Strategic Vision and Plan
For Authorizing, Monitoring, and Supporting Public Charter Schools

Table of Contents

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES 3
CHARTERING AND AUTHORIZING IN UTAH 4
QUALITY AUTHORIZING 9
STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN 12
Charter Performance ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Relationships with Stakeholders ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Support for Charter Schools ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
SCSB Function and Resources ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
SCSB Governance ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES 13
AUTHORIZER-SPECIFIC UTAH CODE AND BOARD RULE 23
PORTFOLIO 25
ADOPTED POLICIES 27
APPROVAL PROCESS 28
OVERSIGHT MODEL 29

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Mission
Advancing quality choice, innovation, and student success through rigorous authorizing and supportive oversight.

Vision
Every student has access to an excellent education that meets their unique learning needs.

Values
The state charter school board embraces the following values and expects the schools it authorizes **to** share in these values.

Excellence
We continue to be the best charter authorizer in the state and a model to authorizers across the country. We do not settle for average, and we celebrate high achievement. We learn and grow from mistakes and adjust when necessary. What we do, we do well.

Trust
We are accountable to the people of Utah to authorize and oversee good schools. Great trust is placed in us to hold schools accountable. At times this means making hard decisions, which cannot be passed to any other entity. For our authorized schools, “the buck stops here.”

Impact
The work of an authorizer is far more than bureaucratic regulation. We oversee compliance and performance in order to provide guardrails for authorized schools and pathways to success.

Authenticity
We stay true to our mission and vision regardless of pressures to act otherwise. We are transparent and honest to our stakeholders. We do what we say we are going to do and be what we commit to be.

Compassion
We show kindness and respect while holding schools accountable. Compassion does not change the actions we take but the way we take those actions.

CHARTERING AND AUTHORIZING IN UTAH

The Utah Legislature passed Utah's first charter school law in 1998 to create schools that provided parents and students with alternatives to traditional public schools. Debates leading up to the passage of this first charter school law envisioned schools given increased autonomy for increased accountability, where individual schools were "free to make any or all changes to traditional school policy and practice that might enhance students' performance."[1]

Utah's initial charter school legislation instructed the Utah State Board of Education ("USBE") to authorize charter schools for a three-year period as a pilot program, established an eight-school limit, and granted no automatic waivers to authorized charter schools. Waivers were requested, considered, and granted at the discretion of the USBE, the state's only charter school authorizer at the time. As a result of these limitations, the Center for Education Reform judged Utah's charter law as weak.[2]

Even in this early stage of authorizing, Utah's charter law allowed for charter schools administered by their local boards of directors as legally independent entities that were accountable to the USBE and other entities for compliance with federal laws related to civil rights, health, safety, and special education as well as applicable state laws. Utah's law also established charter schools as public schools (no tuition), responsible to Utah's public school accountability measures, and supported by public funding.

By 2000, the USBE had authorized the eight charter schools allowed by law. Pro-charter lobbyists and parents pushed for an increased to the cap, and by 2001, legislation passed that allowed for the authorization of four additional schools. In the next few years, the legislature allowed for the authorization of additional schools in a stepped growth plan and in response to pressure from parent groups. In these initial years of charter authorization in Utah, the USBE authorized the first 28 charter schools.

As the legislature approved a removal of a cap on the number of charter schools that could be authorized in the state, it recognized the need to establish an independent authorizing entity in 2004, the Utah State Charter School Board ("SCSB"). This need was, in part, a response to requests from the USBE which was now authorizing nearly 30 additional charter schools, each a Local Education Agency ("LEA"). The Utah State Charter School Board was directed to advocate for charter schools in Utah, hold charter schools accountable for compliance and performance, and promote innovation in the public-school sector.

Members of the SCSB were appointed by the Governor based on a balance of skills thought to support good authorizing and oversight. Charter School stakeholders debated whether the SCSB should be focused on advocacy or accountability, or even innovation. Eventually, a balance of responsibilities was thought to be reached by ensuring that at least two members of the SCSB had significant expertise in charter school development or administration.[3]

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[1] Marlies Burns, "A history of the development of charter school legislation in Utah" (2012), 107. All Graduate Theses and Dissertations. 1293. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/1293. For reference, this dissertation gives a full overview of the history of the inception of charter school law and charter school authorization in Utah.
[2] Marlies Burns, "A history," 107 ff.
[3] Marlies Burns, "A History," 111-113.

Since the creation of the SCSB and its beginning of operations in 2005, the Utah Legislature has eliminated the caps on the number of charter schools that can be authorized annually in Utah. The Legislature has also established additional authorizers beyond the SCSB based on an authorizer's ability to follow processes outlined and approved by the USBE. In an effort to provide additional resources for charter schools, the Legislature has provided charter school start-up monies, opportunities for bonding for acquisition of facilities, funds to increase SCSB staff members who support and monitor their authorized charter schools. These expanded legislative resources have intended to provide training to charter schools, their boards, and their staff members regardless of whether the SCSB or other authorizing entities have authorized specific charter schools in the state.

