Work Plan & Budget:	Up to 90 pages; suggested category page limits:
• Executive Summary	1 page (may be single-spaced)
• School Foundation	43 pages approx..
• Pre-Operational Planning	31 pages approx.
• Early Learning	If Applicable, 10-12 pages approx.
• Program Implementation and Budget	15 pages approx.
• Three-Year Operational Budget Summary Form	2 pages approx.
• Three-Year Operational Budget Narrative	7 pages (may be single-spaced) approx.
Founder Résumés	Does not count toward page limit
Public School Conversion Information (if applicable, see Information Sheet).	Does not count toward page limit
Program Expansion Information (if applicable, see Information Sheet).	Does not count toward page limit

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

The charter school application is to be original work of the applicants. If a source is used, the materials that are paraphrased or copied must be cited appropriately. If a template is used, the application is to be customized so that it clearly describes and meets the needs of the applicant as well as the application requirements.



# **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Each application must contain the following elements.**

## **COVER SHEET**

Provide all requested information. Type information in the form fields on the attached form.

## **FOUNDER CONTACT LIST**

Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved with the development of this new charter public school including people such as founders, board members, developers, grant writers, and consultants. Type all information in the form fields on the attached form.

## **Application Outline:**

Below are the elements that must be included in the Narrative/Work Plan and Budget. Follow instructions carefully. Please use section and sub-section outline headings throughout the application.

- **APPLICATION COVER SHEET**
- **SCHOOL FOUNDERS CONTACT SHEET**
- **CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE AT VOA-MN PRE-APPLICATION MEETING**

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Provides a one-page overview of the school that is planned.

Include: program highlights/learning philosophy, grade levels to be served, anticipated location, and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the community in which the school will be located.

## **II. SCHOOL FOUNDATION**

### **A. Vision & Mission**

Provides vision and mission statements that reflect the school's goals and purpose.

- Vision: Provide a vision statement that outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).
- Mission: Provide a mission statement that outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).

### **B. Need and Demand**

Application must thoroughly explain the compelling need for establishing the new charter school in the targeted location.

- Provide a description and location market-based research as evidence of the need for a new charter school in the anticipated location identified.
- Thoroughly explain community support and ties to develop a new charter school in the anticipated location.
- Identify the nearby district, charter or private schools and the education programs already offered. Include student performance data and analysis based on the state assessment system when available (public schools).
- Evidence of demand for the proposed school in the community to be served. "Demand" means the desire of prospective families to enroll their children in the proposed school's education program. Demand can be evidenced by, for example, feedback from listening sessions or survey results from prospective families.

### **C. Statutory Purpose(s)**

Application must:

- Describe the new and unique characteristics this school will provide to students that distinguish it from other education options available to students.

- Describe how the proposed school will meet the primary statutory purpose of a charter school, “to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.”
- Identify one or more of the additional five statutory purposes for charter schools the school intends to meet (see Minn. Stat. 124E.01, Subd.1), and provide a comprehensive explanation of how the school will meet those additional purposes (should show alignment to mission and vision).

### **III. LEARNING PROGRAM:** Presents a high-quality educational program with accountability for student achievement.

#### **A. Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Tools, Methods and Instructional Techniques**

- Describe the guiding educational philosophy of this school.
- Provide an overview of the proposed curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy.
- Describe the process the school will use to ensure the curricula will align with Minnesota State Academic Standards.
- Cite and explain research evidence demonstrating these curricula, tools, techniques and methods supporting student achievement (if applicable, identify schools involved).
- Identify the contribution this charter school will make to help close the achievement gap and assist educationally and economically disadvantaged and other students to succeed academically.
- Section must include how the proposed school design will meet or exceed the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students (ie. World’s Best Workforce goals).
- Section should clearly indicate if the new charter school is planning to incorporate: digital, online, hybrid or blended learning; and/or project-based learning; and/or work-based learning.

#### **B. Special Education**

- Describe how this school will provide services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
- Include a description of the proposed Child Find process that will be used at this school.

#### **C. Students with Limited English Proficiency**

- Describe how this school will provide services to students with limited English language skills.

**D. Assessment and Accountability:** VOA-MN requires that the schools we authorize be held to a high academic standard. We develop a charter contract accountability/program plan with the school that includes goals based on state standardized test scores as well as an authorizer-school agreed upon formative assessment(s) (e.g. NWEA, IBST, state OLPA). In addition to describing the justification that the applicant has for the interim assessment they propose to use and goals aligned to that assessment, we request the following information about the school’s commitment to assessment and accountability.

- Identify the anticipated interim standardized assessment that will be used and why that assessment was chosen.
- Describe how the school will use assessment data to drive decisions about the learning program and strategic direction of the school.

#### **E. Alignment with VOA-MN’s Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, & Service Learning.**

- Explain how the school being proposed to be authorized by VOA-MN aligns with the VOA-MN Authorizing Program mission and vision.
- Explain how the school will incorporate meaningful student service learning into their school program requirements (e.g., food drives, reading to senior citizens).

### **IV. FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

## **A. School Founders**

Describes the primary school founders and how they are well-positioned to develop and plan a new high-quality charter school.

For each person identified on the Charter Public School Founder Contact List (see form attached to this application packet), include the following information:

- Describe her/his experience and/or involvement in K-12 education;
- Describe his/her experience with the design and operation of a charter school;
- Describe her/his expected role and responsibilities during the school's pre-operational planning period;
- Indicate whether or not each person intends to become a member of the interim board of directors;
- Indicate whether or not each person intends to apply for employment in the new charter school; and
- Describe any affiliation with other founders and current/potential consultants and vendor organizations.
- Describe the relevant work experience and expertise each person brings to the founding team.

## **B. Governance**

Describes a plan to ensure effective, accountable and representative governance over the school's operations.

### **1. Governance Model:**

- Describe the board's anticipated composition and how it will help advance the mission and vision of the school.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board and how each member will help advance this understanding.

### **2. Board Recruitment: Describe specific expertise/characteristics sought in yet-to-be-recruited board members and explain the added value of those characteristics.**

### **3. Plan for Fulfilling Board Obligations:**

- Describe how the interim board will develop policy during the pre-operational planning period to ensure the board governs the charter public school in compliance with federal, state and local requirements (e.g., sample board policy development calendar).
- Describe the specific plan and timeline for the development of:
  - Personnel policies including the creation of job descriptions, an employee performance management program, and training programs;
  - Procurement policies and procedures for contracting with vendors and consultants that are fair and open and avoid apparent and actual conflicts of interest;
  - Conflict of interest policies; and
  - Travel approval and reimbursement policies.

### **4. Describe the process the interim board will use to:**

- Develop and approve the budget;
- Monitor the financial condition of the school; and
- Provide for financial management and selecting an auditor.

## **V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. Marketing, Outreach, Enrollment & Admissions**

Describes a marketing and outreach plan, based on the compelling need established above and grassroots efforts to ensure open access to all and full enrollment.

- Identify the number of students expected to attend the school each year by grade level in the following table (add additional rows if it will take more than five years to reach full enrollment).

Year of Operation	Grade														Total
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Year 1															
Year 2															
Year 3															
Year 4															
Year 5															
Year 6															
														<b>Total</b>	

- Describe the school's marketing strategy for recruiting and retaining the school's target population.
- Discuss how this school will intentionally and specifically conduct outreach to educationally and economically disadvantaged and hard-to-reach populations.
- Describe how the school will conduct an open admissions process including the use of a lottery to provide equal access to all students who apply.
- If the new charter school includes an instructional preschool or prekindergarten program, describe the school's plans to fund the program. Indicate whether the program is free to all participants or fee-based. If fee-based, include the fee structure that will be used. If applicable, describe the school's intent to pursue a Minnesota Parent Aware rating through the Accelerated Pathway for the early learning program and other possible funding sources to sustain the program if available, such as Early Learning Scholarships, Voluntary Prekindergarten or School Readiness Plus, and Title I.

## B. School Management and Staffing

Describes a plan to ensure effective and transparent management of the school's operations.

- Provide an organizational chart for the proposed charter school, distinguishing between governance (board), management (school leader) and other proposed school employees. Include key responsibilities for each position.
  - Include a staffing plan and timeline for the first contract period (pre-operational through the first three years of school operation). How will the school build its leadership, operations, and teaching staff?
  - Explain how this organizational structure is consistent with the mission and vision of the proposed charter school.
  - Describe the fair and open process the interim board will use for recruiting and hiring the school leader, including:
    - The timeline for developing a job description for the school leader and then recruiting and hiring the school leader;
    - How the board will recruit potential candidates who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability; and
    - Whether the board plans to hire a temporary start-up coordinator and, if so, how this person will be identified.
1. Describe the school's strategy and process for recruiting and hiring other school employees that are qualified to effectively serve the unique needs of the projected student population.
  2. Describe how the school will provide employees with initial and ongoing orientation and professional development about the mission, vision and outcomes of the school.

## **B. School Calendar**

Application contains a calendar and corresponding explanation that reflects the school's program model, proposed learning program, and transportation plan.

1. Describe the calendar the school plans to use:
  - Identify the unique characteristics of the school's proposed calendar.
  - Describe how this proposed calendar lends itself to the school's mission and vision.
  - Provide total number of teacher contract days.
  - Indicate the total number of student instructional days.
  - Provide the planned length of the student instructional day (excluding meals).
  - Provide a description or outline of a "typical day" at the new school.

## **C. Facility Plan**

Describes a plan to secure a suitable facility that meets the unique needs of the school and complies with health and safety and building code requirements.

1. Facility Needs Planning Process:
  - Describe the school's plan, including the timeline and process, for determining space needs appropriate to the program and enrollment.
  - Describe results of a preliminary facility needs assessment.
2. Facility Selection Process:
  - Describe the school's plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential facilities and selecting a building for lease that is affordable, provides adequate space and meets all health and safety and public building code requirements.
  - Provide a description of any potential facility or facilities that have been identified.

## **D. Transportation Plan:** Describes a plan to provide transportation that meets the needs of the school and complies with Minnesota law.

- Transportation Options:
  - If the school will provide its own transportation, describe the school's plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential transportation providers.
  - If the resident school district will provide transportation for the school, describe any potential impacts on the school's learning program and school calendar.
- Transportation Policies:
  - Describe the school's policy for providing transportation to special populations
  - Describe the school's policy for providing transportation to students that live outside the resident district.

## **VI. THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET**

Instructions:

- Present a three-year operational budget, using the budget simulation provided to reviewers with an understanding of the proposed operational budget needed to guide and control the use of public funds for the benefit of students at the new charter school (see attached).
  - Provide a comprehensive budget narrative that includes assumptions guiding the use of numbers and provides rationales and substantive documentation for the use of those numbers. Note: Federal funds and start-up funds are not included in the budget.
- Include the three-year budget and corresponding narrative in the application.

Evaluative Criteria:

The three-year operational budget will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Qualities of sound financial management are present.
  - Assumptions guiding the budget development process are defensible.

- Enrollment estimates are based upon sound interest surveys and marketing data.
  - A valid data source for assumptions about student characteristic data is described.
  - Current and historical data assist in shaping revenue and expenditure increases and inflation assumptions.
  - Financial management strategies reflect abilities to adapt to changing fiscal conditions.
  - Budget balancing and cost-containment strategies address potential enrollment changes.
  - Costs for technology, capital and supplies are adequately addressed.
  - If the school intends to apply for federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant funds, the financial plan should include contingencies if CSP funds are not awarded.
2. Qualities of a healthy budget are present.
- There is a positive general fund balance in each of the three years.
- The budget for each year increases the general fund balance.
  - A fund balance exists even if inaccuracies are corrected.
  - The budget reflects only general fund items with food and community service attached as being critical to the operation of the school.
  - Enrollment and staffing projections are consistently used throughout all sections of the application.
3. The budget supports a quality school plan.
- The budget contains a justification for each service option listed in the application.
    - o The narrative elements of the application are completed for each option.
    - o Each option requiring budget data is consistently described throughout the application.
  - Some expenditures support the uniqueness of the school mission.
    - o Special curricular expenditures are clearly supported in the narrative.
    - o The budget contains unique and realistic staffing patterns.

*SECTION SIX MUST ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF THE SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR A PRESCHOOL EXPANSION.*

**VI. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS** (Instructional Preschool or Prekindergarten - *if applicable*) Section will be graded Satisfactory, Approaching Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, but not scored.

**VIA. Comprehensive Child Assessment:** Assessing each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.

- Describe the assessment process used to measure individual child progress in all the prekindergarten and preschool instructional classes that includes the use of a standardized child assessment instrument, such as High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), Teaching Strategies Gold, or Work Sampling System.
  - o The assessment must be used at least at program entrance and program exit.
  - o At a minimum, the comprehensive assessment should measure children's progress in the domains of language, literacy, and mathematical thinking. Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, social and emotional development, creativity and the arts.
  - o The child assessment should be one [approved by Minnesota Parent Aware](#). It must be a valid and reliable child assessment instrument that is developmentally appropriate and comprehensive.

- The comprehensive child assessment must align with [Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress–Minnesota's Early Learning Standards](#), Revised 2017.
- Describe how the child assessment results are used to inform curricula and instruction throughout the school year.
- Describe how families are involved in the assessment process throughout the year.
- Describe how assessment results are shared between the early learning and kindergarten staff in order to maximize the building of a coherent system between early learning and kindergarten.
- Describe how the child assessment process is responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of children in the school's early learning program.

**VI.B. Intentional Instructional Practice:** Provide intentional instructional practice aligned with [Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIPs\) – Minnesota's Early Learning Standards](#) and [Minnesota's Kindergarten Academic Standards](#). Instructional practices must be based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills and development that prepare children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.

- Describe how program content and intentional instructional practices are aligned with Minnesota's ECIPs. The school should consider using a [Minnesota Parent Aware aligned curricula](#).
- Briefly describe the curriculum used in the early learning program, such as High Scope Preschool Curriculum or Opening the World of Learning (OWL).
- Indicate how the ECIPs are incorporated into the program based on the age of children participating in the early learning program.
- Provide an overview of instructional practice to support children's early literacy skills development.
- Describe a balance of child-initiated learning and teacher-directed pedagogies appropriate for young children's development and interests.
- Provide a brief overview of the program's early learning approaches (such as use of project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, learning centers, interactive learning, and play-based learning).

**VI.C. Kindergarten Transition:** Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.

- Briefly describe the program plan for transition to kindergarten that includes meaningful coordination and planning with kindergarten teachers, and engages families in a variety of ways to support children's learning and successful transition to kindergarten. The transition plan should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.
- Describe how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices between the early learning program and kindergarten program are aligned.
- Describe strategies to engage families in meaningful ways to support their children's learning throughout the transition into the kindergarten year beyond one-time events.
- Describe a plan for providing guidance to families not enrolling their child in the charter school kindergarten program.
- *If a free program*, indicate if the charter school will provide enrollment preference to kindergarten for students participating in the early learning program as allowed by [Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11\(c\)](#).

**VI.D. Community-Based Services:** Coordinate relevant services and programs with community organizations.

- Provide a brief description of how the program coordinates with community organizations and how those resources are shared with families.
  - Coordination may include referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health organizations, social services, mental health services, or other early learning or child care programs.
  - The coordination with community-based services should reflect the needs of the children participating in the early learning program.
  - The community-based services utilized should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.

- Describe how information about community-based services can be made available to families using a variety of strategies, such as family advocates, school-home liaisons, parenting educators, social media, and informal school events.

**VI.E Staff Ratios and Licensure:** Ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the staff being supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher.

- Describe how the early learning program is provided and how ratios and group size are provided to ensure a high-quality early learning program.
- For each prekindergarten and preschool instructional class, describe staff licensure area and MN teaching license file folder number and other credentials, as appropriate. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated staffing licensure areas. MDE may require the school to submit staff licensure areas and MN teaching license folder numbers and other credentials when staff is hired.

**VI.F Teacher Content Knowledge:** Ensure teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction.

- Describe licensed staff training/professional development specific to early learning curriculum, instructional practices and assessment that has been completed in the past five years. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction. MDE may require the school to submit evidence of teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction when staff is hired.

**VI.G. Completion of Early Childhood Screening:** Ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statutes, sections [121A.16](#) to [121A.19](#).

- Provide a description of how and where participating children receive health and developmental screening either through a traditional school district or comparable screening from a health care provider (such as Child and Teen Checkups through local public health organizations) if the charter school is not providing the early childhood health and developmental screening program.

*(Please note: It is not necessary for the charter school to provide early childhood health and developmental screening but must describe how children receive the comprehensive health and developmental screening to identify possible problems that may interfere with children's learning.)*

- Provide a plan for those children who do not successfully complete early childhood screening including how referrals will be made.

#### **VI.H. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (if applicable)**

Describe the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood screening program in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, sections [121A.16](#) to [121A.19](#) and Minnesota Rules [3530.3000](#), [3530.3300](#), and [3530.3400](#).

- In discussing the school's plan and capacity to provide an early childhood screening program, describe how the school will meet MDE accountability requirements for data submission in accordance with [Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.17](#). This includes the establishment of the MARSS Preschool Screening (PS) Record and the annual data submission to MDE Early Learning Services for children receiving the early childhood screening program directly from the school or through a contracted service provider with a comparable screening program, such as a local public health organization.

**VII. APPLICATION INTERVIEW PROCESS** – Occurs after the application desk review.

**VIII. FOUNDERS RESUMES** - Attach a **current** (brief) résumé for each person identified on the Founder Contact List to the application.

**The application as a whole and each section will be judged based on the following scale:**



- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

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C. School Calendar	
D. Facility Plan	
E. Transportation Plan	
<b>VI. SCHOOL PREOPERATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BUDGET</b> <b>10 pts</b>	
<b>VI. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM</b> <i>Not scored</i>	
<b>VIII. APPLICANT INTERVIEW</b> <b>20 pts</b>	
<b>Preference Points</b>	
<b>Grassroots Community Ties (5 pts)</b>	
<b>School Replication (5 pts)</b>	
<b>K-12 (5 pts)</b>	
<b>Total Points Possible 100-115</b>	

<b>Application Preference:</b> (check “yes” or “no”)	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
Applicant has board members with grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		5 pts	
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model and board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		5 pts	
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		5 pts	

### **THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET SPREADSHEET**

The budget spreadsheet has several areas that are pre-coded to formulas. Little needs to be done with those cells that are noted as blocked. Those areas will be explained in the pre-application meeting.

General revenue estimates are using the current fiscal year levels issued by the legislature. The task of the budget builder is to simply provide the number of students in particular levels (elementary or secondary) as well as characteristics of students who may be eligible for free or reduced lunch or who need an English Learner program.

Local revenues including grants and donations are not to be placed in the budget. If they are placed in the budget, they must be off-set by an equal number of expenditures so that the budget is not artificially inflated.

Complete all needed expenditure categories. If the expenditures are not covered by any start-up funds, those expenditures (technology, equipment and supplies) must be included in the three-year budget. This should be completely explained in the narrative section of the budget.

Special education expenditures are assumed for the sake of brevity in the budget. Special education revenues are figured at 95% of those expenditures. You need to calculate the special education director costs.

Formulas are already set to calculate lease aid revenue after you provide the lease expenditure.

The lunch program assumes a 10% loss and a transfer for that loss is built into the general fund.

Note that the budget must balance and show growth for the three years. Any year that shows a negative balance will disqualify the application.

Note: Applicant should use the MDE “what-if” budget model available at:

<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=44>

# COVER SHEET

## VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION

### Proposed Name of New Charter Public School

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#### Contact Information

(School mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)

#### Name of Primary Contact

**Primary Contact Information** (If different from above)  
(Mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)

#### Grade Levels Served When Fully Enrolled

#### Number of Students When Fully Enrolled

#### Proposed Opening Date

#### Where Will the School be Located?

#### Is this charter public school a conversion of an existing district public school (see Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd.6)?

If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.

*A conversion request is considered only with evidence of both:*

- A petition from at least 60% of a school’s full-time teachers seeking conversion; and
- Approved public school district board minutes recognizing the petition.

Yes No

#### Is this charter public school an expansion of an existing education program in any form (public, private, or otherwise)?

Yes No

If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.

#### Is this charter public school planning to offer any online coursework?

Yes No

#### Has the new charter public school been approved by the State of Minnesota as a nonprofit corporation or cooperative?

Yes No

If no, provide a specific date by which the new charter public school plans to be approved as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation or cooperative.

Date:

## FOUNDER CONTACT SHEET

### VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION

**Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved in the development of this new charter public school including founders, board members, developers, grant writers, and consultants. Type all information in the form fields below.**

NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL ADDRESS & POSTAL ADDRESS	DEVELOPER ROLE (board member, consultant, etc.)	Minnesota Teacher License File Folder Number (if applicable)

**Important Notes:**

- Minn. Stat. § 124E.07, Subd.3a stipulates that: *The ongoing charter school board of directors shall have at least five nonrelated members.*
- Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, Subd.1a stipulates that: *An authorizer, after receiving an application from a charter school developer, may charter either a licensed teacher under section 122A.18, subd.1, or a group of individuals that includes one or more licensed teachers under section 122A.18, subd.1, to operate a charter school subject to the commissioner's approval of the authorizer's affidavit under subdivision 4.*
- Must have a minimum of FIVE interim board members to be considered for review of your application.
- Check accuracy of all contact information provided.
- Do not include people who only consulted in the development of the application. Include only **primary** founders and developers.

