



Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Authorizer Annual Report

Enter responses where prompted. Enter an “x” in underlined space before “Yes” or “No” responses. Only provide information for one school in each table row. Add additional rows to tables, as needed.

Authorizer Information

Name of Authorizing Organization: University of St. Thomas

Mailing Address: 1000 LaSalle Avenue, MOH217 Minneapolis, MN 55403

Name and Title of Primary Authorizer Contact: Dana Peterson, Director

Telephone of Primary Authorizer Contact: (651) 962-4415

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Authorizing Mission:

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

Authorizer Summary:

The University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas) Charter Authorizing Program is housed within the University’s School of Education. Since it was founded in 2001, the St. Thomas portfolio has grown to 14 schools. In addition to having a staff dedicated to the Charter Authorizing Program, St. Thomas also utilizes a Charter Accountability Board whose members provide valuable insight and specialized knowledge related to academic, financial, and organizational/governance oversight based on their areas of expertise. This level of expertise goes far beyond what could normally be offered by a smaller authorizing program.

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

Authorizer Processes

New Charter School Applications in FY 2023 (B.1)

Did your organization review any new charter school applications?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

After consideration of our office capacity, program mission, the needs of our current portfolio, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the larger charter landscape we determined that it was in the best interest of the schools we currently serve to refrain from holding a new school application process in SY2023.

If yes, complete the table below for each application.

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

New Charter School Openings in FY 2023 (B.2)

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

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

The University of St. Thomas did not have any new schools opening in SY2023.

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

Name of Charter School Projected to Begin Serving Students in FY 2023	Projected Opening Date	Did this School Open as Planned?	If No, Provide Reason(s) and Revised Projected Opening Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter School Expansion Applications (to add primary enrollment sites or grades, including instructional prekindergarten or preschool programs) in FY 2023 (B.2)

Did your organization review any site and/or grade expansion applications (including instructional prekindergarten or preschool programs)?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

The University of St. Thomas did not have any schools seeking to expand grade-wise or to a new site in SY2023.

If yes, complete the table below for each application.

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

Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Requests in FY 2023 (B.2)

Did your organization review any requests for official early childhood health and developmental screening program recognition?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

The University of St. Thomas did not have any schools seeking to add Early Childhood and Developmental Screening recognition in SY2023.

If yes, complete the table below for each request.

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

Charter School Change in Authorizer Requests in FY 2023 (B.2)

Did your organization review any change in authorizer requests?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

The University of St. Thomas did not receive any Change in Authorizer Requests in SY2023.

If yes, complete the table below for each request.

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

Charter Contract Renewals in FY 2023 (B.9)

Did your organization engage in charter renewal activities in FY 2023?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, please provide an explanation:

N/A

If yes, complete the table below for each school.

Name of Charter School	Was Contract Renewed?	If Yes, Term of Contract Renewal	If No, Reason(s) for Nonrenewal
Academia Cesar Chavez	Yes	2 (+1) Years 7/1/2023 – 6/30/26	N/A

Name of Charter School	Was Contract Renewed?	If Yes, Term of Contract Renewal	If No, Reason(s) for Nonrenewal
Cornerstone Montessori	Yes	5 Years 7/1/23 – 6/30/28	N/A
Community of Peace Academy	Yes	4 Years 7/1/23 – 6/30/28	N/A
Global Academy	Yes	5 Years 7/1/23 – 6/30/28	N/A
HOPE Community Academy	Yes	3(+1) Years 7/1/2023 – 6/30/26	N/A
Twin Cities Academy	Yes	5 Years 7/1/23 – 6/30/28	N/A
Spero Academy	Yes	5 Years 7/1/23 – 6/30/28	N/A

Additional Authorizer Activities

Authorizer Organizational Goals (A.2)

Describe the progress your organization made on its organizational goals related to authorizing in FY 2023.

The University of St. Thomas Authorizing Program has identified three goals and corresponding metrics, which are listed below. Items highlighted in green reflect attainment of the metrics, yellow reflects items approaching attainment and items not highlighted reflect metrics not yet met and/or in which data is not currently available.