Over the intervening years, the Legislature has also provided the SCSB with authorities and powers beyond those enumerated in the initial charter school law with the intention of improving the SCSB's ability, and the ability of all charter school authorizers, to support and monitor their authorized charter schools. Some of these authorities include, but are not limited to, the ability to replace board members or administrators of specific charter schools, transfer a school's charter from a struggling to a successful charter school, or request records from entities providing services to charter schools.

With support from the Legislature for the expansion of charter schools and for quality authorizing, the charter school movement has flourished in Utah. In 2010, there were 71 charter schools in operation. By fall of 2022, that number has doubled to 140 charter schools in operation (127 of which are authorized by the SCSB). There were 77,786 students enrolled in a charter school for the 2021-2022 school year, which was 11.5% of all public-school students. Typically, charter schools serve a higher rate of traditionally underserved student populations. The 2021-2022 school year was no exception for students who are economically disadvantaged (25.9%), students with disabilities (14.2%), and students who are ethnic or racial minorities (33.2%). For the latest charter school data, see the SCSB Annual Report at https://www.utahscsb.org/annual-reports.

As the SCSB considers its strategic planning, it should note that it is currently ranked 21st in strength of charter school law according to a report from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. The SCSB may also want to consider the components of best charter school law according to this national organization as it seeks to influence improvements in Utah's charter school law:

Component	Description	Rating	Weight	Total	Notes
No Caps	The state has a cap with room for ample growth.	3	3	9	
Variety of Charter Schools Allowed	The state allows new start-ups and public-school conversions.	4	2	8	Leading State
Non-district Authorizers Available	The state allows two or more authorizing options in all situations, with direct access to each option. There is considerable authorizing activity in at least two of those options.	4	3	12	Leading State
Authorizer and Overall Program Accountability System Required	The state law includes a small number of the elements of the model law's authorizer and overall program accountability system.	1	3	3	

Component	Description	Rating	Weight	Total	Notes
Adequate Authorizer Funding	The state law includes some of the model law's provisions for adequate authorizer funding.	2	2	4	
Transparent Charter Application, Review, and Decision-making Processes	The state law includes some of the model law's provisions for transparent charter application, review, and decision-making processes.	2	4	8	
Performance-based Charter Contracts Required	The state law includes some of the model law's provisions for performance-based charter contracts.	2	4	8	
Comprehensive Charter School Monitoring and Data Collection Processes	The state law includes many of the model law's provisions for comprehensive charter school monitoring and data collection processes.	3	4	12	
Clear Processes for Renewal, Nonrenewal, and Revocation Decisions	The state law includes a small number of the model law's clear processes for renewal, nonrenewal, and revocation decisions.	1	4	4	
Transparency Regarding Educational Service Providers	The state law includes some of the model law's provisions for educational service providers.	2	2	4	
Fiscally and Legally Autonomous Schools with Independent Charter School Boards	The state law includes all of the model law's provisions for fiscally and legally autonomous schools with independent charter school boards.	4	3	12	Leading State
Clear Student Enrollment and Lottery Procedures	The state law includes many of the model law's requirements for student recruitment, enrollment, and lottery procedures.	3	2	6	
Automatic Exemptions from Many State and District Laws and Regulations	The state law allows schools to apply for exemptions from state and district laws and requires all of a school's teachers to be certified.	1	3	3	