## Letter of Intent Evaluation Rubric

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: Incomplete letters will not be reviewed. Candidates must receive a minimum score of 20/22. A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for an invitation to apply.*

**HIGH QUALITY SCHOOL REPLICATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Criteria	Points	Satisfactory	Approaching Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Comments:
Information contains the proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least <b>six</b> grades K- 12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).	Required, but not scored				
Information includes the enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.	(0-2 possible)				
Information includes the anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.	Required, but not scored				
Information includes the proposed location of the school <b>with</b> justification for that location.	(0-4 possible)				
Information includes the names of a founding board - a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, and has strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location of school development. Directory information is included for each member. <i>The majority of founding</i>	(0-4 possible)				

<i>board members live in the proposed geographic location and include at least one MN licensed teacher and one parent residing in the proposed school geographic service area.</i>					
Information includes a brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.	(0-4 possible)				
Information includes program highlights, learning philosophy and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the target geographic location.	(0-4 possible)				
Information explains why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).	(0-4 possible)				
The developers have disclosed if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.	Required, but not scored				
The developers have disclosed if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.	Required, but not scored				
The letter of intent is no more than six pages.	Required, but not scored				
<b>OVERALL RATING / SCORE</b>					

## New Charter School Application Review Rubric

**Applicant Name:**

**Peer Reviewer Name:**

### Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

<b>Application Preference Points (bonus points):</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
Applicants has board members that have grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		5 pts	
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model <u>and</u> there is board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		5 pts	
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		5 pts	

### **Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)**

*Provides a one-page, single-spaced overview of the school that is planned. Includes, program highlights/learning philosophy, grade levels to be served, anticipated location, and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the community in which the school will be located.*

*Rating (mark with an “X”)*

**Satisfactory**

**Unsatisfactory**

**Comments:**

### **Part II – FOUNDATION (10 pts)**

#### **II.A. SCHOOL VISION AND MISSION. (not scored)**

*A high-quality application should provide a clearly articulated vision and mission statements that reflect the school’s purpose, program model and goals.*

*Vision: statement outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).*

*Mission: statement outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).*



Rating (mark with an "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>II.B. NEED AND DEMAND. (5 pts.)</b> <i>A high-quality application presents a clear, compelling reason for establishing the new charter school, including strategies or evidence of demand - how they will meet enrollment targets. Identifies proof of community support for an additional school in this area; Identify the nearby district, charter or private schools and the education programs already offered; Includes a market analysis to justify the need). Addresses how they plan to fulfill the primary purpose of a charter school, "to increase all student learning and all student achievement.</i>		
Rating (assign points)		Comments:
Satisfactory (5 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts)		
<b>II. C. PURPOSE (5 pts)</b> <i>Application explains how the new charter school will meet the state statutory primary purpose of a charter school. Based on the need identified, the application describes the new and unique characteristics this school will provide to students that distinguish it from other education options available to students; describes how the proposed school will meet the primary statutory purpose of a charter school, "to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement," identifies one or more of the additional five statutory purposes for charter schools the school intends to meet (see Minn. Stat. 124E.01, Subd.1), and provides a comprehensive explanation of how the school will meet those additional purposes with alignment to mission and vision.</i>		
Rating (assign points)		Comments:
Satisfactory (5 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts)		
<b>III. LEARNING PROGRAM (25 pts)</b> <i>Presents a high-quality educational program with accountability for student achievement.</i>		
<b>III.A. Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Tools, Methods &amp; Instructional Techniques (5 pts)</b> <i>(The schools plan for meeting or exceeding the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students - World's Best Workforce goals)</i>		
Rating (assign points)		Comments:
Satisfactory (5 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts)		
<b>III.B. Plan for Serving Special Education Students (5 pts)</b>		
Rating (assign points)		Comments:
Satisfactory (5 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts)		
<b>III.C. Students with Limited English Proficiency (5 pts)</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory (5 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts)		
<b>III.D. Assessment and Accountability Plan (5 pts)</b>		
Rating (insert score)		Comments:

<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>III.E. Alignment with VOA-MN Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, and Service Learning (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (assign score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPERS (15 pts)</b>		
<b>IV.A. SCHOOL FOUNDERS (5 pts)</b>		
<i>Application includes the primary school founders and how they are well-positioned to develop and plan a new high-quality charter school.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>IV.B. GOVERNANCE (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to ensure effective, accountable and representative governance over the school's operations.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (20 pts)</b>		
<b>V.A. MARKETING, OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS and ENROLLMENT PROCESS (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Describes a marketing &amp; outreach plan, based on compelling need and grassroots efforts to ensure open access to all students and achievement of enrollment targets.</i>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)</i>		
<b>V.B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING PLANS (10 pts)</b>		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)</i>		
<b>V.C. SCHOOL CALENDAR (not scored)</b>		
<i>Application contains a calendar that reflects the school's program model, proposed learning program, and transportation plan.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>V.D. FACILITY PLAN</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to secure a suitable facility that meets the unique needs of the school and complies with health, safety, and building code requirements.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments</b>

<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>V.E. TRANSPORTATION PLAN (not scored)</b>		
<i>Application describes a plan to provide transportation that meets the needs of the school (program model and calendar) and complies with Minnesota statute.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI. THREE YEAR OPERATIONAL BUDGET (10 pts)</b>		
<i>The budget provides reasonable funding projections, accurate calculations and aligns to the other sections of the charter school application.</i>		
Rating (insert score)		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<b>Part VI: EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (not scored)</b>		
<i>Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs. These sections are graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but not scored.</i>		
<b>VI.A. The application explains the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.B. – The application explains the school's plan for intentional instructional practices.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.C. The application describes the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.D. The application provides an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.E. Community Based Services:</b> <i>The application describes how the program coordinates with community organizations and how those resources are shared with families. The application also describes how information about community-based services can be made available to families using a variety of strategies, such as family advocates, school-home liaisons, parenting educators, social media, and informal school events.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>VI.E. Staff Ratios and Licensure:</b> <i>The application provides an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development. Application includes anticipated staffing licensure areas.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		

<b>Satisfactory</b>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.F. Teacher Content Knowledge:</b> <i>The application contains a plan to ensure teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction. Applicants explain their expectations for teacher qualifications including required level of knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.G. Completion of Early Childhood Screening:</b> <i>The application describes the school's plan for early childhood screening.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.H. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (if applicable):</b> <i>The applicant describes the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood screening program in accordance with Minnesota Statutes.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)</b> <i>Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their expansion application. Individuals participating in the interview are able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the proposed expansion of the school.</i>		
Rating (insert score)		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory (19-20 pts)</b>		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory (17-18 pts)</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</b>		
<b>Base Points</b>	<b>/100</b>	
<b>Preference Points</b>	<b>/</b>	
<b>Final Score</b>	<b>/ 100-115</b>	

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**

## **READY TO OPEN CRITICAL TARGETS FOR PRE-OPERATIONAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**

The Volunteers of America-Minnesota Ready to Open Critical Targets are intended to provide decision points along the path of creating a charter school that is marked by the involvement of several board members and volunteers; marked by consistent and easily-determined progress points; and marked by clear and acceptable deliverables. VOA-MN may choose to discontinue the movement along the critical path at any of the checkpoints in the pre-operational year including late fall, Winter/Spring and June Ready to Open Meetings.

It is important that the founding board chair and start up coordinator (if available) stay in constant communication with a VOA representative. VOA personnel must be able to discern the adequacy of progress on a particular pre-operational activity throughout the process. The Board chair will submit his or her estimate of completion on items on a monthly basis. This document is submitted in electronic form to VOA with appropriate evidence.

Targets listed below are intended to be completed no later than the month in which it is stated. Targets can be started earlier and can be revisited. It is, however, important that an estimate of the number of targets completed on time be reviewed. There are numerous targets that can be accomplished by reviewing documents from other charter schools. However, that is not a guarantee that those documents are acceptable. VOA continues to require more and more quality in items such as handbooks, program assessments, policies and procedures. Also, there is a need to consider actions that result from grants or other donations in the course of the development. Those items will be discussed and mutually agreed upon as the board and VOA representatives work together. The board and school leadership are also free to add items in any given month to add clarity to work accomplished.

The board of director's meeting schedule with time and place needs to be forwarded to a VOA representative who will periodically attend those meetings. That same individual(s) must receive board communications (electronically) when board members receive them.

Finally, it is clear that one or two members of a founding board cannot adequately accomplish the tasks without assistance. All targets should have community, parent and educator involvement in the creation of items. No one person is doing all or the majority of the development work.

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>JUNE - SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>Governance Targets</b>			
	Establish a school website	_____	_____	_____
	Affirm board member expertise (educated &/or trained on applicable laws, finance, academic program, operations and real estate/facilities)	_____	_____	_____
	Background checks are conducted on new board members	_____	_____	_____
	Develop board meeting schedule and calendar	_____	_____	_____
	Affirm the board governance structure	_____	_____	_____
	Develop job descriptions for Board Members and Officers	_____	_____	_____
	Develop corporate By-laws	_____	_____	_____
	Obtain legal status (file for 501c3)	_____	_____	_____
	A conflict-of-interest policy is adopted by the board and signed by all board members	_____	_____	_____
	Secure board and management liability insurance protection	_____	_____	_____
	Create a committee structure including Finance, Policy, PR/Marketing and Academic/Curriculum Development.	_____	_____	_____
	Create a board governance section on school website. Section includes board roster with directory information for board members, meeting schedule/location, meeting Meeting agendas, meeting minutes, adopted policies.	_____	_____	_____

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
<b>NOVEMBER -</b>				
<b>Governance Targets &amp; Policy Committee</b>				
	Create a board manual and board member development plan	_____	_____	_____
	Review list of required policies, set schedule of adoption	_____	_____	_____
	Adopt a school enrollment policy and student application form and post it on the school website.	_____	_____	_____
	COMPLETE BOARD BASIC BOOT CAMP (Oct-Dec) Scheduled by VOA for governance, finance/employment	_____	_____	_____
	Designate individual as volunteer start-up coordinator	_____	_____	_____
<b>Finance Committee</b>				
	Refine Charter School Programs (CSP) Grant as needed	_____	_____	_____
	Create a comprehensive business plan which includes a 4-year budget projection and 4-year market analysis	_____	_____	_____
	Begin preparation for monthly financial statements	_____	_____	_____

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>Operations Targets</b>				
	Create a Facilities Committee and its Charge	_____	_____	_____
	Develop facility space specifications/needs	_____	_____	_____
	Identify possible-general school locations	_____	_____	_____
	Develop school history-origin for inclusion on website & marketing materials	_____	_____	_____
	Establish a staffing plan aligned to the budget	_____	_____	_____
<b>Community Relations/Marketing/PR</b>				
	Develop a marketing plan calendar for community events	_____	_____	_____
	Develop communications systems (brochures, newsletters)	_____	_____	_____
	Develop data base for student recruitment/applications	_____	_____	_____
	Develop intake process for students and families	_____	_____	_____
	Develop a plan to build community relationships	_____	_____	_____



Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>Management Targets-Finance</b>				
	Secure banking services/checks/EFT	_____	_____	_____
	Propose financial policies to the School Board	_____	_____	_____
	Create internal controls, including separation of duties for board approval	_____	_____	_____
	Create forms, including purchase orders	_____	_____	_____
<b>DECEMBER - JANUARY</b>				
<b>Governance-Program</b>				
	Develop an initial set of student opportunities, including service-learning plan and activities (embedded)	_____	_____	_____
	Develop Special Education policies and assurances	_____	_____	_____
	Develop a format for board reports, including finance and Interim director / management reports.	_____	_____	_____
<b>Management Targets-Personnel</b>				
	Develop management personnel evaluation systems	_____	_____	_____
	Develop data base for student recruitment/enrollment	_____	_____	_____
	Develop school-wide staffing needs	_____	_____	_____

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
	Develop/affirm job descriptions for positions	_____	_____	_____
	<b>Governance Targets-Overview-Evaluation</b>			
	Conduct mid-year board self-assessment	_____	_____	_____
	Reaffirm committee tasks and timelines	_____	_____	_____
	Firm up committees where needed	_____	_____	_____
	Develop board and school wide communications protocols	_____	_____	_____
	<b><u>Complete Mid-Year Ready to Open Meeting with VOA</u></b> (August through December)	_____	_____	_____
<b>FEBRUARY</b>				
	<b>Governance-Policy-Personnel</b>			
	Develop overall hiring procedures and policies	_____	_____	_____
	Design benefit packages and employment policies	_____	_____	_____
	Create Employment (staff) Handbook	_____	_____	_____
	Adopt School Calendar	_____	_____	_____

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>Management – Operations</b> (could be start-up coordinator)				
	Set up office complex-hire office support	_____	_____	_____
	Build full parent/community volunteer program	_____	_____	_____
	Approve a student transportation contract for bussing	_____	_____	_____
<b>MARCH</b>				
	<b>Governance-Committees</b>			
	Facilities Committee focus on possible sites	_____	_____	_____
	Finance Committee confirms multiple budgets	_____	_____	_____
	Finance Committee confirm report formats for oversight	_____	_____	_____
	PR/Marketing Committee improve outreach strategies	_____	_____	_____
	Program Committee affirm/revisit school goals	_____	_____	_____
	<b><u>Complete Winter Ready to Open Meeting with VOA</u></b> (August – through February)	_____	_____	_____
<b>APRIL</b>				
	<b>Governance-Facilities</b>			
	Facilities Committee affirm building code knowledge	_____	_____	_____

<b>Month</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Completed on Time Yes/No</b>	<b>Completed When Date</b>	<b>Comment on Task Evidence</b>
	Confirm possible sites that meet specs	_____	_____	_____
	Confirm school insurance needs and facilities security	_____	_____	_____
<b>Governance-Personnel</b>				
	Advertise for and hire School Director	_____	_____	_____
	Advertise for all staff positions	_____	_____	_____
	Create Student/Family Handbook	_____	_____	_____
<b>Management-Personnel-Contractors</b>				
	Develop potential list of business options/vendor	_____	_____	_____
	Confirm transportation needs/options	_____	_____	_____
	Secure vendors list for technology and supplies	_____	_____	_____
	Develop list of potential auditors	_____	_____	_____
	Confirm custodial/maintenance needs and options	_____	_____	_____
	<b>CRITICAL ENROLLMENT TARGET OF 50%</b>	_____	_____	_____

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>MAY</b>				
<b>Governance</b>				
	Sign a Facility Lease	_____	_____	_____
	Hire School Leadership	_____	_____	_____
<b>Management-Student Services</b>				
	Secure SPED services/director	_____	_____	_____
	Submit initial student enrollment list for MARSS	_____	_____	_____
	Develop final procedures on child find	_____	_____	_____
<b>Management-Operations</b>				
	Confirm submission of all Title grants	_____	_____	_____
	Finalize school calendar for 20XX – 20XX	_____	_____	_____
	Confirm completion of Lease Aid application	_____	_____	_____
	Confirm finals on all finance arrangements (PERA, TRA, EFT)	_____	_____	_____
	<b>CRITICAL ENROLLMENT TARGET OF 75%</b>	_____	_____	_____
	<b>LEADERSHIP SIGNED UP FOR SPECIAL TRAINING</b>			

(Director and chair, board)

\_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE PERSONNEL TRAINED IN MDE SYSTEMS**

\_\_\_\_\_

Month	Task	Completed on Time	Completed When	Comment on Task
		Yes/No	Date	Evidence

**JUNE – Ready to Open Meeting Occurs and Determination by Authorizer VOA-MN.**

**JUNE**

**Management-Program-Supplies**

Order curriculum and instruction materials

\_\_\_\_\_

Order school supplies and equipment

\_\_\_\_\_

Order management and instructional technology

\_\_\_\_\_

**Management Personnel/Instruction**

Complete hiring of instructional personnel

\_\_\_\_\_

Design teacher evaluation system

\_\_\_\_\_

Confirm all background checks

\_\_\_\_\_

Confirm all licensures

\_\_\_\_\_

**Management-Operations**

Confirm final on all facility inspections

\_\_\_\_\_

Confirm contract status of vendors

\_\_\_\_\_

**Month**

**Task**

**Completed  
on Time  
Yes/No**

**Completed  
When  
Date**

**Comment  
on Task  
Evidence**

**CRITICAL ENROLLMENT TARGET OF 100%**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete Final Ready to Open Meeting with VOA**  
(August – through June)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**JULY-AUGUST**

**Management-Program**

(completed with teachers)

Develop scope and sequence of program

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continue work on instructional strategies

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continue work on instructional material

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Create Professional Development Strategies

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Confirm use of commercial/state assessments

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Develop lesson plans with assessment materials

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CRITICAL ENROLLMENT TARGET OF 110%**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Month	Task	Completed on Time Yes/No	Completed When Date	Comment on Task Evidence
<b>Management-Professional Development/PR</b>				
	Execute faculty school opening professional development	_____	_____	_____
	Complete development of professional dev. plan	_____	_____	_____
	Complete family orientation	_____	_____	_____
<b>Governance-Finance Protocols</b>				
	Confirm adequacy of financial reports for oversight	_____	_____	_____
<b>Governance-Policy Review</b>				
	Policy Committee develop policy review (future) calendar	_____	_____	_____
	<u><b>Reaffirm Ready to Open Decision with VOA-MN</b></u>	_____	_____	_____





**MINNESOTA**  
**EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS**  
**PREOPERATIONAL CHECKLIST**  
**REVIEW DATE:**

#	Standard	Y/N
1	<p><b>The school plans to provide the program(s) for which it was approved.</b>  <b>What type of early learning program is the school approved to operate?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening. ____ Yes ____ No</li> <li>• Preschool instructional program (not pre-K) for children ages 3-5 years. ____ Yes ____ No</li> <li>• Pre-K instructional program for four-year-olds to prepare children for entry into K the following year. ____ Yes ____ No</li> </ul>	
2	<b>The school has plans to ensure that faculty is supervised by a MN licensed early childhood teacher.</b>	
3	<b>The school has plans to ensure a maximum group size of 20 children.</b>	
4	<b>The school has plans to ensure faculty-child ratios of one-to-ten.</b>	
5	<p><b>The school has plans to assess each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument that measures at a minimum, children's progress in the domains of language and literacy and mathematical thinking, when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.</b></p> <p>Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, social and emotional development, creativity and the arts.</p>	
6	<b>The school has plans to provide curriculum and intentional instructional practices aligned with the state early childhood learning standards (ECIPs) and kindergarten standards that is based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.</b>	
7	<b>The school has plans to coordinate with Relevant Community-Based Services.</b>	
8	<b>The school has plans to employ teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction.</b>	
9	<b>The school has is knowledgeable of early childhood finance mechanisms (VPK, community education, SSP) and an approved balanced budget aligned to program components and student projections.</b>	
10	<b>The school has plans to ensure that participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under MS 121A.16 to 121A.19.</b>	
<p><b>AUTHORIZER SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____</b></p>		



## Charter School Expansion Application

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### **MN Stat., 124E.06 Subd.5:**

*A charter school may apply to the authorizer to amend the school charter to expand the operation of the school to additional grades or sites that would be students' primary enrollment site beyond those defined in the original affidavit approved by the commissioner. After approving the school's application, the authorizer shall submit a supplementary affidavit in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner. The authorizer must file a supplement affidavit by October 1 to be eligible to expand in the next school year. The supplementary affidavit must document that the school has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the authorizer the following:*

- 1) the need for the expansion with supporting long-range enrollment projections;*
- (2) a longitudinal record of demonstrated student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B or on other academic assessments that measure longitudinal student performance and growth approved by the charter school's board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer;*
- (3) a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability; and*
- (4) board capacity and an administrative and management plan to implement its expansion.*

*The commissioner shall have 30 business days to review and comment on the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner shall notify the authorizer in writing of any deficiencies in the supplemental affidavit and the authorizer then has 20 business days to address, to the commissioner's satisfaction, any deficiencies in the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner must notify the authorizer of final approval or disapproval within 15 business days after receiving the authorizer's response to the deficiencies in the affidavit. The school may not expand grades or add sites until the commissioner has approved the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner's approval or disapproval of a supplemental affidavit is final.*

The purpose of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Expansion Application is to provide VOA-MN with adequate information to make a decision regarding a potential expansion and to assist in the process of crafting a strong affidavit for the Commissioner's approval if expansion is merited. The application follows the format of the criteria a charter school is required to meet in statute and must address the items contained in the outline below.