- Expand impact by increasing school performance, growing the size of UST's portfolio in alignment with rigorous standards, and promoting the dissemination and replication of best practices.**
 - Increase the number of UST authorized Title I schools recognized for excellence by MDE.
 - 80% of UST authorized schools choose to attend network training and collaboration opportunities.
 - Grow portfolio size from 10 to between 12 and 18.
- Maintain sustainable infrastructure that includes the financial and human resources needed to effectively elicit and maintain quality authorizing, oversight, growth, and strategic support.**
 - Remain in the black yearly
 - Maintain a staff to school ratio of 1:6
 - 80% or greater meeting attendance rate for Charter Accountability Board members
 - Receive a Commendable or higher rating on 2019-20 MAPES and/or receive a Well-Developed rating in at least 8/10 categories from NACSA.
- Increase visibility, collaboration, and contributions to the University and the broader education ecosystem.**

- Increase the number of UST departments interacting with the authorizing program.
- Increase the number of graduates from UST authorized charter schools being accepted to and attending the University.
- Receive and accept at least two invitations to participate in or present at local, state, and national conferences, workshops, committees, and/or task forces.

Authorizer Structure of Operations (A.3)

Describe changes, if any, to your organization's structure of operations related to authorizing in FY 2023 (for example, organizational changes, new positions, updated full-time equivalencies of authorizing positions, etc.).

The University of St. Thomas Authorizing Team structure shifted slightly in SY2023 with the sunseting of a temporary one-year program manager position in November. The director resumed .8 FTE authorizing responsibilities after this transition.

Authorizing Staff Expertise (A.4)

Briefly describe the background and experience, in the areas of charter school academics, finance, operations, and law, of any authorizing staff, committee members, board members, consultants, etc. new to your organization in FY 2023.

Enter SY2023, the University of St. Thomas Charter Accountability Board added three new members:

- Interim Dean Amy Smith. Dean Smith is an Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the University of St. Thomas School of Education with expertise in literacy methods and practice-based teacher preparation.
- Aura Wharton-Beck. Dr. Wharton-Beck is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of St. Thomas School of Education with a background in arts education and deaf and hard of hearing teaching. She has been a teacher and administrator.
- Sarah McCann. Sarah is the Interim Associate Dean of Academics for the Dougherty Family College at the University of St. Thomas. She has a background in journalism and theological studies and a professional interest in writing and editing for public policy organizations.

St. Thomas also expanded our pool of external experts that serve on renewal site visit teams to include the following individuals:

- Erin Doan. Erin is the former Head of School for Oak Hill Montessori. She has classroom teaching and teacher support experience as well.
- Yuepheng Xiong. Yuenpheng is the founder and owner of Hmong ABC, the first Hmong bookstore in Minnesota and the world. Yuenpheng has a deep knowledge of the Hmong community and culture.
- Laura Medwetz. Laura is adjunct faculty at the University of St. Thomas School of Education with a specialty in Special Education.
- Liz Fogarty. Liz is an Assistant Professor of Teacher Education at the University of St. Thomas School of Education.
- Bonnie Ingelin. Bonnis is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of St. Thomas School of Education.
- Doris Ratcliff. Doris is a Spanish interpreter and an educator with Minneapolis Public Schools.

- Rebecca Bullen. Rebecca is the High School Principal for Perpich Center for the Arts and a media artist. Prior to joining the Perpich Center as a teacher and administrator she was a producer for MN Public Television.

Authorizing Leadership and Staff Skill Development (A.5)

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

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

Staff Development

St. Thomas' staff development includes individual and staff-wide learning opportunities. Each year, St. Thomas team members set goals as a part of their review process and identify relevant learning opportunities to forward these goals and support identified growth areas. Individualized professional development opportunities may take the form of skill development courses, workshops or conference attendance, targeted readings, etc. Program staff also strive to stay abreast of the latest in education and charter legislation, research, authorizing best practices and hot button issues by annually attending one or more local, state and/or national conferences, workshops, trainings and/or presentations such as those offered by the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, Minnesota Department of Education, and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Annual Conference. The team regularly incorporates professional development into weekly team meetings and actively participates in Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers' monthly meetings. Examples of learning opportunities pursued by staff in SY2023 include:

