

NACSA Authorizer Evaluation

MEASURE, ACT, IMPROVE

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

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July 11, 2011



Agenda

- About NACSA
- NACSA Authorizer Evaluations
- ASBCS Evaluation Detail
- Next Steps: the Work Plan

Introduction

About the National Association of
Charter School Authorizers

Mission:

To improve student achievement through
responsible charter school oversight in
the public interest

Not-for-profit, membership association

Authorizer Development Activities:

- Evaluation
- Planning and Training
- Grant-making
- Models and Templates
- Authorizing Services
- Additional Support

Evaluation History

Completed:

- Pueblo (CO) City Schools
- Milwaukee Common Council
- Colorado Charter Schools Institute
- Aurora Public Schools
- New Mexico Public Education Commission
- New Jersey DOE
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- South Carolina Public Charter School District
- Arkansas DOE
- Ball State University
- Nevada DOE
- Delaware DOE
- Stockton (CA) Unified School District
- Utah State Charter School Board
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

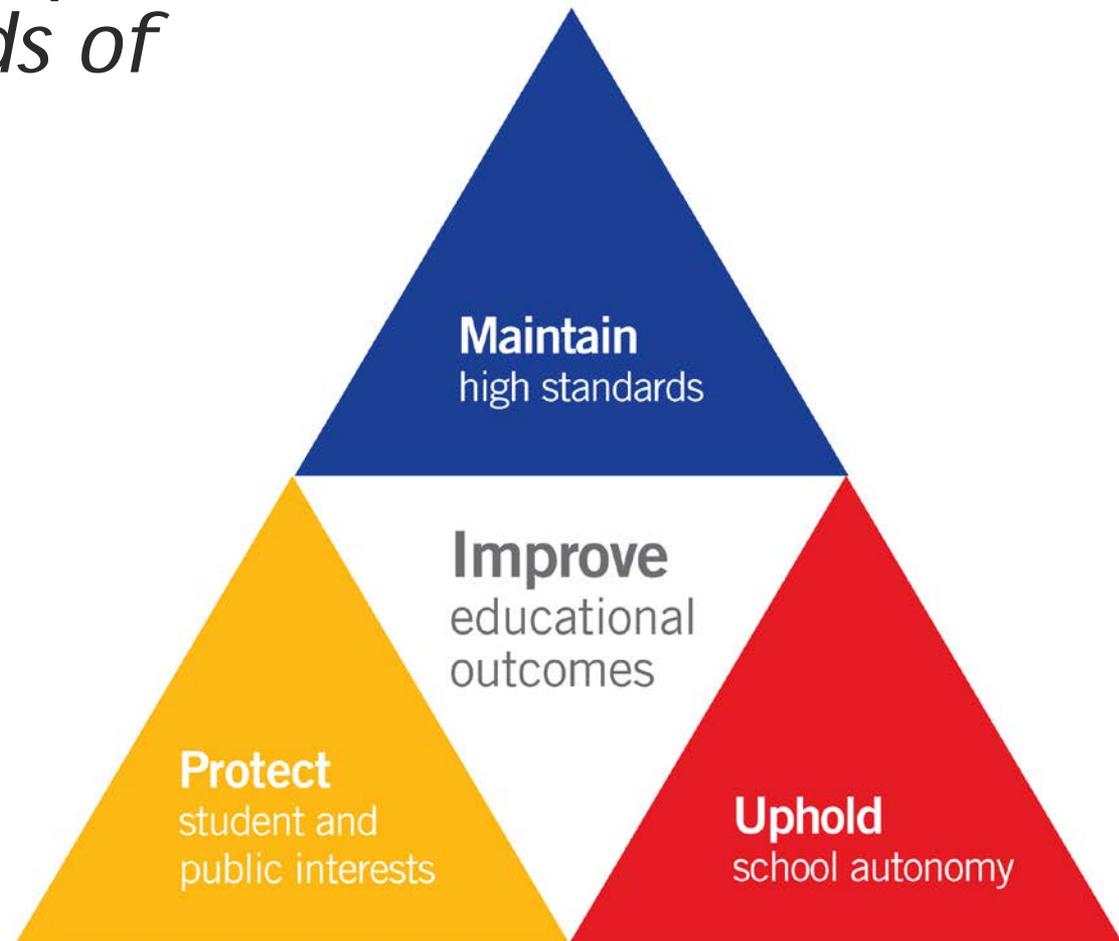
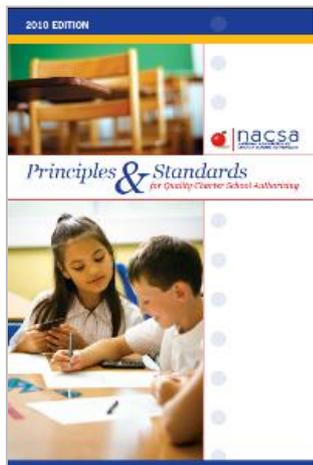
In Progress:

