Creating and Implementing Pre-opening Requirements, Performance Plans, and Monitoring Plans

A Guide for Missouri Charter Public School Sponsors

DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

nacsa

Introduction

Eleven years after Missouri's charter school was enacted, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is pleased to be working with Missouri charter school sponsors and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to improve the quality of the state's charter schools in St. Louis and Kansas City.

It is NACSA's vision that all families to have choices among high quality public schools that meet their children's needs. Our mission is to achieve the establishment and operation of quality charter schools through responsible oversight in the public interest. We focus our work on improving the knowledge and skill of the entities that approve, oversee and evaluate charter schools.

Recognizing the need to improve authorizer capacity by strengthening practice, policies and laws, NACSA developed a Priority State Initiative that calls for the organization to make a multi-year commitment to states where charter schools have the potential to make deep and lasting improvements to public education. NACSA's Priority State work focuses on improving authorizing practices and charter school policies and communications – all in the name of increasing student achievement.

In 2007, NACSA identified Missouri as a Priority State, and began several initiatives to strengthen sponsor practice, and subsequently charter school quality, within Missouri. Specifically, the process of establishing performance expectations and holding charter schools accountable to meeting those expectations became an area of focus for NACSA's work with Missouri charter school sponsors.

Based on input from Missouri charter public school sponsors and the MO DESE, NACSA has developed the *Missouri Charter Public School Sponsor Guide*. The *Guide* contains templates and guidance for charter public school sponsors to fulfill essential responsibilities of charter school sponsorship, including ensuring that a sponsored charter school is prepared to serve students on the first day of operation, setting clearly defined performance targets for its charter schools, and collecting and analyzing school performance data and evidence over the term of the charter for the purposes of renewal decision-making.

The following templates represent a culmination of national best practices in charter school sponsorship and requirements specific to Missouri charter school law. We strongly encourage all Missouri charter public school sponsors to adopt the following Pre-Opening Requirements, Performance Plan, and Monitoring Plan and to use the accompanying guidance in their pursuit of ensuring that Missouri's charter public schools do indeed offer all families in St. Louis and Kansas City high quality public school choice options.

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Pre-Opening Requirements

What are Pre-Opening Requirements?

Pre-Opening Requirements are a set of primarily compliance based actions that the school must complete prior to opening its doors and starting instruction. Schools must demonstrate that there is sufficient demand (enrolled students) to warrant school opening. In addition, schools must demonstrate that the physical building and staff are ready to receive students for instruction. Pre-Opening Requirements usually consist of a combination of paper screening of compliance documents and an on-site visit to the school site to continue to build the collaborative relationship between the sponsor and the school staff that started during the new charter application and granting process. A detailed list of actions for schools and sponsors to take to demonstrate that the building and staff are ready for students is included in the Pre-opening Requirements document included on pages 6-14 of this document.

Why are Pre-Opening Requirements important?

Sponsors are under obligation to proactively monitor activity at all schools during the time between when new charters are awarded and when school opens. It is the sponsor's obligation to make the determination if the school has completed the necessary preparations and largely satisfied the necessary Pre-Opening Requirements before the school is allowed to open for instruction. If the charter school does not complete the necessary Pre-Opening Requirements, and the sponsor determines that the adults in the building and the physical structure are not ready to receive students for instruction, the sponsor must not provide the school with final authorization to open for instruction to students. A delay in opening will be in effect until the sponsor can confirm that the school has satisfied all necessary Pre-Opening Requirements and all necessary documents are on file in the sponsor's office.

What constitutes a "Pre-Opening Requirement?"

Pre-Opening Requirements represent the set of tasks that, once completed, will assist charter schools in coming into general compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as those that will facilitate effective and responsible management of school operations. Although charter school operators will likely identify additional tasks that they will need to complete during the critical time between charter authorization and the opening of the school, the tasks included on the Missouri Sponsors Pre-Opening Requirements alert school founders to those tasks which may not be directly related to the school's education program but are essential to school operations, nonetheless.

Missouri sponsors may also identify additional Pre-Opening Requirements beyond those already included in the template. It is appropriate for Missouri sponsors to add Pre-Opening Requirements to the template when these

requirements will lay the groundwork for increasing the school's capacity to meet other performance expectations set by the school's sponsor.

How are the Pre-Opening Requirements organized?

Pre-Opening Requirements are organized by general categories, including: enrollment and admissions, school governance, budget, and transportation, among others. Each Pre-Opening Requirement should be assigned a specific due date. While some tasks within the template have been assigned pre-determined due dates, other due dates are left to the discretion of each sponsor and should be populated before sharing Pre-Opening Requirements with schools. Under the "Status/Notes" column, the Pre-Opening Requirements template also includes helpful information for school operators that will assist them in fulfilling particular requirements. Finally, the template includes a column for sponsors to indicate whether schools have met each Pre-Opening Requirement.

How should sponsors monitor each school's completion of Pre-Opening Requirements?

Sponsors monitor the completion of Pre-Opening Requirements through each school's timely and complete submission of appropriate documentation, as indicated within the template. In addition, it is appropriate for sponsors to conduct a short site visit to the school facility approximately one to two weeks prior to each school's first day of instruction. Regular contact with charter school operators can also inform sponsors about the progress each charter school is making toward completing the Pre-Opening Requirements, as well as assist

How to use the Pre-Opening Requirements Template

The template below is the Missouri Charter Public School Pre-Opening Requirements Template. Sponsors should complete the template by adding additional Pre-Opening Requirements (as necessary) and by inserting due dates where necessary. Sponsors should then adopt the Pre-Opening Requirements Template and share it among newly sponsored charter schools.

Pre-Opening Requirements for _____

Deliver all documentation and notification described below to:

SPONSOR NAME AND ADDRESS

_____

_____

_____

Failure to submit documentation in a sufficient/timely manner may result in the sponsor taking action to postpone or deny the opening of the school. Additional documentation may be required prior to the opening of the school year. The sponsor will provide written notice and a reasonable time for response to any additional requirements and/or changes to the following list:

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Enrollment and Admissions	Enrollment Policy and Admissions materials approved by school governing board, *if different from Policy and materials approved by sponsor in original charter application.* (Note: The student enrollment process may *not* begin until the sponsor has approved the school's enrollment policy.)	Before the school begins recruitment and enrollment of potential students	☐ Draft Enrollment Policy and Admissions Materials ☐ Ensure alignment with state, county and city laws ☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Roster of enrolled students, including name, address, grade and prior school attended.	At school opening, or at first enrollment count.	Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation) *Due every year*	☐ Yes ☐ No
DESE Web Login	Gain secure access to DESE web portal	June 15	☐ Complete and submit the ePeGs Security Form and the DESE Web Systems User ID Request Form, available online at https://k12apps.dese.mo.go/webapps/securityforms.asp ☐ Fax forms to the Charter School Office at 573.522.8455	☐ Yes ☐ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Missouri Student Information System (MOSIS)	Register for access to MOSIS	June 15	◻ Submit the following information to the Charter School Office: – Authorized Representative – Address – Phone Number – Email Address ◻ Once PIN code is received from the Charter School Office, complete the MOSIS Access Request From (available online at https://k12apps.dese.mo.gov/webapps/securityforms.asp) ◻ Fax forms to Data Management Department at 573.751.1179	◻ Yes ◻ No
Governance	School governing board officer appointments (Chair/President, Treasurer, etc).			◻ Yes ◻ No
	Final Organizational Chart for governance, senior management and instructional leadership, *if different from Organizational Chart submitted to sponsor in original charter application.*		◻ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ◻ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	◻ Yes ◻ No
Governance	Proof of non-profit status			◻ Yes ◻ No
	Insurance for the school governing board			◻ Yes ◻ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
	Resume and affirmation of eligibility to serve for each school governing board member, *including affirmation of*: • Criminal background check for original and current school governing board members • Child abuse registry check for original and current school governing board members • Employee of sponsoring university cannot sit on the school governing board		☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	☐ Yes ☐ No
	School governing board-approved by-laws including a satisfactory conflict of interest policy, *if different from By-laws submitted to sponsor in original charter application*.		☐ Draft/re-draft by-laws ☐ Ensure alignment with state, county and city laws ☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	☐ Yes ☐ No
Governance	Proof of Federal tax exemption status			☐ Yes ☐ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Educational Program	School governing board-approved Code of Conduct for approval, *if different from Code of Conduct submitted to sponsor in original charter application.*		☐ Draft / re-draft Student Code of Conduct ☐ Ensure alignment with state, county and city laws ☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	☐ Yes ☐ No
	School calendar, including official start date for the 20__-20__ school year.		Due every year	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Emergency contact information for the school principal.	No later than 5 days after hire date		☐ Yes ☐ No
Administration and Staff	Staff roster that details teaching qualifications, including certification and federal NCLB "highly qualified teacher" status for teachers of core academic subjects.	August 1, or 10 days prior to school opening.	☐ Review policy and state, county and city laws to ensure compliance ☐ Post jobs, recruit, screen and hire ☐ Maintain all appropriate certifications, certificates and checks (criminal, medical, etc.) ☐ Submit proper assurances to sponsor for personnel compliance and qualifications	☐ Yes ☐ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Administration and Staff	Written documentation that the charter school has completed health, safety and criminal background checks on all school staff and volunteers that come into direct contact with the school's students.	August 1, or 10 days prior to school opening.	☐ Review policy and state, county and city laws to ensure compliance ☐ Post jobs, recruit, screen and hire ☐ Gain access to the DESE system used to complete background checks by emailing school contact information to webreplyimprcharter@dese.mo.gov. ☐ Maintain all appropriate certifications, certificates and checks (criminal, medical, etc.) ☐ Submit proper assurances to sponsor for personnel compliance and qualifications	☐ Yes ☐ No
	Register for The Public School Retirement System of Kansas City or St. Louis		☐ Contact the appropriate retirement system	☐ Yes ☐ No
Management Contract	Submit management contract for compliance review (if applicable).		☐ Draft/re-draft Management Contract ☐ Ensure alignment with state, county and city laws ☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation) ☐ Make any mandatory changes or additions to contract as requested by Sponsor ☐ Submit to school governing board for review and final approval	☐ Yes ☐ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Budget	Submit the school governing board-approved budget, with detailed assumptions for ALL revenues and expenditures, for the first year of operation.	June 1	The fiscal year for the first year of operation is July 1, 20__ through June 30, 20__.	◻ Yes ◻ No
	Submit monthly cash flow projection for the first year of operation.			◻ Yes ◻ No
	Submit the school governing board-approved five-year budget, including general assumptions used to project budget (i.e., changes in enrollment, number of teachers, projected increase in revenue or expenditures, salary increases, etc.)			◻ Yes ◻ No
	Submit Federal Charter Schools Program Grant Application			◻ Yes ◻ No
Financial Management	Submit Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Enrollment Forms	June 15	◻ Complete the attached forms and fax to (573)522-8455 Vendor _input_form.pdf Vendorach.pdf	◻ Yes ◻ No
	Surety bond in an amount agreed to by sponsoring institution and school governing board			◻ Yes ◻ No
	Completed necessary state documents to generate payment: request assignment of County-District and Building Codes and completion of vendor paperwork.			◻ Yes ◻ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
	Internal control policies and procedures with evidence of approval by the school governing board.		☐ Draft financial accounting practices (policies, manual) ☐ Ensure alignment with state, county and city laws ☐ Submit to the school governing board for review and approval ☐ Prepare package for submission to sponsor for approval (cover letter to sponsor requesting review and approval with supporting documentation)	☐ Yes ☐ No
School Facility and Building Safety	Signed lease or other evidence that the school has secured a suitable facility	120 days prior to opening		☐ Yes ☐ No
	Submit valid Certificate of Occupancy	July 15, or 30 days prior to school opening, whichever is earlier		☐ Yes ☐ No
	Submit Safety and Emergency Plan	July 15, or 30 days prior to opening, whichever is earlier		☐ Yes ☐ No
Transportation	Transportation plan (if applicable) and related health and safety certificates.		☐ Review policy and state, county and city laws to ensure compliance ☐ Post RFP, recruit, screen and hire/write contract ☐ Maintain all appropriate certifications, certificates and checks (health and safety, criminal, medical, etc.) ☐ Submit proper assurances to sponsor for personnel compliance and qualifications	☐ Yes ☐ No

Pre-Opening Requirements *(continued)*

CATEGORY	TASK	DUE DATE	STATUS/NOTES	APPROVED BY SPONSOR
Food Services	Food service plan (if applicable) and related health and safety certificates.		☐ Review policy and state, county and city laws to ensure compliance ☐ Post RFP, recruit, screen and hire/write contract ☐ Maintain all appropriate certifications, certificates and checks (health and safety, criminal, medical, etc.) ☐ Submit proper assurances to sponsor for personnel compliance and qualifications	☐ Yes ☐ No
Insurance	Submit evidence of appropriate insurance coverage	August 1, or 10 days prior to opening.		☐ Yes ☐ No

Address questions regarding the requirements outlined above to:

SPONSOR NAME AND ADDRESS

_____

_____

_____

Performance Plans for Missouri Charter Schools

What is a Performance Plan?

One element of a school's charter contract is the Performance Plan. The Missouri Charter School Sponsor, Model Charter Agreement states:

2.14 Evaluation. Before the end of the first year of the Charter School's operation, the Charter School and the Sponsor shall establish a Performance Plan based on state performance standards, the Sponsor's performance expectations, and the educational goals and objectives set out in the Charter Application.

A Performance Plan is an accountability agreement between the charter school and its sponsor that spans the term of the charter. Performance Plans are a component of the charter school contract and are the specific standards by which sponsors monitor school performance over the course of the charter term. The Performance Plan contains a completed set of indicators, measures, metrics and targets in the following areas of charter school accountability: academic program performance, operational program performance, and, if applicable, elements drawn from a school's specific design.

