Evaluation Priorities for Charter Networks Authorized by SCSC

CHARTER NETWORK
- A charter network is defined as a single organization or governing board which oversees the operation of multiple charter schools.

ACHIEVEMENT TRACK RECORDS
- Development of a charter network is contingent on a proven track record of performance. **Specifically, prior to the development of a charter network, the school or schools upon which the network will be based must meet academic, financial, and operational standards under the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework for no less than one full year.**

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
- Operational models promoting financial sustainability are critical for charter school success. Charter networks must demonstrate a track record of financial viability and independence as measured by the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework.
- Additionally, financially viable charter networks do not rely on management organizations or other partners, including other schools within the proposed charter network, to cover budget shortfalls or provide loans, and they are able to feasibly extract themselves from any management contracts without threat of bankruptcy or closure.

GEOGRAPHY
- A single board can only effectively govern multiple schools when the schools operate in relatively close proximity and within a defined geographic area.
- Effective charter networks must focus on regional clusters in specific cities or contiguous counties that offer services and supports for similar communities of students.

GOVERNANCE
- While some school-level autonomy will inevitably be sacrificed in a charter network structure, each school within a charter network should have primary control over day-to-day operations and should play an important role in providing recommendations and feedback to the over-arching governing board.
- To ensure accountability remains at the school-level, a governing board should hold separate contracts with the authorizer for each school within a charter network.
- Governing boards must be well-situated to carry-out their respective fiduciary duties for each school and avoid conflicts of interest.

PEOPLE
- A charter network must demonstrate that it has the human capital required to successfully manage multiple schools.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Prior to opening a new school within a charter network, there must be evidence of need as demonstrated by the local community that the school hopes to serve.

SUCCESSION PLANNING
- Leadership pipelines and succession planning must be incorporated into charter network strategic plans.

MOTIVES
- There should be a clear, rational, and defensible reason for the development of a network.