



FY 2019 Authorizer Annual Report

Authorizer Information

Name of Authorizing Organization: University of St. Thomas

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Authorizer Summary:

The University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas) Charter Authorizing Program is housed within the University's School of Education. Since it was founded in 2001, the St. Thomas portfolio has grown to 13 schools. In addition to having a staff dedicated to the Charter Authorizing Program, St. Thomas also utilizes a Charter Accountability Board whose members provide valuable insight and specialized knowledge, related to academic, financial, and organizational/governance oversight based on their areas of expertise. This level of expertise goes far beyond what could normally be offered by a smaller authorizing program.

The vision of the St. Thomas Charter Authorizing Program is to authorize excellent charter schools in order to increase quality educational opportunities for all children in the Twin Cities metro area. The University of St. Thomas strives to be a national model for quality authorizing and schools' authorizer of choice based on our competence, transparency, and respect for school autonomy.

The mission of the St. Thomas Authorizing Program is to advance the common good by using quality authorizing practices to oversee and promote the health of a portfolio of charter schools that demonstrably assist students in reaching their full academic and human potential.

Authorizer Processes

New Charter School Applications in FY 2019 (B.1)

Did your organization review any new charter school applications in FY 2019?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

After consideration of our office capacity, mission, and the needs of our current portfolio, as well as the larger charter landscape we determined that it was in the best interest of the schools we currently serve to refrain from holding a new school application process in SY2019.

If yes, complete the table below for each application:

| Name of Charter School Applicant | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

New Charter School Openings in FY 2019 (B.2)

Did your organization engage in ready-to-open activities in FY 2019?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

In SY2019, St. Thomas had no new school applicants.

If yes, complete the table below for each charter school scheduled to open:

| Name of Charter School Projected to Begin Serving Students in FY 2019 | Projected Opening Date | Did this School Open as Planned? | If No, Provide Reason(s) and Revised Projected Opening Date |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Charter School Expansion Applications in FY 2019 (B.2)

Did your organization review any site and/or grade expansion applications in FY 2019?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

No schools in the St. Thomas portfolio submitted a site or grade expansion application in FY2019. St. Thomas anticipates receiving 1 -2 site and/or grade applications in FY2020 and/or FY2021.

If yes, complete the table below for each application:

| Name of Charter School | Proposed Additional Grades to be Served and/or Location of New Site | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | MDE Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Official Early Learning Program Recognition Requests in FY 2019 (B.2)

Did your organization review any requests for official early learning program recognition in FY 2019?

Yes

If no, please provide an explanation:

N/A

If yes, complete the table below for each request:

| Name of Charter School | Early Learning Program Seeking Recognition | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | MDE Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Hiawatha Academies | Pre K (Early Learning) Program | Disapproval | N/A | After careful review based on the early learning application rubric and follow-up with the school, St. Thomas determined that additional detail was necessary to meet expansion application standards. The expansion concept in this case was complicated as the school seeks to implement a mixed-delivery subcontracting model which differs from the type of program the application process anticipates. Note that this is a separate application from that reflected in the SY2018 report. | Yes |

| Name of Charter School | Early Learning Program Seeking Recognition | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | MDE Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Global Academy | Pre-K (Early Learning Program) | Approval | Approval | N/A | N/A |

Charter School Change in Authorizer Requests in FY 2019 (B.2)

Did your organization review change in authorizer requests in FY 2019?

Yes

If no, please provide an explanation:

N/A

If yes, complete the table below for each request:

| Name of Charter School | Authorizer Charter School Requested to Transfer From | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | MDE Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Cornerstone Montessori School | Volunteers of America | Approval | Approval | N/A | N/A |

| Name of Charter School | Authorizer Charter School Requested to Transfer From | Authorizer Approval or Disapproval | MDE Approval or Disapproval | If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval | Application Withdrawn by Applicant |
|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| City Academy | St. Catherine University | Disapproval | N/A | After careful review based on the change in authorizer application rubric and follow-up with the school, St. Thomas determined that the lack of strong academic data coupled with unclear academic goals would not make City Academy a strong transfer candidate. | N/A |

Charter Contract Renewals in FY 2019 (B.9)

Did your organization engage in charter renewal activities in FY 2019?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

No schools within the St. Thomas portfolio had contracts that were up for renewal in SY2019.

If yes, complete the table below for each school:

| Name of Charter School | Was Contract Renewed? | If Yes, Term of Contract Renewal | If No, Reason(s) for Nonrenewal |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Additional Authorizer Activities

Authorizing Leadership and Staff Skill Development (A.5)

Describe how your organization built the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development over the past year.

The University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas) Authorizing Program is committed to building the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing team, which includes staff as well as the Charter Accountability Board (CAB). To this end, program leadership and staff participate in high quality, relevant, professional development throughout the course of the year that aligns with St. Thomas's authorizing vision, mission, goals, and operations.

