



FY 2013

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Approved Charter School Authorizer

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Introduction

In cities and states across the country, high quality charter schools are being seen as one of several powerful and complementary strategies to improve public education in their communities. Local school superintendents, state superintendents, colleges, governors, mayors, university leaders, community leaders, not-for-profits, state departments of education and others are taking bold action to develop plans, form public-private partnerships, allocate resources, provide facilities, and implement policies to support new charter schools that meet high standards.

From the moment that our Legislature gave birth to charter schools by enacting the first charter school law in the country in 1991, Minnesota has long been a leader in the charter school sector. In 2012, Minnesota celebrates the 20th anniversary of our charter school law and the first charter school in the country, which opened in Minnesota in 1992. Since then, Minnesota charter schools have grown steadily to approximately 148 schools serving more than 40,000 public school students.

As a national leader in the charter school sector, we have learned through practice and experience that authorizers have a significant impact on the nature and quality of these public schools. The authorizer makes at least two critical decisions in the life of every charter school: whether to approve the school's application and whether to renew the school's contract. In addition, the authorizer has an ongoing relationship with approved schools through which it balances the need to represent the public interest in monitoring the school with ensuring that each school has the operational autonomy that is critical to the concept of charter schools. There are specific characteristics of a quality authorizer that fulfill those responsibilities well. This request for proposals is designed to facilitate the submission of authorizer applications that reflect and align with those characteristics in a clear manner.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) worked closely with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to develop this authorizer approval application process. NACSA was founded on the principle that every child should have the right to choose a high-quality school and advances that vision by promoting the establishment of quality charter schools through responsible oversight in the public interest. NACSA has also developed and implemented a system for comprehensive evaluation of authorizer quality. The central language in Minnesota's authorizer quality legislation, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 3, draws directly from NACSA's Principles and Standards for Quality Authorizing, and this request for proposals aligns directly with both the Minnesota Legislature's mandate and the quality authorizing principles that provide the foundation for that mandate.

Authorizer Application Review Timeline and Process

This review process is the only round of authorizer application reviews MDE will conduct during the 2012-13 school year (FY 2013). It begins with release of this request for proposals (RFP) and ends with the commissioner’s final decisions. Following are the key stages and dates of the FY 2013 authorizer application review process.

Stage	Date
Request for Proposals Release	October 1, 2012
Applicant Orientation/Information Session	October 18, 2012 (afternoon webinar) Contact daniel.debruyne@state.mn.us by October 16 to participate in the webinar.
*Intent to Apply Notice due to MDE	October 19, 2012
Proposals Due/Application Deadline	November 13, 2012 (must be received by 4:30 p.m. Central Time)
Applicant Interviews	Early December 2012
Initial Approval/Disapproval Decisions and Notifications	No later than January 22, 2013 **“Within 45 business days of the application deadline”
Submission to Demonstrate Satisfactory Remedy of Deficiencies	**“Within 20 business days of notification”
Final Decisions	**“After 20 days expire, the commissioner has 15 business days to make a final decision to approve or disapprove the application.”**

Intent to Apply Notice

*In order to determine an appropriate number of reviewers and secure sufficient space for applicant interviews, an Intent to Apply Notice (see Attachment A) is due to MDE no later than **October 19, 2012**. Each applicant must submit an Intent to Apply Notice via email to Dan DeBruyn, Authorizer Specialist, at daniel.debruyne@state.mn.us.

***Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 3(c), “The commissioner must approve or disapprove an application within 45 business days of the application deadline. If the commissioner disapproves the application, the commissioner must notify the applicant of the specific deficiencies in writing and the applicant then has 20 business days to address the deficiencies to the commissioner’s satisfaction. After the 20 business days expire, the commissioner has 15 business days to make a final decision to approve or disapprove the application.”*

Authorizer Application Submission Instructions

Complete Application

Only complete applications with all required narrative and attachments will be reviewed.

Preparing Responses

Read and adhere to the submission instructions for each Part of the application.

Part A is up to a five page narrative, plus relevant attachments.

Part B is up to a ten page narrative, plus relevant attachments.

Part C is an interview between the review panel and the individuals representing the applicant relevant to proposed authorizing duties.

Attachments submitted by the applicant are an essential component of the authorizer application. They are to be included following each Section. The list of required attachments is included in Attachment D: Application Summary Form. Other relevant attachments should be labeled properly and referenced on Attachment D as well.

Submission Instructions

The applicant must submit a total of eight (8) unbound hard copies of the application to MDE:

- One (1) original single-sided copy; and
- Seven (7) double-sided (back-to-back) copies.

In addition, applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy of the complete application on a USB-compatible flash drive. Acceptable electronic file formats are Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel.