- *NACSA Annual Conference*: The Program Director and Interim Program Managers attended a variety of conference sessions, where they had an opportunity to learn from education and authorizing experts and colleagues, network with authorizing staff from across the country and meet with other higher education authorizers.
- *MN Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA)*: St. Thomas remains an active member of MACSA. MACSA includes an Effective Practices Committee that incorporates learning opportunities into monthly board meetings in alignment with the adopted ***Minnesota Authorizing Standards and Practices***. MACSA frequently invites presentations from various departments at MDE, MACS, and other stakeholder groups which provide valuable content. Interacting with our colleagues boosts our knowledge of new and best practices, happenings in the community, and much more.
- *Higher Education Institutions Network*. St. Thomas actively participates in the HEI Network, which brings together authorizers from post-secondary organizations across the country to discuss best practices and challenges unique to this sector of authorizers.
- *St. Thomas School of Education Readings*. The School of Education selects one or more readings relevant to the current education landscape to read and discuss over the course of the school year.

Board Development

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

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

The second component of our CAB development strategy includes embedding trainings on authorizing best practices into monthly meetings a minimum of twice per year. In FY2023 these trainings were focused on best practices for renewing charter schools post pandemic and Cruz Guzman lawsuit.

The third component of our development strategy includes ensuring that CAB members are able to understand, digest, and respond to, current events impacting the charter and authorizing sector. Our monthly meeting agendas include a 'happenings' section where local and national news stories, research, and policy developments are shared and discussed in context. And occasionally outside expertise is sought to allow CAB members a more thorough understanding on topics such as dual language programs, charter school finances etc.

Reflection and evaluation of learning opportunities is also a central part of St. Thomas's development plan. Staff reflect on development opportunities as part of weekly team meetings, typically discussing key takeaways, lessons learned, application to our authorizing work and value. Staff often shares the impact of development opportunities with the CAB as part of their meetings as well. CAB members reflect on their development opportunities as part of the annual self-evaluation that took place in May and June of 2023.

Authorizer Self-Evaluation (A.9)

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

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

- **Board Survey.** Each year, Charter Accountability Board (CAB) members conduct a board self-evaluation. The self-evaluation is intended to gather information on how the board and overall program functions as well as identify focus areas and board recruitment needs for the upcoming year.
- **Staff Evaluations.** Program staff complete a staff evaluation in the spring of each year. The evaluation includes self-reflection as well as supervisor feedback. Goals for the upcoming year are set and areas for growth and professional development identified.
- **Policy, Procedure and Operations Review.** On an annual basis, the authorizing team assesses the capacity, effectiveness, and efficiency of program policies and practices. Areas for improvement as well as gaps are identified. Processes and procedures are revised as needed and new processes and procedures adopted, if needed. In SY2022, the CAB approved the piloting of an updated Site Visit Protocol.
- **Goals Review.** The St. Thomas Authorizing Team compiles data annually on progress towards the program goals. These results are presented to and discussed with the CAB. Areas of strength as well as areas not currently on track and/or areas needing additional focus are identified.

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

1. Identify desired outcome(s);
2. Identify key strategies and products needed to achieve outcome(s);
3. Set target dates for completion and intermediary milestones;
4. Identify the primary person(s) responsible for each strategy;

5. Monitor progress regularly at staff and CAB meetings; and
6. Review final outcome and determine whether issue has been satisfied or the cycle begins again.

Examples of the above process in action in SY2023 include piloting and revising the site visit protocols and supporting templates and an updated timeline for contract renewal.

Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination (A.10)

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

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

- Participating in the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA), including serving on the executive committee and/or other committees (e.g. finance, effective practices, and policy);
- Participating in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), in areas such as serving as a mentor to an emerging leader in the authorizing field through NACSA Leaders Program, participating in NACSA leaders alumni work groups and serving as an external evaluator on NACSA authorizer evaluations teams;
- Participating in the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Network by attending convenings and sharing relevant practices with colleagues from post-secondary authorizing offices across the country;
- Speaking and/or providing training on authorizing at meetings, conferences, and coalition gatherings;
- Providing individual and small group consultation with colleagues and responding to requests for guidance; and
- Providing expertise/authorizer perspective to Great MN Schools, Charter Source, and/or other organizations' initiatives and trainings when opportunities arise.