Why are Performance Plans important?

The Performance Plan provides clarity between sponsors and charter schools. It gives sponsors and the schools they oversee a common set of standards to use over the course of the school's charter term to measure school performance. In addition, Performance Plans provide definition and scaffolding for monitoring events over the course of the charter term. Through Annual Report Cards, schools self-report report on meeting or making progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plans; in turn, sponsors monitor schools' progress against Performance Plans through corroborating information contained in schools' Annual Reports, reviewing assessment results, audits, compliance documents, and conducting site visits, if scheduled and necessary.[1]

[1] *More information about site visits may be found in may be found in the "Key Terms and Definitions" section of this document.*

How are Performance Plans constructed?

Sponsors set Performance Plans, and schools sign-on to the Performance Plan as an accountability agreement and as part of the charter contract. Measures and targets in Performance Plans are non-negotiable. Performance Plans are critical elements of a school's contract, and schools agree to be held accountable to the performance targets set in the Performance Plans when they enter into their contract with their sponsor.

How are Performance Plans organized?

Performance Plans are organized around a coherent set of indicators, measures, metrics and targets that set the goals schools must achieve, or demonstrate significant progress toward achieving, in order to secure renewal at the end of the charter term. Indicators represent general

dimensions of quality or achievement, such as "*Student Achievement Levels*," or "*Postsecondary Readiness and Success*." Indicators are "big buckets," "umbrellas" or the general categories of accountability that will be monitored over the course of the charter term. Measures are general instruments or means to assess performance in each area defined by an indicator. Measures require the application of specific metrics or calculation methods. For example, a measure of postsecondary readiness is *high school completion*. Metrics specify a quantification, calculation method or formula for a given measure. For example, the typical high school completion metric is a *graduation rate*, such as "*the percentage of ninth-graders graduating in four years*."

Taking metrics a step further, targets are specific, quantifiable objectives that set expectations or define what will constitute success on particular measures within a certain period of time. For example, a graduation-rate target might be "*90% of ninth-graders graduating within four years*." Likewise, state-mandated performance levels are common, non-negotiable, targets. Having well-conceived and well-defined performance targets is important to evaluating school success as these targets provide structure for both school and sponsor in assessing the school's progress toward meeting its goals in the years between charter contract signing and charter renewal.

The model provided in this Performance Plan Template combines performance expectations for high functioning schools with measures and metrics specific to the Missouri State Accountability System, while also allowing for additional school specific measures, metrics and targets that are mission or program specific.

How are indicators, measures, metrics and targets set?

Most indicators and measures in Performance Plans are non-negotiable and are common to all charter schools that the sponsor oversees. These non-negotiables can be pre-populated by a sponsor before meeting with the school's board and leaders. In addition, some metrics and targets (particularly those linked with school academic status as defined by federal AYP standards) are also non-negotiable. These metrics and targets will be pre-filled or re-set annually. Under federal accountability standards and state accountability definitions, student proficiency rates, attendance rates and graduation rates all have non-negotiable "floors" for MPI / AYP. Sponsors should never set targets for these non-negotiable targets that are inconsistent with state and federal accountability standards.

Sponsors can create and adapt certain measures, metrics and targets to be responsive to the needs and condition of each school, and to collect evidence and data of growth over time. For example, the specific targets set for student academic growth data will be different for each school a sponsor oversees. Of course, the non-negotiable expectation is that students will be at or above grade level as measured by criterion referenced tests – but the reading level at which a student (or a cohort of students) enrolls at the school, how fast they make it to grade level, and if they keep up at appropriate grade level pace over time are all factors that influence the appropriate setting of growth targets for reading level growth.

Sponsors responsibly set targets within the framework of the Performance Plan. The targets set by sponsors should be in line with the school's charter, outcome based, realistic and measured at appropriate intervals.

In essence, Performance Plans define "how good is good enough" for all areas of charter school performance, prioritizing the academic performance of the school's students while ensuring sponsors also monitor the operational, governance and fiscal health of the organization.

How should sponsors monitor attainment of Performance Targets contained within the Performance Plan?

Sponsors monitor schools' attainment of Performance Targets by monitoring the formal and required accountability submissions from the charter schools that they oversee. These include Annual Reports, annual audits, requests for amendments to the terms of the charter agreement, and applications for charter renewal. In addition, sponsors should monitor school performance and compliance reports available from DESE, including student state assessment results, compliance reviews, enrollment reports, and state accountability reports. Sponsors may also consider monitoring schools by spending time on the school site, observing the activity and operations of the school. However, these visits must be fully coordinated, scheduled with the cooperation of the school, and guided by clear protocols and processes. More information on site visits may be found in the "Key Terms and Definitions" section of this document.

Sponsors should use Performance Plans along with the *Missouri Monitoring Framework* to construct a comprehensive plan for monitoring the schools they oversee.

How to use the Performance Plan Template

The template below is the Missouri Charter Public School Performance Plan Template. Sponsors should fill out the template, codify it as the formal Performance Plan, include the plan as a piece of the formal contract, and follow it over the course of the school's charter term. Some indicators, measures and metrics are common for all schools; some may be customized dependent on the particular program focus of the school. In completing the template, sponsors must set appropriate targets (left blank in the model below), consistent with federal and state accountability guidelines. These targets must also be rigorous and attainable over the course of the charter term.

At the start of each indicator section, there is a description of how to use the indicator and how to set the target.

Performance Plan for

nacsa
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

SPONSOR NAME AND DATE EXECUTED/APPROVED

Academic Program Quality

Indicator 1: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

All public schools must follow federal and state accountability requirements, including participation in state level assessment programs. All public schools, including charter schools, must follow federal and state accountability expectations, commonly referred to as Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP, as defined in the state's Accountability Workbook. Missouri charter school sponsors must hold the charter schools that they oversee to the same accountability standards as traditional public district schools, expecting that charter schools make and maintain AYP over the course of their charter terms.

For further information, please refer to "Understanding Your Adequate Yearly Progress Report (AYP)" http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/dar/UnderstandingYourAYP.pdf

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
AYP determination	Attainment of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	*AYP* • The school will make AYP in the aggregate • The school will make AYP for all statistically significant subgroups • The school will not have advanced accountability status (School Improvement Levels 1-5)

Performance Plan *(continued)*

Indicator #2: Student Achievement Level (Status)

Student academic status, or point-in-time, measures are the most common and simplest indicators of academic program success. Student status measures can include end-of year state testing results, norm referenced testing results, grade level assessments or demonstrations, or school implemented passage or exit assessments. They demonstrate where a student, or group of students, is at a particular point in time, and do not make a distinction or comparison from year-to-year.