### **Application Submission & Deadline**

Schools applying to expand should submit an application to VOA-MN by **July 15<sup>th</sup>** of the year prior to the anticipated expansion. Please send one complete electronic copy of the application to [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### **To be eligible to apply:**

- Schools must be meeting the terms and conditions of their charter contract, including their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.
- Schools must not be in authorizer intervention status.
- Schools must have completed at least four years of school operation.
- Schools must be able to provide a minimum of three consecutive years of student data that reflects a positive trend and student growth based on the state assessments.

**Application Preference:** Application preference will be given to schools who have earned the state designation of "High Quality" status and schools replicating their existing high performing program.

## Review Process and Final Determination

The application will be peer reviewed. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the review of the expansion application (e.g., reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). After the initial peer desk review of an application, the applicant / school representatives and peer reviewers will participate in an interview. The applicant interview focuses on expansions alignment with the charter school's mission and vision, applicant's knowledge of the proposed expansion plan and the applicant's capacity to implement the expansion. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process in order to further assess the quality of the application and expansion implementation team. After the interview, peer reviewers will make a recommendation to the Charter School Division leadership to approve or deny the charter school expansion application. The Charter School Division will communicate the determination in writing to the applicant after a final decision has been rendered by leadership. VOA-MN will provide the school with feedback from the application review process regardless of the determination.

If VOA-MN approves a charter school expansion application, the Authorizer will work with the developing team to prepare and submit its affidavit to MDE for authorization.

## Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of "unsatisfactory" in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 90/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving "preference points" will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 90 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

<i>TABLE OF CONTENTS</i>		<i>Page Number</i>
<b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>NA</b>	
<b>II. NEED AND ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>20 pts.</b>	
<b>III. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>20 pts.</b>	
<b>IV. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>20 pts.</b>	
<b>V. LEADERSHIP CAPACITY</b>	<b>20 pts.</b>	
<b>VI. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS</b>	<b>NA</b>	
<b>VII. APPLICANT INTERVIEW</b>	<b>20 pts.</b>	
<b>Preference Points</b>		
<b>High Quality School Designation (10 pts)</b>		
<b>High Quality School Replication (10 pts)</b>		
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		100-120

## APPLICATION OUTLINE

### I. Executive Summary

The application should commence with a one-page executive summary which provides a rationale for the desired grade expansion, alignment to the school's mission and vision, and touches on the school's most compelling arguments for each of the requirements listed in *Minnesota Statutes*, 124E.06, subd.5.

### III. Demonstrate that expansion is supported by need and demand; supported by long-range enrollment projections.

Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Discussion of the need and demand for expansion to the desired grade levels or additional site. Include evidence to support the school's assumptions (e.g., current school enrollment waiting lists, application interest lists, enrollment waiting lists of nearby schools).
- Projections of the number of students expected to enroll in each grade level and/or site, in the initial year of operation and beyond if a gradual addition of grades is anticipated (Also complete Appendix 4).
- Discussion of how projected figures were arrived at.
- Include an enrollment table with and without the expansion.

### III. Provide longitudinal evidence that students are experiencing high levels of academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B and that the school is meeting the school's primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.

Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Data from statewide assessments administered during the three most recent academic years (both growth and proficiency when available).
- Growth data based on state assessments during the three most recent academic years.
- Data from additional assessments (if desired).
- Discussion of how data presented demonstrates improved academic performance.

### IV. Demonstrate that the charter school has a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability.

Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Provide a detailed discussion of the school's present financial situation, including fund balance history.
- Provide an analysis of the school's fund balance history and discuss the school's multi-year cash flow projections to finance the proposed expansion.
- Provide a budget for the current year as well as the subsequent year, both with and without the proposed expansion. Also include a narrative explaining assumptions and critical changes.
- Discuss if / how the expansion will impact the school's transportation and/or health and safety plan.
- Discuss the school's ability to secure and manage the funding necessary for expansion.
- Discuss any audit findings from the previous fiscal year. Provide evidence that the school has appropriately corrected past findings or has corrective actions in place to address findings for the future.

### V. Provide a compelling argument that the school has the capacity to expand. Applicants must demonstrate school board and management capacity to oversee the expansion. Applications must contain a sound administrative and management plan to implement its expansion.

Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Describe the school's current governance and management structures and discuss anticipated changes resulting from the proposed expansion.
- Describe the qualifications/credentials of the existing school board officers, including number of years at the school. Also, complete Appendix 1-3.

- Describe the qualifications/credentials of the school administration and key faculty members involved in the expansion, including the number of years at the school; explain their ability to provide sound oversight of the expansion.
- Describe the expansion plan including outlining critical elements to complete, team members involved, and timelines for completion.
- Describe the impact the expansion would have on the school's current facility and how the school would provide adequate space for the increased number of students. In the case of an additional site, also provide 1) a timeline for acquiring the new facility space, 2) identify the anticipated location with justification, 3) explain any student safety measures (e.g., a crosswalk will be needed between the two sites) and transportation plan.
- Describe the school faculty plan detailing the changes in staffing patterns necessary to accommodate the increase in students, including the projected number of new staff that will need to be hired and changes in roles (including lines of authority). The school's staffing plan should include and explanation of changes in staffing necessary to accommodate the increase in students (and facility space if applicable), including the projected number of new staff that will need to be hired and changes in roles and responsibilities (e.g., flow chart with all faculty, with and without the new space).

**SECTION SIX MUST ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF THE SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR A PRESCHOOL EXPANSION.**

**VI. Early Learning Programs (Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs)**

*Schools seeking official recognition of their preschool programs must also complete the following application items A-F. Sections are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but not scored.*

**A. Explain the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment. Include at least the following information in this section:**

- Describe the schools existing and/or proposed plan for assessing each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.
- Explain how the assessment process measures individual child progress in all the prekindergarten and preschool instructional classes that includes the use of a standardized child assessment instrument, such as High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), Teaching Strategies Gold or Work Sampling System. *(To measure child progress, the assessment must be used at program entrance and program exit. At a minimum, the comprehensive assessment should measure children's progress in the domains of language and literacy and mathematical thinking. Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, and creativity and the arts.)*

**B. Explain the school's plan for intentional instructional practices. Include at least the following information in this section:**

- Describe your program's existing and/or proposed intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning and kindergarten standards and that is based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.
- Describe how the program content and intentional instructional practices are aligned with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards (ECIPs) available on the MDE website and include a very brief description of the curriculum used in the early learning program, such as Teaching Strategies Gold, High Scope, Opening the World of Learning (OWL).
- Describe how the existing and/or proposed program incorporates the Minnesota's Early Learning Standards (ECIPs). Provide an explanation of how the existing and/or proposed instructional practice supports children's early literacy skills development.

**C. Describe the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.**

- Explain how the school will coordinate and plan, along with kindergarten teachers, and engaging families in a variety of ways to support children's learning and successful transition to kindergarten.
- Include an explanation of the school plans to coordinate referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health, social services, mental health services, early childhood special education programs, or other early learning or childcare programs. Include a brief description of how the program intends to generally coordinate/collaborate with community organizations.

**D. Provide an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.**

- The plan must ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the first staff required to be a licensed early childhood teacher. Include a description of how the prekindergarten or preschool instructional program is provided and how ratios and group size ensure a high-quality early learning program.
- For each prekindergarten and preschool instructional class, describe faculty licensure and other credentials, as appropriate (table format with teacher name and license number is preferred).

**E. Provide an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development.**

- Describe how the school will ensure that the preschool teachers are qualified and have the necessary knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction.
- Include the school's plan for license faculty professional development on early learning curriculum and/or assessment that has been completed in the past five years. If it is a new program, describe the school's future plan.

**F. Describe the school's plan for early childhood screening.**

- Explain how the plan ensures that participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statutes section 121A.16 to 121A.19.
- Include a description of how participating children will receive health and developmental screening through a traditional school district or comparable screening from health care provider. (It is not necessary for the charter school to provide the health and developmental screening but must describe how children will receive the comprehensive health and developmental screening to identify possible problems that may interfere with children's learning.)

**VII. Applicant Interview.** Interview occurs after the peer desk review of the expansion application. Applicant (school representatives) and peer reviewers will participate in an interview process. Failure of the applicant to have a satisfactory interview could result in the automatic decline of the application.

## Expansion Appendix 1

### SCHOOL NAME SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROSTER

Member Name E-Mail	Board Position & Term	Group Represented (teacher, parent, community member)	Meeting Participation Rate
Jane Doe <a href="mailto:jdoe@gmail.com">jdoe@gmail.com</a>	Position: Chair Term:	Parent	<b>Example</b>  100% 😊
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR – LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			
MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GOVERNANCE TRAINING</b> – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li><b>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING</b> – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul>			

## Expansion Appendix 2

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXPANSION TEAM FACULTY INFORMATION

NAME	POSITION	FILE NUMBER	NUMBER OF YEARS AT X SCHOOL
Jane Doe	e.g., School Director		
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTIONS THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:			



### Expansion Appendix 3

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXISTING TEACHING FACULTY INFORMATION TABLE

(Teacher name should appear as it is found on the MDE Licensure Look-Up Page)

Name	Subject Area	Folder #	Years at X School	Total Years Teaching

### Expansion Appendix 4

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

#### STUDENT ENROLLMENT TABLE

GRADE	Prior Year	Current Year	Next Year 1	Est. Next Year 1 w/out expansion	Est. Next Year 2 w/expansion

#### 20XX-20XX STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

\_\_\_% Caucasian *est.*

\_\_\_% Black *est.*

\_\_\_% Hispanic *est.*

\_\_\_% Asian *est.*

\_\_\_% American Indian *est.*

\_\_\_% Special Education *est.*

\_\_\_% Free/Reduced Priced Lunch *est.*

Next Year 1 School Year Student Attendance Rate: \_\_\_%

## EXPANSION APPLICATION REVIEW RUBRIC

**Applicant Name**

**Peer Reviewer Name:**

### Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 90/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 90 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

<b>Application Preference:</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
Applicant has earned MDE “High Quality” charter school designation.		10 pts.	
Application is to replicate the high performing school.		10 pts.	

<b>Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)</b> <i>The executive summary provides a brief the rationale for the desired grade expansion and touches on the school’s most compelling arguments for each of the requirements listed in Minnesota Statutes, 124E.01, subd.5.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>Part II: NEED AND DEMAND (20 pts.)</b> <i>The application demonstrates that the expansion is supported by need and demand; supported with long-range enrollment projections.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (18-20 pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (16-17 pts.)		

<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		
<b>Part III: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (20 pts.)</b> <i>The application provides evidence that demonstrates student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B and that the school is meeting the school's primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		
<b>Part IV: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (20 pts.)</b> <i>The application demonstrates that the charter school has a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		
<b>Part V: LEADERSHIP CAPACITY (20 pts.)</b> <i>The application provides a compelling argument that the school has the capacity to expand. Applicants must demonstrate school board and management capacity to oversee the expansion. Application must contain a sound administrative and management plan to implement its expansion.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		
<b>Part VI: EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (not scored)</b> <i>Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs</i>		
<b>VI.A. The application explains the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.B. – The application explains the school's plan for intentional instructional practices.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		
<b>VI.C. The application describes the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>		

<b>VI.D. The application provides an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>VI.E. The application provides an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>VI.F. The application describes the school's plan for early childhood screening.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>VII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)</b>		
<i>Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their expansion application. Individuals participating in the interview are able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the proposed expansion of the school.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (18-20 pts)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)		
Base Score	/100	
Preference Points	/20	
Final Score	/100-120	

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**

## EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING APPLICATION

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The purpose of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Early Childhood Health and Development Screening Application is to provide VOA-MN with adequate information to reach a determination regarding a potential expansion and to assist in the process of crafting a strong affidavit for the Commissioner's approval if expansion is merited. The application follows the format of the criteria a charter school is required to meet in statute and must address the items contained in the outline below. This application is for schools that already have state-approved early childhood or Pre-K programs.

### Application Submission

Please send one complete electronic copy of the application to [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### Review Process and Final Determination

The application will be peer reviewed. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the review of the expansion application (e.g., reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). After the initial peer desk review of an application, the applicant / school representatives and peer reviewers will participate in an interview. The applicant interview focuses on expansions alignment with the charter school's mission and vision, applicant's knowledge of the proposed expansion plan and the applicant's capacity to implement the expansion. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process in order to further assess the quality of the application and expansion implementation team. After the interview, peer reviewers will make a recommendation to the Charter School Division leadership to approve or deny the charter school expansion application. The Charter School Division will communicate the determination in writing to the applicant after a final decision has been rendered by leadership. VOA-MN will provide the school with feedback from the application review process regardless of the determination.

If VOA-MN approves a charter school expansion application, the Authorizer will work with the developing team to prepare and submit its affidavit to MDE for authorization.

### Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of "unsatisfactory" in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

Applicants must earn a satisfactory rating in all categories.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The school has a state approved operational preschool program \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

**I. I. Executive Summary.** The application should commence with a brief executive summary which provides a rationale for the school to be approved to operate an early childhood health and development screening program.

**II. Describe the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood health and development screening program** in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2021, sections 121A.16 to 121A.19 and Minnesota Rules, parts 3530.3000 to 3530.4310. "Developmental screening" means identification of the motor, language, social-emotional, and cognitive status of the child. The plan must fully address items a-f below.

- a. The plan must include the school's plans for selecting a qualified:
  - Early childhood screening coordinator to be responsible for administering all components of the screening program.
  - Developmental screener
  - Vision and hearing screener
  - Dental screener
- b. The observational developmental screening instrument and the parent report social-emotional screening instrument the school will use, as required by Minnesota Rules, part 3530.3400. The Minnesota Department of Health website lists the recommended screening instruments.
- c. The school's plan to ensure the screening of each required component including vision, hearing, immunization review, review of risk factors that may impact learning, developmental screening (cognitive, fine/gross motor, speech/language, social-emotional), health care provider coverage, height, and weight.
- d. The school's plan to provide screening for English learners, including use of interpreters, translated forms, and translated screening instruments.
- e. The school's plan to ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment. The 90-day requirement also applies to voluntary prekindergarten, school readiness, school readiness plus, and early learning scholarships. Additionally, provide the school's plan to ensure all enrolled kindergarten students who have not previously been screened will receive the screening within 30 days after the first day of attendance.
- f. The school's plan for those children who do not successfully complete early childhood screening including how referrals and follow up will be made for vision, hearing, medical insurance, early childhood special education or mental health, early learning programs or public health home visiting programs.

**III. Describe the school's capacity to meet MDE accountability requirements for data submission ([Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.17](#))** Include the school's plans for establishment of the MARSS Preschool Screening (PS) Record and the annual data submission to MDE Early Learning Services for children receiving the early childhood screening program directly from the school or through a contracted service provider with a comparable screening program, such as a local public health organization.

**IV. Applicant Interview.** Interview occurs after the peer desk review of the expansion application. Applicant (school representatives) and peer reviewers will participate in an interview process. Failure of the applicant to have a satisfactory interview could result in the automatic decline of the application.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING (ECHDS) ADMINISTRATIVE AND TEAM**

## FACULTY INFORMATION

NAME	POSITION e.g., School Director	FILE NUMBER	NUMBER OF YEARS AT X SCHOOL
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO ECHDS:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO ECHDS:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO ECHDS:			
NAME			
QUALIFICATIONS:			
CONTRIBUTIONS THEY WILL MAKE TO ECHDS:			

## EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING APPLICATION REVIEW RUBRIC

This application is designed for schools that already have state-approved early childhood or Pre-K programs.

**Applicant Name**

**Peer Reviewer Name:**

### Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

<b>Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)</b>		
<i>The executive summary provides a brief rationale for approval to operate an early childhood health and development screening program.</i>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>Part II. the school's plan and capacity to provide the early childhood health and development screening program. The plan must fully address items a-f below.</b>		
<b>a. The plan must include the school's plans for selecting a qualified:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early childhood screening coordinator to be responsible for administering all components of the screening program.</li> <li>- Developmental screener</li> <li>- Vision and hearing screener</li> <li>- Dental screener</li> </ul>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>b. The observational developmental screening instrument and the parent report social-emotional screening instrument the school will use, as required by Minnesota Rules, part 3530.3400. The Minnesota Department of Health website lists the recommended screening instruments.</b>		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
<b>c. The school's plan to ensure the screening of each required component including vision, hearing, immunization review, review of risk factors that may impact learning, developmental screening</b>		



(cognitive, fine/gross motor, speech/language, social-emotional), health care provider coverage, height, and weight.		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
d. The school's plan to provide screening for English learners, including use of interpreters, translated forms, and translated screening instruments.		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
e. The school's plan to ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment. The 90-day requirement also applies to voluntary prekindergarten, school readiness, school readiness plus, and early learning scholarships. Additionally, provide the school's plan to ensure all enrolled kindergarten students who have not previously been screened will receive the screening within 30 days after the first day of attendance.		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
f. The school's plan for those children who do not successfully complete early childhood screening including how referrals and follow up will be made for vision, hearing, medical insurance, early childhood special education or mental health, early learning programs or public health home visiting programs.		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>III. Applicant describes the school's capacity to meet MDE accountability requirements for data submission.</b>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		
<b>IV: APPLICANT INTERVIEW</b> Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their expansion application. Individuals participating in the interview are able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the proposed expansion of the school.		
Rating (mark with a "X")		Comments:
Satisfactory		
Unsatisfactory		

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**



## Change in Authorizer Application Process

Letter of Intent due September 1<sup>st</sup> Annually

Application is due December 1<sup>st</sup> Annually

(Deadlines may change under certain circumstances with permission from MDE)

A charter school currently in operation in Minnesota under *Minnesota Statutes* 124E.10, Subd.5 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 change in authorizer request to the Minnesota Department of Education with the intent to authorize the charter school, per Minn. Stat. 124E.10, Subd.5. 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. 124E.10, Subd.5

*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:**

- Proof that 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 outperforming their local school district school with similar student demographics on the state exams. The school is meeting their present charter contract academic performance goals or making progress meeting the terms of their school improvement plan.
- Assurance that the school has been compliant with the majority of MDE reporting deadlines within the past two years.
- Explanation of the school's service-learning component in their education program or plans for developing one.
- Assurance that 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 of 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.

**INTERVIEW** - Applicants will be asked to participate in an interview with review team and VOA-MN Authorizing Program representatives.

**SUBMIT MATERIALS *ELECTRONICALLY* TO:** VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program  
c/o Stephanie Olsen, Program Manager, [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org)

**QUESTIONS:** Contact Stephanie Olsen at [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org) or 612-270-1998.



## **Change in Authorizer Application**

(Revised 2022)

**INTENT TO APPLY DEADLINE: September 1st**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 1st**

The following is an estimated timeline upon receipt of the school's transfer application:

- Approximately five business days for technical review and notice of invitation to apply.
- Approximately five days for distribution of applications to peer reviewers.
- Approximately 15 business days for peer desk review process.
- Approximately 5 business days for applicant to provide additional clarification / information based on concerns expressed in desk review.
- Approximately 5 business days after the peer reviewers receive supplemental information from Applicant, applicant interview occurs.
- Approximately 10 business days, final determination is issued from VOA-MN to applicant.
- Total estimated time span: 9-10 weeks.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Please provide the following information as part of your application for a change in authorizer (documents should be provided electronically and combined into one submission):

- 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.

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

- **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.

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.

- **Applicant Interview**

After the desk review of the application, candidates will be scheduled for an interview with the peer reviewers. Individuals participating in the interview must be prepared to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the school. Applicants must be prepared to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their change of authorizer application.

## CHANGE OF AUTHORIZER APPLICATION REVIEW RUBRIC PHASE 1: LETTER OF INTENT

**Applicant Name:**

**Peer Reviewer Name:**

*Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 45/50 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved.

<b>School Mission and Vision Fit with VOA-MN</b> <i>The Letter of Intent contains an explanation of how the school’s mission and vision align with VOA-MN Authorizing Program mission and vision.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (9-10pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (7-8pts)		
Unsatisfactory (pts)		
<b>Authorizer / School Alignment</b> <i>The Letter of Intent contains an explanation of why the school believes VOA-MN would be an appropriate authorizer for the school.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (9-10pts)		
Approaching Satisfactory (7-8 pts.)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)		
<b>School Financial Health</b> <i>The Letter of Intent contains information on the fiscal health of the school. 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.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)		
Approaching Satisfactory (7-8 pts.)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)		
<b>Academic Performance</b> <i>The Letter of Intent contains information on how 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 outperforming their local school district school with similar student demographics on the state exams. The school is meeting their present charter contract academic performance goals.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (9-10pts.)		
Approaching Satisfactory (7-8 pts.)		
Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)		
<b>Service Learning</b> <i>The Letter of Intent contains an explanation of the school’s service-learning component in their education program or plans for developing one.</i>		
Rating (mark with a "X")		<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)		
Approaching Satisfactory (7-8 pts.)		