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

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

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

Specific activities St. Thomas may use to strengthen the 'Charter Network' and facilitate growth opportunities include:

- **Resource on Charter Law and Related Topics.** We are available to answer questions regarding St. Thomas authorizing practices, the charter law (when the answer is clearly defined in law), and related topics. This includes ensuring that schools are aware of changes in Minnesota's Charter Law by providing up-to-date copies of the law (and highlights of items we perceive as major) following legislative sessions.
- **Liaison with MDE.** We are present for our schools when they are working with MDE on a statutory question or other issue and when possible, work to facilitate solutions.

- **Information Hub.** We serve as a ‘hub’ for information. If a charter school leader calls with a question or request for assistance with best practice, we provide referrals to other schools or individuals we believe may be able to help. Additionally, we send out regular email updates to charter school leaders with news from our schools as well as key updates and information on topics of expressed interest and best practices.
- **Other St. Thomas Departments and Colleges.** St. Thomas authorized charter schools may choose to work with other departments and colleges within the University. To protect autonomy, we neither encourage nor prohibit such partnerships. See the discussion of Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest in measure A.7 for additional information on this aspect of our program. When a school calls us with a request for another department/area of St. Thomas, we offer to make the initial connection and attempt to ensure that the school receives a response.
- **Use of Space.** Occasionally schools need off-site space for a meeting, board retreat, or other gathering. When the authorizing program is approached with such a request, we do our best to accommodate the school and do not charge for the space.
- **School Leadership Gatherings.** We offer our school leaders the opportunity to come together at least once per year to share ideas and information. In SY2023, St. Thomas returned to gathering in-person. The gathering was held at Global Academy and included a facility tour following the meeting. Topics included a presentation and discussion of the Cruz Guzman lawsuit, teacher education opportunities at St. Thomas and table topics based on school leader interests.
- **Trainings.** Through surveys and conversations, we may choose to work with school leaders to identify common areas of growth across our network of charter schools and organize training opportunities to meet their needs. Typically, we call upon our school leaders or experts in the field to conduct the trainings. The one area where we frequently provide direct training to schools is authorizer policies/procedures and/or accountability plan metrics.

It is important to note that not all requests for support and/or assistance may be granted based on the availability of human and/or financial resources. It is also important to highlight that participation by St. Thomas-authorized charter schools in support, development and technical assistance is optional and provided at no-cost to schools. There are no negative consequences for schools who decline to participate.

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

Describe how your organization promoted model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charters schools over the past year.

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

1. Require new charter school applications to identify research supporting the educational model, curricula, and instructional methodology (see B1 and St. Thomas Charter School Authorizing Program Manual);
2. Implement a streamlined application process for proven high-quality model replication and/or expansion that reduces the application burden while maintaining rigorous evaluation standards;
3. Encourage existing high-quality schools within St. Thomas’s portfolio to apply for Federal CSP Replication/Significant Expansion grants and the Best Practice Award Competition; and
4. Promote and support the replication of existing high-quality schools within St. Thomas’s portfolio.

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

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

Models and best practices are identified in multiple ways, including but not limited to:

- Data and information gathered during the annual oversight process;
- Inviting schools to self-identify practices within their schools;
- Research by staff and/or Charter Accountability Board members;
- Recommendations by state and local education entities such as the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) and the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA); and
- Recommendations by nationally recognized education entities such as the National Association for Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).