Sponsors should set these targets ensuring that targets are consistent with the following:

- the school meeting AYP in the aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups;
- the school reaching for and maintaining status measures High 1 and High 2;
- the school meeting and maintaining MAP Performance Index (MPI) required index score improvements from one year to the next; and
- students at the school demonstrating proficiency, or substantial progress toward meeting proficiency.

For further information, please refer to "Understanding Your Annual Performance Report (APR)" http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/dar/understandingyourAPR.pdf

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Proficiency Levels on State Assessments by Grade and Subject *The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) as measured by the MAP Performance Index (MPI).* *Mathematics and Communication Arts MAP assessments are administered to students each year in grades 3-8; Math Grade 10, and Communication Arts Grade 11.* *End of Course Assessments:* *2009 Operational: Biology, Algebra and Communication Arts II* *2010 Operational: Algebra II, Geometry, Integrated Math II, Integrated Math III, Government, English I and American History* *Science assessments became mandatory for grades 5 and 8 in 2008.* *Missouri MPI is cumulative over the past 5 testing years and is broken into performance levels, "Floor" to "High 1."* *In addition, Missouri tracks, through Standard 9.7, AYP accountable subgroups.*	Percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced Percentage of students scoring at each state performance level (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced) Meeting and maintaining MAP Performance Index (MPI) score improvements	*Proficiency* XX% of students will score Proficient or Advanced *Performance Levels* • XX% of students will score at [each performance level] • Each year, the percentage of students scoring the bottom two performance levels will be reduced. *MPI* • The school meet and maintain required MPI score improvements from one year to the next

Performance Plan *(continued)*

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
College Entrance Exam Composite and Subtest Scores *Missouri tracks ACT through Standard 9.3*	Percentage of graduates scoring at or above the national scaled score average on the ACT	*Percentage of graduates* XX% of graduates will score at or above the national scaled score average on the ACT

Indicator #3: Student Progress over Time (Growth)

Student growth over time, as measured by an externally or internally reliable criterion referenced test, is an important indicator of academic program quality. Criterion referenced tests measure a student's grasp of a particular set of knowledge and skills outlined in a specific curriculum.

These assessments, when utilized correctly, can track student academic progress over time in reading, language arts, and math.

Targets must be consistent with students making appropriate progress towards grade level proficiency and sustaining or exceeding grade level proficiency over time.

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Longitudinal Growth Based on Similar Starting Points	Percentage of students achieving or exceeding typical or average growth rate Percentage of students making or exceeding target growth rate	*Typical/Average Growth* XX% of students will achieve or exceed typical or average growth, based on similar starting points (e.g., one year's growth in one year's time) *Target Growth* XX% of students will make or exceed target growth, based on similar starting points
Criterion-Referenced Longitudinal Growth	Percentage of students making adequate growth to reach or maintain proficiency during a certain period of time Percentage of students already proficient or advanced who maintain or improve their performance level Percentage of students moving to a higher performance level	*Growth to Proficiency* XX% of students will make growth to reach or maintain proficiency *Maintain and Improve* • XX% of proficient or advanced students will maintain or improve their performance level • XX% of students below proficient that move to a higher performance level • XX% of students move to a higher performance level

Performance Plan *(continued)*

Indicator #4: Postsecondary Readiness and Success (for High Schools)

Sponsors should set these targets by looking at appropriate benchmark comparison schools in Kansas City and St. Louis, as well as statewide. Sponsors can find school level data for the following measures in Standards 9.4.1 (advanced courses); 9.4.2 (career education courses); 9.4.3 (college placement calculations), 9.4.4 (career education placement), 9.5.5 (graduation rate), and 9.5.6 (attendance rates) in the state performance report. Staff at DESE can also provide comparison data and appropriate baseline data for target setting.

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Postsecondary Access and Opportunity	Percentage of students enrolled in a college-prep curriculum (based on state high school standards or admission standards for in-state public 4-year colleges) Percentage of graduates submitting applications to postsecondary institutions, by type of program (4-year and 2-year colleges, trade and apprentice programs)	*College-prep curriculum enrollment* XX% of students are enrolled in a college-prep curriculum *Post-secondary applications* XX% of graduates submit application(s) to postsecondary institutions
High School Completion	Missouri Graduation Rate Calculation, Standard 9.5.5 of the MAP "The persistence to a graduation rate is determined by dividing the *number of graduates* by the *number of graduates plus the number of cohort dropouts in grades 9-12*, then multiplying by 100." MO also tracks completion of the GED and for schools where 5% or more students complete the GED, awards progress bonus points.	*Graduation Rate* The school maintains a graduation rate of XX%
Postsecondary Enrollment or Employment	1. Percentage of graduates, by cohort, enrolled in postsecondary institutions (college, trade and apprentice programs) by February of Year 1 after graduating from high school 2. Percentage of students, by cohort, not enrolled in postsecondary institutions but employed full-time or enlisted in the military by February of Year 1 after graduating from high school	*College placement* XX% of graduates enter college *Career education placement* XX% of career education completers are placed in occupations related to their training, in college, or in the military

Performance Plan *(continued)*

Indicator #5: Student Engagement

Sponsors should set these targets by looking at appropriate benchmark comparison schools in Kansas City and St. Louis, as well as statewide. Sponsors can find school level data for the following measures in Standards 9.4.1 (advanced courses); 9.4.2 (career education courses); 9.4.3 (college placement calculations), 9.4.4 (career education placement), 9.5.5 (graduation rate), and 9.5.6 (attendance rates) in the state performance report. Staff at DESE can also provide comparison data and appropriate baseline data for target setting.

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Student Attendance	Average Daily Attendance rate	*Attendance* • K-8 attendance : XX% • 9-12 attendance: XX% • K-12 attendance: XX%
Continuous Enrollment	Percentage of students re-enrolled from one year to the next	*Re-enrollment* XX% of students re-enroll from one year to the next

Performance Plan *(continued)*

Operational Program Quality

Indicator 1: Financial Performance and Sustainability

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Financial Reporting	Timeliness and sufficiency	*Financial Reporting* Timely and sufficient filing of required reports
Financial Status (based on budget, balance sheets, and cash flow statements)	Net financial position	*Financial Position* Positive net assets and adequate reserve
	Cash flow statements	*Cash Flow* Adequate working capital
	Budget	*Long-range Planning* Balanced, based on valid, evidence-based assumptions
	• Budget-Actuals	*Short-term Planning* General budget-actuals alignment
	Financial commitments and obligations	*Financial Commitments* In good standing with respect to financial obligations
Financial Management	Independent audit results	*Audits* • Unqualified • No major findings

Performance Plan *(continued)*

Indicator 2: School Governing Board Performance and Stewardship

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
School Governing Board Meeting Conduct	Legal compliance	*Open Meetings Law* Noticed and conducted consistent with open meetings law
Conflict of Interest Compliance	Applicable law, school governing board policy	*Conflict of Interest* Decision-making that is free of conflicts and consistent with the school governing board's fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the school
Grievance Compliance	Applicable law, school governing board policy	*Grievances* Material compliance with applicable due process laws and school governing board policy
Reporting (financial, attendance, staff-related)	Applicable law, the charter; sponsor policy	*Organizational Reporting* On time and complete, consistent with applicable law, the charter, and sponsor policy
Legal compliance	IDEA, NCLB, Title VI (ELL), health and safety law, employment-related law including background check requirements, other legal compliance requirements as set out in the Charter	*Legal Compliance* Material compliance with all applicable law

Indicator 3: Parent and Community Engagement

MEASURES	METRICS	TARGETS
Enrollment lottery	Applicable law; school governing board policy; charter	Lottery conducted in accordance with applicable law, school governing board policy and the terms of the charter.