Staff Development

St. Thomas's staff development plan is comprised of two parts: individual and staff-wide learning opportunities. Each year, St. Thomas team members set goals as a part of their review process. These goals are revisited throughout the course of the year in order to determine successes and areas for growth. An individual learning plan, which includes at least one learning experience annually, is created for each team member based on areas of growth identified. Individualized professional development opportunities may take the form of skill development courses, workshop or conference attendance, targeted readings, etc.

Program staff also strive to stay abreast of the latest in education and charter legislation, research, authorizing best practices, and hot button issues by annually attending statewide and national conferences as well as networking opportunities. Below is a sampling of the professional development activities St. Thomas authorizing staff participated in during SY2019:

- *NACSA Annual Conference*: The Program Coordinator attended the FY2019 Conference, where she had an opportunity to learn from education and authorizing experts and colleagues, network with authorizing staff from across the country and meet with other higher education authorizers.
- *NACSA Workshops*: In Spring 2019, NACSA hosted a workshop focused on the authorizer's role in advancing educational equity. NACSA leaders and fellows were invited to participate. Both the director and program coordinator attended.
- *Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Authorizer Conference*: St. Thomas participated in the annual conference hosted by MDE, which included presentations from a variety of teams within MDE connected to and supporting charter schools.
- *Higher Education Institutions Collaborative*: In June 2019, the Director and Program Coordinator attended the second annual convening of HEI authorizers. In June 2018, St. Thomas hosted the first convening.
- *MN Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA)*: St. Thomas remains an active member of MACSA, with the Assistant Director acting as a member of the Executive Committee, the Director acting as a member of the Finance Committee, and the Program Coordinator acting as a member of the Policy Committee. Interacting with our colleagues boosts our knowledge of new and best practices, happenings in the community, and much more. In addition, MACSA frequently invites presentations from various departments at MDE, MACS, and other stakeholder groups which provide valuable content.

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- *BKDV Financial Accountability Project*: Beginning in SY2019 and continuing into SY2020, St. Thomas has been working with BKDV to better understand the strengths/weaknesses of its financial accountability framework, create a protocol for financial review, provide opportunities to practice review of financials against new protocol, and provide additional content and recommendations.

In addition to ongoing individual professional development, St. Thomas created a comprehensive onboarding plan in FY2017 to ensure that new authorizing team members have access resources required to gain a comprehensive understanding of the charter landscape in Minnesota, the history of the St. Thomas authorizing program, and training in finance, governance, and the office's accountability and oversight frameworks. This process was utilized by both St. Thomas and other local authorizers in FY2018 as part their onboarding processes, and covers both legal and historical context of authorizing in Minnesota.

Board Development

A key component of St. Thomas's authorizing program is the utilization of a Charter Accountability Board (CAB), which provides recommendations on interim accountability and high stakes decisions. To ensure that we are building the knowledge and skill base of CAB members we employ a three-pronged development strategy.

First, as some CAB members have limited experience with the concept of authorizing prior to joining the board, St. Thomas authorizing program staff provide a robust orientation which includes providing key reading materials such as the NACSA principles and standards, St. Thomas's Authorizing Program Manual, conflict of interest policy, CAB bylaws, and more. Reading materials are supplemented with a presentation and one-on-one meeting with the Program Director to digest the content, answer questions, and familiarize members with the schools in St. Thomas's portfolio. All CAB members maintain a binder containing the documents listed above, as well as current portfolio school information.

The second component of our CAB development strategy includes embedding trainings on authorizing best practices into monthly meetings a minimum of twice per year. In FY2019 these trainings were focused on charter school academic performance and policy creation.

Finally, the third component of our development strategy includes ensuring that CAB members are able to understand, digest, and respond to, current events impacting the charter and authorizing sector. Our monthly meeting agendas include a 'happenings' section where local and national news stories, research, and policy developments are shared and discussed in context.

Authorizer Self-Evaluation (A.9)

Describe how your organization self-evaluated its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure, and practices) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools over the past year.

Self-evaluation and continuous improvement are central to achieving our vision and mission. To this end, the University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas) Authorizing Program engages in the following annually:

- **Board Survey.** In June of each year, Charter Accountability Board (CAB) members conduct a board self-evaluation. The self-evaluation is intended to gather information on how the board and overall program functions as well as identify focus areas and board recruitment needs for the upcoming year.

- **Staff Evaluations.** Program staff complete a staff evaluation in the spring of each year. The evaluation includes self-reflection as well as supervisor feedback. Goals for the upcoming year are set and areas for growth and professional development identified.
- **Policy, Procedure, and Operations Review.** On an annual basis, the authorizing team assesses the capacity, effectiveness, and efficiency of program policies and practices. Areas for improvements as well as gaps are identified. Processes and procedures are revised as needed and new processes and procedures adopted, as needed.

Where areas for improvement are identified, the St. Thomas Authorizing Program implements a continuous improvement plan that includes the following components:

- Identify desired outcome(s);
- Identify key strategies and products needed to achieve outcome(s);
- Set target dates for completion and intermediary milestones;
- Identify the primary person(s) responsible for each strategy;
- Monitor progress regularly at staff and CAB meetings; and
- Review final outcomes and determine whether issue has been satisfied or the cycle begins again.

