

Evaluation Priorities for Charter Networks Authorized by SCSC

ACHIEVEMENT TRACK RECORDS

- Replication or expansion of a charter school or charter network is contingent on a proven track record of performance. Student achievement results at existing schools will be taken into account when replication/expansion proposals are presented.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Operational models promoting financial sustainability are critical for charter school success. Schools or networks hoping to replicate/expand must demonstrate a track record of financial viability and independence.
- Financially viable schools operate in a fiscally responsible manner, and they do not operate at a deficit. Additionally, financially viable schools do not rely on management organizations 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.

GEOGRAPHY

- A single board can most effectively govern multiple schools when the schools operate in relatively close proximity and within a defined geographic area.
- Effective charter school networks 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.

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.