<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)	
<b>Reporting Compliance – Not scored</b>	
<i>The Letter of Intent includes an assurance that the school has been compliant with the majority of MDE reporting deadlines within the past two years.</i>	
<b>Rating (mark with a "X")</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	
<b>Website Compliance – Not scored</b>	
<i>The Letter of Intent contains an assurance that the school's website is compliant with all statutory requirements.</i>	
<b>Rating (mark with a "X")</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	
<b>Final Score</b>	/50
NOTE: School must earn a minimum score of 45/50 (90%) for approval to proceed to apply	

**Reviewer Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ Approve      \_\_\_\_\_ Not Approve

## Change of Authorizer Application Rubric

**Peer Reviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

*Note: A rating of "unsatisfactory" in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

**Point System:** Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 90/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved.

<b>I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)</b> <i>The executive summary provides a brief rationale for the desired change in authorizer and touches on the school's most compelling arguments for choosing VOAMN as their potential new authorizer.</i>							
<div style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">Rating (mark with a "X")</div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;"><i>Satisfactory</i></td> <td style="width: 5%; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Unsatisfactory</i></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Satisfactory</i>		<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		<b>Comments:</b>		
<i>Satisfactory</i>							
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>							
<b>II. LEARNING PROGRAM (25 pts)</b> <i>The applicant describes the guiding educational philosophy of the school. Information in this section includes an overview of the curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy. The applicant cites and explains research supporting these curricula, tools, techniques and methods support all pupil learning and all student achievement. This section includes a discussion of how the learning program aligns with the school's mission, vision, and goals. The section includes a description of the school's professional development plan.</i>							
<div style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">Rating</div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;"><i>Satisfactory</i> (23-25 pts)</td> <td style="width: 5%; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Approaching Satisfactory</i> (20-22 pts.)</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Unsatisfactory</i> (0 pts.)</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Satisfactory</i> (23-25 pts)		<i>Approaching Satisfactory</i> (20-22 pts.)		<i>Unsatisfactory</i> (0 pts.)		<b>Comments:</b>
<i>Satisfactory</i> (23-25 pts)							
<i>Approaching Satisfactory</i> (20-22 pts.)							
<i>Unsatisfactory</i> (0 pts.)							



### III. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (20 pts)

*The application demonstrates that the charter school has a history of sound school finances and policies in place to promote the school's financial sustainability. The applicant describes how the school board appropriately oversees the school's financials and explains the financial training the board members have received. The applicant describes how the school board is 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).*

Rating		Comments:
<b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		

### IV. BOARD GOVERNANCE (20 pts)

*The application describes the school's governance model (i.e. how is membership defined, board composition, etc.). The applicant explains how the school governance model provides quality oversight of the school. Board composition and school website is compliant with requirements set forth in state law.*

Rating		Comments:
<b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		

### V. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS (15 pts)

*The applicant describes the school's leadership structure and explains how the structure supports both the learning program and effective operations of the school. Application includes a complete faculty roster with names, positions, and for classroom teachers their license number and assignment. The application provides an explanation of the school's facility and includes a discussion of any changes that have occurred to improve the physical learning environment.*

Rating		Comments:
<b>Satisfactory</b> (14-15 pts.)		
<b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (12-13 pts.)		
<b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)		

**VII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)**

*Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their change of authorizer application.*

*Individuals participating in the interview were able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the school.*

<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b><i>Satisfactory</i></b> (18-20 pts)		
<b><i>Approaching Satisfactory</i></b> (16-17 pts.)		
<b><i>Unsatisfactory</i></b> (0)		
<b>Final Score</b>	/ 100	

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**



## CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT

between  
Volunteers of America-Minnesota, Authorizer  
and  
SCHOOL (#4), School

WHEREAS, the primary purpose of the School is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement;

WHEREAS, additional purpose of the School to includes to increase learning opportunities for all pupils.

NOW, THEREFORE, Volunteers of America-Minnesota grants this Contract conferring certain rights, privileges, and obligations of a charter school and confirms the continued status of a charter school to the School. In addition, the parties agree that the granting of this Contract is subject to the following terms and conditions.

### ARTICLE 1 TERM OF CHARTER CONTRACT

1.1 Effective date: July 1, \_\_\_\_\_.

1.2 Expiration date: June 30, \_\_\_\_\_.

1.3 Survival of Terms. The following clauses survive the expiration or cancellation of this contract: 1. Liability; 2. State and Federal Audits; 3. Government Data Practices and Intellectual Property; 4. Publicity and Endorsement; 5. Governing Law, Jurisdiction, and Venue; 6. Data Disclosure; and 7. Dissolution.

### ARTICLE 2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 "Charter Contract" means this contract between the Authorizer and the School as required by Minnesota Charter School Law, Minn. Stat. § 124E.10.

2.2 "Applicable Law" means all state and federal laws and rules applicable to Minnesota charter schools and any regulations and guidelines issued pursuant to those laws and rules. This includes changes made to Applicable Law by Congress, Minnesota Legislature and/or appropriate federal and state agencies.

2.3 "School Program Description" means the school program parameters agreed upon by the Authorizer and the School for the length of this Contract, as evidenced by Addendum A ("Charter School Program").

2.4 "Charter Law" means the Minnesota Statutes § 124E.10 *et seq.*, as amended, and any rules or regulations adopted by the Education Commissioner relating to this law.

2.5 “Charter School Board” means the Board established to govern the School, as required under Minnesota Statutes § 124E.07.

2.6 The “Authorizer” refers to the Volunteers of America of Minnesota.

2.7 The “School” refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

2.8 “Education Commissioner” means the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education or his or her designee.

2.9 “Department” means the Minnesota Department of Education.

2.10 State” means the State of Minnesota.

2.11 “School information” includes all educational data, as defined in Minnesota Statutes §13.32; any and all data related to employees; any and all complaints filed by the School as required by federal and state law and all complaints filed against the School or any of its employees; any and all investigative files and the results of any investigations; any and all financial information as required to be disclosed under the Minnesota Data Practices Act; and any data or other information that the Authorizer deems reasonably necessary to carry out its role.

### **ARTICLE 3**

#### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA OF MINNESOTA**

3.1 Voluntary Authorization. Volunteers of America of Minnesota qualifies as an authorizer pursuant to Minnesota Statute 124E.10 Subd.3. In granting this Contract, Volunteers of America of Minnesota voluntarily exercises powers given to Volunteers of America of Minnesota pursuant to Applicable Law to authorize charter schools. Nothing in this Contract shall be deemed to be any waiver of Volunteers of America of Minnesota’s autonomy or power.

3.2. Independent Status of the School. The School is not and shall not be deemed to be a division or part of Volunteers of America of Minnesota. The relationship between the School and Volunteers of America of Minnesota is based solely on the applicable provisions of the Charter School Act and the terms of this Contract or other written contracts or written agreements between Volunteers of America of Minnesota and the school. Except as otherwise provided in this Contract, Volunteers of America of Minnesota shall have no authority or control over operational, administrative, or financial responsibility for the School.

3.3. Financial Obligations Are Separate. Any contract or other instrument of indebtedness entered into by the School and a third party shall not in any way constitute an obligation, either general, special, or moral, of Volunteers of America of Minnesota. The School will never pledge the full faith and credit of Volunteers of America of Minnesota for the payment of any School contract, loan, or other instrument of indebtedness.

Any contract or other instrument of indebtedness entered into by Volunteers of America of Minnesota and a third party shall not in any way constitute an obligation, either general, special, or moral, of the School. Volunteers of America of Minnesota will never pledge the full faith and credit of

the School for the payment of any Volunteers of America of Minnesota contract, loan, or other instrument of indebtedness.

3.4 No Authority to Obligate or Bind Other Party. The School has no authority whatsoever to enter into any contract or other agreement that would financially obligate Volunteers of America of Minnesota, nor does the School have any authority whatsoever to make any representations to lenders or third parties, that Volunteers of America of Minnesota in any way guarantees, is financially obligated, or is in any way responsible for any contract, loan or other instrument of indebtedness entered into by the School.

Volunteers of America of Minnesota has no authority whatsoever to enter into any contract or other agreement that would financially obligate the School, nor does Volunteers of America of Minnesota have any authority whatsoever to make any representations to lenders or third parties, that the School in any way guarantees, is financially obligated, or is in any way responsible for any contract, loan or other instrument of indebtedness entered into by the Volunteers of America of Minnesota.

3.5 Limited Use of Volunteers of America of Minnesota Name. The School may not use the name of the Volunteers of America of Minnesota or any assumed name, trademark, division or affiliation of Volunteers of America of Minnesota in any of the School's promotional advertising, contracts, or other materials without Volunteers of America of Minnesota prior written consent, except that the School may include the following statement in such materials "\_\_\_\_\_ is authorized by Volunteers of America-Minnesota." Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 124E.07, Subd.8, the School shall identify Volunteers of America of Minnesota as the authorizer and provide contact information.

## **ARTICLE 4 LEGAL STRUCTURE**

4.1 Nonprofit Status. The Charter School Board is organized and operated as a nonprofit corporation under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317A, as amended.

4.2 Articles of Incorporation. The Charter School Board is organized and operated as a nonprofit and within the parameters of their state approved Articles of Incorporation under and by virtue of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317A, as amended. The School must notify the Authorizer of any changes to the Articles of Incorporation approved by the Minnesota Secretary of State.

4.3 Bylaws. The Charter School Board is organized and must operate within the parameters of their approved bylaws. The School will notify the Authorizer of any amendments to the bylaws. At its discretion, the Authorizer may provide review and comment on the proposed amendments. The School will consider the Authorizer's review and comment.

4.4 Lease Space. The School may lease space from any public or nonsectarian private organization as it deems necessary. If the School intends to lease from a private sectarian organization, it will comply with the provisions of the Charter Law, specifically Minnesota Statutes § 124E.22. Prior to finalizing a lease for space, the School will submit an application to the Department for approval. The School will provide a copy of the Department's decision, to the Authorizer within thirty days of receipt.

4.5 Authorized Grades. The School is authorized to serve grades \_\_\_\_\_. The School will not expand its present grade levels without approval by the Authorizer and the Education Commissioner, consistent with the Charter Law or Minnesota Statutes § 124E.06, subd.5.

## **ARTICLE 5 SCHOOL LOCATION**

5.1 The location of the School is \_\_\_\_\_.

5.2 The School will notify the Authorizer of any anticipated change in geographical location. At its discretion, the Authorizer may provide review and comment on the proposed change in location. The School will consider the Authorizer's review and comment.

5.3 The School will not expand to additional school sites beyond the present location(s) without approval by the Authorizer and the Education Commissioner, consistent with the Charter Law or Minnesota Statutes § 124E.06, subd.5.

## **ARTICLE 6 OPERATING REQUIREMENTS**

6.1 Governance Structure. The School shall be governed by a Board of Directors. The School will file changes in the membership of the Board with the Authorizer and Department. The Board will be composed of at least five nonrelated members and include: (1) at least one licensed teacher employed as a teacher at the school or providing instruction under a contract between the charter school and a cooperative; (2) at least one parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the charter school; and (3) at least one interested community member who resides in Minnesota and is not employed by the charter school and does not have a child enrolled in the school. The board may include a majority of teachers or parents or community members, or it may have no clear majority. The chief financial officer and the chief administrator are ex-officio nonvoting board members. No charter school employees shall serve on the board other than licensed teachers employed as a teacher at the school. Board bylaws shall outline the process and procedures for changing the board's governance model, consistent with Chapter 317A and Charter Law.

Contractors providing facilities, goods, or services to a charter school may not serve on the board of directors of the charter school. A board may change its governance structure only: (1) by a majority vote of the board of directors and a majority vote of the licensed teachers employed by the school as teachers, including licensed teachers providing instruction under a contract between the school and a cooperative; and (2) with the authorizer's approval. Any change in board governance structure must conform with the composition of the board established under Charter Law.

6.2 Charter School Board Election. Charter School Board elections will be conducted as provided in the Charter Law. Board elections must be held during the school year but may not be conducted on days when the school is closed for holidays, breaks, or vacations. The charter school will notify eligible voters of the school board election dates at least 30 days before the election.

6.3 Background Checks. Prior to the time such persons are seated as members of the Charter School Board, the School will conduct a criminal background check identical to those required by Minnesota Statutes § 123B.03, subd.1. The Charter School Board will certify to the Authorizer that background checks have been completed. Consistent with data practices law, the Charter School Board will provide to the Authorizer any adverse information that is revealed as part of the background checks and will evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, membership on the Charter School Board where the background check revealed adverse information.

6.4 Training. Every charter school board member shall attend annual training throughout the member's term on the board. All new board members shall attend initial training on the board's role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial management. A new board member who does not begin the required initial training within six months after being seated and complete that training within 12 months of being seated on the board is automatically ineligible to continue to serve as a board member. The school shall include in its annual report the training attended by each board member during the previous year. The Charter School Board will submit its plan for training to the Authorizer annually, and attend additional training reasonably required by the Authorizer.

6.5 Powers. The Charter School Board will provide policy leadership including, but not limited to, long range planning and goal-setting for the School consistent with the school's approved mission; holding the School accountable for meeting its goals; and overseeing and approving an annual budget. The board may not levy taxes or issue bonds.

6.6 Board Operations. All meetings and business of the Charter School Board will comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13 and the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13D.

6.7 Frequency of Board Meetings. The Charter School Board will meet as provided in the bylaws. A copy of the agenda, minutes and all related documents will be provided to the Authorizer prior to the public meeting. At the request of the Authorizer, the Charter School Board will provide the Authorizer an opportunity to address the Charter School Board regarding matters determined by the Authorizer.

6.8 Board Responsibilities. The board of directors shall decide and be responsible for policy matters related to the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum programming, personnel, and operating procedures. The board shall maintain a policy on nepotism in employment and other policies required by state or federal law. Charter Law requires that the board maintain personnel evaluation policies and practices that, at a minimum: (1) carry out the school's mission and goals; (2) evaluate the execution of charter contract goals and commitments; (3) evaluate student achievement, postsecondary and workforce readiness, and student engagement and connection goals; (4) establish a teacher evaluation process; and (5) provide professional development related to the individual's job responsibilities.

6.9 School Web Site. The Charter School Board shall publish and maintain on the school's official Web site all items required by state and federal law and Authorizer, including, but not limited to: (1) the minutes of meetings of the board of directors for at least one calendar year from the date of publication; (2) directory information for members of the board of directors, (3) names of members of committees having board-delegated authority, (4) board meeting calendar, (5) board- approved school budget, (6) School Annual Report, (7) school admissions policy including lottery process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot and early admissions requirements when applicable, (7) Authorizer name and contact information, (8) the name, mailing address, bylaws, minutes of board meetings, and names of the current board of directors of the affiliated nonprofit building corporation.

6.10 Employment Terms and Conditions. The Charter School Board is subject to section Minnesota Statutes Chapter 181.932. When offering employment to a prospective employee, a charter school must give that employee a written description of the terms and conditions of employment and the school's personnel policies.

6.11 Authorization of Employment. The Charter School Board will employ and contract with necessary teachers, as defined by Minnesota Statutes § 122A.15, subd.1, who hold valid teaching licenses issued by the State to perform the particular service for which they are employed at the School.

6.12 Non-Licensed Personnel. The Charter School Board or its delegate may employ necessary employees who are not required to hold teaching licenses to perform duties other than teaching, and may contract for other services.

6.13 Administrative Leadership. A person, without holding a valid administrator's license, may perform administrative, supervisor, or instructional leadership duties. The Charter School Board will establish and maintain qualifications for persons that hold administrative, supervisory or instructional leadership roles. The qualifications will include at least the following areas: instruction and assessment; human resource and personnel management; financial management; legal and compliance management; effective communication; and board, authorizer, and community relationships. The Charter School Board will use those qualifications as the basis for job descriptions, hiring, and annual performance evaluations of those who hold administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership roles. The Charter School Board and an individual who does not hold a valid administrative license and who serves in an administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership position shall develop and maintain a professional development plan. Documentation of the implementation and maintenance of the professional development plan of these persons shall be included in the school's Annual Report.

6.14 Collective Bargaining. If employees of the School choose to engage in collective bargaining, the School will comply with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 179A, the Public Employment Labor Relations Act ("PELRA").

6.15 Non-Sectarian Operation. The School will be non-sectarian in its program, admission policies, and employment practices, and for all other purposes.

6.16 Home School Students. The School will not be used as a method of generating revenue for students who are being home schooled pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 120A.22.

6.17 School Admissions. The School may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability, nor may it condition admission on criteria or take any action that would violate the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 363A. The charter school shall not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student in a charter school.

A charter school shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. The charter school must develop and publish, including on its Web site, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot.

A charter school shall give enrollment preference to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents and may give preference for enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lot. A charter school may give enrollment preference to children currently enrolled in the school's free preschool or prekindergarten program under section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (a), who are eligible to enroll in kindergarten in the next school year.

A person shall not be admitted to a charter school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences; or (2) as a first grade student, unless the pupil is at least six years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten; except that a charter school may establish and



publish on its Web site a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in this section.

Once a student is enrolled in the school, the student is considered enrolled in the school until the student formally withdraws or is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act in sections 121A.40 to 121A.56. A charter school is subject to and must comply with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, sections 121A.40 to 121A.56.

6.18 Reporting to the Authorizer.

(a) Reports. The School will file reports with the Authorizer regarding the program and financial status of the school according to the terms of this Contract and the Volunteers of America of Minnesota Annual Submission Calendar.

(b) Other Reports. The School and the Authorizer will file all reports with the Education Commissioner consistent with the procedures established by the Department.

(c) Violations of Law. The School will promptly notify the Authorizer of all complaints that allege that a violation of state or federal law or regulation has been committed by the School, its employees or agents, unless such reporting would be in non-compliance with a state or federal law.

6.19 Financial Management.

(a) Financial Reports. The School will provide the Authorizer a copy of the annual budget for review and comment prior to its approval by the Charter School Board, if requested by the Authorizer. The School also will provide the Authorizer periodic reports of the financial status of the School.

(b) UFARS and MARSS. The School will utilize the UFARS financial accounting principles and MARSS student accounting requirements.

(c) Audits. The School will comply with the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements of school districts required in Minnesota Statutes §§ 123B.75-.83. The School will be audited annually by a public accounting firm hired by the Charter School Board and the annual audit will be submitted to the Department and Authorizer no later than December 31 of each year. The School will make available for review by the Authorizer all financial records at such times as requested by the Authorizer.

(d) Creditors. The School will pay all creditors within 30 days of receipt on an outstanding invoice, pursuant to the State's prompt payment law, Minnesota Statutes § 16A.124, subd.3. If the School has any payments to creditors for which there is an outstanding liability of over 90 days, the School will provide the Authorizer a written statement explaining the reasons for the delay and a proposal for payment of the outstanding liability.

6.20 Transportation. Transportation will be provided for students enrolled at the School in accordance with the Charter Law and other applicable state and federal laws.

6.21 Insurance. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Charter Contract, the School is considered a school district for the purposes of tort liability under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 466. The School Board of Directors shall acquire and maintain at least the amount and types of insurance coverage up to the applicable tort liability limits under Chapter 466.04. The School agrees to provide the Authorizer with certificates of insurance at least annually or as otherwise requested by the Authorizer.

The board must submit changes in its insurance carrier or policy to its Authorizer within 20 business days of the change.

## **ARTICLE 7**

### **SCHOOL PROGRAM, PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND EVALUATION**

7.1 Academic Program and Curriculum. The school will implement and adhere to the academic program and curriculum set forth in Addendum A (“School Program Description”).

7.2 Methods of Assessment. The School shall evaluate student’s work based on the assessment strategies identified in this Contract and in its annual report. The School and the Authorizer agree that the School’s operation under the Charter Contract shall be measured by the school performance indicators set forth in this Contract, including academic outcomes, standards for governance, financial management, and school operation as set forth in state and federal law and Addendum B (“School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”).

- (1) Regular Assessments. Volunteers of America will monitor student academic achievement by reviewing student testing and assessments.
- (2) Government Required Assessments. School students will take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests and any other testing required by Applicable Law.

The School will comply with the requirements of the Minnesota Graduation Standards, as defined by Minnesota Statutes §§ 120B.02 and 120B.024; and Minnesota Rules parts 3501.0010–.0280.

- (3) District Assessment Plan. The School will annually adopt a Board-approved Assessment Plan. The Plan will utilize a variety of assessment techniques to measure student progress towards state standards. These measures include internal and external assessments. The School will submit the board-approved school Assessment Plan to the authorizer by September 1<sup>st</sup> annually.
- (4) Test Results. The School will provide the Authorizer results of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments at such time they are available.

7.3 Professional Development. The School will ensure that each teacher at the School has a professional development plan that focuses in part on developing quality assessments, measures of student outcomes, and effective teaching strategies. The School will provide the Authorizer with a calendar for planned staff development according to the Volunteers of America-Minnesota Annual Submission Calendar.

7.4 Contract Amendments. The charter contract will be amended as warranted by Minnesota Department of Education approval of an additional school site(s) and/or additional grade levels served, or significant changes in state law. The charter contract may be amended during the term of the contract if the Authorizer and School mutually agree that the school specific academic goals (performance targets) are not attainable.