St. Thomas recently implemented a yearly survey sent to our school directors and board chairs that includes soliciting feedback on authorizer performance. We use feedback from the survey to improve our authorizing practices.

In FY2019 St. Thomas focused its efforts on reviewing and revising its new school application process, resulting in a modified timeline which will help successful applicants maximize the time they are able to plan and prepare with the help of CSP funds.

Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination (A.10)

Describe how your organization disseminated best authorizing practices and/or assisted other authorizers in high quality authorizing over the past year.

The St. Thomas Authorizing Office is committed to promoting high quality authorizing across Minnesota and the nation. The organization uses the following strategies to share best practices, assist other authorizers, and engage with professionals in the field:

- Participating in the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA), including serving on the Executive, Authorizer Development, Finance and Policy Committees;
- Participating in Minnesota Comeback, including serving on the Leadership Council and chairing the Charter Implementation Team;
- Participating in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA),
- Speaking and/or providing training on authorizing at meetings and conferences; and
- Providing individual and small group consultation with colleagues and responding to requests for guidance.

Charter School Support, Development, and Technical Assistance (B.7)

Describe how your organization supported its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings over the past year.

Support and Development Plan

The University of St. Thomas' (St. Thomas's) plan for support and technical assistance takes the approach of facilitation rather than provision. Specifically, we encourage St. Thomas schools to take the lead in selecting and providing development and take our cues from schools' expressed needs. By allowing school leaders to receive information on best practices from one another rather than directly from St. Thomas, our hope is that leaders will form meaningful connections and that the information gained can be used or discarded without any concern about rejecting an idea generated by the authorizer. St. Thomas continues to work to create a network across our schools that enables the sharing of best practices, continuous improvement, and ongoing learning.

Participation by St. Thomas-authorized charter schools in support, development, and technical assistance is optional and provided at no cost to schools. There are no negative consequences for schools who decline to participate, but participation in school leadership gatherings over SY2019 was generally strong with 65-85% of schools in attendance at each meeting. Specific activities that St. Thomas used over the past year to establish a 'Charter Network' and facilitate growth opportunities include:

- **Resource on Charter Law and Related Topics.** We are available to answer questions regarding St. Thomas authorizing practices, the charter law (when the answer is clearly defined in law), and related topics.
- **Liaison with MDE.** We are present for our schools when they are working with MDE on a statutory question or other issue and when possible, work to facilitate solutions.
- **Information Hub.** We serve as a 'hub' for information. If a charter school leader calls with a question or request for assistance with best practice, we provide referrals to other schools or individuals we believe may be able to help. Additionally, we send out regular email updates to charter school leaders with news from our schools as well as key updates and information on topics of expressed interest and best practices.
- **Other St. Thomas Departments and Colleges.** St. Thomas authorized charter schools may choose to work with other departments and colleges within the University. To protect autonomy, we neither encourage nor prohibit such partnerships. When a school calls us with a request for another department/area of St. Thomas, we offer to make the initial connection and attempt to ensure that the school receives a response.
- **Use of Space.** Occasionally schools need off-site space for a meeting, board retreat, or other gathering. When the authorizing program is approached with such a request, we do our best to accommodate the school and do not charge for the space unless the request is complex enough to require the assistance of event staff.
- **School Leadership Gatherings.** We offer our school leaders the opportunity to come together at least once per year to share ideas and information.
- **Trainings.** Through surveys and conversations, we may choose to work with school leaders to identify common areas of growth across our network of charter schools and organize training opportunities to meet their needs. Typically, we call upon our school leaders or experts in the field to conduct the trainings. The one area where we frequently provide direct training to schools is with regard to authorizer policies/procedures/accountability plan metrics.

It is important to note that requests for support and/or assistance may or may not be granted, based on the availability of human and/or financial resources.

High Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices (B.8)

Describe how your organization planned and promoted, within its portfolio, the model replication and dissemination of best practices of high performance charters schools over the past year.

The University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas) Charter School Authorizing Program has a four-part plan for model replication:

1. Require new charter school applications to identify research supporting the educational model, curricula, and instructional methodology;
2. Implement a streamlined application process for proven high-quality model replication and/or expansion that reduces the application burden while maintaining rigorous evaluation standards;
3. Encourage existing high-quality schools within St. Thomas's portfolio to apply for Federal CSP Replication/Significant Expansion grants and the Best Practices Award Competition; and
4. Promote and support the replication of existing high-quality schools within St. Thomas's portfolio.

St. Thomas has a four-part plan for the dissemination of best practices:

1. Identify best practices within the St. Thomas network and external (local, state, and national) for dissemination to St. Thomas authorized charter schools using a variety of vehicles such as authorizer updates, networking sessions, and/or professional development offerings;
2. Identify best practices within the St. Thomas network and encourage schools to share through presentations and/or publications;
3. Identify best practices within the St. Thomas network and invite faculty from St. Thomas's College of Education, Leadership, and Counseling to visit the schools and/or meet with school leadership; and
4. Share information with St. Thomas authorized charter schools about learning opportunities.
5. Additionally St. Thomas staff encourage schools in our portfolio every year to apply for best practice/innovation awards.

