

Authorizer Standards Draft

Definition and Terms

Administrative capacity

Financial capacity

Organizational capacity

To include governance and management structures

Standards and Practices for Authorizers of Multi-District Online Schools*

It is recommended that the following standards and practices provide the foundation for the Colorado Department of Education’s evaluation and certification of authorizers of multi-district online schools. It is also recommended that authorizers of multi-district online charter schools first align practice with the previously adopted NACSA standards, followed by these standards specific to multi-district online authorization.

Evaluation & Certification of Authorizers

Standards & Practices

Standards & Practices

Authorizer Commitment and Capacity

- 1) Ensure the district mission is inclusive of multi-district online schools
- 2) Demonstrate sufficient staffing and expertise
- 3) Transparent expenditures
- 4) Demonstrate commitment to ongoing authorizer quality improvement

School Application Process and Authorizer Decision Making

- 1) Ensure transparency
- 2) Establish rigorous performance standards aligned to the state accountability system
- 3) Implement rigorous decision making criteria and practices
- 4) Define a timeline for local application and oversight processes

Performance Contracting (*for charter schools or any school utilizing an educational service provider*)

- 1) Clearly identifies essential and material terms to be included in performance contracts
- 2) Defines performance standards aligned to state accreditation
- 3) Describes practices adopted by the authorizer to ensure alignment with national best practice recommendations for educational service provider contracts.

Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation

- 1) Outcomes-based annual review process.
- 2) Transparent compliance monitoring.
- 3) Transparent timelines

Review and Accountability

For authorizers who directly operate a multi-district online school, these standards refer to decisions or actions the district would take as part of ongoing review and intervention.

Comment [MS1]: Suggested change: “to implement policies and plans included in the application”

For authorizers of charter or contract schools, or authorizers who contract with an educational service or management provider to manage one or more multi-district online schools, these standards guide actions and decisions related to: review, renewal, intervention, and revocation.

- 1) Transparent review procedures.
- 2) Outcomes-based review.
- 3) Consistent and clear report and recommendation making process
- 4) Rigorous decision making procedures

*Based largely on NACSA Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing

System & Process Elements for Authorizers of Multi-District Online Schools

CDE Review and Certification Criteria

It is recommended that the following system and process elements serve as the basis for the Colorado Department of Education’s review and certification of authorizer’s of multi-district online schools.

Evidence according to each standard/area should be utilized as the foundation for evaluation and decision-making regarding authorizer capacity to successfully authorize multi-district online schools.

It is recommended that the Colorado Department of Education collect signed assurances for those standards that speak to a local district’s commitments. Alternatively, for those standards that either identify local policies to be created, or ask an authorizer to describe an approach to quality authorization, CDE shall seek, through written application, information from applying districts about their existing policies, new policies, and plans for implementing these standards.

Evaluation

Standard / Area	Evidence
Authorizer Commitment and Capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ensure the district mission statement is inclusive of multi-district online schools (District or BOCES commitments to be made through assurances to CDE) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assurances that the authorizer <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Will hold schools accountable for their performance ii) Has expertise in implementing and supporting online learning as differentially appropriate for traditional vs charter models. b) Promise of accountability to the public <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) For the proper stewardship of educational resources ii) To commit to offering quality, sustainable education options to students 2) Demonstrate sufficient staffing and expertise <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstration of prior performance (not limited to management of online schools), if available <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) To include local or state measures of success for students participating in existing online programs or schools operated by the district or BOCES.

Standard / Area	Evidence
<p>School Application Process and Authorizer Decision Making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To include local or state performance measures of success for existing charter or contract schools authorized by the district or BOCES b) Description of the responsibilities of the district or BOCES personnel and teachers, and their qualifications c) Describe and provide rationale for staff time (or equivalent) and financial resources devoted to authorization activities d) Demonstration of plan for district or BOCES personnel and teacher professional development 3) Transparent expenditures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expenditures on oversight and support of multi-district online schools should be annually reported 4) Demonstrate commitment to ongoing authorizer quality improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Plan for evaluation of its authorizing practice against state standards for quality multi-district online school authorizing and recognized effective practices and development of improvement plans, as needed.
	<p>Districts and BOCES who are certified as multi-district online school authorizers may decide to directly manage and operate multi-district online schools. Similarly, Districts and BOCES may choose to establish a contract with an educational service or management provider. Separately, districts may also choose to authorize charter schools or contract schools. The following components and criteria for an application process may be used by a district choosing to directly manage and operate schools as components and criteria for plans, rather than for applications to be reviewed. As such, the terms “application/plan” will be used throughout the section. Districts or BOCES planning to play both direct management, and charter, contract or service provider authorization roles should address their processes for both in their application.</p> <p>Description of the application/plan and review process the authorizer will use to make decisions regarding the granting of new multi-district online schools. The following elements should be included in processes for charter or traditional models, with or without ESPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ensure Transparency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explanation of rights and responsibilities of both authorizer and applicant b) Evidence that training and supports for school staff are sufficiently provided. 2) Establish rigorous performance standards aligned to the state accountability system.

