NACSA AUTHORIZER EVALUATION

MEASURE, ACT, IMPROVE

NEW MEXICO – PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

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With support from:

AGENDA

- About NACSA
- Evaluation Process
- Evaluation Results
- Next Steps: The Work Plan

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TODAY'S GOALS

- Expand our knowledge of best practices in high quality authorizing.

- Identify and unpack key competencies and priorities for improvement of New Mexico Public Education Commission's authorizing program.

- Prioritize next steps that will unify the PEC, PED, and charter schools behind a shared vision of quality authorizing.

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ABOUT NACSA

MISSION

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

Not-for-profit, non-partisan, membership association

117 authorizer members, representing 3,700 charter schools (approximately 60% of charter schools)

AUTHORIZER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Authorizer Start-Up
- Application Decision-Making
- Performance Management
- Board and Staff Training
- Authorizer Evaluation
- Due Diligence

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PRINCIPLES OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZING

MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS

UPHOLD SCHOOL AUTONOMY

PROTECT STUDENT/PUBLIC INTERESTS
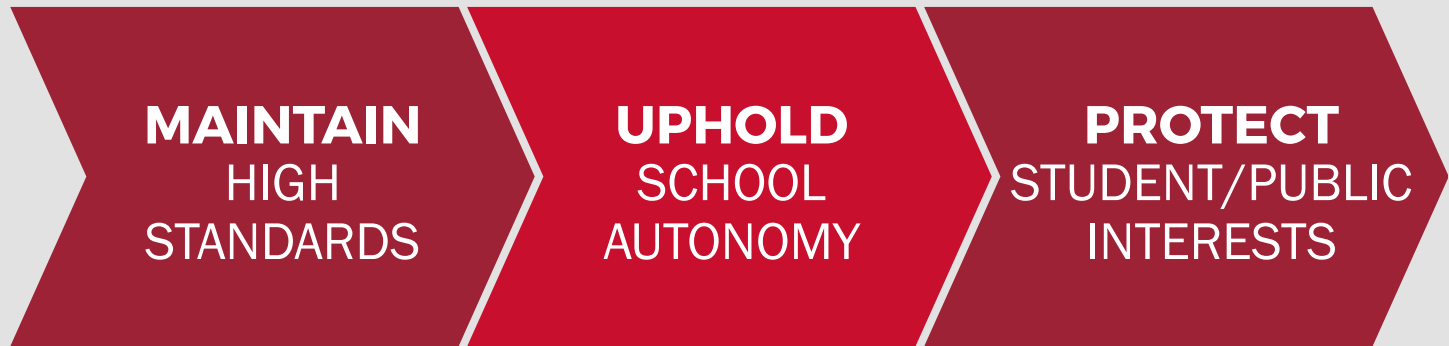
IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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RATING 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.

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RATING DEFINTIONS

WELL-DEVELOPED
Commendable in that it meets or exceeds NACSA's *Principles and Standards*.

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.

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

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EVALUATION STRUCTURE
QUESTIONS THAT GUIDE EACH SECTION OF THE EVALUATION

1 **APPLICATION DECISION MAKING**
Does the authorizer approve applications based on an applicant's demonstrated preparation and capacity to open and operate a quality charter school?

2 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**
Does the authorizer have effective systems for establishing and monitoring school performance expectations and for holding schools accountable as necessary to protect student and public interests?

3 **PERFORMANCE-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY**
Does the authorizer have rigorous, appropriate standards by which it holds schools accountable for results? Are decisions made with the intent to maintain high standards and protect the students' and the public's interests?