- Philadelphia Public Schools
- Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

Pending:

- Hawaii Charter School Review Panel
- Louisiana DOE
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- Texas Education Agency

NACSA's *Principles and Standards of Quality Authorizing*



Rating Categories

The authorizer is evaluated on two categories:

Established:

What are the authorizer's practices as presented on paper and communicated?

Rating is based on what the authorizer *intends to do*.

Applied:

What are the authorizer's practices as carried out?

Rating is based on what the authorizer *actually does*.



Sources



Rating Definitions

The extent to which authorizer practices meet NACSA's *Principles and Standards for Quality Authorizing*



Model

Exceptional, and warrants notice from and emulation by other authorizers.



Well-Developed

Commendable in that it materially satisfies the expectations.



Approaching Well-Developed

Sound in that it fulfills most but not all aspects of a well-developed practice.



Partially Developed

Incomplete in that it contains some aspects of a well-developed practice, but is missing key components or is limited in execution.



Minimally Developed

Inadequate in that the authorizer has minimally undertaken the practice or is carrying it out in a way that falls short of satisfying the standard.



Undeveloped

Wholly inadequate in that the authorizer has not undertaken the practice or is carrying it out in a way that falls far short of the standard.

Evaluation Structure: *Authorizer Responsibilities*

The authorizer has responsibilities at every level of the framework.

- 1** **Application Decision Making**
Decide whether to hire the school.
- 2** **Monitoring Operations**
Make the deal.
- 3** **Performance-Based Accountability**
Enforce the deal.
- 4** **School Autonomy**
Give the school room to succeed (or fail).

Evaluation Structure: *Guiding Questions*

There are guiding questions for each part of the framework.

1

Application Decision Making

Does the authorizer approve applications based on demonstrated preparation and capacity to operate a quality charter school?

2

Monitoring Operations

Does the authorizer establish and monitor school compliance with rigorous operational expectations?

3

Performance-Based Accountability

Does the authorizer use comprehensive academic, financial and operational performance information to make rigorous, merit-based accountability decisions?

4

School Autonomy

Do schools have the autonomy to which they are entitled?

NACSA Authorizer Evaluation

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

Application Decision Making

Does the authorizer approve applications based on demonstrated preparation and capacity to operate a quality charter school?

Key Competencies:

- ASBCS has established thorough requirements and evaluation criteria
- ASBCS uses a Technical Review Panel comprised of external experts to evaluate all charter applications
- ASBCS approves only those applications that meet or exceed all criteria

Application Decision Making

Priorities for Improvement:

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Develop and implement thorough requirements and criteria to assess the proposed Business Plan

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Only approve replication applications from schools and / or operators that have a proven track record of success

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Assess applicant capacity to implement the plan effectively

Recommended Actions:

Require applicants to submit a five-year operating budget and description of internal controls and develop related criteria

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Conduct thorough due diligence; assess portfolio performance (including schools located out of state); and require an organization-level growth plan.