Parts, Sections and attachments must be submitted in the same order as listed in these directions (see Attachment F: Order of Application Submission). It is important that the applicant submit materials in an organized fashion, including page numbers, either continuous throughout the application or continuous within Sections. Include attachments to the authorizer application following each Section in the same order that they are listed on the Application Summary Form (see Attachment D).

Where to Submit Hard Copies of the Application

Complete applications, including eight (8) hard copies and one (1) flash drive may be mailed or delivered to:

Minnesota Department of Education
Attn: Marsha Davis-Busch
Charter Center
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

When to Submit an Application

The Intent to Apply Notice (see Attachment A) must be submitted electronically to daniel.debruyne@state.mn.us at MDE by **October 19, 2012**. The submission deadline for the FY 2013 Authorizer Application is **November 13, 2012**. The commissioner will make initial application decisions within 45 business days following the submission deadline.

Applications must be received by MDE before 4:30 p.m. Central Time on the date due.

Application Cycle: FY 2013

Submission Deadline: November 13, 2012

Amending Responses

Do not send unsolicited amendments to the application following its initial submission.

If an application is initially disapproved, the commissioner's notice will include reviewer feedback identifying any content that has been reviewed and determined to be unsatisfactory. Per Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 3(c), if an application is disapproved, "the commissioner must notify the applicant of the specific deficiencies in writing and the applicant then has 20 business days to address the deficiencies to the commissioner's satisfaction. After the 20 business days expire, the commissioner has 15 business days to make a final decision to approve or disapprove the application." [View full text of statute here.](#)

Disposition of Responses

Once an application is received, MDE may release to the public the name and mailing address of the applicant. All materials submitted in response to this request for proposals will become property of the State of Minnesota and will become public record in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 13, after the evaluation process is completed. Completion of the evaluation process occurs when the commissioner has notified every authorizer applicant of final approval or disapproval. If the responder submits information in response to this request for proposals that it believes to be trade-secret materials as defined by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, section 13.37, the responder must:

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

Authorizer Application Rating Scale

The application will be evaluated according to the following rating scale. The scale is designed to ensure successful applications meet statutory requirements for authorizing and MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.

Cumulative Ratings

The rating for each Part and Section of the application will be based on the following scale:

4	Well-developed	Content meets the minimum statutory requirements AND does an exceptional job of meeting MDE’s standards for quality authorizing. Warrants notice from, and emulation by, other authorizers.
2	Satisfactory	Content meets the minimum statutory requirements AND meets minimum expectations of MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.
0	Unsatisfactory	Content is either lacking altogether or falls well below the minimum statutory requirements for authorizing AND/OR MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.

Please note that ratings are qualitative and not to be quantified.

Indicator-specific Ratings

For individual indicators, MDE will use an expanded rating scale that allows for greater specificity. In addition to enabling increased differentiation of performance, the expanded scale facilitates greater precision in identifying strengths and weaknesses of proposed authorizer practices.

4	Well-developed and Promising Practice	Content meets the minimum statutory requirements AND does an exceptional job of meeting MDE’s standards for quality authorizing. Warrants notice from, and emulation by, other authorizers.
3	Approaching well-developed	Content meets the minimum statutory requirements AND exceeds expectations in meeting MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.
2	Satisfactory	Content meets the minimum statutory requirements AND meets minimum expectations of MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.
1	Approaching satisfactory	Content does not meet the minimum statutory requirements OR improvement is needed in order to meet MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.
0	Unsatisfactory	Content is either lacking altogether or falls well below the minimum statutory requirements for authorizing AND/OR MDE’s standards for quality authorizing.

Please note that ratings are qualitative and are not to be quantified.

Commissioner Approval or Disapproval

By law, the commissioner must make a determination regarding whether to approve or disapprove each eligible organization that submits a timely and complete application. Performance ratings are generated to support the commissioner's decision regarding approval or disapproval.

Approval - An approval by the commissioner means that the application, including proposed practices at a minimum, meets the statutory requirements for authorizing and MDE's standards for quality authorizing. An approval will be accompanied by the length of approval (up to five years). An approved authorizer will be subject to more frequent reviews if subsequent circumstances give MDE cause to conduct such reviews pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 3(g).

Disapproval - A disapproval by the commissioner means that MDE has found that, in whole or in part, the application, including proposed practices, does not meet the statutory requirements for authorizing and/or MDE's standards for quality authorizing. A recommendation to disapprove will be accompanied by documentation of the deficiencies in the application.

The performance ratings and recommendation will not reflect an average score. An application must be sound across the full range of authorizing responsibilities. For example, a single unsatisfactory rating may be sufficient to generate a recommendation to disapprove, depending on the significance of the section and the depth of the deficiency.