7.5 VOA-MN Charter School Network Meetings. The School agrees to participate in Volunteers of America of Minnesota Charter School Network Meetings and the Authorizer will monitor the School’s attendance at Network Meetings. The goal of participation in the Network Meetings is to share information and resources, and identify resources, and School agrees to do so. The Network Meetings are comprised of two representatives from each Volunteers of America Minnesota authorized charter

school (one person in an administrative position and one person from the Charter School Board). The Authorizer will convene Network Meetings no more than twice annually.

7.6 Service Learning. The Authorizer requires that the School annually engage in planned and meaningful service learning activities. The school will have a Service Learning Plan. The school reserves the right to amend the annual plan as needed. The school should develop a corresponding locally determined method of evaluation to measure the level of student and community engagement and benefit from each service learning opportunity. The school shall include their annual plan for service learning and related evaluation results in the school Annual Report of the following year.

## **ARTICLE 8 COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS**

8.1 State Laws. The School shall comply with applicable state laws.

- (1) Students with a Disability. The School shall comply with Minnesota Statutes Chapters A charter school must comply with sections 125A and 124E and rules relating to the education of pupils with a disability as though it were a district. Consistent with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, the financial parameters within which the School will operate to provide special education instruction and related services to students with disabilities will be based on the individual needs of the student, as defined by the student's evaluation and by the instruction and related services specified in the student's Individual Education Plan ("IEP"). Refer to Addendum C ("Special Education Services").
- (2) Health and Safety. The school will meet all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements applicable to school districts. (Minnesota Statutes § 124E.03, subd.2).
- (3) Immunizations. The School shall comply with Minnesota Statutes section 121A.15, requiring proof of student immunization against measles, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, mumps, and hemophilia influenza type B prior to enrollment.
- (4) Human Rights Act. The School shall comply with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A, which prohibits unfair discriminatory practices in employment, public accommodations, public service, or education; and comply with Minnesota Statutes section 121A.04, which governs provisions of equal opportunities for members of both sexes to participate in athletics.
- (5) Student Discipline and Dismissal. The school will comply with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.
- (6) Fee Law. The school shall comply with the Minnesota Public Schools Fee Law, Minnesota Statutes §§ 123B.34-.39, which governs authorized and prohibited student fees.
- (7) Annual Report. The School will publish an Annual Report approved by the Board. The report will contain all information required by the Authorizer and the Education Commissioner consistent with the provisions of the Charter Law at § 124E.16, subd.2. The Annual Report will be filed in a timely manner. The School may include other information in the Annual Report. The School will distribute the Annual Report by publication, mail, or electronic means to the Authorizer, school employees, and parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the charter school and must also post the report on the charter school's official Web site. The reports are public data under Chapter 13.

8.2 Federal Laws. The School shall comply with applicable federal laws.

## **ARTICLE 9 AUTHORIZER DUTIES**

9.1 Oversight Plan. The Authorizer will implement a plan to provide ongoing oversight to determine whether the School is complying with the terms of this Charter Contract and to meet its responsibilities under the law regarding Authorizer oversight. Refer to Addendum A (“School Program Description”) and Addendum B (“School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”). The Authorizer will use the following five criteria in determining the School’s compliance with this Charter Contract:

(a) Mission and Program Model Implementation. The Authorizer will evaluate whether the School has been faithful to the terms of this Agreement regarding the implementation of the School’s design pursuant to the Application submitted to the Department.

(b) Governance. The Authorizer will evaluate whether the Charter School Board is performing its governance responsibilities.

(c) Student and school performance. The Authorizer will evaluate whether the performance of the students and the School meet the Authorizer expectations as provided in this Contract and Addendum B (“School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”).

(d) Finance. The Authorizer will evaluate whether the School is using its resources in compliance with the law and is engaging in adequate fiscal planning for future years.

(e) Operation of the School. The Authorizer will evaluate whether the School is meeting the administrative requirements of the Charter Law.

9.2 Site-Visits. The Authorizer will conduct a minimum of one formal site visit and one informal site visit in the course of an academic year. Formal site visits will be guided by the Volunteers of America of Minnesota Formal Site Visit Rubric. Volunteers of America of Minnesota may engage in scheduled and unscheduled site-visits at such frequency as determined necessary or prudent by Volunteers of America of Minnesota.

9.3 Authorizer Fee. The Authorizer shall monitor and evaluate the academic, financial, operational, and governance performance of the school (refer also to Addendum B and F), and may for this purpose annually assess a charter school a fee. The School shall pay a fee for Volunteers of America of Minnesota execution of its oversight duties. The fee shall be the maximum fee provided by the Charter Law, except that if Minnesota law is amended to increase this fee, the school will pay the increased fee.

9.4 Liaison. The Authorizer will designate a liaison for the School and will inform the School if the liaison changes. The name of the liaison and the liaison’s duties are included in Addendum B (“School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”).

## **ARTICLE 10 CAUSES FOR NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION**

10.1 Grounds. The Authorizer may or may not renew the Agreement at the end of the term for any ground listed in Article nine of the Charter Contract. The Authorizer may unilaterally terminate the Agreement during the term of the Agreement for any ground listed in Article nine of the Charter

Contract and Addendum B (“School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”). The grounds for non-renewal or termination for cause must be consistent with Charter Law.

10.2 Formal Notice. At least 60 business days before not renewing or terminating the Agreement, the Authorizer shall notify the Charter School Board of the proposed action in writing. The notice shall state the grounds for the proposed action in reasonable detail and that the Charter School Board may request in writing an informal hearing before the authorizer within 15 business days of receiving notice of nonrenewal or termination of the Agreement. Failure by the Charter School Board to make a written request for an informal hearing within the 15-business-day period shall be treated as acquiescence to the proposed action. Upon receiving a timely written request for a hearing, the Authorizer shall give ten business days' notice to the Charter School Board of the hearing date. The Authorizer shall conduct an informal hearing before taking final action. The Authorizer shall take final action to renew or not renew a contract no later than 20 business days before the proposed date for terminating the contract or the end date of the contract.

10.3 Termination and Nonrenewal. The Charter Contract may be terminated or not renewed upon any of the following grounds:

- (1) failure to demonstrate satisfactory academic achievement for all students, including the requirements for pupil performance contained in the contract;
- (2) failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
- (3) violations of law; or (4) other good cause shown.

If a contract is terminated or not renewed under this paragraph, the school must be dissolved according to the applicable law and the terms of the Charter Contract.

10.4. Mutual Nonrenewal or Termination. If the Authorizer and the Charter School Board mutually agree not to renew the Agreement, a change in authorizers is allowed. The Authorizer and the Charter School Board must jointly submit a written and signed letter of their intent to the Commissioner to mutually not renew the Agreement. If no change in authorizer is approved by the Commissioner, the School and the Authorizer may withdraw their letter of nonrenewal and enter into a new Agreement. 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 Agreement, the school must be dissolved according to applicable law and the terms of the Charter Contract.

10.5 Commissioner Termination for Cause. The Commissioner, after providing reasonable notice to the Charter School Board and the Authorizer, and after providing an opportunity for a public hearing, may terminate the existing contract between the Authorizer and the Charter School Board if the charter school has a history of:

- (1) failure to meet pupil performance requirements consistent with state law;
- (2) financial mismanagement or failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or
- (3) repeated or major violations of the law.

10.6 Dissolution. In the event that the Charter School Board unilaterally votes to close the School or the school must be dissolved under section 10.3 or 10.4 of the Charter Contract, the school must be dissolved according to applicable state and federal laws and the terms of the Agreement. Refer to Addendum E (“School Closure Plan”).

## **ARTICLE 11 GENERAL TERMS**

11.1 Amendments. The Charter Contract may only be amended by written agreement executed by both parties.

11.2 Authorizer Authority. Except as otherwise provided by the Charter Contract or Applicable Law, the Authorizer has no authority, control, power, administrative or financial responsibility over the School. This provision does not prohibit the parties from contracting for any services deemed appropriate in the future.

11.3 Assumption of Liability. The School and the Charter School Board may sue and be sued. The School and the Charter School Board accept liability for all actions arising out of, or in any manner connected with, the School's operations.

11.4 Indemnification. The School will assume full liability for its activities and indemnifies and holds harmless the Authorizer. The Authorizer, the Authorizer's board members and employees, are immune from civil and criminal liability with respect to all activities related to the School. The School agrees not to sue the Authorizer or any of its representatives for any matters that may arise under the Charter Contract. The School and Authorizer acknowledge and agree that the Commissioner, Authorizer, members of the board of the Authorizer in their official capacity, and employees of the Authorizer are immune from civil or criminal liability with respect to all activities related to a charter school they approve or authorize. Notwithstanding Minn. Stat. 3.736, the School shall assume full liability for its activities and indemnify and hold harmless the Authorizer and its officers, agents, and employees from any suit, claim, or liability arising from any operation of the School and the Commissioner and Department officers, agents, and employees.

11.5 Severability. If any provision in the Charter Contract is held to be invalid or unenforceable, it will be ineffective only to the extent of the invalidity, without affecting or impairing the validity and enforceability of the remainder of the Agreement.

11.6 Non-agency. It is understood that the School is not the agent of the Authorizer.

11.7 General Compliance and Assurances. The School and the Authorizer agree to comply with all Applicable Laws including, but not limited to, the Charter Law. In addition, the School and the Authorizer assure that they are eligible entities under the Charter Law.

As the designated Representative for Volunteers of America of Minnesota, I hereby issue this contract to the School.

[AUTHORIZER]

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date) (Position Held)

As the authorized representative for the School, I hereby certify that the school is able to comply with the contract and all applicable law and that the school, through its governing board, has approved and agreed to comply with and be bound by the terms and conditions of this contract.

[SCHOOL]

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(date)

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(Board Chair)

The charter contract addendums are as follows:

- A. School Program Description
- B. School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System
- C. Special Education
- D. Signed Board Member Assurances
- E. School Closure Plan
- F. Authorizer School Renewal Evaluation or Ready to Open Standards (when applicable)

**SCHOOL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

INSERT SCHOOL LOGO HERE

**SCHOOL NAME:**

**FIRST SCHOOL YEAR SERVING STUDENTS:**

**GRADES SERVED:**

**GRADES APPROVED TO SERVE:**

**SCHOOL ADDRESS:**

**SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER:**

**SCHOOL WEBSITE:**

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**SCHOOL MISSION:**

**SCHOOL VISION:**

**SCHOOL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** *i.e. Program model, instructional strategies, unique characteristics, curriculum - limit two pages):*

**DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND ELECTION PROCESS**

The Charter Law requires the board of directors to decide and be responsible for policy matters related to the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum programming, personnel, and operating procedures. The board shall maintain a policy on nepotism in employment. The board shall maintain personnel evaluation policies and practices that, at a minimum: (1) carry out the school's mission and goals; (2) evaluate the execution of charter contract goals and commitments; (3) evaluate student achievement, postsecondary and workforce readiness, and student engagement and connection goals; (4) establish a teacher evaluation process; and (5) provide professional development funding related to the individual's job responsibilities.

Charter School Law requires that every charter school board member attends annual training throughout the member's term on the board. All new board members are required to attend initial training on the board's role and responsibilities, employment policies and practices, and financial management. A new board member who does not begin the required initial training within six months after being seated and complete that training within 12 months of being seated on the board is automatically ineligible to continue to serve as a board member. The school board maintains a record of member board training and sends copies to Authorizer VOA-MN. In summary, the school board is responsible for: Hire/evaluate director; Set & maintain & promote mission, vision, strategic plan; Sign contracts and approve employment matters; Provide oversight of state/MDE, federal and charter authorizer requirements.

Consistent with the Charter School Law, the school notifies eligible voters of the school board election dates at least 30 days before the election. School elections are held on an annual basis at a time and date set by the board and in accordance with statutes. Staff members employed at the school, including teachers providing instruction under a contract with a cooperative, members of the board of directors, and all parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the school are the voters eligible to elect the members of the school's board of directors.



The Board will be composed of \_\_\_\_\_ qualified members who are passionate about the school's success and demonstrate professional expertise in curriculum, instruction, assessment, finance, facilities, law, business management, governance, administration, management, and experience in working with targeted student population. Additionally, the Board will be composed of officers including Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary (amend if needed to fit your bylaws). Standing committees may include Budget and Finance, Audit, Marketing and Recruitment, and Academic Performance. The Board Chair will convene special advisory committees as deemed necessary by the Board.

#### **SCHOOL'S PRESENT GOVERNING BOARD**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b> (i.e. PARENT / CHAIR)	<b>TERM</b> (start and end dates)

#### **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION / MANAGEMENT TEAM**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF POSITION DESCRIPTION / RESPONSIBILITIES</b>

#### **SCHOOL FACULTY**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF POSITION DESCRIPTION / RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
e.g. elementary classroom teacher / math teacher/para/custodian, etc.	

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT:** Minnesota Statue 124E, set forth certain requirements the School must follow when enrolling students. The School may limit admission to:

- (1) pupils within an age group or grade level;
- (2) pupils who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program; or
- (3) residents of a specific geographic area in which the school is located when the majority of students served by the school are members of underserved populations.

The School shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. The charter school must develop and publish, including on its Web site, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot.

The School shall give enrollment preference to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents and may give preference for enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lot.

A person shall not be admitted to the School (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences; or (2) as a first grade student, unless the pupil is at least six years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten; except that a charter school may establish and publish on its Web site a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in the aforementioned paragraphs.

The School may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability and may not establish any criteria or requirements for admission that are inconsistent with this subdivision. The School shall not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student in a charter school. The School will abide by the board approved school enrollment policy and procedures and applicable laws.

#### **Enrollment Projections**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Next Year 1</b>	<b>Next Year 2</b>	<b>Next Year 3</b>
PK				
K				
1 <sup>st</sup> grade				
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade				
3rd grade				
4 <sup>th</sup> grade				
5 <sup>th</sup> grade				
6 <sup>th</sup> grade				
Etc.				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

**SCHOOL CALENDAR:** In compliance with Minnesota Code §120A.41, the school calendar will include no fewer than 165 instructional days and will meet the following hours of instruction requirements: 425 hours for Kindergarten; 935 hours for grades 1-6; and 1020 hours for grades 7-12. The draft calendar presented here includes 170 instructional days. This leaves sufficient room in the calendar for unexpected events such as snow days.

**DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:** (Refer to Contract Addendum C)

**DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM:**

**DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PLAN:**

**DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL FACILITY PLAN:**

**FUTURE PLANS:** (Describe if the school anticipates wanting to add additional sites, grades, or move during the contract term)

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET:** The Board will have a standing Budget and Finance Committee which will be tasked with ensuring the school's financial plans are prepared for launch. The school's fiscal year will run from July through June each year, and the final budget will be approved no later than the June Board meeting annually. Budgets will be designed to yield positive net income each year to strengthen the school's fund balance.

(three year projected inserted below)

## **School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System**

### **SCHOOL STATUTORY PURPOSES:**

- **PRIMARY PURPOSE (M.S. 124E.01): The primary purpose of the charter school is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.**

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS / EXPECTATIONS: VOA-MN Academic Performance Standards below.

MEASURE: MCA exams and locally determined supplemental data based on nationally normed assessments.

REPORTING: Progress meeting these expectations is a required element of the Annual Report and “World’s Best Workforce” Plan.

- **STATUTORY PURPOSE II (MS 124E.01): Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.**

PERFORMANCE STANDARD / EXPECTATIONS:

MEASURE: Locally determined, board approved annually.

REPORTING: Progress meeting these expectations is a required element of the Annual Report and “World’s Best Workforce” Plan.

- **ADDITIONAL PURPOSE (M.S. 120B.11): The school is to meet the outcomes adopted by the Commissioner for all public school students under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11 (“World’s Best Workforce”), applicable to ....**

PERFORMANCE STANDARD / EXPECTATIONS: Locally determined, board approved annually.

MEASURE / GOALS: locally determined, board approved annually for each of the outcomes.

REPORTING: Element of the Annual Report and “World’s Best Workforce” Plan.

### **Introduction**

As a leading authorizer, Volunteers of America–Minnesota builds its portfolio of high-performing charter schools by only selecting proposals with a strong potential for success. It then ensures that such potential is realized through a unique system of accountability that begins even before a school opens its doors.

VOA-MN is committed to fulfilling its role as a charter school authorizer by holding its schools accountable for a range of results. The accountability system presented in this document ensures that VOA-MN will uphold its legal obligation to make sure the schools it authorizes are reaching (or

making adequate progress toward) the goals and benchmarks outlined in its charter contract and Minnesota statute.

VOA-MN uses a standard charter contract with unique school-specific terms that capture different approaches to achieving student success. The individuality of each school will be preserved in the “Academic Program Description” addendum to the charter contract.

### **Volunteers of America of Minnesota Accountability Plan**

According to Minnesota Statute 124E.01, subd.1, *The primary purpose of charter schools is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.* VOA-MN holds the schools it authorizes accountable in five major areas: academic performance, fiscal management, board governance, management and operations, and legal compliance. Each area may have multiple indicators of success and the charter school’s performance on each indicator will be rated as:

- Does Not Meet Standard
- Partially Meets Standard
- Meets Standard

### **Rating Scale: For each standard, a school earns points for contract renewal as follows:**

- 0 = Does Not Meet Standard
- 1 = Partially Meets Standard
- 2 = Meets Standard

### **Weighting of Performance Measures used during the contract renewal process is as follows:**

- 50% weighting: Academic Program (statutory purposes, including primary purpose)
- 20% weighting: Financial Sustainability
- 30% weighting: Organization
  - 15% governance
  - 15% management & compliance

### **Combining Data Over the Contract Term**

Annual school performance results will be combined each successive year of the contract term wherever possible so that fluctuation due to small group size will be minimized and overall performance is accurately reflected.

### **Contract Renewal Eligibility**

VOA-MN schools must achieve at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal and at least an Exemplary Rating (80% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

Progress meeting VOA-MN Standards is monitored and communicated to schools annually through the school Formal Site Visit Reports and three VOA-MN Charter School Network Reports (academic, finance, governance). Renewal contract length is based on an average of school’s performance over the term of the contract. Renewal decisions for a three-year or five-year contract term will be based on two and four fiscal years of data respectively.

If a school is performing below standard to receive a three-year renewal contract but has agreed to the authorizer terms and conditions set forth in the School Improvement Plan to correct areas of deficiency, VOA-MN may agree to extend a school's contract (not to exceed five years) to provide additional time for a school to improve performance as an alternative to termination. If sufficient school improvement is not being made by the end of the 1st year of the extension, termination proceedings will commence.

The following is an example of a five-year contract term renewal calculation:

ANNUAL AND CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATIONS TABLE						
	YR 1 Rating	YR 2 Rating	YR 3 Rating	YR 4 Rating	Average Rating	
ACADEMIC (50%)	%					
FINANCE (20%)	%					
ORGANIZATION (30%)						
	BOARD GOVERNANCE (15%)					
	MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS (15%)					
	TOTAL					
CUMULATIVE TOTAL AVERAGE						

### Intervention and Corrective Action

VOA-MN schools that, prior to their year of contract renewal, fall below a Satisfactory Rating in the Performance Framework overall and/or in any performance area (Academic, Finance, Governance, Management/Operations) must enter into a School Improvement Plan that addresses the specific standards in the Performance Framework where the school performance is below Satisfactory.

### Closure Plan

If the school does not meet the terms of the School Improvement Plan and attain a Satisfactory Rating by the end of the contract term, the school is a candidate for nonrenewal. If the school's contract is not renewed, the school must implement the Closure Plan as described in the school's charter contract.

### Three essential questions guide our VOA-MN authorizer oversight and charter school accountability plan.

- **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE - Is the school's Learning Program a Success?**

**Academic Performance-** All public schools, including charters, must fully participate in the state assessments - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Data from state assessments as well as Title 1 Designation consistent with the state North Star system will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are required to meet the academic performance standards for which they agree to be held accountable in their charter contract. The extent to which a school is meeting their World's Best Workforce requirements and additional statutory purposes are also measured in the Learning program section.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually an Academic Performance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The report serves as a single annual source of academic program and performance information for all of our VOA-MN operational charter schools. The report contains an analysis of annual and cumulative academic program, performance, and professional development data for each school.

Content from the annual Academic Performance Report also serves as the basis for the school academic performance analysis contained in the statutorily required Contract Renewal Evaluation Reports, including evaluation of the extent to which the school has met their primary purpose, “to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement” during the contract term.

The VOA-MN determined academic performance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school academic performance and contract renewal determinations. *The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed (example: based on cell size being too small). One sample rating scale is imbedded below to provide the reader with context.*

**VOA-MN’s academic performance standards/expectations include the following:**

Academic Performance Standard 1 - Students are performing well on state examinations in comparison to students at schools they might otherwise attend (with similar demographics) as evidence of meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. Imbedded WBWF. A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator. The “comparison” group will be the nationally-normed group.

(Data Source: Evidence / Source: Minnesota Department of Education).

Scale:

2 = School’s average proficiency rate exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.

1 = School’s average proficiency rate meets or exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend in one or two subjects (math, reading and science) but not all three.

0 = School’s average proficiency rate is less than the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.

