

Evaluation Priorities for Charter Networks Authorized by SCSC

REPLICATION

- Replication means opening a new charter school based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school.

EXPANSION

- Expansion means significantly increasing student enrollment, adding one or more grades, or adding an additional campus to an existing high-quality charter school.

ACHIEVEMENT TRACK RECORDS

- Replication or expansion of a charter school or charter network is contingent on a proven track record of performance. **Specifically, the school must meet academic, financial, and operational standards under the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework before the SCSC will consider the school eligible for expansion or replication.**

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Operational models promoting financial sustainability are critical for charter school success. Schools or networks hoping to replicate or expand must demonstrate a track record of financial viability and independence as measured by the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework.
- Additionally, financially viable schools do not rely on management organizations or other partners 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.
- Any evaluation of proposed replication and expansion will also include a review of a school or network's previous fundraising efforts.
- Applicants must be prepared to submit unqualified audit reports devoid of significant findings, material weaknesses, and going concern disclosure for the last three fiscal years.

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 school 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 network structure, each school within a 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 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 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 network strategic plans.

MOTIVES

- There should be a clear, rational, and defensible reason for expansion and networking.