Portfolio Information

General Charter School Portfolio Data (as of June 30, 2023)

Preoperational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio

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

Operational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	CSP Grant Recipient	Grade Levels Served in FY 2022	Location
Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School	4073	No	PK-8	1801 Lacrosse Ave, St Paul, MN 55119
Community of Peace Academy	4015	No	PK-12	471 Magnolia Ave E Saint Paul, MN 55130-3849
Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School	4201	No	K-6	1611 Ames Ave Saint Paul, MN 55106
Face To Face Academy	4036	No	9-12	1165 Arcade St. Saint Paul, MN 55106-2615
Global Academy	4186	No	K-8	4065 Central Ave NE Columbia Heights, MN 55421-2917
HOPE Community Academy	4070	No	K-12	720 Payne Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55130-4127

Hiawatha Academies	4170	No	K-12	1611 E. 46th Street, Minneapolis MN, 55407 (Northrop) 3800 Pleasant Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55409 (Hiawatha College Prep) 4640 17th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407 (Northrop Middle) 3500 E. 28th St., Minneapolis, MN 55406 (HCHS)
Metro Deaf School	4005	No	PK-12	1471 Brewster St Saint Paul, MN 55108-2612
Northwest Passage High School		No	9-12	11345 Robinson Drive, Coon Rapids, MN 55433
PIM Arts High School	4110	No	9-12	7255 Flying Cloud Drive Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Spero Academy	4113	No	K-6	2701 California St. NE Minneapolis, MN 554187 7444 N Humboldt Ave Brooklyn Park, MN 55444
St Paul Conservatory Performing Art	4112	No	9-12	16 W 5th Street Saint Paul, MN 55102-1403
Twin Cities Academy	4132	No	6-12	690 Birmingham Saint Paul, MN 55106-5199
Twin Cities German Immersion Charter School	4152	No	K-8	1031 Como Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55103-1021

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

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

Charter School Portfolio Activity in FY 2023

Did any charter schools leave your organization's portfolio and transfer to another authorizer during or at the end of the year?

☐ Yes

☒ No

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

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

Did your organization terminate or revoke the charter contract for any charter school before the end of the contract term?

☐ Yes

☒ No

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

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

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

☐ Yes

☒ No

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

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

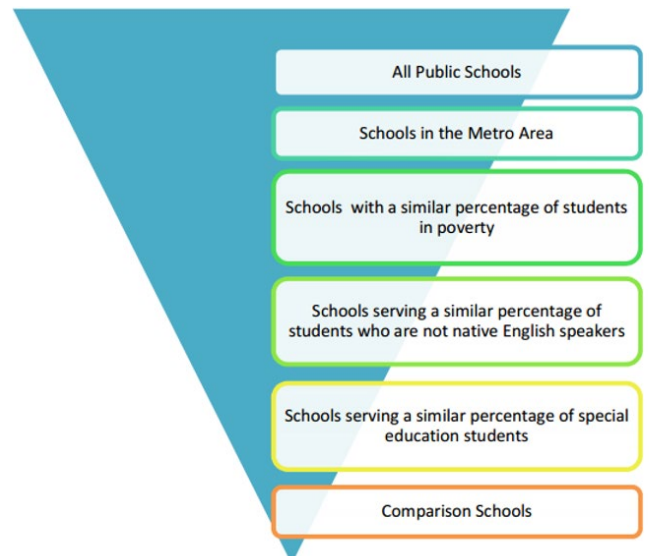
Charter School Portfolio Performance

Academic Performance

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

In order to evaluate the learning program, St. Thomas uses a performance framework which examine the following categories of information: school-specific goals, goals aligned with Minnesota Department of Education systems, proficiency and growth on standardized tests, graduation rates, post-secondary readiness, and whether the school is meeting its stated mission. In SY2021, St. Thomas convened a task force comprised of directors from the St. Thomas network schools to review and refresh the framework (previously updated in SY2018) with an equity lens. School renewing in SY2021 began using this framework in SY2022. The framework was updated slightly in SY2023 based on learnings from the initial implementation.