Academic Performance Standard 2 - Over the term of the contract, the school will maintain an average state-determined minimum achievement level of (Increased + Maintained) as evidence of meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. (Evidence / Source: North Star Academic Progress) A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator. The minimum growth level will be the nationally-normed expected growth.

Scale:

2 = School's achievement level of "increased and maintained" is 65% or higher.

1 = School's achievement level of "increased and maintained" is between 64.9% and 50.1%.

0 = School's achievement level of "increased and maintained" is below 50%.

***Alternative Standard 2 for school's grades 9-12 only***

Academic Performance Standard 2 (alternative) - Over the term of the contract, the school's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate will remain above 80%. \*Imbedded WBWF Standard: All students graduate from high school. (Evidence / Source: Minnesota Department of Education)  
Scale:

- 2 = School's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is 80% or higher.
- 1 = School's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is between 75.1%-79.9%.
- 0 = School's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is below 75%.

Academic Performance Standard 3 - The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate in the School and any reportable student group proficiency rate will be reduced over the term of the contract in both reading and math using state examination data as evidence of the School meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. Imbedded WBWF Standard: all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed. (Evidence / Source: Minnesota Department of Education). A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator Scale:

- 2 = The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and all student group proficiency rates has been reduced.
- 1 = The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and at least one student group proficiency rate has been reduced.
- 0 = The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and all reportable student group proficiency rates has increased.

Academic Standard 4: The school has adopted a formal teacher evaluation process and adheres to the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute 122A.40. (Data/Source: AASC Annual Report) Scale:

- 2 = Meets all criteria and is adhered to.
- 1 = Meets some of the criteria, but no evidence that process is followed.
- 0 = School has not adopted a teacher evaluation process.

Academic Standard 5: All teachers are supported through a school-wide professional development plan that is based on analysis of assessment data and directly linked to improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. (Data / Source: School Annual Report) Scale:

- 2 = The school has adopted and followed a school-wide, data-driven professional development plan.
- 1 = The school has a school-wide professional development plan, but the reviewer could not conclude that the plan was tied to data-driven decision-making.
- 0 = The school has not adopted a school-wide professional development plan.

Academic Standard 6: The school is meeting their additional purposes (MS 124E.01,Subd 1; Charter Contract Addendum B). (Data Source: School Annual Report) Scale:

- 2 = The school has a plan and is meeting their additional statutory purposes.
- 1 = The school has a plan for meeting their additional statutory purposes and is partially meeting them.
- 0 = The school does not have a plan for meeting their additional statutory purposes and measuring progress.

Academic Standard 7: The school is meeting the World’s Best Workforce goals (MS 120B.11; Charter Contract Addendum B). (Data Source: School Annual Report) Scale:



- 2 = The school has a plan and is meeting their WBWF goals.
- 1 = The school has a plan for meeting their WBWF goals and is partially meeting them.
- 0 = The school does not have a plan for meeting their WBWF goals and measuring progress.

• **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY – Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial Health?**

Charter schools receive public funds and must meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. It is VOA-MN's duty to ensure that the schools are responsible stewards of public funds. The charter school shall provide VOA with a copy of its draft and final annual budgets and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA-MN shall use submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan for the current year. VOA-MN shall use the financial statements presented in the charter school's annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior-year. Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Financial Oversight Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The parties acknowledge that the Minnesota Charter Schools Law requires a charter school to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. This requirement has two underlying purposes: to monitor the financial health of the school and compliance with state and federal laws, including proper use of public funds. The report will contain an evaluation of school performance meeting the VOA-MN financial standards.

The VOA-MN determined school financial standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school financial health and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer will monitor school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Finance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. *The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed (example: fund balance standard may be negotiated based on school length of operation or size). One sample rating scale is imbedded below to provide the reader with context.*

VOA-MN's school financial standards/expectations include the following (authorizer reserves the right to amend standards or scale as needed/warranted):

Finance Standard 1: The School maintains a balanced budget. Data Source: Original and revised budgets, annual financial audit report, monthly income statements.

- 2 = surplus position
- 1 = NA
- 0 = deficit position

Finance Standard 2: The School is compliant with state and federal financial reporting deadlines and laws, including the proper use of public funds. Data Source: MDE reports including: Preliminary UFARS data, Student ADM, Final UFARS data.

- 2 = never missed
- 1 = missed 1 time
- 0 = missed > 1 time

Finance Standard 3: The School's financial audit is submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education, Office of the State Auditor and the authorizer by December 31. Data Source: Email from the School with attached MDE documentation.

2 = submitted

1 = n/a

0 = not submitted

Finance Standard 4: Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings. Data Source: The School's financial audit report.

2 = no findings

1 = 1 or more "significant deficiency" finding(s)

0 = 1 or more "material weakness" or legal compliance finding(s)

Finance Standard 5: The School is current on all financial obligations, including, but not limited to: pension payments, payroll taxes, insurance coverage and loan payments. Data Source: Monthly check registers, cash flow projections, board meeting agendas and minutes.

2 = never late

1 = late 1-2 times

0 = late > 3 times

Finance Standard 6: The School provides VOA-MN and school board members with monthly financials. June financial reports may be delayed until year-end journal entries are completed. Packets include at least the following: 1) detailed income/expense report, 2) cash flow projection, 3) check register, and 4) current enrollment (Average Daily Membership). The board should review and approve the financials at each board meeting. Data Source: Board packets

2 = never missed

1 = missed 1-2 times

0 = missed > 2 times

Finance Standard 7: The School develops and maintains a targeted General Fund balance determined by the School Board. For the finance report, VOA-MN also determines a standard for fund balance annually based on items such as school funding trends and funding hold-backs. Data Source: The school's General Fund balance policy, monthly financial reports, board meeting agenda's and minutes.

2 = 20% or >

1 = 15-20%

0 = < 15%

Finance Standard 8: The School Board has a finance committee that meets regularly to review financial reports. Data Source: Board meeting packets, agendas, and minutes.

2 = 8-12 meetings/year

1 = 5-9 meetings/year

0 = 0-4 meetings/year

Finance Standard 9: All finance committee members exhibit working knowledge of financial oversight. Data Source: School board members queries, board meeting agendas and minutes.

2 = All committee members have received formal/informal training during the year relating to their roles and responsibilities on the finance committee.

1 = NA

0 = Some committee members have not received formal/informal training during the year relating to their roles and responsibilities on the finance committee.

Finance Standard 10: The school is not in Statutory Operating Debt (SOD). Data Source: School's budget, board meeting agendas and minutes, financial audit.

2 = not in SOD

1 = n/a

0 = in SOD

## **SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS - Is the organization effective and well run?**

- SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE
- SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

- **SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE**

Effective board governance is essential to the successful start-up and operation of a public charter school. The diversity of charter school board memberships – teachers, parents, community leaders, and volunteers – heightens the importance of consistent expectations and development activities.

The authorizer regularly monitors the performance quality of the school board based on authorizer observations; interviews with the director, board and faculty; and the review of school policies, reports and board meeting minutes. A school must have a governance model that provides quality oversight by ensuring that there are checks and balances between the board and the school administrators.

A school board is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing policy; defining sound employee relations; conducting open meetings; recognizing and conforming to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws; and governing within the limits of a delegation of state authority – as a nonprofit and public-school board. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; inform the public of all deliberations and decisions; promote accountability; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Board Governance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source on the board operations and compliance of the eighteen VOA-MN-authorized charter schools. Authorizer VOA-MN also observes a minimum of two school board meetings annually.

The VOA-MN determined school board governance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school board performance and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer will monitor school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards shall will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Governance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. *The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed (example: based on length the school has been in operation). One sample rating scale is imbedded below to provide the reader with context.*

VOA-MN's school board governance standards/expectations include the following (authorizer reserves the right to amend standards or scale as needed / warranted):

### Board Structure and Development

Governance Standard 1: The Board of Directors met its governance model requirements laid out in its bylaws and membership requirements as required by Minnesota Statute\*.

- 2 = The Board structure meets bylaws and state statute.
- 1 = The Board did not meet requirements for the entire fiscal year.
- 0 = The Board's structure does not meet bylaws and/or state statute.

Governance Standard 2: The Board of Directors has the necessary knowledge to carry out the responsibilities contained in Minn Stat 124E.07, Subd. 6. (Duties), including knowledge in finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.

- 2 = The Board has a plan with evidence of training consistent with the plan to ensure members have the necessary knowledge in the areas of finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.
- 1 = The board has a plan but is unable to provide evidence of completion of board member training to ensure members have the necessary knowledge in the areas of finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.
- 0 = The Board does not implement a plan to ensure Board members have the necessary knowledge.

Governance Standard 3: The board adheres to an orientation process for bringing on new members.

- 2 = The Board adheres to a thorough process for the orientation of new board members.
- 1 = The Board has a process for the orientation of new board members, but it is not consistently followed.
- 0 = The Board does not have a membership orientation process for new board members.

Governance Standard 4: The Board of Directors complies with initial and ongoing training requirements set forth in Minn. Stat 124E.07, Subd 7 (Training): governance, financial, and employment policies and practices.

- 2 = All Board members comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements.
- 1 = One Board member did not fully comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements and was removed.
- 0 = More than one Board member did not fully comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements.

Governance Standard 5: The Board of Directors completes a self-evaluation each year.

- 2 = The Board completes a formal self-evaluation each year.
- 1 = The Board competes informal self-evaluations during one or more board meeting(s).
- 0 = board does not self-evaluation

Governance Standard 6: The Board of Directors will comply with MN Open Meeting Law, Chapter 13D, and maintains a quorum for all board meetings.

- 2 = The Board has no infractions of MN Open Meeting Law.
- 1 = The Board has 1 infraction of MN Open Meeting Law.
- 0 = The Board has 2 or more infractions of MN Open Meeting Law.

Governance Standard 7: The board regularly reviews, updates, and approves its bylaws. The bylaws are consistent with state law.

2 = Bylaws are consistent with state law and the board reviews them regularly.

1 = Bylaws are consistent with state statute but have not been reviewed regularly.

0 = Bylaws are inconsistent with state statute.

Governance Standard 8: The Board of Directors adheres to board member election requirements set forth by state statute\*.

2 = All requirements were met.

1 = NA

0 = Election requirements were not met.

Governance Standard 9: The Board conducts an annual evaluation (including all aspects of the position description) of the performance of the school leader through a defined annual evaluation process.

2 = The Board completed a formal evaluation of the school leader including all aspects of the job description.

1 = The Board completed an evaluation of the school leader but not on all aspects of the job description.

0 = The Board did not complete an annual evaluation of the school leader.

Governance Standard 10: The Board has a board-approved professional development plan for the school director (if applicable as required by Minn. Stat. 124E.12, Subd. 2\*).

2 = A professional development plan for the non-licensed individual(s) was documented in the School's Annual Report or the School's Director holds an administrative license.

1 = NA

0 = A professional development plans for the non-licensed individual(s) was not documented in the School's Annual Report.

Governance Standard 11: The Board of Directors monitors the organization's adherence to school board policies.

2 = Meeting minutes include three or more examples of the Board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.

1 = Meeting minutes includes one or two examples of the Board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.

0 = Meeting minutes include no evidence of the Board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.

Governance Standard 12: The Board of Directors complies with Federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13)\*.

2 = The board has required Data Practice policies with evidence that they are implemented in accordance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act. There is evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There were zero incidents of not following data practice policies.

1 = The board has required Data Practice policies with evidence that they are implemented in accordance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act. There is evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There was one incident of noncompliance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

0 = The board does not have one or more required Data Practice policies in place and/or there was insufficient evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There has been

two or more incidence of noncompliance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

Governance Standard 13: The Board of Directors provides ongoing oversight of school academic performance.

2 = Meeting minutes include evidence of regular oversight of school academic performance.

1 = At least half of the Board meeting minutes include evidence of oversight of school academic performance.

0 = Less than half of the Board meeting minutes or less include evidence of oversight of school academic performance.

Governance Standard 14: The school maintains a high level of parent, teacher and student satisfaction rates based on school conducted surveys and student/faculty retention rates.

2 = All of the following criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.

1 = Two of three criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.

0 = Less than two of three criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.

Governance Standard 15: Board documents are distributed to all board members at least 3 days prior to a board meeting.

2 = Board documents were distributed to all Board members at least 3 days prior to each board meeting.

1 = Board documents were not distributed to all Board members one or two times.

0 = Board documents were not distributed to all Board members three or more times.

Governance Standard 16: The Board of Directors maintains a Board Documents Binder which includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements; and statutory requirements for posting board related information on the school's website\*.

2 = A complete Board Documents Binder is kept includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements; and the school's website includes the statutory requirements for posting board-related information.

1 = Complete information is available both in a binder and on the school's website; but there are 1-2 incidents of minutes not being posted after board approval.

0 = Information is incomplete in the binder or on the school's website.

Governance Standard 17: The board has a policy review calendar and reviews and updates its policies as needed or required by state law.

2 = The Board has a thorough policy review calendar/plan and review policies as a regular component of regular board meetings.

1 = The Board has a policy review calendar/plan and reviews policies at half or fewer of the regular board meetings.

0 = The Board does not have a calendar/plan for policy review and/or reviews policies at half or fewer of the regular meetings.

- **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS** - Effective day-to-day operations of a charter school support the Learning Program. A well-run school provides an environment in which staff and students can perform at the highest possible level and more effectively reach the school's goals. Management and operations of the school will be monitored and reported by the authorizer using the Formal Site Visit Rubric. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed (example: based on cell size being to small). One sample rating scale is imbedded below to provide the reader with context.

Authorizer standards / expectations for school management and operations include:

M/O Standard 1: Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school. (Data source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

- 2 = Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.
- 1 = Mission and vision are displayed in the facility, on website and in annual report, but evidence that they guide decision-making and programming are missing.
- 0 = Mission and vision are not used to guide school's decision-making.

M/O Standard 2: The school has a plan for Service Learning that connects classroom learning with real life lessons that come through service. (Data source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar, document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

- 2 = The school has a plan for Service Learning that connects classroom learning with real life lessons that come through service.
- 1 = The school has a service-learning plan, but without evidence of a connection between the plan and service activities.
- 0 = The school does not have a plan for service learning. School does not engage in service.

M/O Standard 3: The school maintains a safe and healthy environment per state and federal guides and board policy. (e.g., facility /ADA, building inspections, school liability insurance, student medical / health matters, school drills). (Data source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar, document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

- 2 = The school can provide evidence that it complies with health and safety requirements for public schools.
- 1 = The school is making progress approaching standard.
- 0 = The school could not provide evidence of compliance with health and safety requirements for public schools.

M/O Standard 4 - The School complies with state and federal data practices and privacy laws (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13 and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)). Data Source: Board minutes, VOA-MN Visit Review  
Scale:

- 2 = There were zero incidents of not following state and federal data practices policies and privacy laws.

1 = There was one incident of noncompliance with state and federal data practices policies and privacy laws.

0 = Does Not Meet - There have been two or more incidences of noncompliance with state and federal data practices policies and privacy laws.

M/O Standard 5: Evidence suggests that the school engages parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child's learning (Data source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school provides ample evidence that the organization engages parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child's learning.

1 = The school is making progress approaching standard.

0 = The school could not provide evidence that it has a plan or activities to engage parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child's learning.

M/O Standard 6: Evidence suggests that the school-teachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards and engaging in data-driven decision-making. (Data source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = Evidence suggests that the school has established a uniform system to ensure that the school-teachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards and monitoring student progress toward comprehension.

1 = The school leadership provided some examples of how he/she provides oversight that school-teachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards, but systemic plan for monitoring progress and data-driven decision-making was lacking.

0 = The school does not have a system established to ensure that school-teachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards &/or does not engage in data-driven decision-making.

M/O Standard 7: The school employs highly qualified, appropriately licensed teachers. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school provides evidence of exemplary hiring processes that ensure teachers are properly credentialed. There have been no license infractions over the contract term.

1 = The school has had two or fewer teacher license infractions and they were swiftly resolved. Evidence suggests that the school has systems to recruit quality licensed teachers.

0 = The school has had multiple license infractions over the contract term.

M/O Standard 8: Criminal background checks are conducted on all persons per the board policy and Minn. Stat. 123B.03, Subd.1. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school provided evidence that it adheres to statute and policy pertaining to conducting criminal background checks on employees and school volunteers.

1 = NA

0 = The school could not provide evidence that it adheres to statute and policy pertaining to conducting criminal background checks on employees and school volunteers.

M/O Standard 9: The school meets / maintains its enrollment goals. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:



2 = The school could provide evidence that it is meeting its annual student enrollment goals.

1 = NA

0 = The school is not meeting its student enrollment goals.

M/O Standard 10: The school institutes a fair and open student admission process that complies with Minnesota law. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school provides evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission.

1 = The school provides evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission. The school has been the subject of state investigation with findings.

0 = The school could not provide evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission.

M/O Standard 11: The school's employment process complies with state and federal law. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school provides evidence that its employment process complies with state and federal law.

1 = The school is making progress meeting standard.

0 = The school could not provide evidence that its employment process complies with state and federal law.

M/O Standard 12: The school has defined job descriptions and defined evaluation process for all personnel. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school could provide evidence of job descriptions for all employee positions and aligned to an evaluation process.

1 = The school could provide evidence of job descriptions for most employee positions but did not have a defined evaluation process.

0 = The school could not provide evidence of job descriptions for all employee positions and aligned to an evaluation process.

## Special Education - Services to Students with a Disability

M/O Standard 13: The school complies with IDEA, special education laws and school's TSES plan, including "Child Find." Applicable training is provided to faculty annually. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership, MDE communications) Scale:

2 = The school could provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school's TSES plan, including "Child Find."

1 = The school could provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school's TSES plan, including "Child Find." However, the school has been the subject of MDE complaint investigation with findings.

0 = The school could not provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school's TSES plan, including "Child Find."

M/O Standard 14: The school is not subject to special education investigations by MDE and is not in Corrective Action. (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership, MDE communications) Scale:

2 = The school is not subject to special education investigations by MDE and is not in corrective action or is adhering to their plan to resolve concerns.

1 = The school has been the subject of MDE investigations with findings. Progress has been observed to resolve findings.

0 = The school has been the subject of MDE investigations with findings. Findings have not been resolved.

M/O Standard 15: The school is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC). (Data source: annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership) Scale:

2 = The school could provide evidence that it is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC).

1 = The school contracts with a special education director but could not provide evidence that it has a SEAC that meets at least annually.

0 = The school could not provide evidence that it is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC).

**Legal and Contractual Compliance** - Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. VOA-MN expects compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a Compliance Binder on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed Annual Submission Calendar. Management and operations of the school will be monitored by the authorizer and reported in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. *This section is not scored individually. The compliance binder and submission calendar are systems for ongoing monitoring of school performance and compliance and compliance requirements are imbedded in previous sections.*

## ONGOING AUTHORIZER SCHOOL MONITORING

### SITE VISITS

One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school and engage in discussions with school management. VOA-MN conducts two different types of site visits: Formal and Informal.

- **Formal Site Visit-** Formal Site Visits are typically conducted once per year by a member of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Leadership Team who interviews key stakeholders and conducts observations. Written feedback is provided to the Board of Directors and school leadership guided by the Site Visit Rubric. VOA-MN staff will provide formal written feedback summarizing observations. The feedback will identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement. If a more serious issue arises from a site visit, VOA-MN may implement an intervention based upon the “Range of Interventions” table.
- **Informal Site Visit-** VOA-MN may conduct informal site visits at any time to fulfill its duties as an authorizer. Reasons for informal site visits may include: investigation of a complaint, determination of readiness to open, follow up on implementation of improvement plans, or

documentation of best practices. These visits are typically less formal and may be without notice.

### **BOARD MEETINGS**

Another important component of VOA-MN authorizer oversight is board meeting observations conducted at least twice per year and more often for schools within their first two years after initial charter approval. Authorizer VOA-MN uses the Board Meeting Observation Rubric and provides timely feedback to the school boards. VOA-MN also closely monitors the monthly board meeting minutes and financials of each authorized school and provides feedback to the school as needed.

### **SCHOOL PUBLISHED ANNUAL REPORTS**

The Charter School Law (Minn. Stat. 124E.16) includes requirements for a charter school annual. Additionally, VOA-MN requires that annual reports include specific elements defined by VOA-MN annually. VOA-MN required elements include how the school is performing based on the three essential questions: Is the student learning program a success? Does the school exhibit strong financial health? Is the organization effective and well-run? The final draft be board approved and posted to the school's official website. The VOA-MN Annual Report criteria may contain the World's Best Workforce Report.

### **AUTHORIZER PUBLISHED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

In addition to the Formal Site Visit Report that each school is provided, VOA-MN will also annually publish three VOA-MN Charter School Network Reports: Academic Performance, Board Governance, and Financial Management. The cumulative purpose of these reports is to assess the ongoing performance of VOA-MN authorized schools regarding academic success, financial sustainability, and organizational effectiveness.