Authorizer Application Instructions, Evaluation Criteria and Indicators

The authorizer approval process is designed to assess how well an applicant proposes to fulfill the role, based on the requirements set out in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 (Charter Schools) and consistent with MDE's standards for quality authorizing.

PART A: STATEMENT OF INTERESTⁱ

The purpose of the Statement of Interest is to provide the applicant an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity and commitment to further the purposes of Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10.

Part A has two evaluated Sections. Provide up to a five page narrative for Part A plus attachments that address the applicant's mission, vision, capacity and infrastructure to authorize charter schools.

In addition to the narrative, sections must include the following attachments:

Section A.1: Authorizer Mission and Vision (*no attachments required*)

Section A.2: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure (*attachments*)

- Job descriptions of authorizer's relevant personnel.
- Resumes of relevant personnel. Each should identify all schools, local education agencies (LEAs), state education agencies (SEAs), etc., with which the individual(s) has/have been associated/affiliated.
- Applicant's organizational plan/chart of authorizing efforts (short and long-term).
- Five-year projected budget. This will include anticipated revenue and expenditures and the number of anticipated charter schools broken down by category (school size, new or transfer school, etc.).

SECTION A.1: AUTHORIZER MISSION AND VISION

<p>Guiding Question Does the applicant present a compelling authorizing mission and vision aligned with the purposes of Minnesota’s charter school law?</p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>A description of how the process of chartering schools is a way for the organization to carry out its mission.” The response should include information about which statutory purposes of charter schools are a particular priority for the applicant and what the applicant’s short and long-term goals are for authorizing. Such goals should address the number of schools, types of schools, populations to be served, etc.</i></p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	
A.1.1	The mission statement is a clear and concise statement of what the organization intends to accomplish as a charter school authorizer.
A.1.2	The vision articulates the primary statutory purposes that the organization expects to fulfill through charter school authorizing as well as any organization-specific purposes. The vision need not touch on every statutory purpose; however, it should align clearly with one or more of those purposes. It discusses with specificity the desired characteristics of the schools it will charter (e.g. types of schools, populations to be served and geographic priorities). It contains measureable criteria by which the organization can evaluate its success as an authorizer.

SECTION A.2: AUTHORIZER CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

<p>Guiding Question Does the organization have the demonstrated capacity to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of a charter school authorizer?</p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>A description of the organization’s capacity and infrastructure to carry out its authorizing responsibilities.ⁱⁱⁱ The response should include a description of staff authorizing roles and responsibilities; an organizational chart showing where authorizing responsibilities rest within the organization; a description of how the authorizer will manage school and student information; and – to the extent that the authorizer plans any substantial changes, such as growth in the number of schools chartered – a description of how it anticipates the organizational structure and chartering responsibilities will change over the next five years, along with a five year projected budget. The narrative and budget will reflect the ratio of authorizer staffing to the size of the portfolio of schools.</i></p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	
A.2.1	The description of capacity and infrastructure conveys a clear, accurate understanding of the organization’s duties and responsibilities as a charter school authorizer. It also conveys a persuasive, viable plan for how those responsibilities will be implemented effectively. This includes a description of how the applicant will establish the expertise necessary to fulfill its authorizing responsibilities. ^{iv}
A.2.2	The applicant clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of their staff, both short and long term. A well-developed plan will include thorough and clear job descriptions. ^v
A.2.3	The organizational chart shows clear lines of reporting and authority/decision-making and clarifies anticipated changes, both short and long-term.
A.2.4	The applicant clarifies how they anticipate managing both school and student information ^{vi}
A.2.5	The applicant provides a five-year budget . The budget distinguishes between revenue and expenses by category, number and type of authorizer staffing and schools (i.e. size of school, new or transfer), and anticipated growth over time. This includes the ratio of authorizer staffing to the size of the portfolio of schools.

PART B: EVALUATION OF PROPOSED AUTHORIZER PRACTICES

The purpose for the Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices is to assess the organization's understanding of and plans to implement critical authorizer practices. The majority of the application focuses on these proposed practices.

The evaluation of Part B has four Sections, each focuses on a functional area of the authorizing role.

Provide up to a 10 page narrative for Part B plus attachments that address the applicant's plans for charter school decision making, contracting and oversight, performance-based accountability and autonomy.

In addition to the narrative, Sections must include the following attachments.

Please note that MDE understands some or all of these attachments may be located in a single resource (e.g. a chartering manual). If that is the case, in addition to identifying the page number on the Application Summary Form (see Attachment D), please ensure the narrative response to each section clearly identifies where each attachment is located.