The intent of the Academic Performance section is to provide a multi-faceted understanding of student performance at the charter school. Many of the measures are aligned to the state's World's Best Workforce Priorities. The measures used to understand academic performance include:



- Preschool/Prekindergarten readiness
- Students reading well by 3rd grade
- Performance on the North Star Excellence and Equity System: MN's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan;
- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Data: All authorized schools shall participate fully in the MCAs;
- At least one additional school-selected standardized assessment which must be approved by the authorizer in advance of the evaluation rubric's finalization and be utilized for a minimum of three years before a change in assessment can be requested;
- At least one mission-specific academic goal;
- Program alignment with chartered mission and vision;
- Graduation rate data; and
- College and career readiness data.

As charter schools are expected to improve student performance, several academic goals involve the use of demographically similar comparison schools. Schools are given the choice to use an MDE-generated 'virtual comparison school' or a filtering process (depicted at right, above). The filtering process begins with a list of public schools in the metro area available through the Minnesota Department of Education. The goal of the filtering process described above is to generate 3-5 schools serving a similar population with which the authorized school can be compared. It is important to note that at times, the process above will produce too many or too few matches. In that case, the parameters of items b, c, and d above may be adjusted to find an adequate number of the best possible matches. Due to shifting demographics in schools, matches may vary from year to year.

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

We believe our broad and comprehensive accountability measures provide additional insight into schools' strengths and challenges—particularly when the school population is significantly different from the state's population. Overall academic results in SY2023 showed improvement over SY2022 as schools continue to recover student learning coming out of the pandemic. Data summarizing St. Thomas charter schools' performance on the MCA/MTAS can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website [MDE Report Card](#). Moving forward, St. Thomas will continue to push those schools experiencing weak academic results to improve, learn from successful charter and district schools, and take whatever steps are necessary to ameliorate student learning. Ultimately, we believe in the charter promise of accountability for results, meaning charter schools must demonstrate their ability to provide a safe, effective program in order to continue their operations.

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

As highlighted above, St. Thomas updated the performance framework in FY2023, FY2021 and FY2018. At renewal, schools shift to the updated framework. FY2023 includes three schools that were evaluated under the framework updated in SY2021 (Face-to-Face Academy, Hiawatha Academies and St. Paul Academy for

Performing Artists), seven schools under the SY2018 framework and three schools under the previous framework (Metro Deaf School, PiM Arts High School and Twin Cities German Immersion School). Keep in mind that contracts are negotiated with each individual school using template goals as a starting point. Thus there may be variation in the wording and scoring of rubric indicators.

Note: For the purpose of this report, approaching standards reflects a score of 1.6 – 2.5, meets standard 2.6 – 3.5, and exceeds standards is above a 3.5.

St. Thomas Academic Performance Measure (SY2021)

Does Not Meet Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
1.1	3 rd Grade MCA reading proficiency: Are students who have been served by the school for two or more years proficient in reading?		
1.2	MCA Proficiency: Are students performing as well as or better than the state, the resident district and the virtual comparison school/comparison schools on MCA math and reading exams?		
1.3	MCA Proficiency, State Demographic Comparison by Race/Ethnicity and FRL: Are student demographic groups (with tested cell sizes greater than 10) performing as well as or better than the statewide average for that student group?		
1.4	MCA Progress: Are students maintaining or moving towards proficiency?		
1.5	MCA Progress (Comparison Groups): Are students making progress at the same or better rate as the state, resident district, and comparable district schools?		
1.6	Are students performing at or above target levels, as measured using the school’s selected standardized assessments?		
1.7	Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using the school’s selected standardized assessments?		
1.8	Is the school meeting state and authorizer-established targets for graduation rate?		
1.9	Does students’ performance on post-secondary readiness assessments (i.e.: ACT, SAT, Accuplacer) reflect college and career readiness?		
1.10	Are students learning English (English Learners/EL students) performing at or above the state average for English Learners as measured by MCA proficiency?		
1.11	Are students receiving special education services performing at or above the state average for students receiving special education services as measured by MCA proficiency?		
1.12	Does the school’s learning program exemplify the mission and vision of the school?		
1.13	Maximizing instructional time: Are students missing instructional time due to disciplinary incidents?		
1.14	Is the school meeting its school-specific academic goal(s)?		
1.15	Are students equitably accessing rigorous coursework (AP, IB, CIS, PSEO, Honors) at high rates?		
*Only possible scores are “Does Not Meet Standard,” “Approaching Standard,” and “Meets Standard”			