4 **AUTONOMY**
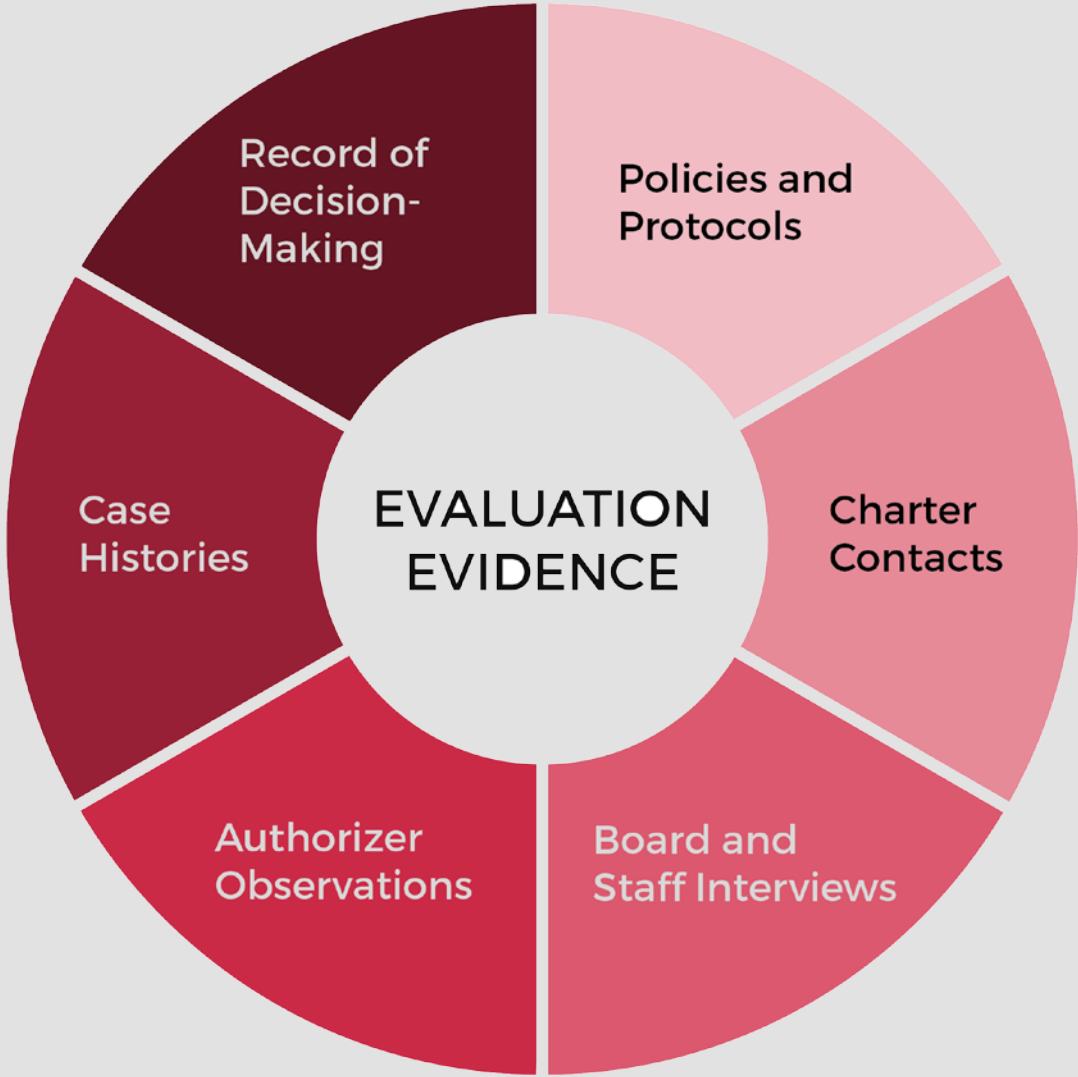*Do schools have the autonomy to which they are entitled?*

5 **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**
To what extent do the organizational structure and systems support quality authorizing practices and forward the authorizer's mission?

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EVALUATION SOURCES

Record of Decision-Making

Policies and Protocols

Case Histories

EVALUATION EVIDENCE

Charter Contacts

Authorizer Observations

Board and Staff Interviews

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NACSA Authorizer Evaluation

New Mexico - Public Education Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RATINGS SUMMARY	ESTABLISHED	APPLIED
1. Application Decision-Making	Partially Developed	Partially Developed
2. Performance Management Systems	Partially Developed	Partially Developed
3. Performance-Based Accountability	Partially Developed	Minimally Developed
4. Autonomy	Approaching Well-Developed	Partially Developed
5. Organizational Capacity	Minimally Developed	Minimally Developed

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY COMPETENCIES

- Key recommendations from the previous evaluation have been implemented.

- Representatives of both the PEC and PED support a thriving charter school community.

- The PEC has worked hard to develop tools that more comprehensively evaluate school performance.