Section B.1: New Charter School Application Decision Making (Attachments)

- New Charter School Application/Policies/Procedures (possibly including charter school application packet that covers, at a minimum, all elements found in the Evaluation Criteria for this section)

Section B.2: Charter School Contracting and Oversight (Attachments)

- Sample Charter Contract (See Attachment E - Charter Contract Provisions)

Section B.3: Charter School Performance-Based Accountability (Attachments)

- School Opening Policy/Process
- Renewal Decision Policy/Procedures
- Charter School Supplemental Affidavit (for expansion of grades or sites) Application/Policy/Procedures
- Affiliated Building Corporation Application/Policy/Procedures
- Change of Authorizer Application/Policy/Procedures
- Charter Intervention Policy/Procedures
- Charter Revocation – if not included in the Renewal Decision Policy/Procedures
- School Closure Policy/Procedures

Section B.4: Charter School Autonomy (Attachments)

- Authorizer Conflict of Interest Policy

SECTION B.1: NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION DECISION MAKING^{vii}

<p>Guiding Question <i>Does the applicant propose decision making standards, policies and procedures for approval of new charter school applications based on demonstrated preparation and capacity to operate a quality charter school?</i></p>	
<p>STANDARDS</p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>The response should include expectations or standards that the applicant establishes, communicates and applies to new charter school applications. In order to make decisions about whether to approve or deny applications, at a minimum, the applicant considers the educational program, the organizational plan, the business plan (including a financial plan) and demonstrated capacity.</i></p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	
B.1.1	The applicant has thorough requirements and rigorous standards for evaluating the charter school's proposed mission and vision .
B.1.2	The applicant has thorough requirements and rigorous standards for evaluating the charter school's proposed educational program , including, but not necessarily limited to: the educational philosophy; proposed academic goals; curriculum and instruction; teaching skills and experience; calendar and daily schedule; target population; enrollment; and plans for educating students with special needs.
B.1.3	The applicant has thorough requirements and rigorous standards for evaluating the charter school's proposed organizational plan , including, but not necessarily limited to: legal status of the organization; management and operations plan; comprehensive service provider arrangements (if applicable); community involvement; governance plan; student recruitment and enrollment; and staffing and human resources.
B.1.4	The applicant has thorough requirements and rigorous standards for evaluating the charter school's proposed business plan , including, but not necessarily limited to: the budget; management of financial and other procedures; facilities; and pre-opening tasks.
B.1.5	The applicant has thorough requirements and rigorous standards for evaluating the charter school's capacity to implement the school plan effectively, including, but not necessarily limited to: reviewing backgrounds, education and experience of school developers, founders, board members and educational leaders; overseeing the educational program; achieving accountability goals; ensuring effective and responsible management of public funds; and taking responsibility for legal compliance. This includes considerations for any comprehensive service provider.

PROCESS	
Evaluation Criteria <i>The response should include the expectations that the applicant establishes, communicates and applies to the new charter school application process. This includes timelines, format requirements, evaluation procedures, and any steps the authorizer applicant will actively take to solicit applications.</i>	
Indicators	
B.1.6	The applicant's decision making process is informed by documented evidence and analyses of the extent to which the plan satisfies approval criteria/standards.
B.1.7	The applicant has clear and realistic timelines for the application process.
B.1.8	The applicant has clear and realistic expectations for proposal/application format .
B.1.9	The applicant has transparent processes for application timelines, evaluation and application decision making.

SECTION B.2: CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACTING AND OVERSIGHT

<p>Guiding Question <i>Does the applicant establish clear expectations for charter school contracting and performance-monitoring consistent with those expectations?</i></p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>The contract should document the material terms of the school's operation, including, but not necessarily limited to: its legal status; the educational program; operational requirements; financial commitments; and miscellaneous terms of the contract's operation. The contract should also make clear the legal authorities with which the charter school must comply. The charter contract requirements found in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 6, are addressed in the Charter Contract Provisions (See Attachment D).</i></p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	
B.2.1	Through the contract, the applicant establishes a declaration of the purposes that the school intends to carry out and how the school will report its implementation of those purposes. ^{viii}
B.2.2	Through the contract, the applicant establishes a description of the school program and the specific academic and nonacademic outcomes that pupils must achieve. ^{ix}
B.2.3	Through the contract, the applicant establishes a statement of admission policies and procedures. ^x
B.2.4	Through the contract, the applicant establishes governance, management, and administration plans for the school and any restrictions or requirements that apply to the school's governing body. ^{xi}
B.2.5	Through the contract, the applicant provides for signed agreements from charter school board members to comply with all federal and state laws governing organizational, programmatic, and financial requirements applicable to charter schools. ^{xii}
B.2.6	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the criteria, processes, and procedures that they will use for ongoing charter school oversight and evaluation of operational performance under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 15, including, but not necessarily limited to: the school's mission; grade range and number of students; school calendar; student discipline; student transportation; employee status and other personnel matters; handling of student records; insurance; board operating restrictions and open meeting requirements; and (if applicable) terms of a third-party service provider or comprehensive service agreement. ^{xiii}
B.2.7	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the criteria, processes, and procedures that they will use for ongoing charter school oversight and evaluation of financial performance under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 15, including, but not necessarily limited to: funding calculation and delivery; audit findings; enrollment reporting; authorizer fees; reporting requirements; audit requirements; asset ownership; and disposition rights and responsibilities. ^{xiii}