	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	1.11	1.12	1.13	1.14	1.15	Overall
Face to Face Academy	NA				NA	NA		NA		NA	NA			NA	NA	
Hiawatha Academies					NA											
Northwest Passage High School	NA		NA	NA	NA					NA			NA			
PiM Arts High School	NA			NA	NA					NA	NA					
St. Paul Conservatory of Performing Arts	NA		NA	NA	NA					NA	NA		NA			
Twin Cities German Immersion School				NA	NA			NA	NA	NA					NA	

St. Thomas Academic Performance Measure (SY2018)

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

Note: For the purpose of this report, approaching standards reflects a score of 1.6 – 2.5, meets standard 2.6 – 3.5, and exceeds standards is above a 3.5.

	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	1.11	1.12	1.13	Overall
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Academia Cesar Chavez				NA	NA			NA	NA					
Community of Peace				NA	NA									
Cornerstone				NA	NA			NA	NA		NA			
Global Academy				NA	NA									
HOPE Community Academy				NA	NA									
Spero Academy				NA	NA		NA	NA			NA	NA		
Twin Cities Academy				NA	NA					NA				

St. Thomas Academic Performance Measures (Previous Version)

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

Note: For the purpose of this report, approaching standards reflects a score of 1.6 – 2.5, meets standard 2.6 – 3.5, and exceeds standards is above a 3.5.

	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	1.11	1.12	1.13	1.14	Overall
Metro Deaf School				NA		NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	

Operational Performance

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

In order to evaluate the organizational health of schools, the performance framework template utilized by St. Thomas includes 18 or more indicators which encompass a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures such as board adoption of best practices, quality of the school facility, and the presence of critical policies and procedures. A successful charter school requires a board and leadership team with competency in a variety of governance, operational, and compliance-related areas. The Organizational Effectiveness indicator seeks to capture a school's performance through a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures. The intent of the Organizational Effectiveness section is to ensure that schools are following all St. Thomas, MDE, and statutory compliance requirements, providing academic programs that meet state and federal requirements, properly governing schools, and utilizing certain accepted best practices all in service of providing students with a safe, stable, and effective school.

Overall, operational performance is strong across St. Thomas authorized charter schools as demonstrated in the summary chart below. Governance is a prime example of success in our portfolio. Board members from St. Thomas authorized schools exhibit an understanding of the role of the board, which can be attributed to the fact that almost all our boards engage in professional development above what is required by statute. The boards of the school's in our portfolio also routinely engage in strategic planning and make efforts to engage the entire school community and conduct annual self-evaluations. Parent satisfaction and student retention are two other indicators of schools' operational performance – both areas where the majority of St. Thomas authorized schools meet or exceed expectations. Three St. Thomas authorized schools struggled in various operational areas in SY2023, two of which are on intervention. Two of these schools made promising strides to remedy the identified issues.

St. Thomas Operational Performance Measures (updated FY2021)

Does Not Meet Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
3.1	Do all board members meet the statutory requirements for initial and ongoing training on board roles and responsibilities, governance, finance and employment practices?*		
3.2	Does the board understand and comply with the Open Meeting Law and maintain orderly records including its bylaws, policies, board/committee minutes, and board packets?*		
3.3	Are all the school's educational staff appropriately licensed? *		
3.4	Does the school complete criminal background checks in accordance with MN Statute and St. Thomas expectations?*		
3.5	The school compliant with other applicable law.**		
3.6	Do all board members exhibit understanding of the role of the board and utilize nonprofit governance best practices*		
3.7	Does the board regularly review, update, and approve its bylaws and policies such that they maintain compliance with state law and current best practices?*		
3.8	Board submits a complete board packet to UST at least three days prior to all board meetings.*		
3.9	The school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English language learners.*		
3.10	The school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with individual education plans (IEPs). *		
3.11	The school has a high attendance rate.		
3.12	The school is able to maintain a high percentage of teacher retention.		
3.13	The school generally retain its students from October 1 st through the close of the school year.*		