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Conduct comprehensive face-to-face interviews with applicants that focus on addressing gaps in the application and assessing capacity.

Monitoring Operations

Does the authorizer establish and monitor school compliance with rigorous operational expectations?

Key Competencies:

- Contract identifies some expectations for student achievement, including the PMP
- ASBCS monitors organizational requirements through an annual audit and compliance questionnaire
- Audit and Compliance Questionnaire Follow-up Matrix guides audit review process and follow-up

Monitoring Operations

Priorities for Improvement:

Make charter contracts performance-based

Ensure quality oversight of financial performance

Ensure that schools contracting with an ESP maintain appropriate financial independence from the ESP and exercise rigorous oversight of the ESP

Recommended Actions:

Incorporate material terms of the school's existence and operations in the contract, including expectations and a high-stakes review every five years

Establish regular reporting requirements and criteria, such as monthly or quarterly financial statements to monitor financial performance on a more frequent basis

Develop an ESP policy and contract addendum that identify minimum standards for ESP agreements, and include additional contractual provisions

Performance-Based Accountability

Does the authorizer use comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance information to make rigorous, merit-based accountability decisions?

Key Competency:

- ASBCS has created some uniform standards for judging educational performance
- ASBCS is making progress towards becoming more performance-driven as an authorizer
- ASBCS has held some schools accountable for failure to meet organizational and/or financial performance requirements

Performance-Based Accountability

Priorities for Improvement:

Establish clear, rigorous school performance standards as a means to evaluate schools

Implement a renewal process that is based on the holistic record of performance and the school's capacity to continue to execute on the charter goals

Create and enforce consequences for failing to meet the expectations set forth in the performance framework and charter contract

Recommended Actions:

Create a performance framework that builds on the growth model and establishes more robust educational, organizational, and financial performance indicators and standards

Align the renewal process with a comprehensive performance framework and renewal policy that specifies what level of performance must be achieved in order to earn renewal

Develop a multi-leveled intervention policy that articulates what level of performance will trigger an intervention.

Integrate the five-year interval review to formalize evaluation and assessment against expectations

School Autonomy

Does the authorizer establish and monitor school compliance with rigorous operational expectations?

Key Competency:

- Schools have substantial autonomy to make decisions -- specifically regarding the educational program, school operations, resource allocation, and personnel decisions

School Autonomy

Priorities for Improvement:

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Create a framework for defining autonomy to charter school operators

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Clarify autonomies with respect to management of the educational and operational program

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Permit schools the ability to earn autonomy based on strong performance

Recommended Actions:

Document statutory waivers and other autonomies in the charter contract and describe them in the charter application and renewal materials

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Define in the charter application and contract the material aspects of the educational program and clarify schools' authority to make non-material changes at their discretion

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Revise the five-year interval review and renewal processes to ensure that schools meeting all operational goals and material terms in the charter have the ability to earn additional autonomy

Summary

	Established	Applied
Part 1: Application Decision Making		
Part 2: Monitoring Operations		
Part 3: Performance Based Accountability		
Part 4: School Autonomy		



Next Steps: Actions

Short term

- Charter Applicant Interviews
- Revised Charter Contract
- Comprehensive Performance Framework
- Refined 5-year Interval Reviews
- Intervention Policy

Medium term

- Refined Renewal Process and Policy
- ESP Policy and Addendum
- Enhanced Financial Monitoring

Longer term

- Refined Application Requirements / Criteria
- Document Autonomies
- Earned-autonomy Policy



Next Steps: Strategic

- What are ASBCS' strategic priorities for building a portfolio of high quality schools?
- What is ASBCS able to address with existing resources and capacity?
- Do agency structure and capacity need to change to support quality authorizing?
- What should the ASBCS look like in five years?



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