Portfolio Information

General Charter School Portfolio Data (as of June 30, 2019)

Preoperational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio:

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number (if assigned) | Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Recipient | Grade Levels Approved to Serve | Projected Enrollment when Fully Enrolled | Proposed Location | Proposed Opening Date |
|------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Operational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio:

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | CSP Grant Recipient | Grade Levels Served in FY 2019 | Location | Charter School Demographic and Enrollment Information | Charter School's World's Best Workforce Report |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School | 4073 | No | PK-8 | 1801 Lacrosse Ave, St Paul, MN 55119 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Community of Peace Academy | 4015 | No | PK-12 | 471 Magnolia Ave E Saint Paul, MN 55130-3849 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School | 4201 | No | K-6 | 1611 Ames Ave Saint Paul, MN 55106 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Face To Face Academy | 4036 | No | 9-12 | 1165 Arcade St. Saint Paul, MN 55106-2615 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Global Academy | 4186 | No | K-8 | 4065 Central Ave NE Columbia Heights, MN 55421-2917 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| HOPE Community Academy | 4070 | No | K-12 | 720 Payne Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55130-4127 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | CSP Grant Recipient | Grade Levels Served in FY 2019 | Location | Charter School Demographic and Enrollment Information | Charter School's World's Best Workforce Report |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Hiawatha Academies | 4170 | No | K-12 | 3810 E. 56th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55417 (Morris Park) 1611 E. 46th Street, Minneapolis MN, 55407 (Northrop) 3800 Pleasant Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55409 (Hiawatha College Prep) 4640 17th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407 (Northrop Middle) 3500 E. 28th St., Minneapolis, MN 55406 (HCHS) | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Metro Deaf School | 4005 | No | PK-12 | 1471 Brewster St Saint Paul, MN 55108-2612 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| PIM Arts High School | 4110 | No | 9-12 | 7255 Flying Cloud Drive Eden Prairie, MN 55344 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Spero Academy | 4113 | No | K-6 | 2701 California St. NE Minneapolis, MN 55418 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | CSP Grant Recipient | Grade Levels Served in FY 2019 | Location | Charter School Demographic and Enrollment Information | Charter School's World's Best Workforce Report |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| St Paul Conservatory Performing Art | 4112 | No | 9-12 | 16 W 5th Street Saint Paul, MN 55102-1403 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Twin Cities Academy | 4132 | No | 6-12 | 690 Birmingham Saint Paul, MN 55106-5199 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |
| Twin Cities German Immersion Charter School | 4152 | No | K-8 | 1031 Como Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55103-1021 | Hyperlink to MDE Report Card | Hyperlink to Report |

MDE Officially Recognized Early Learning Programs at Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio:

| Name of Charter School | Officially Recognized Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Program | Officially Recognized Instructional Preschool Program to provide early childhood education and preparation for transition to kindergarten for children ages 3-5 | Officially Recognized Instructional Prekindergarten Program for four-year-olds to prepare children for entry into kindergarten the following year |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Academia Cesar Chavez | Yes | No | Yes |
| Community of Peace Academy | Yes | No | Yes |
| Metro Deaf School | No | Yes | No |

Charter Schools with Charter Management Organization (CMO)/Education Management Organization (EMO)

| Name of Charter School | Management Organization Name | Employer Identification Number (EIN) | Management Organization Address Location | Management Organization Address Mailing | Management Organization Type |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| Name of Charter School | Name of Management Organization | Management EIN | Street address including street address, city, state, ZIP code and ZIP code +4. | Mailing address including mailing address, city, state, ZIP code and ZIP code +4. | Choose an item |
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Charter School Portfolio Activity in FY 2019

In FY 2019, did any charter schools leave your organization’s portfolio and transfer to another authorizer during or at the end of the year?

No

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | New Authorizing Organization | Effective Date of Transfer |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

In FY 2019, did your organization terminate or revoke the charter contract for any charter school before the end of the contract term?

No

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | Reason(s) for Contract Termination | Effective Date of Contract Termination |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

In FY 2019, did any charter schools voluntarily close (i.e., closure was initiated by the school) during or at the end of the year?

No.

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

| Name of Charter School | Charter School LEA Number | Reason(s) for Closure | Effective Date of Closure |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Charter School Portfolio Performance

World’s Best Workforce

Describe how your organization incorporates achievement of World’s Best Workforce goals in its ongoing oversight and evaluation of charter schools.

The World’s Best Workforce bill, passed in 2013, focuses on five goals: Ensuring that:

- All children are ready for school,
- All third graders can read on grade level,
- All achievement gaps are closed,
- All students graduate from high school, and that
- All students are college and career ready.

The St. Thomas authorizing program supports all of these goals and examines school progress toward their achievement through the metrics in our accountability plan, many of which are aligned with the WBWF goals. In addition, we are able to remain abreast of school performance on WBWF measures as we read schools’ full WBWF reports (generally included as a part of schools’ annual reports) and independently examine the information available via the MDE Data Center on a regular basis. For example, while we do not have a metric explicitly dedicated to third graders reading on grade level, a number of our accountability plan indicators examine proficiency and growth for students at all grade levels—and we look at this information by grade as it is entered and can then dialogue with schools about results as necessary. Other indicators, such as graduation level, are explicitly included in our framework for all schools serving high school grades.