The combination of school performance based on the three VOA-MN Annual School Performance Reports, annual Formal Site Visit Reports, informal site visit observations, authorizer observations of board meetings, and ongoing monitoring of school reporting and compliance provides an accountable oversight mechanism for the authorizer, schools, and other organizations. This collective body of evidence will also form the basis for contract renewal decisions.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL PRE-OPERATIONAL STAGE (Start-up Checklist)**

A charter school's ability to successfully fulfill the three primary components of its contractual agreement with VOA-MN – academic success, financial sustainability, and organizational aptitude – depends on what happens well before the doors of the school open. While a Start-Up Coordinator is often hired by the interim board to handle many functions, the volunteer efforts of board members and parents are often necessary to absorb much of the work and provide direction to any pre-operational staff.

VOA-MN has organized a charter school's start-up year, contained in the Ready-To-Open standards organized by month. Progress and completion of Ready-To-Open standards for preoperational school development are checked every trimester of the development year, in a meeting between the authorizer and school. The official RTO meeting and authorizer determination occurs in June prior to being approved, or not approved, to open.

<b>RANGE OF POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS</b>		
<p>If VOA-MN has a concern about the School, or if the School fails to make adequate progress towards achieving authorizer contractual standards/expectations for school performance, or to comply with Applicable Law, or other requirements of this contract, VOA-MN shall determine the appropriate intervention. The interventions below need not be implemented sequentially, and VOA-MN will implement these as it sees fit and at its sole discretion.</p>		
<b>Status</b>	<b>Triggered By</b>	<b>May Result In</b>
<b>INTERVENTION LEVEL ONE</b>  <b>Notice of Concern</b>	<p>Signs of weak performance identified through routine monitoring; through implementation, compliance, or performance reviews; or by other means.</p> <p>Lack of progress towards meeting contractual performance standards / expectations.</p> <p>Failure to submit required documents on a timely basis.</p> <p>Failure to comply with applicable law or the conditions of the charter contract.</p> <p>Signs of poor financial health or management.</p>	<p>Letter from the Authorizer to the charter school's Board of Directors detailing areas of concern.</p> <p>Authorizer recommendation that the school board institute an oversight plan for performance improvement in the areas where standards were not met.</p>
<b>INTERVENTION LEVEL TWO</b>  <b>Notice of Deficiency</b>	<p>Signs of further weakening performance identified through routine monitoring; through implementation, compliance, or performance reviews; or by other means.</p> <p>Failure to meet multiple contractual performance standards/expectations; or repeated failure to meet a single performance standard/expectation.</p> <p>Significant failure to comply with applicable law or the conditions of the charter contract.</p> <p>Continued evidence of poor financial health or management.</p>	<p>Letter from Authorizer to charter school Board of Directors detailing areas of deficiency and action required to address the deficiency.</p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p>Authorizer may require charter school Board of Directors to approve a remediation plan containing specific improvement objectives, technical assistance requirements, and schedule for remedial actions to be approved by the Authorizer.</p>
<b>INTERVENTION LEVEL THREE</b>  <b>Probationary Status</b>	<p>Continued failure to meet contractual performance standards/expectations or failure to meet objectives of a remediation plan.</p> <p>Continued failure to comply with the applicable law or the conditions of the charter contract.</p> <p>Severe concerns regarding the school's financial viability.</p>	<p>Letter from the Authorizer to charter school Board of Directors detailing reasons for probationary status and action required to address concerns.</p> <p>Remediation plan imposed by the Authorizer.</p> <p><i>and/or</i></p> <p>Authorizer may appoint staff or a consultant to specifically monitor implementation of the remediation plan</p>
<b>INTERVENTION LEVEL FOUR</b>  <b>Charter Review</b>	<p>Failure to address the terms of Probationary Status.</p> <p>Extended pattern of failure to meet contractual performance standards/ expectations and/or to comply with applicable law or the conditions of the charter contract.</p> <p>Severe and persistent concerns regarding the school's financial viability.</p>	<p>Recommendation to revoke, not to revoke, or to impose lesser sanctions.</p> <p><i>and/or</i></p> <p>Decision to commence or not to commence revocation proceedings made by VOA-MN.</p>

<b>INTEVENTION LEVEL FIVE</b>  <b>Charter Revocation</b>	Charter Review results in recommendation to revoke.	Commencement of charter revocation proceedings consistent with Minnesota Stat. 124E and the terms of the charter contract.
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## **Charter School Contract Renewal and Revocation Process**

### **Renewal Process**

Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) views contract renewal as an on-going process that is engaged in by the Board of Directors, school leadership, and the authorizer throughout the entire life of the school's contract with its authorizer. This process culminates in the authorizer publishing an end of contract evaluation report.

### **End-of-Term Evaluation**

VOA-MN publishes an end-of-contract evaluation report based on information, observations and documentation accumulated throughout the length of the contract. The evaluation is an opportunity to determine the extent to which the school is meeting VOA-MN's expectations of a high-quality charter school. More specifically, we assess the school based on the following three central questions:

- 4) Is the student learning program a success? (Academic Performance)
- 5) Does the school exhibit strong financial health? (Financial Management)
- 6) Is the organization effective and well-run? (Board Governance, Management and Operations, Compliance)

We quantify the school's progress in each area (academic performance, governance, financial management / health, and management/operations) using the system described in B.I. (Rating Scale and Weighting of Performance Measures).

VOA-MN will complete a draft of its end-of-term evaluation of the school and submit the draft for review and comment by school leadership and the board. VOA-MN will then make changes, if necessary, and resubmit a final evaluation and decision of renewal to the school's board. Through ongoing monitoring and the renewal evaluation process, VOA-MN determines whether to renew its contract with the charter school and if so, for what length of time. Contracts can be renewed for up to five years.

### **Termination or Nonrenewal of a Contract**

Consistent with Minn. Stat. 124E.10, Subd.4(b), VOA-MN may act to terminate or not renew a charter under the following grounds:

- (1) failure to meet the requirements for pupil performance contained in the contract;*
- (2) failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;*
- (3) violations of law; or*
- (4) other good cause shown.*

At least 60 days before not renewing or terminating a contract, the authorizer shall notify the board of directors of the charter school of the proposed action in writing. The notice shall state the grounds for the proposed action in reasonable detail and that the charter school's board of directors may request in writing an informal hearing before the authorizer within 15 business days of receiving notice of nonrenewal or termination of the contract. Failure by the board of directors to make a written request for a hearing within the 15-business-day period shall be treated as acquiescence to the proposed action. Upon receiving a timely written request for a hearing, the authorizer shall give ten business days' notice to the charter school's board of directors of the hearing date. The authorizer shall conduct an informal hearing before taking final action. The authorizer shall take final action to

renew or not renew a contract no later than 20 business days before the proposed date for terminating the contract or the end date of the contract.

### **Example VOA-MN Timeline for Contract Renewal Process**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
School Program Description Completed by Charter School	Renewing School	February-March
The School will complete and submit their proposed Program Description (contract Addendum A) for review by VOA-MN. Once the content of the document is agreed upon - including curriculum, interim assessments, and future plans, it will be incorporated into the renewal contract.		
Authorizer formal end-of-term evaluation draft completed and submitted to renewal school for review	Authorizer	April
End-of-term evaluation comments completed	Renewing School/Bd	April-May
Draft contract submitted to renewing school for comment	VOA-MN	April –May
Contract approved and signed	VOA-MN	May-June
Contract approved and signed	Renewing Board	May-June

### **If Terminating/Not Renewing**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Request a public hearing	Board	Within 15 business days of termination or nonrenewal notice
Final contract termination/renewal decision	VOA-MN	Within 20 business days of the contract end date if not renewing or terminating



SCHOOL NAME

### **Special Education Services**

SCHOOL NAME will comply with Minnesota Statutes Chapters 125A and 124E, all applicable rules implemented pursuant to these chapters, and all Federal and State law relating to the education of students with disabilities. Consistent with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes § 124E.21, the financial parameters within which the School will operate to provide special education instruction and related services to students with disabilities will be based on the individual needs of the student, as defined by the student's evaluation and by the instruction and related services specified in the student's Individual Education Plan ("IEP"). The School will deliver services in accordance with IDEA, board policies, and best practices.

The School will provide special education services in compliance with all state and federal guidelines. The teaching staff will provide strategies and instructional techniques that support the learning needs of each learner. The School will continue to contract with a Special Education Director for oversight and assistance maintaining a compliant system that meets the needs of the student population.

The School will plan for child-find activities, initial assessments, reassessments, IEP planning and service delivery as dictated by special education laws. The School will use a combination of employment and contracted services to meet the needs of identified special education students.

#### **Responsibilities of the Board:**

- Approve and monitor school budget revenues and expenditures related to special education. Require regular updates by school management regarding state special education reporting and financial reimbursements. Review and approve special education program expenditures.
- Approve the hiring of necessary and essential special education staff and contracted services.
- Monitor school management's oversight of special education faculty and contractors.
- Monitor school management's oversight of required special education program and financial reporting to the state.
- Collaboratively with school management, ensure that the school facility is ADA compliant and supports the continuum of special education services for students with disabilities. A charter school may not deny persons with disabilities, including parents and students, the benefits of programs and activities offered at its school because of inaccessible facilities.

#### **Responsibilities of the School Management:**



- Monitor school compliance with the board-approved Total Special Education Services Plan (TSES). Every Minnesota school district, including charter schools that are districts, is required to have a Total Special Education System (TSES).
- Monitor and supervise special education faculty and contractors.
- Maintain and report financial data related to special education programs as required by Minnesota Statute § 125B.07, Subd.6 “Data Acquisition Calendar.”
- Provide oversight of the school budget related to special education revenue and expenditures.
- Supervise special education faculty to ensure that each student with an IEP is receiving all special education supports identified in the student's IEP.
- Arrange appropriate and ongoing staff development regarding the delivery of special education and related services.

**As a result of this expectation, the Authorizer will:**

- Annually review student school application forms, policies and procedures for compliance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Regularly monitor school compliance with the board-approved Total Special Education Services Plan (TSES). Every Minnesota school district, including charter schools that are districts, are required to have a Total Special Education System (TSES).
- Regularly monitor compliance with state reporting requirements as required by Minnesota Statute § 125B.07, Subd.6 “Data Acquisition Calendar.”
- At least annually interview the school Special Education Director and staff to monitor program accountability and compliance.
- During site visits, monitor ADA compliance and whether or not facilities support the continuum of special education services for students with disabilities. A charter school may not deny persons with disabilities, including parents and students, the benefits of programs and activities offered at its school because of inaccessible facilities.
- Monitor school compliance with state and federal special education educator licensing requirements and reporting.



## COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT

The undersigned members of the **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** of **SCHOOL NAME** agree to comply with all federal and state laws governing organizational, programmatic and financial requirement applicable to charter schools.

1. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name
2. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name
3. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name
4. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name
5. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name
5. _____ Board Member Signature	_____ Printed Name

## Charter School Closure Plan

Item	Description of Required Actions	Responsible Party	Completion Date	Status
<b>Immediate Board Actions</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>Establish <i>ad hoc</i> School Board Committee for wind-up / restructuring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Designate School contact person(s) to send and receive communications from the VOA-MN;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Designate employees or School Board members who will handle various aspects of winding up of School operations;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide contact information, and list of employees / School Board members and correspondent responsibilities to the VOA-MN.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instruct contact persons to heed notification requirements for time sensitive notifications, if any.</li> </ul>	Board		
<b>2</b>	<b>Reserve Funds</b> Segregate by Board resolution in a separate checking account up to \$45,000 in funds to be used for legal, accounting and other expenses to execute this Closure Plan and to dissolve the School Corporation.	Board		
<b>Notifications and Further Actions</b>				
<b>3</b>	<b>Notification of Parents / Guardians</b> Within 10 days after charter revocation, notify parents / guardians and employees of school regarding the closure of the School, if such notification has not been made. Such notification shall include, but not be limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> * date of the last day of regular instruction;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> * cancellation of any planned summer school;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> * notice to parents that enrollment of children in their district of residence or other school is mandatory under state law for children that are six years of age or older;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> * a listing of the names of charter, parochial, public and private schools in the area.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> * offer of copies of student records before the CHARTER REVOCATION.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the VOA-MN with a copy of the notice.</li> </ul>	Board Chair or School Director		
<b>4</b>	<b>Final Report Cards and Student Records Notice</b>	School Director		

	<p>Within 10 business days after CHARTER REVOCATION, provide parents / guardians with copies of final report cards and notice that records, which include information about any formal suspension, expulsion, and exclusion disciplinary action under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56, will be transferred to the student's school district of residence. Notice shall include specific contact information for the resident school district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The notice must advise the parent/guardian to contact the school where the student intends to enroll and have the new school request a transfer of records from the school being closed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the VOA-MN with a copy of the notice.</li> </ul>			
5	<p><b>Transfer of Student Records and Testing Material</b></p> <p>No later than 10 business days after Authorizer Notice of CHARTER REVOCATION / CLOSURE, the school must provide parents of enrolled students information and assistance to enable the student to re-enroll in another school.</p> <p>Within ten business days of closing the charter school, the closed school must transfer each student's educational records to the student's school district of residence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all records regarding special education and supplemental services;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> student health / immunization records;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> attendance records; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all other student records.</li> </ul> <p>Student transmitted records information must include any formal suspension, expulsion, and exclusion disciplinary action under sections 121A.40 to 121A.56. The school must provide notice to a student and the student's parent or guardian that formal disciplinary records will be transferred as part of the student's educational record, in accordance with data practices under chapter 13 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, United States Code, title 20, section 1232(g).</p> <p>All end of school year grades and evaluations must be completed and made part of the student records, including any IEP / Committee on Special Education meetings / progress reports.</p> <p>As noted above, parents / guardians should be offered copies of students' records before CHARTER REVOCATION / CLOSURE.</p> <p>Testing material, including scores, test booklets, and annual data files etc. required to be maintained by the School by the State Education Department must also be forwarded to each pupil's resident school district.</p>	School Director		

6	<p><b>Notification of the Commissioner, School District, and Parents / Guardians of Enrolled Students</b></p> <p>Within 7 business days after the charter revocation, the School must notify school district(s) of students' residence regarding the termination of the education program and lack of future enrollment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, notification regarding cessation of food and transportation services should be provided.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide notice to the districts that arrangements should be made to pick up any district property; e.g., borrowed books, nursing equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide VOA-MN with a copy of the notice.</li> </ul>	<p>Board Chair or Secretary</p> <p>Authorizer will notify Commissioner</p>		
7	<p><b>Notification of Funding Sources / Charitable Partners</b></p> <p>Within 7 days after CHARTER REVOCATION, all other sources of the School's operational funding must be notified in writing of the closure of the School as well as charitable partners of the School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The School should not accept further loans from management companies, etc. nor otherwise incur additional liability. However, it may continue to accept gifts from charitable partners as long as the charity is aware of the School's closure / restructuring status.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Charities with property on the premises of the School should be notified to remove same as soon as possible or after CHARTER REVOCATION, whichever is appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Board Chair or Treasurer</p>		
8	<p><b>Notification of Contractors and Termination of Contracts</b></p> <p>Within 20 days after charter revocation, formulate a list of all contractors with contracts in effect, and notify them regarding cessation of current school operations at CHARTER REVOCATION.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, instruct contractors to make arrangements to remove any contractor property from the School facility by a date certain, e.g., copying machines, water coolers, other rented property.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the VOA-MN with a copy of such notice.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Retain records of past contracts with proof that they were fully paid (<i>see</i> Records Retention, below) to prevent spurious claims.</li> </ul> <p>As appropriate, and to the extent possible, terminate contracts for goods and services as of the last date such goods or services will be needed to the extent not necessary for the educational program or wind-up of the School.</p>	<p>Board Chair or Treasurer</p>		

	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone, gas, electric, water, insurance (premises and D&O insurance, <i>see</i> below) should remain operative through the CHARTER REVOCATION and to the extent necessary to wind up the School's affairs beyond that time.			
9	<p><b>Notification of Employees and Benefit Providers</b></p> <p>After an employee termination date is established, but in no event later than 60 days before CHARTER REVOCATION, notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts, and notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees. Further notify employees and providers of termination of all benefit programs, and, if allowable, terminate all programs as of the last date of service in accordance with applicable law and regulations (i.e. COBRA), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> health care / health insurance;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> life insurance;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> dental plans;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> eyeglass plans;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> cafeteria plans;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 401(k), retirement plans; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pension plans.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TRA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> PERA</li> </ul> <p>Specific rules and regulations may apply to such programs especially teacher's retirement plans so legal counsel should be consulted.</p> <p>Employees should be notified of eligibility for unemployment compensation. (In the event the School has not paid into the unemployment program on an ongoing basis, the School may have significant financial liability on an ongoing basis after the CHARTER REVOCATION, and reserve funds should be set aside for this purpose.) <i>See</i> School Wind-Up Plan and Action regarding payment of taxes, below.</p>	Board Chair or designee		
10	<p><b>Notification of Food and Transportation Services and Cancellation of Contracts</b></p> <p>Within 20 days after the charter revocation, or earlier if required by the contractual notice requirements, cancel school district or private food and/or transportation services for summer school and next school year.</p>	Board Chair or Secretary		
11	<p><b>Notification of VOA of MN Regarding Lawsuits</b></p> <p>As soon as possible after receiving notice and/or service of process regarding litigation against, or initiated by, the School, School Board or School employees, notify the VOA of MN and provide copies of legal papers received.</p>	Board Chair or Secretary		

	The School has an ongoing obligation to keep the VOA-MN informed regarding such litigation, including bankruptcy, whether voluntary or involuntary, and to provide copies of all filings.			
<b>Assets, Creditors and Debtors</b>				
<b>12</b>	<p><b>List of Creditors and Debtors; UCC Search</b></p> <p>Within twenty (20) days after the charter revocation, formulate list of creditors and debtors and any amounts accrued and unpaid with respect to such creditor or debtor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This list is not the same as the contractor list, above, but may include contractors, which should be listed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creditors include lenders, mortgage holders, bond holders, equipment suppliers, service providers and secured and unsecured creditors. Security interests may be recorded and filed pursuant to the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) with the county and State of Minnesota, and may include all of the assets of the School Corporation or specific assets in which a creditor has an interest as long as such debt remains outstanding.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A UCC search should be performed by the School to determine if there are any secured creditors and to what assets security interests are attached.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Debtors include persons who owe the school fees or credits, lessees or sub-lessees of the School, and any person holding property of the School.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a copy of the list of creditors to the VOA-MN with the amount owed to each creditor thereon and the amount owed by each debtor.</li> </ul>	Board Chair or Treasurer		
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Notification to Creditors</b></p> <p>Within thirty (30) days after the charter revocation, the School must notify all creditors of its closure.</p> <p>The School should solicit from each creditor a final accounting of the School's accrued and unpaid debt owed to such creditor. This figure should be compared to the School's calculation of the debt and be reconciled between the parties.</p> <p>To the extent possible, the School negotiates a settlement of debts, which is ultimately consummated by a settlement agreement reflecting satisfaction and release of the existing obligations, if possible.</p>	Board Chair or Treasurer		
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Notification to Debtors</b></p> <p>Within thirty (30) days after the charter revocation, the School must contact all debtors and demand payment. To the extent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the School may turn the debt over to</p>	Board Chair or Treasurer		