How does this all fit together?

The following chart shows a sequence of monitoring activities, from Pre-Opening Requirements in the upper left-hand corner through to renewal decision-making in the lower right-hand corner. The charts display appropriate sequencing of monitoring events by focus area – compliance, academic, and operational/fiscal – and how these areas are rolled-up into school performance profiles by operational year and by charter term (renewal decision-making).

Assumptions

The following chart is built on a few underlying assumptions. The assumptions are that:

1. Sponsoring boards set policies that guide the development and execution of charter school oversight and monitoring events.Sponsoring boards must set direction for each oversight activity, defining the parameters of timeframe, roles and responsibilities, and standards for evaluation and review. These parameters, or policies, allow staff in the sponsoring office to build appropriate procedures to guide all oversight events.
2. Sponsoring boards expect and allow professional staff in their offices to carry out the day-to-day work of executing oversight and monitoring schools in line with the policies of the sponsoring board. Staff in sponsoring offices is responsible for creating operational protocols and reporting templates to guide the review of new charter applications; to monitor schools through annual reporting, fiscal audits, and site visits if necessary; and to guide decision-making regarding renewal of a school's charter.
3. Sponsoring boards expect and allow staff in their offices to analyze and sort school performance data and evidence over the course of a school's charter term to make recommendations related to charter intervention and charter renewal. Sponsoring boards do not involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of charter school oversight or charter school monitoring. Staff in sponsoring offices is responsible for carrying out school monitoring activities, guided by formalized protocols and reporting templates, to gather evidence and data on school performance over the course of a school's charter term. Staff in sponsoring offices uses this evidence and data to make action recommendations to their sponsoring board, when appropriate, including charter renewal.
4. Sponsoring boards make high-stakes decisions, based on recommendations from professional staff in their sponsoring offices. Sponsoring boards and board members set policy that guide the work of staff. The sponsoring boards act on policy-based recommendations made by staff in their office.

Annual Monitoring Events

On an annual basis, sponsors must monitor school performance across all areas of charter school accountability – compliance, academics, and operational program and fiscal health. Sponsors monitor school performance and health by actively reviewing:

- student academic assessment results,
- compliance monitoring reports generated by the host district,
- the school's progress towards meeting targets in its Performance Plan,
- the school's annual reports, and
- the school's annual financial audits.

Sponsors may consider conducting site visits on a regular basis to verify information contained in a school's annual report and monitor progress against targets in a school's Performance Plan, however these visits should only be conducted for the purpose of collecting such evidence as it relates to the goals contained within the Performance Plan. Site visits may occur on an annual or less regular basis, depending upon the capacity of the sponsor to staff and support site visits with additional resources, including human and financial resources. Iit is important that these site visits be formally planned, conducted on a date and time determined by the sponsor (and working in cooperation with the charter school), and guided by a well-defined site visit protocol. Sponsors should amend the Monitoring Plan to reflect the actual frequency of regularly scheduled site visits. More information about site visits may be found in the "Key Terms and Definitions" section of this document.

After each academic year, sponsors summarize all data and evidence collected from the school within a performance profile—from the school's completion of Pre-Opening Requirements to monitoring events that occur in the last year of a school's charter term. Sponsors have an obligation to publically report on the performance of the schools that they oversee. By actively reviewing and analyzing school performance and other indicators of school health identified within the Performance Plan, sponsors ensure that they are able to report to the general public in a timely manner.

The flow of annual monitoring events for Missouri charter school sponsors is illustrated by the direction of the blue arrows on the following Monitoring Plan.

Monitoring Timeline and Events

YEAR OF OPERATION	COMPLIANCE MONITORING	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	OPERATIONAL/FISCAL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE
0	Pre-opening requirements (compliance check-list)		Pre-opening requirements (compliance check-list)	
1	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Approve school Performance Plans with school targets Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability growth to standard Receive and review school Annual Report	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financ reports (balance Summary letter school on progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plan	Year 1 performance profile
2	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and , when possible, growth to standard • Verify information in Annual Report • Assess progress towards meeting Performance Plan targets	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financial reports	Year 2 performance profile Summary letter to school on progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plan
3	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment Annual Report Site visit (if scheduled)	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financ	Year 3 performance profile Summary letter to school on progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plan

Periodic monitoring to assess the performance of the school.

Periodic monitoring to assess the performance of the school.

Periodic monitoring to assess the performance of the school.

Monitoring Timeline and Events *(continued)*

YEAR OF OPERA-TION	COMPLIANCE MONITORING	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	OPERATIONAL/FISCAL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE
4	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and, when possible Receive and review school Annual Report Site visit (if necessary)	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financ	Year 4 performance profile Summary letter to school on progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plan
5	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and, when possible Annual Report Receive and review Application for Renewal Renewal site visit (if scheduled)	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financ	Year 5 performance profile Renewal decision-making

Periodic monitoring to assess the performance of the school.

Periodic monitoring to assess the performance of the school.

Over the Term of the Charter in Preparation for Renewal Decision-Making

When charter schools apply for charter renewal, sponsors will refer back to annual performance profiles (which summarize a school's progress toward attaining the targets contained within the Performance Plan) when analyzing school performance over the term of a school's charter. These performance profiles will assist sponsors in making responsible renewal decisions. Performance profiles should include information from the school's completion of Pre-Opening Requirements through to the school's submission of an application for renewal, as well as any subsequent monitoring events that may occur (as defined within the Performance Plan), including a renewal site visit.

All data and evidence collected over the term of a school's charter is then summarized and analyzed by the staff of the sponsoring office within a renewal performance profile. The renewal performance profile reports upon the extent to which the school has achieved or demonstrated indicators of quality, as determined by the Performance Plan. Finally, the renewal performance profile is shared with the sponsor board, along with the staff recommendation regarding renewal, to assist them in making an informed decision regarding charter renewal that is aligned with the school's charter contract and Performance Plan.

For Missouri charter school sponsors, the flow of monitoring events over the course of the charter term illustrated by the direction of the red arrows on the following Monitoring Plan.