While it is still difficult to accurately ascertain whether students are college and career ready, a college readiness indicator has been added to the updated annual evaluation rubric. Additionally, we have already begun examining the data through Minnesota's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) and Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS) and look forward to a time when we can incorporate it into our accountability frameworks. This impressive collection of data will allow a critical window into the work of our schools and allow us to answer questions about whether students are truly entering and finishing school ready for the next stages of their lives.

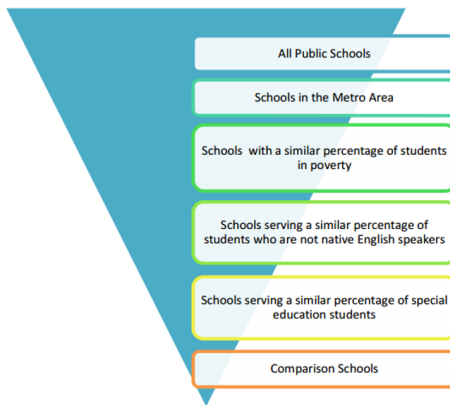
Academic Performance

Present outcome data regarding key academic performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

In order to evaluate the learning program, the performance framework template utilized by St. Thomas includes twelve or more possible indicators, which examine the following categories of information: school-specific goals, goals aligned with Minnesota Department of Education systems, proficiency and growth on standardized tests, fulfillment of duties to English Learners (ELs) and Special Education students, attendance, and whether the school is meeting its stated mission.

The intent of the Academic Performance section is to provide a multi-faceted understanding of student performance at the charter school. The measures used to understand academic performance include:

- Performance on the North Star Excellence and Equity System: MN's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan;
- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Data: All authorized schools shall participate fully in the MCAs;
- At least one additional school-selected standardized assessment which must be approved by the authorizer in advance of the evaluation rubric's finalization and be utilized for a minimum of three years before a change in assessment can be requested;
- At least one mission-specific academic goal;
- Program alignment with chartered mission and vision;
- Graduation rate data; and
- College and career readiness data.



As charter schools are expected to improve student performance, several academic goals involve the use of demographically similar comparison schools which are identified using a filtering process (depicted at right, above). The process begins with a list of public schools in the metro area available through the Minnesota Department of Education.

The goal of the process described above is to generate 3-5 schools serving a similar population with which the authorized school can be compared. It is important to note that at times, the process above will produce too many or too few matches. In that case, the parameters of items b, c, and d above may be adjusted to find an adequate number of the best possible matches. Due to shifting demographics in schools, matches may vary from year to year.

The picture of portfolio performance can be complex when examining the academic data. The University is proud of the fact that most of our (gen ed) schools outperformed their comparison schools or resident district. The University is also gratified that our portfolio includes a number of schools that have repeatedly achieved Reward status, been identified as High Quality Charter Schools, Schools of Character, and been cited as 'Beating the Odds' schools. Additionally, the portfolio includes schools recognized for their innovative practices and schools that serve over 90% students qualifying for special education services.

We believe our broad and comprehensive accountability measures provide additional insight into schools' strengths and challenges—particularly when the school population is significantly different from the state's population. Yet we find that the overall picture seen when viewing our MDE portfolio data is aligned with our own assessment—results are mixed. While many St. Thomas charters are demonstrating strong academic gains for students, others must make improvements to ensure that their model produces strong outcomes for all of those who attend—the most important purpose of any school. Data summarizing St. Thomas charter schools' performance on the MCA/MTAS can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website [MDE Report Card](#). Moving forward, St. Thomas will continue to push those schools experiencing weak academic results to improve, learn from successful charter and district schools, and take whatever steps are necessary to ameliorate student learning. Ultimately, we believe in the charter promise of accountability for results, meaning charter schools must demonstrate their ability to provide a safe, effective program in order to continue their operations.

A summary of each school's academic performance is presented below. As noted above, St. Thomas evaluates its schools using a series of key indicators which encompass both qualitative and quantitative data. The indicators are scored using a four-point scale including the following categories: Does Not Meet Standard, Approaching Standard, Meets Standard, or Exceeds Standard. For some compliance indicators, it is not possible to exceed the standard, thus, it is not possible to achieve an overall 4.0 rating of 'Exceeds Standard.'

It is important to note that St. Thomas underwent a yearlong process, which included a study of national best practices, expert consultation and a task force comprised of directors from the St. Thomas network, to update the performance measures in FY2018. At renewal, schools shift to the updated framework. FY2019 includes six schools that were evaluated under the updated framework and six that remained under the previous framework. Each school's performance against these indicators is summarized below under the relevant framework.