Comment [MS2]: OTF members need to provide a list of components and criteria for each: plan and application

Standard / Area	Evidence				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify sources of academic outcomes data that will form the evidence base for decision making (including but not limited to the CDE SPF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Including state-mandated and other standardized assessments, student academic growth measures, internal assessments, qualitative reviews, and performance comparisons with other public schools in the district and state b) Identify sources of financial data that will form the evidence base for decision making, grounded in professional standards for sound financial operations and sustainability c) Define the sources of organizational data that will form the evidence base for decision making, focusing on fulfillment of legal obligations, fiduciary duties, and sound public stewardship 				
<p>Performance Contracting</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Suggested Change</th> <th>OTF Comment(s)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Performance Contracting (if applicable)</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Suggested Change	OTF Comment(s)	Performance Contracting (if applicable)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Implement rigorous decision making criteria and practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evidence of rigorous application evaluation criteria and evidence of transparent and consistent procedures for decision making. b) Evidence that performance outcomes serve as the primary basis for decision making. 4) Define a timeline for local application and oversight processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clearly defined timeline for submission, review, and decision making. b) Clearly defined timeline for oversight procedures 1) Clearly identifies essential and material terms to be included in performance contracts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Description of rights and responsibilities of both parties, including scope of service and deliverables. b) Description of performance standards reliant on objective, verifiable, and state aligned data sources to be included in performance contracts. c) Description of services appropriate for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners. d) Description of processes for successful entry to and exit from the school, including transition to another school, if necessary, for all students e) Description of student and family engagement, and community outreach f) Membership of school (FTE) g) Evidence that training and supports for school staff are sufficiently provided h) Terms of any facility agreement that may be part of the relationship
Suggested Change	OTF Comment(s)				
Performance Contracting (if applicable)					

Comment [HE3]: I think this is where Gretchen's language on spec pops gets plugged in.

Standard / Area	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Disclosure and explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities i) Clear establishment of the primacy of the multi-district online school contract over the third-party contract ii) Clear identification of the multi-district school governing board as the party ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the school, and clearly define the external provider as a vendor of services iii) Prohibition of the third party from selecting, approving, employing, compensating, or serving as school governing board members j) Requirement that all instructional materials, furnishings, and equipment purchased or developed with public funds to be the property of the school, not the third party k) Assurances that the school governing board, at all times, maintains independent fiduciary oversight and authority over the school budget and ultimate responsibility for the school's performance l) Clarifies responsibilities of the governing board and service provider in the event of school closure 2) Defines performance standards aligned to state accreditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Define clear, measurable, and attainable academic, financial, and organizational performance standards and targets that the school will utilize when determining renewal, including but not limited to state and federal measures b) The performance measures, consequences, and mechanisms by which the school governing board will hold the provider accountable for performance, aligned with the performance measures in the charter contract 3) Describes practices adopted by the authorizer to ensure alignment with national best practice recommendations for educational service provider contracting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Documentation of their educational, organizational, and financial performance records based on all existing schools (if applicable) b) Presentation of their growth plan, business plan, and most recent financial audits c) Clear evidence of their capacity to operate new schools successfully while maintaining quality in existing schools (if applicable).

Standard / Area	Evidence
Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Outcomes-based annual review process. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Description of the activities of the review process, including site visits (if any, physical and/or virtual), review of enrollment trends, types of outcomes data used, financial audits, and annual report creation, and how these will be used in decision making b) Description of comprehensive review of performance outcome data that is inclusive of review of both SPF and UIP 2) Transparent compliance monitoring. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Description of compliance monitoring systems and procedures b) Provides clear technical guidance to schools as needed to ensure timely compliance with applicable rules and regulations c) Assurance that monitoring will be minimally invasive and in line with school autonomy. 3) Transparent timelines <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Description of timeline for review (annually, at a minimum) and provision of feedback
Review and Accountability	<p>For authorizers who directly operate a multi-district online school, these standards refer to decisions or actions the district would take as part of ongoing review and intervention.</p> <p>For authorizers of charter or contract schools, or authorizers who contract with an educational service or management provider to manage one or more multi-district online schools, these standards guide actions and decisions related to: review, renewal, intervention, and revocation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Transparent review procedures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) District plan explains procedures for review, as well as, how those procedures will be made transparent and clearly communicated. b) Description of procedures and timelines for review, renewal, intervention and revocation using clearly defined criteria for renewal, and charter revocation processes (if applicable), and provides clear guidance regarding performance concerns, available remedies, and support to be provided by the authorizer 2) Outcomes-based review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) District plan describes a comprehensive body of evidence that includes, at a minimum, the SPF and UIP, to be analyzed in making all intervention and/or renewal decisions. 3) Consistent and clear report and recommendation making

Standard / Area	Evidence
	process a) District plan describes the basic content of comprehensive reports the authorizer will provide to schools in advance of intervention or renewal decision making. 4) Rigorous decision making procedures a) When applicable, the authorizer grants renewals of schools or service contracts only for schools meeting expectations of performance, as defined in district policy or the performance contract.

Further Recommendations

1. Review and certification of all authorizer’s currently overseeing multi-district online schools be completed on or before January 1, 2016.

OTF Comment(s)
“January 1, 2016 provides only six (6) months to do this work.”
“How does this fit with current legislation?”

2. Ongoing reviews of all authorizers of multi-district schools occur every 5 years.

Suggested Change	OTF Comment(s)
Ongoing reviews of all authorizers of multi-district schools occur every 5 years so long as School Performance ratings remain at either “Performance” or “Improvement.” The state reserves the right to modify the frequency of review for an authorizer of one or more multi-district online schools in priority improvement or turnaround status	

3. The CDE is charged with clarifying the effect on a multi-district on-line school if the school's authorizer loses certification, including but not limited to establishing and making known to schools the types of actions and consequences that they may.

Suggested Change	OTF Comment(s)
The CDE is charged with clarifying the effect on a multi-district on-line school if the school's authorizer loses certification, including but not limited to establishing and making known to schools the types of actions and consequences (omit that) they may face.	

- a. Any State Board Decisions to remove authorizing capacity from a district, BOCES or CSI as of July 1 of any year must be made by July 20 of the prior year.

Suggested Addition	OTF Comment(s)
A district's current DPF rating should be considered when weighing the evidence regarding capacity to perform authorizing duties	

DRAFT