Monitoring Timeline and Events

YEAR OF OPERA-TION	COMPLIANCE MONITORING	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	OPERATIONAL/FISCAL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE
0	Pre-opening requirements (compliance check-list)		Pre-opening requirements (compliance check-list)	
1	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Approve school Performance Plans with school targets Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and , when possible, growth to standard Receive and review school Annual Report	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financial reports (balance sheet, cash flow, budget-actuals) Summary letter to school on progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plan	Year 1 performance profile
2	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and , when possible, growth to standard Receive and review school Annual Report Site visit (if scheduled) • Verify information in Annual Report • Assess progress towards meeting Performance Plan targets	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financial reports	Year 2 performance pro Sur lett ol on tow me targ Per Pla

Trend monitoring to make renewal decisions.

Monitoring Timeline and Events *(continued)*

YEAR OF OPERA-TION	COMPLIANCE MONITORING	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	OPERATIONAL/FISCAL PERFORMANCE	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE
3	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and , when possible, growth to standard Receive and review school Annual Report Site visit (if scheduled)	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financial reports	Year 3 performance profile Sur lett on tow me targ Per Plan
4	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Re external accountability r nal assessment possible, grow Receive and Annual Report Site visit (if necessary)	Board-approved budget Annual independent audit Quarterly financial reports	Yea per pro Sur lett on tow me Pl Plan
5	Periodic monitoring to check compliance with operational program quality expectations through review of site visit records, audit records, and related means of gathering evidence of performance.	Review State MAP assessments; MPI (status) Review external accountability results; internal assessment results, and , when possible, growth to standard Receive and review school Annual Report Receive and review Application for Renewal Renewal site visit (if scheduled)	Board-ap Annual inder audit Quarterly financial reports	Year 5 performance profile Renewal decision-making

Trend monitoring to make renewal decisions.

Trend monitoring to make renewal decisions.

Key Terms and Definitions

Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a term used by states to determine the appropriate, predicted rate of progress of students over time. Adequate Yearly Progress is an element in each State Accountability Workbook. Adequate Yearly Progress is determined for schools and districts, in the aggregate for all students and for statistically significant subgroups. It is made up of a few elements, including:

- *Participation rates* – the percentage of eligible students tested on state assessments
- *Index scores* – proficiency rates on state assessments as measured by state index scores
- *Attendance rates* – for grades K-8
- *Graduation rates* – for grades 9-12
- *Growth measures*

Some states allow for "safe harbor" or waiver exclusions which allow for schools or districts to make AYP in the aggregate or for identified sub-groups if they make certain gains for disadvantage students, even if they have not met overall targets.

States define accountability status based on if a school or district has met or not met AYP over the course of time. Each state, and No Child Left Behind, has defined a cascading series of sanctions and interventions for schools and districts who repeatedly fail to meet AYP. Schools and districts progress through a series of labels with linked consequences, such as:

- *(Needs or Program) Improvement* – Years 2 and 3
- *Corrective Action* – Year 4
- *Restructuring* – Year 5, on

State accountability systems are not consistent or calibrated from state-to-state. State standards are different, assessments are different, state definitions and "cut points" for proficiency are different. It is not possible to say that a school or district making or meeting AYP targets in one locality or state is the same as in another.

Annual Reporting

There are two types of annual reporting. The first type of annual reporting is the structured reporting a charter school makes to its sponsor. The second type of annual reporting is when sponsors aggregate the performance of the schools that they oversee and report out on this school performance to the public at-large.

Schools reporting to their sponsor

Sponsors should set a formal reporting template that guide how schools sum annual performance reporting. This template must guide schools utilizing their Performance Plans, and provide the sponsor with information that can be used for summarizing the school's performance annually, and over the course of the charter term for renewal decision-making.

Through Annual Reporting, the charter school reports on progress made towards and targets set in its Performance Plan; summarizes student academic performance on external and internal accountability measures; provides a summary of major policy decisions made by the school governing Board; and describes the general school population and program. In addition, the school annually accounts for the following:

- Finances (annual audits to its sponsor; intent to apply for federal grants)
- Enrollment (pre-enrollment reports and ADA, quarterly counts)
- Staffing (status of Highly Qualified Teachers)
- Academic Program Reporting (certification for high school coursework, graduation requirements)
- Any additional required state and local data collection

When creating the template for the Annual Report, sponsors should strive to collapse required reporting, where possible. Sponsors should be aware of the data and information collected through the Student Information Systems and refrain from asking schools to, in essence, double report information when it is not necessary. One example is to consider incorporating the charter school report card data directly into the Annual Report, and not ask schools to submit school report card data separately. This strategy also provides the benefit of consolidating and streamlining the number of documents sponsors are required to review. It is best, when requiring reporting, not to ask schools to submit documentation or evidence that does not relate directly to monitoring requirements and therefore, renewal decision-making.

Necessary components of a school's formal Annual Report include academic, operational, and financial performance against the targets identified in the Performance Plan. Some sponsors and schools may also choose to include data demonstrating progress toward meeting indicators and targets unique to the school's educational mission or design. Comprehensive annual reporting emphasizes the public stewardship responsibility of charter school governing boards. As educational trustees of the state, school governing Boards are called upon to be responsive to diverse, complex and often conflicting constituencies. School governing boards govern on behalf of and are accountable to the broader public, not merely their own school's internal community, and must publically report out on school performance.

In creating its Annual Report, the charter school provides a year-end summary of school performance. The Annual Report may also serve as a road map for the on-site and renewal visits made by the sponsor. If a sponsor chooses to formally visit a school, information contained in the school's Annual Report can provide school site visitors with a comprehensive picture of school performance and operations, as reported by the school. Sponsors should utilize the information reported in school's Annual Reports to build a collective performance report of all of its schools.

Annual Reports are the formal, structured way in which the governing Board of the school reports on school performance to its sponsor and to the public. In preparing accurate Annual Reports, the governing Board of the school also builds evidence of success to warrant renewal of the school's charter over the course of the charter term.

If the charter school fails to comply with deadlines related to the submission of its Annual Report, this non-compliance will be noted in its Performance Profile. Schools with chronic lateness or violations of accountability deadlines are out of compliance with the terms of their charter contract and can risk facing non-renewal of its charter.

If a school chooses to report in a more informal way to its constituents, that is fine, but formal annual reporting for charter school monitoring must follow a structure defined by the sponsor and incorporate reporting against the school's Performance Plan.

Sponsors reporting to the public

Sponsors create profiles by synthesizing and sorting school academic performance information, compliance reporting, Annual Reports generated by schools, operational and fiscal performance information, and qualitative and quantitative information gathered during on-site visits. These profiles are frequently updated and modified. Nationally, high functioning sponsors collect and publish these profiles on an annual basis, sharing the performance of each school in a public manner with a wide range of constituents.

Application for Renewal ("Request for Renewal")

Sponsors in Missouri grant charters to operate a public school to the school governing board for a term of five to ten years. At the end of each charter term, the governing board of a school must submit a request for renewal of the school's charter to the sponsor. Request for renewal of the charter must convey the school's evidence based record of achieving, or posting substantial progress toward achieving the terms of its charter contract and the targets identified in its Performance Plan. The school must be free from material violations of its charter and in compliance with applicable federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements. In requesting renewal of the school's charter, the school governing board must submit a concise, comprehensive application for charter renewal.