	commercial debt collection agencies. All records regarding such collection or disputes by debtors regarding amounts owed must be retained.			
<b>15</b>	<p><b>School Wind-Up Plan and Action</b></p> <p>The School Corporation shall collect debts, dispose of assets and negotiate with and pay creditors in an orderly fashion in accordance with a timetable and plan adopted by the School's board of directors. Priority should be given to continuing the School's educational program through the end of the school year and retaining funds to complete the wind-up process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The initial plan should be adopted within 20 days of charter revocation, and be updated at least bi-weekly with copies to the VOA-MN. The plan should include, but not be limited to, the following.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Termination of non-essential personnel and cancellation of non-essential services prior to CHARTER REVOCATION.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make final federal, state and local tax payments (every employer, including the School, which pays wages to employees is responsible for withholding, depositing, paying, and reporting federal, state and local income tax, social security taxes, and federal unemployment tax for such wage payments).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Auction / sale of assets in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, and maximizes net revenue to the extent permitted by ongoing agreements with existing creditors. (<i>See Liquidation of Assets, below.</i>)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Liquidation or closing of bank accounts according to a schedule that minimizes fees but leaves the School enough flexibility to pay creditors, attorneys, accountants, etc. during the course of the wind-up, including funds for a final audit, and (if the School Corporation does not submit or the board of directors do not approve a renewal application), for dissolution.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cancellation of corporate credit cards and lines of credit.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change authorized signatures on accounts as needed to reflect changes in persons authorized to implement the winding down operations of the School Corporation, and employment, contract and School Board status of those authorized to sign for the School.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Status reports on the implementation of the School Wind-Up Plan to be submitted to the VOA-MN through Interim Statements and a Final Statement (below).</li> </ul>	School Board and School Director		
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Protection of Assets; Insurance</b></p> <p>The School's assets and any assets in the School that belong to others must be protected against theft, misappropriation and deterioration.</p>	Board Chair or Designee		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Existing insurance coverage should be maintained on the assets until the disposal of such assets. In accordance with the Wind-Up Plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue existing insurance for School Facility, vehicles and other assets until 1) disposal or transfer of real estate or termination of lease, and 2) disposal, transfer or sale of vehicles and other assets are sold, respectively.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate School Facility insurance with entities that may take possession of School Facility – lenders, mortgagors; bond holders, etc., if possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate security services should be obtained or maintained.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Action may include moving assets to secure storage after closure or loss of the School Facility.</li> </ul>			
<b>17</b>	<p><b>Inventory</b></p> <p>No later than 30 days prior to CHARTER REVOCATION, <u>all</u> of the School’s assets must be inventoried with item #'s and quantities and/or its inventory updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All assets of the School, not just ones over a certain dollar value must be inventoried.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide VOA OF MN with a copy of the inventory.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify assets belonging to other entities (school district, county, municipality, health department, Authorizing foundation, vendors, PTA, etc.), including those borrowed or loaned.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify assets encumbered by the terms of a contingent gift, grant or donation, or a security interest.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Return assets not belonging to School and document same.</li> </ul>	Board Chair & School Director		
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Liquidation of Assets</b></p> <p>Assets must be liquidated in a commercially reasonable manner including, but not limited to, sale by way of auction, sealed bidding or other commercially reasonable sales methods to the extent permitted under agreements with existing creditors and to the extent such assets are free and clear of any liens or encumbrances. If an asset is subject to a lien, encumbrance or security interest (above), the secured party should be contacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pursuant to MN Statute 317A.735, no asset may be given away, except as authorized by law. In cases where the cost of disposing of an asset will exceed the cost to be received at sale or auction, it may be permissible to give away or discard such assets. However, this should be cleared from the largest or sole creditor(s) in advance.</li> </ul> <p>School Board members and their relatives as well as employees and students of the School should not</p>	School board chair and treasurer		

	purchase any asset unless the purchase is disclosed to the School Board and the disclosure is made a matter of record in the School Board's minutes and approved by a majority of the non-interested members of the School Board.			
<b>19</b>	<b>D&amp;O Insurance</b> Maintain existing directors and officer's liability (D&O) insurance, if any, until final dissolution of the School Corporation. If no such D&O insurance exists, disclose this fact to the board of directors.	School Board		
<b>20</b>	<b>Interim Statements</b> No later than 10 days after CHARTER REVOCATION, prepare, and submit to the VOA of MN, an interim statement in a form satisfactory to the VOA of MN, of the status of all contracts and other obligations of the School Corporation, and all funds, including principal and accrued interest, owed to, and by, the School Corporation, with supporting evidence showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all creditors or former creditors, any amounts paid to creditors (or in-kind exchanges of assets), and any amounts of debt of the School or School Corporation outstanding, including principal and accrued interest, as of the date of the interim report; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all amounts owed to the School Corporation by debtors, any amounts paid by debtors, and whether any debtors have paid in full, and any amounts outstanding; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all income generated through sale or auction of assets and any other change in status of assets.</li> </ul> The School will prepare and submit such statements to the VOA-MN at 30-day intervals until the final statement (below) is prepared and submitted.	School board chair or designee		
<b>21</b>	<b>Final Statement</b> At a date to be determined by the VOA-MN, anticipated to be no later than 90 days after CHARTER REVOCATION, no later than 10 days prior to the filing of a dissolution proceeding, the School shall prepare to the full satisfaction of the VOA of MN a final statement of the status of all contracts and other obligations of the School Corporation, and all funds owed to the School, audited (or confirmed) by an independent accountant, with supporting evidence showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all assets and the value and location thereof, whether such asset has been distributed to creditors in satisfaction or payment of any existing debt obligation; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> each remaining creditor and any and all amounts owed to each creditor, including principal and accrued interest through the date of such statement; and</li> </ul>	School board chair or designee		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> statement that (a) all debts have been collected, or (b) that good faith efforts have been made to collect same, and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> each remaining debtor of the School or School Corporation and the amounts owed by each debtor, including principal and accrued interest.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This statement is submitted to the VOA-MN in the form in which it will be sworn and submitted to the MN Attorney General and/or MN Secretary of State as part of any dissolution proceeding.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This statement is in addition to the final Financial Statement Audit (below).</li> </ul>			
<b>Corporate Records / Accounting</b>				
<b>22</b>	<b>Final Financial Statement Audit</b> The School must have a financial statement audit performed in accordance with the Charter and the Act no later than November 1 <sup>st</sup> of the calendar year in which the School ceases instruction.	School Board		
<b>23</b>	<b>Closeout of State and Federal Grants</b> State, federal and other grants must be closed out, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> notification to the grant entity of the School closure; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> filing of any required expenditure reports or receipts and any required program reports.</li> </ul> The School Corporation should continue to pursue grant funds to which it is entitled, provided that it fully discloses its current situation and intentions with respect to closure. The School Corporation should not seek or accept grant funds for future school years when the School will be closed. Grant status should be noted on financial statements.	School Board		
<b>24</b>	<b>U.S. Dept. of Education Filings</b> File Federal form 269 or 269a if the School was receiving funds directly from the United States Department of Education. <i>See</i> 34 CFR 80.41.	School Board		
<b>25</b>	<b>IRS Status; Reports</b> The School Board must continue to take all steps necessary to maintain its 501(c)(3) status, including, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> notification to IRS regarding any address change of the School Corporation; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> filing of required tax returns or reports (e.g., IRS form 990 and Schedule A).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the School Corporation proceeds to dissolution, notify the IRS of dissolution of the education corporation and its 501(c)(3) status and furnish a copy to the VOA of MN.</li> </ul>	School Board		

26	<p><b>Corporate Records</b></p> <p>In all cases, the School Board shall maintain all corporate records related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loans, bonds, mortgages and other financing;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contracts;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leases;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assets and asset sales;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grants -- records relating to federal grants must be kept in accordance with 34 CFR 8042.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Governance (Minutes, by-laws, policies);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employees (background checks, personnel files);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/audit, taxes and tax status, etc;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personnel,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employee benefit programs and benefits; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student summary test data files</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any items listed in this Closure Plan.</li> </ul>	School Board		
<b>Dissolution / Final Distribution of Assets</b>				
27	<p><b>Resolution of Dissolution</b></p> <p>The Board of Directors must adopt a resolution that the School Corporation be dissolved and proceed to file the same with the MN Attorney General and/or MN Secretary of State.</p>	School Board Chair		
28	<p><b>Dissolution</b></p> <p>If the School Corporation dissolves, the Board must follow the dissolution provisions in its articles of incorporation and applicable laws. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a complete statement of all assets, their location and an estimate of their value; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> a statement of the ascertainable debts of the education corporation.</li> </ul> <p>Whenever the Charter or an order of dissolution is made, the members of the School Board or other custodian of the records of the School have the duty to properly maintain the permanent records of the School according to law and stored in a secure, locked container.</p> <p>Copies of all papers related to dissolution should be sent to the VOA-MN.</p> <p>Members of the Board are empowered to continue in office even after the expiration of the Charter and dissolution of the School Corporation for the purpose of winding-up and settling the affairs of the School Corporation, and after the dissolution of the School Corporation.</p>	School board secretary		

29	<p><b>Final Distribution of Assets</b></p> <p>All liabilities and obligations of the School must be paid and discharged (or adequate provision must be made therefore) to the extent of the School's assets. Any assets held subject to a lien, encumbrance, security interest or other written conditions or limitations must be disposed of in accordance with and subject to those conditions or limitations.</p> <p>Assets received and held by the School subject to limitations permitting their use only for charitable, benevolent, educational, or similar purposes, but not held upon condition requiring return or with specific disposition instructions, shall be held until dissolution and transferred or conveyed to one or more charter schools in the school district or to the school district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An itemized receipt must be obtained from each recipient of an asset containing the name, address and telephone number of the recipient. (In case of later question, audit or review by federal bankruptcy or state supreme court, or other governmental body.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In closing out any federal grant and accounting for any federal grant funds, property owned by the federal government or property acquired under a federal grant must be distributed in accordance with federal regulations.</li> </ul>	School board chair or designee		
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**Contract Evaluation Report Template****SCHOOL, # \_\_\_\_\_****Contract Term:**

**REPORT PURPOSE:** This report was produced by the authorizer of [SCHOOL] charter school in compliance with Minnesota Statute § 124E.10, Subd.3 (Review and Comment), which requires an authorizer to conduct a formal evaluation and report on the performance of a charter school before a charter school's contract is renewed for another contract term. Per state law, Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) regularly monitors and evaluates the performance of the school. VOA-MN views contract renewal as an on-going process that is engaged in by the Board of Directors, school leadership, and the authorizer throughout the entire life of the school's contract with its authorizer. Using the results of ongoing site school site visit reports, performance on the VOA-MN Annual Reports on Governance, Finance, and Academics, board meetings monitored, as well as the evaluation and observations from the end-of-term site visit, VOA-MN determines whether to renew its contract with the charter school and if so, for what length of time. Contracts can be renewed for up to five years.

**SCHOOL DIRECTOR:****PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:****EVALUATION REPORT ORDER**

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE &amp; STATUTORY PURPOSES

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- BOARD GOVERNANCE
- MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

CONTRACT RENEWAL DETERMINATION

**Rating Scale: For each standard, a school earns points for contract renewal as follows:**

2 = Meets Standard

1 = Partially Meets Standard

0 = Does Not Meet Standard

**Weighting of Performance Measures used during the contract renewal process is as follows:**

50% weighting: Academic Program (statutory purposes, including primary purpose)

20% weighting: Financial Sustainability

30% weighting: Organization

15% governance  
15% management & compliance

### **Three essential questions guide our VOA-MN authorizer oversight and charter school accountability plan.**

#### **1. Academic Program Performance - Is the school's Learning Program a Success?**

**Academic Performance-** All public schools, including charters, must fully participate in the state assessments - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Additionally, the school shall annually complete a VOA-MN (authorizer)/School jointly approved interim assessment in reading and math. Data from state assessments as well as Title 1 Designation utilizing Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are required to meet the academic performance standards for which they agree to be held accountable in their charter contract.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually an Academic Performance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The report serves as a single annual source of academic program and performance information for all of our VOA-MN operational charter schools. The report contains an analysis of annual and cumulative academic program, performance, and professional development data for each school.

Content from the annual Academic Performance Report also serves as the basis for the school academic performance analysis contained in the statutorily required Contract Renewal Evaluation Reports, including evaluation of the extent to which the school has met their primary purpose, “to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement” during the contract term.

The VOA-MN determined academic performance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school academic performance and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed:

#### **[SCHOOL] Academic Performance Section Overview:**

Figure 1 – School Population

Figure 2 - Enrollment by Special Population

Figure 3 – Number of Students Tested (MCA)

#### **Academic Performance Standard 1 – State Examinations**

Students are performing well on state examinations or other agreed upon exam (i.e. NWEA) in comparison to students at schools they might otherwise attend (with similar demographics) as evidence of meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.

The following results show the percentage of students tested who either met or exceeded the standards on the MCA Math, Reading, and Science assessments.

Table 1 – MCA Math Proficiency [CONTRACT TERM]

<b>MCA Math</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>
Statewide					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					
SCHOOL					
1-Oct.					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					
COMPARISON SCHOOL					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					

Figure 4 - MCA Math Proficiency [CONTRACT TERM]

#### **ANALYSIS OF MATH MCA PROFICIENCY:**

Table 2 – MCA Reading Proficiency [CONTRACT TERM]

<b>MCA Reading</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>YR</b>
Statewide					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					
SCHOOL					
1-Oct.					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					
COMPARISON SCHOOL					
Grade					
Grade					
Grade					

Figure 5 – MCA Reading Proficiency [CONTRACT TERM]

#### **ANALYSIS OF READING MCA PROFICIENCY:**

##### **Academic Performance Standard 2 - Growth**



Over the term of the contract, the school will maintain an average state-determined minimum achievement level of 65% (Increased + Maintained) as evidence of meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. (an alternative measure will be used when cell size is too small or in the case of stand-alone high school).

[INSERT GRAPH]

Figure 6- Growth Scores in Math and Reading

**Academic Performance Standard 3 - Achievement Gap Reduction**

The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate in the School and any reportable student group proficiency rate will be reduced over the term of the contract in both reading and math using state examination or other agreed upon exam (i.e. NWEA) data as evidence of the School meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.

[INSERT GRAPH]

Figure 7- Reportable Student Groups MCA Math [YEARS]

[INSERT GRAPH]

Figure 8 - Reportable Student Groups MCA Reading [YEARS]

**VOA -MN Standards Evaluation**

The school’s evaluation on each standard is listed in the table below. The three possible outcomes are:

- 2 = Meets standard
- 1 = Partially meets standard
- 0 = Does not meet standard

VOA-MN’s academic performance standards / expectations include the following:

For the purpose of the “sample evaluation,” one table is provided. A full set of VOA-MN Academic standards and performance indicators is contained in “ADDENDUM B - School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”

<b>Standard 1: Students are performing well on state examinations or other agreed upon exam (i.e. NWEA) in comparison to students at schools they might otherwise attend (with similar demographics) as evidence of meeting their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.</b>		
<b>• Imbedded WBWF Standard: All third-graders can read at grade-level.</b>		
2	<b>Meets</b>	School’s average proficiency rate exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.
1	<b>Partially Meets</b>	School’s average proficiency rate meets or exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend in one or two subjects (math, reading and science) but not all three.
0	<b>Does Not Meet</b>	School’s average proficiency rate is less than the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.
<b>Evidence / Source:</b> Minnesota Department of Education		
<b>Analysis:</b>		

## **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY - Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial Health?**

### **Financial Section Summary**

Charter schools receive public funds and must meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. It is VOA-MN's duty to ensure that the schools are responsible stewards of public funds. The charter school shall provide VOA with a copy of its draft and final annual budgets and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA-MN shall use submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan for the current year. VOA-MN shall use the financial statements presented in the charter school's annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior-year. Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings.

Ten key financial oversight standards that every VOA-MN charter school strives to achieve are the basis for the VOA-MN Finance Award of Excellence. There were various data sources and documents examined during the review of the fiscal condition of each school. There was a review of the original budget and monthly income statement, balance sheet, check registers, cash flow projections, enrollment reports along with school board and finance committee meeting agendas and minutes. Various school reports were reviewed that were submitted to MDE for UFARS and ADM enrollment updates and projections. That examination was followed by a review of the school financial audit reports and revised budgets. Finally, selected financial documents and practices were studied including finance related policies, appropriate use of public funds and various internal systems.

The VOA-MN determined school financial standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school financial health and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer monitors school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Finance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations and annual network award winners. The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed.

### **VOA -MN Standards Evaluation**

The school's evaluation on each standard is listed in the table below. The three possible outcomes are:

2 = Meets standard

1 = Partially meets standard

0 = Does not meet standard

For the purpose of the "sample evaluation," one table is provided. A full set of VOA-MN Academic standards and performance indicators is contained in "ADDENDUM B - School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System"

<b>Financial Standard 1: The school maintains a balanced budget.</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Meets</b>	surplus position
<b>1</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	NA
<b>0</b>	<b>Does Not Meet</b>	deficit position
<b>Data / Source:</b> School budgets, Annual Report, School monthly financial reports		

## **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION - Is the organization effective and well run?**

**PART I: BOARD GOVERNANCE.** Effective board governance is essential to the successful start-up and operation of a public charter school. The diversity of charter school board memberships – teachers, parents, community leaders, and volunteers – heightens the importance of consistent expectations and development activities.

The authorizer regularly monitors the performance quality of the school board based on authorizer observations; interviews with the director, board and faculty; and the review of school policies, reports and board meeting minutes. A school must have a governance model that provides quality oversight by ensuring that there are checks and balances between the board and the school administrators.

A school board is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing policy; defining sound employee relations; conducting open meetings; recognizing and conforming to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws; and governing within the limits of a delegation of state authority – as a nonprofit and public-school board. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; inform the public of all deliberations and decisions; promote accountability; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Board Governance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source on the board operations and compliance of the fifteen VOA-MN-authorized charter schools. Authorizer VOA-MN also observes a minimum of two school board meetings annually.

The VOA-MN determined school board governance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school board performance and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer monitors school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards shall will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Governance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed.

### **Board Chair:**

Email:

Phone:

### **[SCHOOLS] Board Committees**

### **VOA -MN Standards Evaluation**

The school's evaluation on each standard is listed in the table below. The three possible outcomes are:

2 = Meets standard

1 = Partially meets standard

0 = Does not meet standard

For the purpose of the “sample evaluation,” one table is provided. A full set of VOA-MN Academic standards and performance indicators is contained in “ADDENDUM B - School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”

## Board Structure and Development

<b>Standard 1: The Board of Directors meets its governance model requirements laid out in its bylaws and membership requirements as required by Minnesota Statute.</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Meets</b>	The Board structure meets bylaws and state statute.
<b>1</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	The Board structure meets bylaws and state statute.
<b>0</b>	<b>Does Not Meet</b>	The Board’s structure does not meet bylaws and/or state statute.
<b>Data / Source:</b> Website and Annual Report		
<b>Analysis:</b>		

## SECTION PART II: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Effective day to day operations of a charter school support the Learning Program. A well-run school provides an environment in which staff and students can perform at the highest possible level and more effectively reach the school’s goals. Management and operations of the school will be monitored and reported by the authorizer using the Formal Site Visit Rubric. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these standards /expectations as needed. Standards for Management and Operations are judged on the Formal Site Visit Rubric and monitoring of reporting compliance.

**Renewal Year Formal Site Visitation Date:**

**Informal Site Visitation Date:**

**School Participants & Titles:**

One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school, hear directly from key stakeholders, and corroborate school-reported information and data. VOA-MN conducts two different types of site visits: Formal and Informal. School site visits help inform the extent to which the school is meeting the charter school contract provisions contained in the body of the contract. Formal Site Visits are typically conducted once per year by a member of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Leadership Team.

## VOA -MN Standards Evaluation

The school’s evaluation on each standard is listed in the table below. The three possible outcomes are:

2 = Meets standard

1 = Partially meets standard

0 = Does not meet standard

For the purpose of the “sample evaluation,” one table is provided. A full set of VOA-MN Academic standards and performance indicators is contained in “ADDENDUM B - School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System”

<b>Standard 1: Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Meets</b>	Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.
<b>1</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	Mission and vision are displayed in the facility, on website and in annual report, but evidence that they guide decision-making and programming are missing.
<b>0</b>	<b>Does Not Meet</b>	Mission and vision are not used to guide school's decision-making.
<b>Data / Source:</b> Website, Board Packets, Annual Report, Site Visits, Authorizer-School Discussion		
<b>Analysis:</b>		

### Legal and Contractual Compliance

Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. VOA-MN expects compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a Compliance Binder on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed Annual Submission Calendar. *This area is not calculated separately and instead is imbedded in the three sections above.*

### Weighting of Performance Measures used during the contract renewal process is as follows:

- 50% weighting: Academic Program (statutory purposes, including primary purpose)
- 20% weighting: Financial Sustainability
- 30% weighting: Organization
  - 15% governance
  - 15% management & compliance

### Contract Renewal Eligibility

VOA-MN schools must achieve 70% of points possible in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal. VOA-MN schools must achieve 80% or greater of points possible in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

Progress meeting VOA-MN Standards is monitored and communicated to schools annually through the school Formal Site Visit Reports and three VOA-MN Charter School Network Reports (academic, finance, governance). Renewal contract length is based on an average of school's performance over the term of the contract. Renewal decisions for a three-year or five-year contract term will be based on two and four fiscal years of data respectively.

If a school is performing below standard and not able to receive a three-year renewal contract but has agreed to the authorizer terms and conditions set forth in the School Improvement Plan to correct areas of deficiency, VOA-MN may agree to extend a school's contract (not to exceed five years) to provide additional time for a school to improve performance as an alternative to termination. If sufficient school

improvement is not being made by the end of the 1st year of the extension, termination proceedings will commence.

The following is an example of a five-year contract term renewal calculation:

ANNUAL AND CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATIONS TABLE					
		YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4
ACADEMIC (50%)		/ 50%	/ 50%	/ 50%	/ 50%
FINANCE (20%)		/20%	/20%	/20%	/20%
ORGANIZATION (30%)					
	BOARD GOVERNANCE (15%)	/ 15%	/ 15%	/ 15%	/ 15%
	MANAGEMENT & COMPLIANCE (15%)	/ 15%	/ 15%	/ 15%	/ 15%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	/100%	/100%	/100%	/100%
<b>FOUR-YEAR AVERAGE FINAL TOTAL</b>		(Example: Y1 79/100+ Y2 80/100+Y3 85/100+ Y4 90/100 = 334/400 = <b>AVERAGE FINAL 83.5%</b> )			