



MINNESOTA

Volunteers of America-Minnesota Application for Authorization, Change in Authorizer

A charter school currently in operation in Minnesota under *Minnesota Statutes*, 2009, 124D.10 may apply to Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) for a change in authorizer under the following parameters.

A charter school board may submit a Letter of Intent to VOA-MN for a change in authorizer. Upon approval of the Letter of Intent, VOA-MN may ask the board to submit a full application; VOA-MN will review applications on a rolling basis.¹ VOA-MN will only review full applications from schools whose Letter of Intent has already been approved. Once the full application is approved, VOA-MN will submit a supplemental affidavit to the Minnesota Department of Education with the intent to authorize the charter school, per *Minnesota Statutes*, 2009, 124D.10, subd. 23(c). At any point in the process, VOA-MN may move to deny authorization of a charter school and may not provide a reason for denial.

Minnesota Statutes, 2009, 124D.10, subd. 23(c)

“(c) If the sponsor and the charter school board of directors mutually agree to terminate or not renew the contract, a change in sponsors is allowed if the commissioner approves the transfer to a different eligible authorizer to authorize the charter school. Both parties must jointly submit their intent in writing to the commissioner to mutually terminate the contract. The sponsor that is a party to the existing contract at least must inform the approved different eligible sponsor about the fiscal and operational status and student performance of the school. Before the commissioner determines whether to approve a transfer of authorizer, the commissioner first must determine whether the charter school and prospective new authorizer can identify and effectively resolve those circumstances causing the previous authorizer and the charter school to mutually agree to terminate the contract. If no transfer of sponsor is approved, the school must be dissolved according to applicable law and the terms of the contract.”

Letter of Intent to Change Authorization

VOA-MN is committed to authorizing high quality charter schools with proven results. We will only consider a change in authorizer application from charter schools that are able to adequately illustrate strong academic standing and fiscal responsibility. If a charter school board is not able meet any of the three requirements listed below then the board must make a compelling case in the Letter of Intent for why VOA-MN should consider an application for a change in authorizer.

¹ Applications should be submitted with ample time for VOA-MN to review the application, schedule a site visit, and if accepted, submit an affidavit to MDE for a Change in Authorizer. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received.

The charter school board must submit a letter to VOA-MN stating the reason for the request to submit an application for a change in authorizer. This letter should state how the school's mission aligns with VOA-MN's five hallmarks of authorizing and why the school believes VOA-MN would be an appropriate authorizer for the school. In its Letter of Intent the charter school board must verify that:

- The school has a fund balance of at least 12 percent in the last audited fiscal year as illustrated in its most recent financial audit. If the school's fund balance is below 12 percent please provide a description of the extenuating circumstances that have led to the current balance and the school's plan for improvement.
- The school has made AYP for the last two years in all subgroups and schoolwide as illustrated in the school's MDE report card. If the school has not made AYP in the last two years please provide a description of the extenuating circumstances that have contributed to the school's difficulty in making AYP.
- The school is making adequate academic growth as illustrated by standardized test results (e.g. MCA II, NWEA MAP tests, Stanford 10, etc.). Explain how the school has established schoolwide goals to meet expectations of growth in math and reading as well as the school's results over the term of the contract.
- The school has a history of compliance with all applicable laws and its current charter.

Additionally, applicants must provide the following attachments to the Letter of Intent:

- Mutual Agreement to terminate or not renew a contract. The outgoing authorizer and the active charter school board must both submit statements to VOA-MN with their intent to terminate or not renew the charter school contract. This could be a joint letter or two separate letters from both entities but must be signed and dated by the responsible parties.
- Evaluation of Existing Performance prepared by the outgoing authorizer. Per the Charter School Law (124D.10) the outgoing authorizer must inform VOA-MN "about the fiscal and operational status and student performance of the school."
- Most recent year's completed financial audit.

VOA-MN will review the Letter of Intent and may choose to visit the school prior to determining whether to invite the board to submit a full application. If VOA-MN invites the board to submit a full application, the board must follow the process outlined below.

Change in Authorizer Application

If invited to apply, the Change in Authorizer Application should be no longer than 5 pages and address the following areas: academic program, financial management and oversight, and governance and organizational viability. See Appendix A: Change in Authorizer Application.

The report should discuss the progress the school has made, existing and future challenges, and how it has responded directly to any concerns/challenges that it has faced over the term of the contract with its outgoing authorizer. For example, if a school has had major financial problems, it might devote more space to discussing how the issue has been addressed and/or resolved. If the outgoing authorizer states any concerns about the performance of the charter school or board in documentation to VOA-MN, we will require the board to respond to those concerns.

Site Visit

VOA-MN will conduct a site visit to the school prior to a decision on the application. This site visit may be completed during the review of the Letter of Intent or full application. The purpose of a site visit is to observe the learning program and meet with key stakeholders like board members, teachers, parents, school leadership, and business office staff. VOA-MN will follow its formal site visit protocol when conducting this visit.

VOA will use information provided in the Letter of Intent, Change In Authorizer Application and related attachments, and site visit to perform an evaluation using the VOA Annual School Evaluation Rubric.