If the charter school fails to comply with deadlines related to the submission of an application for renewal of its charter, it risks not entering into the renewal process with its sponsor.

Contract

The contract is the legal agreement between the sponsor and charter school that defines the commitment between these two parties. In addition, it outlines the responsibilities each party holds in delivering on these commitments. Entered into and signed after awarding of the charter, the contract shifts the application for a charter into reality. The promises and aspirations of the founding group become concrete, legal realities and practical expectations of what the public charter school will become. The sponsor commits to entrusting public dollars and public school students to the school's independent governing board. The sponsor also commits to giving the governing board more flexibility in how it operates the school than is afforded traditional public schools. In return, the school's governing board commits to handling the funds responsibly, complying with its legal obligations, and educating the students well.

The contract between sponsor and charter school incorporates elements of the original charter application that are integral to the school's identification and operation. These include the school's mission statement, location, educational philosophy and program. A quality contract outlines the following material terms:

- *Recitals* – purposes of [State] Charter School Law
- *Establishment of the School* – legal status of the school, requirements of the Board
- *Operation of the School* – Board by-laws, transparent governance requirements
- *School Financial Matters* – clarity of financial matters, schedule of funding transfers
- *Personnel* – personnel provisions
- *Charter Term, Renewal and Revocation* – guidance on length of term and how renewal decisions are made
- *Operation of the Contract* – non-standard provisions, dispute resolutions
- *Sponsor Policies* – incorporated policies

Federal Program Review

These reviews are structured, expected, routine visit from the sponsor (and/or host district, county office of education, or state department of education) to the school to gather on-site qualitative and quantitative evidence and data. Federal Program Review visits focus on certain Federal Programs (mandated programs through which schools must meet the needs of exceptional students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, etc.), and for which the school must fully account for federal funding.

An important role of a sponsor in Federal Program Review is to keep the schools that they oversee informed so that the charter schools can remain in compliance. The best sponsors start early in the life of the charter, by defining related Pre-Opening Requirements and working with schools to answer questions about system set up, record keeping, timelines, reporting requirements formats, and other detail areas related to compliance paperwork. Sponsors can chose to do this work themselves, or partner with the agency

responsible for monitoring Federal Program Compliance to provide guidance to charter schools.

It is important for sponsors to remember that they are not responsible for the implementation of the special programs for students with disabilities and for English language learners. Sponsors cannot dictate or direct the design or implementation of these programs at the schools they oversee. As is the case with general education programs, sponsors must not direct the content or delivery of the programs focused on Federal Programs.

If the charter school fails to comply with implementation of required programs for students with disabilities and English language learners, as well as health and safety requirements for staff and building, this non-compliance will be noted in its Performance Profile. Schools with chronic violations and non-implementation of program are out of compliance with the terms of their charter contract and can risk facing non-renewal of the charter.

Performance Plan

A Performance Plan is an accountability agreement between the charter school and its sponsor that spans the term of the charter. Performance Plans are a component of the charter school contract and are the "work plan" by which sponsors monitor school performance over the course of the charter term. The Performance Plan contains a completed set of indicators, measures, metrics and targets in the following areas of charter school accountability: academic program performance, operational program performance, and, if applicable, elements drawn from a school's specific design.

Performance Plans are important because they provide a common, agreed upon work plan for sponsors and schools to follow when measuring school performance over the course of the charter term. The Performance Plan provides clarity between sponsors and charter schools. It gives sponsors and the schools they oversee a common set of rulers and rubrics to use over the course of the school's charter term to measure performance. In addition, Performance Plans also provide definition and scaffolding for monitoring events over the course of the charter term. Schools self-report report on meeting or making progress towards meeting targets in Performance Plans in Annual Reports; and sponsors monitor schools' progress against Performance Plans through corroborating information contained in schools' Annual Reports, reviewing assessment results, audits, compliance documents, and conducting site visits, if scheduled and necessary.

Most indicators and measures in Performance Plans are non-negotiable and are common to all charter schools that the sponsor oversees. In addition, some metrics and targets (particularly those linked with school academic status as defined by federal AYP standards) are also non-negotiable. These metrics and targets will be pre-filled or re-set at appropriate intervals when state testing results become available. Under federal accountability standards and state accountability definitions, student proficiency rates, attendance rates and graduation rates all have non-negotiable "floors" for AYP. Sponsors should never set targets for these non-negotiable targets that are inconsistent with state and federal accountability standards.

Sponsors and schools can create and adapt certain measures, metrics and targets to be responsive to the needs and condition of each school, and to collect evidence and data of growth over time. For example, the specific targets

set for student academic growth data will be different for each school a sponsor oversees. Of course, the non-negotiable expectation is that students will be at or above grade level as measured by criterion referenced tests. However, the reading level a student, or a classroom of students, arrives at the school with, how fast they make it to grade level, and if they keep up at appropriate grade level pace over time are all factors that influence the appropriate setting of growth targets for reading level growth. In addition, a school may wish to add a measure, metric and target that matches its specific design. If a school has a performing arts focus, or a foreign language focus and wishes to add accountability measures that reflect its school design, these measures, metrics and targets will be specific to its school and program.

Sponsors responsibility set targets in consultation with their schools within the framework of the Performance Plan. The targets set by sponsors and their schools should be in line with the school's charter, outcome based, realistic and measured at appropriate intervals.

If the charter school fails to meet a majority of the targets in its Performance Plan, or fails to make substantial progress toward meeting a majority of the targets in its Performance Plan, it risks facing non-renewal of its charter.

Pre-Opening Requirements

Pre-Opening Requirements are a set of primarily compliance based actions that the school must complete prior to opening its doors and starting instruction. Schools must demonstrate that there is sufficient demand (enrolled students) to warrant school opening. In addition, schools must demonstrate that the physical building and staff are ready to receive students for instruction. Pre-opening Requirements usually consist of a combination of paper screening of compliance documents and an on-site visit to the school site to continue to build the collaborative relationship between the sponsor and the school staff that started during the new charter application and granting process. A detailed list of actions for schools and sponsors to take to demonstrate that the building and staff are ready for students is included in the Pre-Opening Requirements document included on pages 6-14 of this document.

Sponsors are under obligation to proactively monitor activity at all schools during the time between when new charters are awarded and when school opens. It is the sponsor's obligation to make the determination if the school has completed the necessary preparations and largely satisfied the necessary Pre-Opening Requirements, before the school is allowed to open for instruction. If the charter school does not complete the necessary Pre-Opening Requirements, and the sponsor determines that the adults in the building and the physical structure are not ready to receive students for instruction, the sponsor must not clear the school to open for instruction to students. A delay in opening will be in effect until the sponsor can confirm that the school has satisfied all necessary Pre-Opening Requirements and all necessary documents are on file in the sponsor's office.