Areas of strength that the authorizer can draw from.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
The tension between the PEC and PED staff is so high that it undermines both entities' capacity to make good decisions about charter schools.	Engage in intervention to work through immediate issues; develop a long-term plan for resolving chronic dysfunctions that are proving debilitating; and clarify authorizing roles, responsibilities, and authority.
The PEC has no authorizing policies that define the roles of each entity and that serve as a foundation for how the PEC makes critical high-stakes decisions.	Establish authorizing policies that codify the roles and responsibilities of the PEC and PED.
At renewal, the PEC has struggled to hold schools to its established standards.	Define the requirements to earn renewal; only grant renewal to schools that meet the standard and are in good standing with their charter.
The PEC's application evaluation rubric sets a bar for approval that is too low and that contains ambiguous language.	Revise the application toolkit and embedded evaluation rubric to establish a clearer and higher bar for approval to ensure only applications that demonstrate a high likelihood of success are approved.

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1 APPLICATION DECISION-MAKING

The PEC's application evaluation rubric sets a bar for approval that is too low and that contains ambiguous language.

- Revise the application toolkit and embedded evaluation rubric to establish a clearer and higher bar for approval. Define the PEC's threshold for approval and ensure only applications that demonstrate a high likelihood of success are approved.

The evaluation rubric uses subjective language.

- Remove ambiguous language and replace such language with concrete descriptors of quality that will improve the consistency of application evaluations and help ensure that only high-quality applications are approved.

Does the authorizer approve applications based on an applicant's demonstrated preparation and capacity to open and operate a quality charter school?

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2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Progress to create a comprehensive monitoring structure is still lacking and the CSD and PEC are experiencing gaps in oversight. This is despite the fact that the PEC has worked to develop tools to evaluate school performance.

- Develop a comprehensive monitoring system—based on the performance framework--that allows the CSD to evaluate school performance; communicate school status; and prepare the PEC for high-stakes decision-making.

Does the authorizer have effective systems for establishing and monitoring school performance expectations and for holding schools accountable as necessary to protect student and public interests?

3 PERFORMANCE-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

The PEC has struggled to hold schools to its established standards due to a lack of authorizing policies and performance thresholds that are necessary to provide a structure for performance-based accountability.

- Prior to the next renewal period define, in policy, the academic requirements to earn renewal.

- Develop a roll-up methodology to effectively assess whether schools meet the performance framework standards or "make substantial progress toward" meeting the standards.

Does the authorizer have effective systems for establishing and monitoring school performance expectations and for holding schools accountable as necessary to protect student and public interests?

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4 AUTONOMY

At times, in practice, the CSD unnecessarily restricts autonomy of schools.

- Define, in policy, what technical assistance the CSD will provide to schools that preserves the PEC's role as authorizer but that meets the CSD's statutory requirements to provide technical assistance.

Do schools have the autonomy to which they are entitled?

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5 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The PEC and PED do not work effectively and efficiently as a unit. The tension between the PEC and PED staff is so high that it undermines both entities' capacity to make good decisions about charter schools.

- Engage in intervention such as mediation to work through immediate issues; develop a long-term plan for resolving chronic dysfunctions that are proving debilitating to effective operation; and clarify authorizing roles, responsibilities, and authority.

The PEC has no authorizing policies that define the roles of each entity and that serve as a foundation for how the PEC makes critical decisions.

- Establish a set of authorizing policies that codify the roles and responsibilities of the PEC and PED.

To what extent do the organizational structure and systems support quality authorizing practices and forward the authorizer's mission?

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NEXT STEPS

SHORT-TERM—Build Trust

- Both PEC and CSD/PED commit to accepting the NACSA evaluation and recommendations.

- If necessary, hire a mediator to work through the difficult communication and governance questions that impact quality authorizing.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of all parties.

LONG-TERM—Build Systems

- Resolve chronic dysfunctions— in practice and policy—that are proving debilitating to effective operations.

- Develop a long-term plan that unifies the PEC, PED, and charter schools behind a shared vision of quality authorizing and that will result in an increased number of high quality spaces for students.

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TODAY'S GOALS

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- Identify and unpack key competencies and priorities for improvement of New Mexico Public Education Commission's authorizing program.

- Prioritize next steps that will unify the PEC, PED, and charter schools behind a shared vision of quality authorizing.

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QUESTIONS & ASSISTANCE

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