St. Thomas Academic Performance Measure (Updated Framework)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|--|--|----------------|------------------|
| 1.1 | Northstar/State Accountability System Goal: Minnesota uses the North Star system to identify schools and districts for support. Has the school been identified as in need of support? If so, is the school using the resources and supports available to create a plan for student success?* | | |
| 1.2 | MCA Proficiency: Are students performing as well as or better than the state, the resident district, and comparable schools on MCA math and reading exams? | | |
| 1.3 | MCA Proficiency, State Demographic Comparison by Race/Ethnicity and FRL: Are student demographic groups (with tested cell sizes greater than 10) performing as well as or better than the statewide average for that student group? | | |
| 1.4 | MCA Growth (Normal Curve): Are students who are continuously enrolled making growth academically as measured by MCA exams? | | |
| 1.5 | MCA Growth (Comparison Groups): Are students making expected growth compared to the state, resident district, and comparable district schools? | | |
| 1.6 | Are students performing at or above target levels, as measured using the school's selected standardized assessments? | | |
| 1.7 | Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using the school's selected standardized assessments? | | |
| 1.8 | Is the school meeting state and authorizer-established targets for graduation rate? | | |
| 1.9 | Does students' performance on post-secondary readiness assessments (i.e.: ACT, SAT, Accuplacer) reflect college and career readiness? | | |
| 1.10 | Is the school meeting its school-specific academic goal(s)? | | |
| 1.11 | Are students learning English (English Learners/EL students) performing at or above the state average for English Learners as measured by MCA proficiency? | | |
| 1.12 | Are students receiving special education services performing at or above the state average for students receiving special education services as measured by MCA proficiency? | | |
| 1.13 | Does the school's learning program exemplify the mission and vision of the school? | | |
| *Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard," "Approaching Standard," and "Meets Standard" | | | |

| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.10 | 1.11 | 1.12 | 1.13 | Overall |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|------------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|---------|
| Academia Cesar Chavez | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | | | | | |
| Community of Peace | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Global Academy | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | | | | | |
| HOPE Community Academy | | | | | | N/A ¹ | N/A ² | N/A | N/A | | | | | |
| Spero Academy | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | | N/A | N/A | | |
| Twin Cities Academy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

¹ Due to a change in assessment, data to score this indicator will first be available for SY2019

² Due to a change in assessment, data to score this indicator will first be available for SY2019

St. Thomas Academic Performance Measures (Previous Version)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|--|---|----------------|------------------|
| 1.1 | Students in all subgroups will meet proficiency targets set by the Minnesota Department of Education. | | |
| 1.2 | MCA II Proficiency: Students are performing as well as or better than the state, the resident district, and comparable schools on MCA II math and reading exams. | | |
| 1.3 | MCA II Growth (Normal Curve): Students who are continuously enrolled are making growth academically as measured by MCA II exams. | | |
| 1.4 | MCA II Growth (Comparison Groups): Students are making expected growth compared to the state, resident district, and comparable district schools. | | |
| 1.5 | Students are performing at or above the national median, as measured using standardized assessments. | | |
| 1.6 | Students are making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis. | | |
| 1.7 | The school is meeting its school-specific academic goal(s). | | |
| 1.8 | Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (if applicable): If the school receives Title I or Title III funding, students are meeting the state-established expectations for English language learner (ELLs) academic progress. | | |
| 1.9 | The school is fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English language learners (ELLs).* | | |
| 1.10 | The school is fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with individual education plans (IEPs).* | | |
| 1.11 | The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school. | | |
| 1.12 | The school is meeting state-established targets for graduation rates. | | |
| 1.13 | The school meets or exceeds the attendance rate for AYP. | | |
| 1.14 | Students are attaining English Language Proficiency at rates equal to or greater than students statewide as measured by the ACCESS test. | | |
| *Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard," "Approaching Standard," and "Meets Standard" | | | |

| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.10 | 1.11 | 1.12 | 1.13 | 1.14 | Overall |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| Face to Face Academy | N/A | | | | | | | N/A | | | | | | N/A | |
| Hiawatha Academies | N/A | | | | | | | | N/A | | | | N/A | | |
| Metro Deaf School | N/A | | | | N/A | N/A | | N/A | N/A | | | N/A | | | |
| PIM Arts High School | N/A | | | | | | | N/A | | | | | | N/A | |
| St. Paul Conservatory of Performing Arts | N/A | | | | | N/A ³ | | N/A | | | | | | N/A | |
| Twin Cities German Immersion School | N/A | | | | | | | N/A | | | | N/A | | N/A | |

³ SPCPA began implementing the Suite in SY18. SPCPA will be able to provide the needed information and analysis for inclusion in the SY20 evaluation.

Operational Performance

Present outcome data regarding key operational performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

In order to evaluate the organizational health of schools, the performance framework template utilized by St. Thomas includes twenty or more indicators which encompass a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures such as board adoption of best practices, quality of the school facility, and the presence of critical policies and procedures. A successful charter school requires a board and leadership team with competency in a variety of governance, operational, and compliance-related areas. The Organizational Effectiveness indicator seeks to capture a school's performance through a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures. The intent of the Organizational Effectiveness section is to ensure that schools are following all St. Thomas, MDE, and statutory compliance requirements, providing academic programs that meet state and federal requirements, properly governing schools, and utilizing certain accepted best practices all in service of providing students with a safe, stable, and effective school.