3.14	The school exhibits a high level of parent satisfaction.
3.15	The school's physical plant is safe and conducive to learning.
3.16	The school has systems in place for reducing the number of subjective disciplinary incidents. OR The school's disciplinary practices eliminate disparities as the relate to students of color.
3.17	The school has appropriate structures in place to effectively identify and support students needing academic accommodations (either acceleration or remediation), mental health supports or other supports in a timely fashion.
3.18	The school is committed to culturally affirming practices and equity.
3.19	The school is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that is open to all students.
*Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard," "Approaching Standard," and "Meets Standard"	
**Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard" and "Meets Standard"	

Note: For the purpose of this report, approaching standards reflects a score of 1.6 – 2.5, meets standard 2.6 – 3.5, and exceeds standards is above a 3.5

	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.10	3.11	3.12	3.13
Face to Face Academy											NA		
Hiawatha Academies													
Northwest Passage High School									NA				
PiM Arts High School													
St. Paul Conservatory of Preforming Arts													
Twin Cities German Immersion School													

	3.14	3.15	3.16	3.17	3.18	3.19	Overall
Face to Face Academy			NA				
Hiawatha Academies			NA				
Northwest Passage High School			NA			NA	
PiM Arts High School							
St. Paul Conservatory of Preforming Arts			NA				
Twin Cities German Immersion School			NA	NA		NA	

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

	3.13	3.14	3.15	3.16	3.17	3.18	Overall
Academia Cesar Chavez							
Community of Peace							
Cornerstone Elementary							
Global Academy							
HOPE Community Academy							
Spero Academy							

Metro Deaf School							
Twin Cities Academy	NA	NA	NA				

Financial Performance

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

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

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

St. Thomas Financial Performance Measures (updated FY2021)

Does Not Meet Standard	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
2.1	The school has an active finance committee that meets regularly.		
2.2	The board has a fund balance policy that includes fund balance goals over time.		
2.3	The school has a clean audit with no major findings.		
2.4	The school establishes and maintains a balanced budget.		
2.5	The school's target ADM (as established by initial board-approved budget) matches its actual ADM		
2.6	The school has sufficient cash on hand to meet its near-term obligations		
2.7	The school has a sufficient fund balance (for schools in operation for at least 4 years).		
2.8	The school is meeting bond covenants (if applicable).		
*Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard," "Approaching Standard," and "Meets Standard"			
**Only possible scores are "Does Not Meet Standard" and "Meets Standard"			

	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	Overall
Face to Face Academy								NA	
Hiawatha Academies									
Northwest Passage High School								NA	
PiM Arts High School									
St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Arts									
Twin Cities German Immersion School									

Academia Cesar Chavez									
Community of Peace									
Cornerstone Elementary									
Global Academy									
HOPE Community Academy									
Spero Academy									
Metro Deaf School									
Twin Cities Academy									

Other Performance (if applicable)

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

As noted under academic performance above, a number of St. Thomas authorized charter schools have received recognition for their performance over the last few years. Community of Peace, Face to Face Academy, Twin Cities Academy and Twin Cities German Immersion School have all been designated as high-quality charter schools. Additionally, F2F has won the innovation award in SY2020 and a number of the schools in our portfolio have earned the MDE Finance award.

In SY2023, three St. Thomas authorized schools were on intervention. Academia Cesar Chavez (ACC) has been on intervention since June 2015 based on “concerns regarding the academic success of ACC students. The level of intervention escalated in SY19 and again in SY22, at which point the school was required to submit a plan to address the concern areas. In SY23, ACC made strides to implemented the improvement plan as their intervention status was dropped on level. Progress continues to be closely monitored. In January 2020, Hiawatha Academies was placed on Level 1 Intervention: Notice of concern, based on elementary and middle school academic performance falling below expectations. Academic performance at the above schools is being closely monitored and intervention status will remain in place until a trend of improved student performance has been established. In March 23, HOPE Community Academy was placed on Level 2 Intervention based on academic, operational and financial concerns. A plan to address the areas of concern is in progress and being is being monitored closely.