B.2.8	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the criteria, processes, and procedures that they will use for ongoing charter school oversight and evaluation of academic performance under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 15, including, but not necessarily limit to outcomes under B.2.2 (above). ^{xiii}
B.2.9	Through the contract, the applicant provides the written performance evaluation that is a prerequisite for renewing a charter contract. ^{xiv}
B.2.10	Through the contract, the applicant establishes, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivisions 6(8 and 9) and 8(k), types and amounts of insurance liability coverage to be obtained by the charter school. ^{xv}
B.2.11	Through the contract, the applicant establishes, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 25(d), a provision to indemnify and hold harmless the authorizer and its officers, agents, and employees for any suit, claim, or liability arising from any operation of the charter school, and the commissioner and department officers, agents, and employees notwithstanding section 3.736. ^{xvi}
B.2.12	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the term of the contract , which may be up to five years for an initial contract, plus an additional preoperational planning year, and up to five years for a renewed contract if warranted by the school's academic, financial, and operational performance. ^{xvii}
B.2.13	Through the contract the applicant establishes how the board of directors or the operators of the charter school will provide special instruction and services for children with a disability under sections 125A.03 to 125A.24, and 125A.65, and a description of the financial parameters within which the charter school will operate to provide the special instruction and services to children with a disability. The authorizer will clarify expectations and how they will monitor compliance with the school's obligations for serving students identified with disabilities, English language learners and other special populations. ^{xviii}
B.2.14	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the plan for an orderly closing of the school under chapter 308A or 317A, if the closure is a termination for cause, a voluntary termination, or a nonrenewal of the contract, and includes establishing the responsibilities of the school board of directors and the authorizer and notifying the commissioner, authorizer, school district in which the charter school is located, and parents of enrolled students about the closure, the transfer of student records to students' resident districts, and procedures for closing financial operations. ^{xix}
B.2.15	Through the contract, the applicant establishes the operational terms of the contract itself, including, but not necessarily limited to: provisions regarding notice, waiver, severability, assignment, amendment, indemnification, and contract dispute resolution.
B.2.16	Through the contract, the applicant documents and monitors compliance with relevant external authorities , including, but not necessarily limited to: applicable civil rights; state testing and accountability; open meeting requirements; and health, safety and welfare laws.

SECTION B.3: CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY DECISIONS

<p>Guiding Question <i>Does the applicant plan to hold schools accountable, based on performance as measured against rigorous expectations?</i></p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>The response should include the applicant’s accountability and decision making processes and procedures that are based on the application of valid, reliable evidence of the school’s performance as set out in the charter contract. Accountability includes decisions about: a school’s preparation to open; supplemental affidavits; affiliated building corporations; whether to intervene in a school’s operation; whether to renew or revoke a charter contract; and school closure.</i></p>	
<p>School Opening Indicators</p>	
B.3.1	The applicant has sound educational, organizational and financial conditions that must be met in order for the school to be approved to open. ^{xx}
<p>Performance Measures Indicators</p>	
B.3.2	Consistent with state and federal accountability systems, the applicant has clear expectations for and monitors educational performance based on: contract goals; achievement level (status); student progress over time (growth); and postsecondary readiness (if applicable). The applicant considers both absolute and comparative educational performance. ^{ix}
B.3.3	The applicant has clear expectations for and monitors organizational performance , based on: responsible governance, management and administration; legal compliance; sound enrollment; and positive student and family engagement. ^{xi}
B.3.4	The applicant sets clear expectations for and monitors financial performance predicated on: audit results; sound budgeting; sound accounting; and demonstrated fiscal viability. ^{xiii}
<p>Performance Decisions Indicators</p>	
B.3.5	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented and effective process and timeline for making supplemental affidavit (charter expansion) decisions, such as adding additional sites or grades at the school beyond those described in the original affidavit or contract, and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school’s demonstrated academic, organizational, and financial performance. ^{xxi}
B.3.6	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented, and effective process and timeline for creating an affiliated building corporation and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school’s demonstrated academic, organizational and financial performance. ^{xxii}