APPENDIX A



Volunteers of America-Minnesota Change in Authorizer Application, Rolling Deadline

The following application should be completed and submitted to VOA-MN at least 15 business days before a change in authorizer affidavit is due to the Minnesota Department of Education (determined based on the school's contract end-date and notice of nonrenewal deadlines outlined in law for the outgoing authorizer). The maximum length of the application is 5 pages, excluding the following required documentation.

DOCUMENTATION

Please provide the following information as part of your application for a change in authorizer.

- Three most recent annual reports
- Three most recent financial audits
- Board minutes from the last 12 months
- Current year budget and year-to-date actuals
- Board approved strategic plan, if applicable. (Please note if the board does not have a strategic plan in place.)
- Board's director evaluation policy and process
- Completed Academic Progress spreadsheet

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please provide a brief narrative highlighting the school's accomplishments over the previous contract period with the outgoing authorizer and a rationale for why VOA-MN should agree to authorize the charter school. Provide a brief description of the school's mission and vision and how this aligns with VOA-MN's hallmarks for authorizing.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Education Program

Describe the guiding educational philosophy of your school. Provide an overview of the curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy.

Cite and explain research evidence demonstrating these curricula, tools, techniques and methods support student achievement.

Financial Oversight

Describe how the school board appropriately oversees the school's financials. What financial training have new and existing board members received? How is the board structured to ensure that a significant body of people have strong working knowledge of the school's financials (e.g. describe the board's committee structure and treasurer's involvement in oversight).

Governance

Describe the school's governance model (i.e. how is membership defined, board composition, etc.). How does the chosen governance model support quality oversight of the school? List the school's current board members and provide an explanation of the expertise each member brings to the board.

Operations

Describe the school's leadership structure and team. How does this support both the learning program and effective operations of the school? How does the leadership structure exemplify the mission and vision of the school?

Discuss the school's physical plant and comment on the changes made over the course of the contract to improve the physical learning environment. What major/minor changes have been made to support student learning and what challenges does the school continue to face?

Compliance

Describe the processes the school and board use to ensure the school is compliant with all applicable laws. For instance, how does the board ensure that all teachers have the credentials necessary to teach in the positions they have been assigned? The application must show that the school has a history of compliance with both state and federal laws.

EVIDENCE OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Please complete the spreadsheet below on the school's academic progress in the most recent school year. If the school does not conduct NWEA MAP testing, please provide comparable standardized test results that illustrate growth.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS SPREADSHEET

SCHOOL NAME, SCHOOL YEAR

[School name] Comparison Schools Demographics						
	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
Free/Reduced Lunch	%					
Minority	%					
Special Ed.	%					
Limited Eng. Prof.	%					
Grades Served	#					
Enrollment	#					
Title 1 in current yr?	Yes/No					
The MCA II Test is administered to students in grades 3-8, 10 (reading only) and 11 (math only).						
"Comparison school" includes schools in the same economic development region that were within five percentage points of the [school]'s "Free and Reduced Lunch" and "Minority" percentages in current year.						
Comparable schools, resident district, and statewide demographics represent only those grades that are served by [school].						

Adequate Yearly Progress, [School Year]						
	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
Math Proficiency	Yes/No					
Reading Proficiency	Yes/No					
Attendance	Yes/No					
Schoolwide AYP	Yes/No					
# Groups Not Making AYP	#					
NCLB Stage	#					

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MCA II Math, [School Year]							
	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Avg of Comparison Schools</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
Grade X							
Grade Y							
Grade Z							
Overall							
Overall percentages are calculated using only grades relevant to [school].							

Percent Meeting or Exceeding on MCA II Reading [School Year]							
	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Avg of Comparison Schools</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
Grade X							
Grade Y							
Grade Z							
Overall							
Overall percentages are calculated using only grades relevant to [school].							

Percent Growth on MCA II Math, [School Year] to [School Year]

	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Avg of Comparison Schools</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
%Not Prof, High Growth	%						
%Not Prof, Med. Growth	%						
%Not Prof, Low Growth	%						
%Prof, High Growth	%						
%Prof, Med. Growth	%						
%Prof, Low Growth	%						
% NPH, PH, PM	%						
% High Growth	%						
% Low Growth	%						
TOTAL*	%						

*May not add to 100% due to independent rounding.

Percent Growth on MCA II Reading, [School Year] to [School Year]

	<u>School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Comparison School</u>	<u>Avg of Comparison Schools</u>	<u>Resident District</u>	<u>Statewide</u>
%Not Prof, High Growth	%						
%Not Prof, Med. Growth	%						
%Not Prof, Low Growth	%						
%Prof, High Growth	%						
%Prof, Med. Growth	%						
%Prof, Low Growth	%						
% NPH, PH, PM	%						
% High Growth	%						
% Low Growth	%						
TOTAL*	%						

*May not add to 100% due to independent rounding.

NWEA Math Academic Goals, [School, School Year]

	<u>Percent At/Above National Median (Spring Only)</u>	<u>Percent Meeting RIT Growth Goal (Fall to Spring)</u>
Grade X		
Grade Y		
Grade Z		
Overall		

NWEA Reading Academic Goals, [School, School Year]

	<u>Percent At/Above National Median (Spring Only)</u>	<u>Percent Meeting RIT Growth Goal (Fall to Spring)</u>
Grade X		
Grade Y		
Grade Z		
Overall		