Site Visits

Standards set for frequency and formality of site visits require sponsors to carefully consider a number of factors, including provisions under statute and the charter contract. If a sponsor chooses to utilize site visits as part of the Monitoring Plan, the scope and frequency of these visits will vary depending upon the resources available to each sponsor as well as the performance

Key Terms and Definitions
(continued)

record of each of its schools. In some cases, schools that have proven themselves as high-functioning and healthy through the attainment of targets within the Performance Plan and timely compliance with all other reporting requirements may only warrant one formal school evaluation visit during their charter term. On the other hand, sponsors may indicate that schools struggling to meet targets contained within the Performance Plan, or schools that have difficulty meeting other reporting requirements, will receive a more regular diet of site visits so that sponsors can observe school operations more closely. If a sponsor anticipates placing a school's charter on probation or revoking or non-renewing a school's charter, school site visits are critical monitoring events.

Missouri sponsors choosing to utilize site visits as part of on-going monitoring should follow the following general guidelines:

1. Organize school visits around specific data gathering protocols
   Formal site visits are best structured by a site visit protocol that defines the types of events that happen during the visit. A formal protocol should outline the process for interviews with the school governing board, leadership, students, family members, teachers; classroom observations; school site walk-through; and include a sample schedule, sample key questions. It is aligned with the Performance Plan; and includes description of roles and responsibilities of the school and visit team members. Site visits should be purposeful and organized around specific data gathering activities linked to the indicators, measures and metrics identified in the school's Performance Plan. Sponsors must be careful to never making direct recommendations for academic or operational program change during site visits. At the conclusion of the site visit, the sponsor feedback consists of reporting on the progress the school is making toward attaining the indicators, measures and metrics set forth in its Performance Plan.
2. Document and share site visit protocols
   Sponsors should document site visit protocols and related training materials and make these resources available to schools and the public. Schools should understand that site visits are routine accountability and monitoring event, and should expect to have staff from the sponsoring office, or its representatives, on-site at some time during the charter term.
3. Ensure consistency
   Sponsors should use the same overall site visit protocol for all school visits, but make modifications in response to individual school elements such as type, grade range, size, accountability status, and age. Sponsors use these visits to gather on-site qualitative and quantitative information that can assist in evaluating a school's progress toward meeting the targets set in the Performance Plan.
4. Publically report data gathered on school visits
   Sponsors should analyze the information gathered during a site visit and report back to the school in a timely and public manner. Any post-visit reporting generated by the sponsor accumulates with other monitoring reports over the life of a school's charter. As the school approaches renewal, site visit reports combine with performance against Performance Plan targets and other monitoring reports to serve as a foundation for renewal decision -making.

Key Terms and Definitions
(continued)

Site visits are appropriate when...

- The sponsor follows a defined protocol, and publically reports out on data gathered during the visit;
- They are utilized to gather information and data to monitor a school's performance ;
- They are utilized to gather information and data for renewal decision-making; and
- The sponsor "holds up a mirror" to corroborate/confirm what is provided in schools' annual reports, audits, student academic performance data, and compliance reviews.

It is inappropriate to use formal site visits to ...

- just stop in and see the school;
- catch the school in non-compliance; or
- employ a third party contractor to provide technical assistance to the school about curriculum and instruction, or to advise the school on governance and management issues. Sponsors also should not engage in School Quality Review (SQR) visits, visits where lines of school autonomy are crossed and the site visit team identifies the school's strengths and areas for improvement, making suggestions and recommendations for academic and operational program changes.

In some cases, sponsors may need to engage an outside contractor to help with school site visits. This may be due to demands upon the sponsor staff, or in cases when there is a particularly contentious charter revocation or non-renewal decision that would benefit from third-party review *in addition to adherence to the Performance Plan by the school's sponsor*. If sponsors choose to utilize a third party to carry out site visits, these contractors should use the sponsor's protocol for site visits, and *not* engage in School Quality Review work.

In all cases, the sponsor must weigh frequency and formality to produce the most rigorous set of evidence for monitoring the school's performance and for renewal decision-making. Site visits should never be executed without a purpose or for any reason other than to collect evidence and data about school performance as it pertains to the Performance Plan.

Sponsoring boards and sponsor staff

Sponsoring boards are responsible for setting policy and overseeing the operations for charter schools and staff. In some cases, the sponsoring boards may have staff (an individual or an office dedicated to charter school oversight work) who manages the day-to-day operations work associated with all aspects of charter school authorization and oversight. NACSA makes the distinction between the day-to-day operations work that may fall to authorizing staff or a Charter School Office and the policy and decision making role of the authorizing body.

Key Terms and Definitions
(continued)

Charter School Office or authorizing staff duties may include:

- Updating policies, protocols and procedures that govern and guide charter school oversight work
- Managing initial application/petition processes
- Managing all accountability activities
- Managing all fiscal oversight
- Interfacing with appropriate departments or district offices (Special Education, transportation, Title I, etc.)
- Interfacing with charter school support organizations
- Making initial recommendations to senior staff and the governing board (sponsor) on initial charter awards and charter renewals

Conclusion

The Missouri Charter Public School Sponsor Guide presents a framework upon which Missouri charter school sponsors are strongly encouraged to build their ongoing oversight and monitoring activities. From defining Pre-Opening Requirements to articulating a Monitoring Plan that will assist charter public school sponsors in gathering the data and evidence required for sound renewal decision-making, the *Sponsor Guide* melds national best practices in charter school sponsorship and requirements specific to Missouri charter school law.

Charter school monitoring activities begin long before a charter school opens its doors to students, when charter school sponsors monitor the school's fulfillment of Pre-Opening Requirements. Monitoring activities continue over the charter term and will be guided by the Performance Plan, which defines the specific metrics, measures and targets that charter schools must meet in order to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their primary purpose of offering all families in St. Louis and Kansas City high quality public school choice options. Lastly, the Monitoring Plan outlines the way in which a sponsor's monitoring activities over the charter term culminate in a body of evidence that will be used for the purposes of renewal decision-making.

Rigorous oversight and monitoring of charter schools against clearly defined performance targets is at the core of a charter school sponsor's responsibilities, and is the key to ensuring charter school quality. Although some sponsors may experience obstacles as they adopt and implement Pre-Opening Requirements, Performance Plans, and the Monitoring Plan —including limited resources and staffing, resistance from existing schools or other parties, and missteps along the way—it is critical to the effectiveness of the Missouri charter school movement that that Missouri charter school sponsors persist in their commitment to clearly defining expectations for charter school performance through the Pre-Opening Requirements and the Performance Plan, and that they evaluate charter school performance over time, as outlined in the Monitoring Plan, making modifications where necessary and appropriate. Finally, NACSA stands poised to provide Missouri charter school sponsors with additional technical assistance, training, and support when needed.