B.3.7	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented and effective process and timeline for making a change of authorizer decision , and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school's demonstrated academic, organizational, and financial performance. ^{xxiii}
B.3.8	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented, and effective process and timeline for charter renewal and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school's demonstrated academic, organizational and financial performance. ^{xxiv}
B.3.9	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented, and effective process and timeline for charter intervention and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school's demonstrated academic, organizational and financial performance. ^{xiii}
B.3.10	The applicant establishes standards for a transparent, documented, and effective process and timeline for charter revocation and makes evidence-based decisions regarding the school's demonstrated academic, organizational and financial performance. ^{xxiv}
B.3.11	In the context of making accountability decisions, the applicant affords schools a meaningful opportunity to present evidence related to their performance and to amend the contract to reflect the current state of the school. ^{xxiv}
B.3.12	The applicant has sound practices for oversight of orderly school closure in the event of revocation, non-renewal or voluntary relinquishment of the charter. ^{xix}

SECTION B.4: CHARTER SCHOOL AUTONOMY

<p>Guiding Question <i>Does the applicant show evidence of a plan to provide schools the autonomy to which they are entitled?</i></p>	
<p>Evaluation Criteria <i>The response should include ways that the applicant will provide for autonomy or authority of schools to make decisions about the process and means by which they will achieve expected outcomes, consistent with the charter contract and applicable law and policy.</i></p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	
B.4.1	The applicant has an established policy and process to avoid conflicts of interest that might affect the applicant’s capacity to make objective, merit-based application and renewal decisions, including avoiding decisions and interventions that make the authorizer responsible for the school’s performance. ^{xxv}
B.4.2	Through the contract, the applicant documents and respects the autonomies (e.g. waivers from statutes and regulations) to which schools are entitled by law. ^{xxvi}
B.4.3	Any services that the applicant intends to offer schools for a fee are made distinct from the authorizer’s accountability role and responsibilities and are entered into voluntarily by both parties. ^{xxvii}
B.4.4	The applicant provides allowable autonomies needed to enable schools to achieve instructional innovation and innovative forms of measuring outcomes. ^{xxviii}

PART C: APPLICANT INTERVIEW

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

The purpose of the Applicant Interview is to gain clarity on questions or concerns that arise from the review of the application. In addition, it provides an opportunity for the applicant to clearly articulate the overall authorizing plan, including the philosophy, policies, processes and short and long-term plans.

SECTION C.1: APPLICANT INTERVIEW^{xxix}

Guiding Question <i>Can the applicant clearly articulate an understanding of the overall authorizing plan and how the plan would be implemented?</i>	
Evaluation Criteria This section evaluates the applicant's understanding of and ability to clearly articulate the authorizing plans. This includes displaying clarity and comprehension as well as a commitment to becoming an effective authorizer.	
Indicators	
C.1.1	Clarity: The applicant's responses are precise, effective, thoughtful and direct.
C.1.2	Comprehension: The applicant is well-informed and demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the written application.
C.1.3	Commitment: The applicant conveys a genuine interest and commitment to becoming an effective authorizer.

RFP ATTACHMENTS – AUTHORIZER APPLICATION PROCESS

Attachment	Title
A	INTENT TO APPLY NOTICE
B	APPLICATION COVER SHEET (SHEET 1 - CONTACT AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION)
C	APPLICATION COVER SHEET (SHEET 2 - ASSURANCES)
D	APPLICATION SUMMARY FORM
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INTENT TO APPLY NOTICE

Instructions: In order to determine an appropriate number of reviewers and secure sufficient space for applicant interviews, MDE respectfully requests all applicants submit this Intent to Apply Notice no later than October 19, 2012. Submit the notice via email to Dan DeBruyn, Authorizer Specialist, at daniel.debruyn@state.mn.us.

Name of Organization (intended applicant):	
Name of Authorizer's Charter School Liaison:	
Contact Information (include email, mailing address and phone number):	
Type of Organization (Check the appropriate boxes below):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent school district school board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate school district school board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education district organized under sections 123A.15 to 123A.19
<input type="checkbox"/>	Institution of higher education, check the authorizer category the organization meets:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Minnesota private college that grants two- or four-year degrees and is registered with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education under chapter 136A</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Community college, state university, or technical college, governed by the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>University of Minnesota</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nonprofit corporation subject to chapter 317A, described in section 317A.905, and exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)6 of the Internal Revenue Code.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Purpose Authorizer – Charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

APPLICATION COVER SHEET 1 – CONTACT AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