Overall, operational performance is strong across St. Thomas authorized charter schools as demonstrated in the summary chart below. Governance is a prime example of success in our portfolio. All board members from St. Thomas authorized schools exhibit an understanding of the role of the board, which can be attributed to the fact that almost all of our boards engage in professional development above what is required by statute. The boards of the school's in our portfolio also routinely engage in strategic planning and make efforts to engage the entire school community.

St. Thomas Operational Performance Measures (updated FY2018)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 3.1 | | | |
| 3.2 | | | |
| 3.3 | | | |
| 3.4 | | | |
| 3.5 | | | |
| 3.6 | | | |
| 3.7 | | | |
| 3.8 | | | |
| 3.9 | | | |
| 3.10 | | | |
| 3.11 | | | |
| 3.12 | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| 3.13 | The school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with individual education plans (IEPs). * |
| 3.14 | The school meets or exceeds the attendance rate goal. |
| 3.15 | The school is able to maintain a high percentage of teacher retention. |
| 3.16 | The school generally retain its students from October 1 st through the close of the school year.* |
| 3.17 | The school exhibits a high level of parent satisfaction. |
| 3.18 | The school’s physical plant is safe and conducive to learning. |
| *Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard,” “Approaching Standard,” and “Meets Standard” | |
| **Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard” and “Meets Standard” | |

| | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.10 | 3.11 | 3.12 |
|------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Academia Cesar Chavez | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Community of Peace | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Global Academy | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| HOPE Community Academy | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Spero Academy | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Twin Cities Academy | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |

| | 3.13 | 3.14 | 3.15 | 3.16 | 3.17 | 3.18 | Overall |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|
| Academia Cesar Chavez | Meets | Approaching | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Community of Peace | Meets | Does Not Meet | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| Global Academy | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |
| HOPE Community Academy | Approaching | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets |
| Spero Academy | Meets | Does Not Meet | Approaching | Meets | Does Not Meet | Meets | Meets |
| Twin Cities Academy | Meets | Meets | Approaching | Meets | Meets | Meets | Meets |

St. Thomas Operational Performance Measures (previous version)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|------------------------|---|----------------|------------------|
| 3.1 | All board members meet the statutory requirements for training on board roles and responsibilities, governance, and employment practices. | | |
| 3.2 | All board members exhibit understanding of the role of the board and utilize nonprofit governance best practices. | | |
| 3.3 | The board completes a self-review each school year. | | |
| 3.4 | The board meet the governance model requirements laid out in its bylaws as required by Minnesota Statute and board membership includes a balance of skills and expertise. | | |
| 3.5 | The school board periodically engages in strategic planning, and the school exemplifies the strategic direction set by the board. | | |
| 3.6 | The board comprehensively evaluates the performance of the school leader through and annual evaluation process. | | |
| 3.7 | The school board has a board-approved professional development plan for the director. | | |
| 3.8 | The board keeps a governance binder that includes bylaws, policies, board committee minutes and board packets. | | |
| 3.9 | The board reviews, updates, and approves its policies.* | | |
| 3.10 | The board regularly reviews, updates, and approves its bylaws.* | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| 3.11 | The board submits a complete board packet to St. Thomas at least 3 days prior to all board meetings.* |
| 3.12 | The board understands and meets the requirements of the Open Meeting Law.* |
| 3.13 | The school has strong academic and organizational leadership. |
| 3.14 | The school exhibits a high level of parent satisfaction. |
| 3.15 | The school is able to maintain a high percentage of teacher retention. |
| 3.16 | The school’s educational staff is appropriately licensed.* |
| 3.17 | The school remains consistently full with retention rates at or above the school’s agreed upon target rates. |
| 3.18 | The school follows the admission policies and procedures outlined in law.** |
| 3.19 | The school’s physical plant is safe and conducive to learning. |
| 3.20 | The school completes criminal background checks for teachers and board members.* |
| *Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard,” “Approaching Standard,” and “Meets Standard” | |
| **Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard” and “Meets Standard” | |

| | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.10 | 3.11 | 3.12 |
|--|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Face to Face Academy | Green | Green | Green | Blue | Green | Blue | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| Hiawatha Academies | Yellow | Green | Green | Green | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| Metro Deaf School | Yellow | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| PIM Arts High School | Green | Green | Green | Yellow | Green | Green | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| St. Paul Conservatory of Performing Arts | Green | Green | Green | Green | Yellow | Blue | Blue | Green | Green | Yellow | Green | Green |
| Twin Cities German Immersion School | Blue | Blue | Green | Green | Blue | Blue | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |

| | 3.13 | 3.14 | 3.15 | 3.16 | 3.17 | 3.18 | 3.19 | 3.20 | Overall |
|--|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Face to Face Academy | Blue | Green | Blue | Green | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| Hiawatha Academies | Green | Green | Red | Green | Yellow | Green | Blue | Yellow | Green |
| Metro Deaf School | Blue | Yellow | Blue | Green | Blue | Green | Blue | Green | Green |
| PIM Arts High School | Blue | Green | Yellow | Green | Red | Green | Blue | Green | Green |
| St. Paul Conservatory of Performing Arts | Green | Green | Yellow | Green | Yellow | Green | Blue | Green | Green |
| Twin Cities German Immersion School | Green | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Blue | Green | Green | Green | Green |