(Submit with Authorizer Application)

Name of Organization (intended applicant):	
Name of Authorizer's Charter School Liaison:	
Contact Information (include email, mailing address and phone number):	
Type of Organization (Check the appropriate box and provide the appropriate organizational eligibility information):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent school district school board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate school district school board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education district organized under sections 123A.15 to 123A.19
<input type="checkbox"/>	Institution of higher education, check the authorizer category the organization meets:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Minnesota private college that grants two- or four-year degrees and is registered with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education under chapter 136A</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Community college, state university, or technical college, governed by the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>University of Minnesota</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Include as attachments the organization's most current version of every item requested below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documentation to evidence the organization's current membership with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits or the Minnesota Council on Foundations (membership must be active when the application is submitted).</i> • <i>Documentation of the organization's "Active" registration with the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General when the application is submitted to MDE.</i> • <i>Documentation from the Minnesota Secretary of State to evidence the organization has been incorporated in the state of Minnesota and has been operating continuously for at least five years (i.e., since September 2007.)</i> • <i>Documentation to verify the organization does not operate a charter school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Nonprofit corporation subject to chapter 317A, described in section 317A.905, and exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)6 of the Internal Revenue Code. Include as an attachment the organization's most current version of both items requested below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documentation from the Internal Revenue Service to evidence the organization's federal income tax exemption under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.</i> • <i>Documentation from the Minnesota Secretary of State to evidence the organization has been incorporated in the state of Minnesota and existed as a nonprofit for at least 25 years (i.e., since September 1987.)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Single Purpose Authorizer – Charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Include as an attachment the organization's most current version of both items requested below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documentation from the Internal Revenue Service to evidence the organization is a charitable, nonsectarian organization formed under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.</i> <i>Documentation from the Minnesota Secretary of State to evidence the organization is incorporated in the state of Minnesota as a charitable, non-sectarian organization.</i> <p><i>Please note: Single purpose authorizers "shall consider and approve applications using the criteria provided in subdivision 4 and shall not limit the applications it solicits, considers, or approves to any single curriculum, learning program, or method" (Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(b)(5)).</i></p>

APPLICATION COVER SHEET 2 – ASSURANCES

(Submit with Authorizer Application)

LEGALLY BINDING

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

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

IDENTIFIED OFFICIAL WITH AUTHORITY

Printed Name and Title

Signature *(person with authority to sign legal documents on behalf of the organization)*

Date

AUTHORIZER'S CHARTER SCHOOL LIAISON *(if different from above)*

Printed Name and Title

Signature

Date

APPLICATION SUMMARY FORM

(Submit with Authorizer Application)

Instructions: The documents listed below are **REQUIRED** as part of the application process. Additional documents should be added to the chart below and included in the order listed following the relevant Section. Use additional pages, as needed.

Application Part/Section	Document Title	Location in Application <i>(page number)</i>
	Attachment B RFP Application Cover Sheet 1: Contact Information	
	Organization's eligibility documentation (as required on Cover Sheet 1)	
	Attachment C RFP Application Cover Sheet 2: Assurances	
	Attachment D – RFP Application Summary Form	
Part A: Statement of Interest		
Section A.1: Authorizing Mission and Vision	No attachments required	
Section A.2: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure	Job Descriptions of Authorizer's Relevant Personnel	
A.2	Relevant Resumes	
A.2	Organizational Plan/Chart	
A.2	Five-year Projected Budget	
Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizing Practices		
Section B.1: Application Decision-Making	New Charter School Application/Policies/Procedures (including application packet that covers, at a minimum, all elements found in the Evaluation Criteria for this section)	
Section B.2: Contracting and Oversight	Sample Charter Contract (see Attachment E: Charter Contract Provisions)	
Section B.3: Accountability Decisions		
B.3.1	School Opening Policy/Process	
B.3.2, 3.8-3.10	Renewal Decision Policy/Process	
B.3.5	Charter Supplemental Affidavit Application/Policy/Procedures	
B.3.6	Affiliated Building Corporation Application/Policy/Procedures	
B.3.7	Change of Authorizer Application/Policy/Procedures	
B.3.9	Charter Intervention Policy/Procedures	

Application Part/Section	Document Title	Location in Application <i>(page number)</i>
B.3.10	Charter Revocation – if not included in Renewal Decision Polices/ Process (see B.3.2)	
B.3.12	School Closure Policy/Procedures	
Section B.4: Autonomy	Authorizer Conflict of Interest Policy	

CHARTER CONTRACT PROVISIONS

(Do not submit this page)

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 6, addresses charter contract requirements. A charter contract must be in writing and contain at least the following 13 elements:

1. a declaration of the purposes in Subdivision 1 that the school intends to carry out and how the school will report its implementation of those purposes;
2. a description of the school program and the specific academic and nonacademic outcomes that pupils must achieve;
3. a statement of admission policies and procedures;
4. a governance, management, and administration plan for the school;
5. signed agreements from charter school board members to comply with all federal and state laws governing organizational, programmatic, and financial requirements applicable to charter schools;
6. the criteria, processes, and procedures that the authorizer will use for ongoing oversight of operational, financial, and academic performance;
7. the performance evaluation that is a prerequisite for reviewing a charter contract under Subdivision 15;
8. types and amounts of insurance liability coverage to be obtained by the charter school;
9. consistent with Subdivision 25, paragraph (d), a provision to indemnify and hold harmless the authorizer and its officers, agents, and employees for any suit, claim, or liability arising from any operation of the charter school, and the commissioner and department officers, agents, and employees notwithstanding section 3.736;
10. the term of the contract, which may be up to five years for an initial contract plus an additional preoperational planning year, and up to five years for a renewed contract if warranted by the school's academic, financial, and operational performance;
11. how the board of directors or the operators of the charter school will provide special instruction and services for children with a disability under sections 125A.03 to 125A.24, and 125A.65, a description of the financial parameters within which the charter school will operate to provide the special instruction and services to children with a disability;
12. the process and criteria the authorizer intends to use to monitor and evaluate the fiscal and student performance of the charter school, consistent with Subdivision 15; and,
13. the plan for an orderly closing of the school under Chapter 308A or 317A, if the closure is a termination for cause, a voluntary termination, or a nonrenewal of the contract, and that includes establishing the responsibilities of the school board of directors and the authorizer and notifying the commissioner, authorizer, school district in which the charter school is located, and parents of enrolled students about the closure, the transfer of student records to students' resident districts, and procedures for closing financial operations.

ORDER OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

(Do not submit this page)

Documents must be organized and submitted in the following order:

Cover page

RFP Attachment B: *Application Cover Sheet 1: Contact Information*

Organization's eligibility documentation *(as required on Attachment B - Cover Sheet 1)*

RFP Attachment C: *Application Cover Sheet 2: Assurances*

RFP Attachment D: *Application Summary Sheet*

Part A: Statement of Interest - Section A.1 *Narrative*

Part A: Statement of Interest - Section A.1 *Attachments*

Part A: Statement of Interest - Section A.2 *Narrative*

Part A: Statement of Interest - Section A.2 *Attachments*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.1 *Narrative*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.1 *Attachments*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.2 *Narrative*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.2 *Attachments*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.3 *Narrative*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.3 *Attachments*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.4 *Narrative*

Part B: Evaluation of Proposed Authorizer Practices - Section B.4 *Attachments*

STATUTORY REFERENCES (ENDNOTES)*(Do not submit this page)*[View full text of Minn. Stat. § 124D.10](#)

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- ⁱ Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(c)(1) (capacity and infrastructure)
- ⁱⁱ Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(1) (authorizer mission)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subdivisions 3(c)(1) (capacity and infrastructure) and 4(d)(1 and 2) (mission and capacity)
- ^{iv} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(2) (authorizer capacity)
- ^v Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(8) (authorizer long term commitment)
- ^{vi} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(5) (ongoing oversight)
- ^{vii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(3) (decision-making)
- ^{viii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(1) (declaration of purpose)
- ^{ix} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(2) (school program)
- ^x Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(3) (admission policy)
- ^{xi} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(4) (governance plan)
- ^{xii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(5) (complying with federal and state laws and rules)
- ^{xiii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(6) (oversight)
- ^{xiv} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(7) (performance evaluation)
- ^{xv} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(8) (insurance amounts)
- ^{xvi} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(9) (indemnification)
- ^{xvii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(10) (term of contract)
- ^{xviii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(11) (special services)
- ^{xix} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 6(13) (orderly closure)
- ^{xx} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 4(c) (opening for operation)
- ^{xxi} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subdivisions 3(d)(6) and 4(j) (expanded application)
- ^{xxii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 17a (affiliated building corporation)
- ^{xxiii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subdivisions 3(f) (withdrawal of approved authorizer) and 23(c) (mutual agreement to terminate)
- ^{xxiv} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(d)(7) (renewal and termination)
- ^{xxv} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 4a(c) (conflict of interest)
- ^{xxvi} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 7 (exemption from statutes)
- ^{xxvii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 15(d) (no fee for required services)
- ^{xxviii} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 1(a)(3 and 4) (purposes)
- ^{xxix} Minn. Stat., § 124D.10, Subd. 3(c) (applicant's ability)