Financial Performance

Present outcome data regarding key financial performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

In order to evaluate the fiscal health of schools, the performance framework template includes eight indicators which include timely production and reporting of financial information, use of best practices, compliance with law, results of external audits, enrollment, and maintenance of a fund balance sufficient to cushion against unexpected events. The intent of the Financial Viability section is to ensure the successful operation of the school into the future and to ensure the proper use of public funds.

In examining the data available by authorizing portfolio via the MDE Report Card and other elements of the website, it is clear that our authorized schools are generally in a strong financial position—a fact echoed in the overall strong performance schools demonstrated against the financial elements in our accountability framework (see individual school profiles below). For example, all St. Thomas schools have an active finance committee that meets regularly to review the school’s financial health. Additionally, the majority of our schools have a fund balance above 16% and are not at risk of falling into Statutory Operating Debt.

St. Thomas Financial Performance Measures (updated FY2018)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|--|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 2.1 The school has an active finance committee that meets regularly. | | | |
| 2.2 The board has a fund balance policy that includes fund balance goals over time. | | | |
| 2.3 The school has completed an annual audit.** | | | |
| 2.4 The school has a clean audit with no major findings. | | | |
| 2.5 The school establishes and maintains a balanced budget. | | | |
| 2.6 The school’s target ADM (as established by initial board-approved budget) matches its actual ADM | | | |
| 2.7 The school has sufficient cash on hand to meet its near-term obligations | | | |
| 2.8 The school has a sufficient fund balance. | | | |
| 2.9 Cash Flow: Indicates a school’s change in cash balance from one period to another.*** | | | |
| 2.10 Current Ratio: Measures school’s ability to pay its obligations over next 12 months. *** | | | |
| 2.11 Total Margin and Aggregated Total Margin: Measures the deficit or surplus a school yields out of total revenues—whether or not the school is living within its means. *** | | | |
| *Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard,” “Approaching Standard,” and “Meets Standard” | | | |
| **Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard” and “Meets Standard” | | | |
| *** Only applicable if Fund Balance Falls Below 10% | | | |

| | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 2.10 | 2.11 | Overall |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|---------|
| Academia Cesar Chavez | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Community of Peace | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Global Academy | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| HOPE Community Academy | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Spero Academy | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |
| Twin Cities Academy | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A | N/A | |

St. Thomas Financial Performance Measures (previous version)

| Does Not Meet Standard | Approaching Standard | Meets Standard | Exceeds Standard |
|--|---|----------------|------------------|
| 2.1 | The school provides financial material to St. Thomas at least 3 days prior to its school board meetings.* | | |
| 2.2 | The school has an active finance committee that meets regularly. | | |
| 2.3 | All charter board members meet the statutory requirements for board financial management training. | | |
| 2.4 | The board has a fund balance policy that includes fund balance goals over time. | | |
| 2.5 | The school has completed an annual audit.** | | |
| 2.6 | The school has a clean audit with no major findings. | | |
| 2.7 | The school establishes and maintains a balanced budget. | | |
| 2.8 | The school has a sufficient fund balance. | | |
| *Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard,” “Approaching Standard,” and “Meets Standard” | | | |
| **Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard” and “Meets Standard” | | | |

| | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.8 | Overall |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| Face to Face Academy | | | | | | | | | |
| Hiawatha Academies | | | | | | | | | |
| Metro Deaf School | | | | | | | | | |
| PIM Arts High School | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Paul Conservatory of Performing Arts | | | | | | | | | |
| Twin Cities German Immersion School | | | | | | | | | |

Other Performance

Present outcome data regarding other key performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

As noted under academic performance above, a number of St. Thomas authorized charter schools have received recognition for their performance. Community of Peace, Face to Face Academy, Twin Cities academy and Twin Cities German Immersion School have all been designated as high quality charter schools. Additionally F2F has won the innovation award and a number of the schools in our portfolio have earned the MDE Finance award.

In SY2019, one St. Thomas authorized school was on intervention. On June 24, 2015 Academia Cesar Chavez was placed on a Level 1 Intervention: Notice of Concern, based on “concerns regarding the academic success of ACC students,” which began in SY13 and intensified in SY14, SY15 and SY18 (at which time the school received a three-year contract renewal). Although the school’s academic results increased in SY2018 they trail considerably behind those of comparison groups. ACC remains on intervention until a clear return to acceptable performance has been achieved.

Additionally because of the decline in proficiency across a number of campuses in the Hiawatha network we are closely monitoring their academic performance. Heightened monitoring also applies to PIM Arts High, which has had a number of years of low academic performance in the area of mathematics.