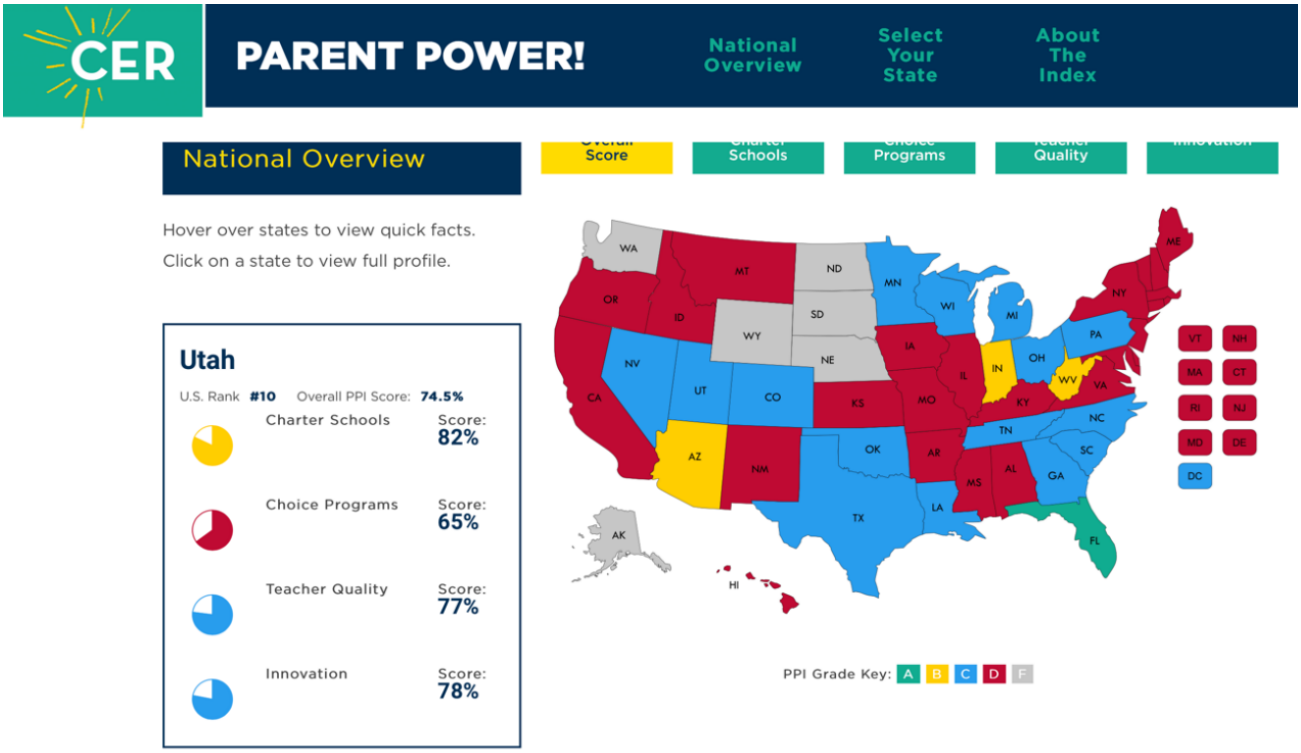
Component	Description	Rating	Weight	Total	Notes
Automatic Collective Bargaining Exemption	The state law does not require any charter schools to be part of existing collective bargaining agreements.	4	3	12	Leading State
Multi-school Charter Contracts and/or Multi-charter School Contract Boards Allowed	The state law explicitly allows multi-school charter contracts for some schools and requires each school to be independently accountable for fiscal and academic performance.	3	2	6	
Extracurricular and Interscholastic Activities Eligibility and Access	The state law provides charter school extracurricular and interscholastic activity eligibility and access.	4	1	4	Leading State
Clear Identification of Special Education Responsibilities	The state law includes some of the model law's requirements for special education responsibilities.	2	2	4	
Equitable Operational Funding and Equal Access to All State and Federal Categorical Funding	The state law includes many of the model law's provisions for equitable operational and categorical funding.	3	4	12	Leading State
Equitable Access to Capital Funding and Facilities	The state law includes many of the model law's provisions for equitable access to capital funding and facilities.	3	4	12	Leading State
Access to Relevant Employee Retirement Systems	The state law provides access to relevant employee retirement systems but does not require participation.	4	2	8	Leading State
Full-time Virtual Charter School Provisions	The state law includes a small number of the model law's requirements for full-time virtual charter schools.	1	3	3	

Utah's score for its charter school law is 154 points, ranked at number 21 out of 45 states. Specific comments and recommendations from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for improving Utah's Charter School law are found below:

- Utah's law contains a cap with room for ample growth and allows multiple authorizing entities. It has also made notable strides in recent years to provide more equitable funding to public charter schools.
- Potential areas for improvement include the following:
    - Ensuring authorizing accountability
    - Beefing up the requirements for renewals
    - Ensuring transparency regarding educational service providers
    - Providing more operational autonomy to charter schools
    - Strengthening accountability for full-time virtual charter schools.

Rank out of 45	21
Total points out of 240	154
Year Public Charter School Law was first enacted	1998
Number of Public Charters Schools in 2017-18	132
Estimated Number of Public-School Students in 2017-18	74,800

The Center for Education Reform (CER) is an organization whose mission is to "expand educational opportunities that lead to improved economic outcomes for all Americans, particularly our youth, ensuring that conditions are ripe for innovation, freedom and flexibility throughout U.S. education". The organization is a strong advocate for parent choice, including (though not limited to) charter schools. The two charts below from CER used a rubric in the scored areas of Choice Programs (37.5%), Charter Schools (37.5%), Teacher Quality (10%), and Digital & Personalized Learning (15%). While Utah only scored a "C", its placed in the top 10 for parent choice. CER praised Utah for its digital learning, teacher requirements, and its response to COVID.



CER **PARENT POWER!** National Overview | Select Your State | About The Index

Utah | U.S. Rank #10

Overall PPI Score: **74.5%**

Utah does digital learning well and has rigorous requirements for teachers. It's COVID response was good for kids and education opportunity in general is modestly supported. Imagine if education was as seasoned as well as the Great Salt Lake.

Opportunity

Charter Schools

Score: **82%**
Grade: **B**
Rank: **#10**

While funding is tenuous each year, the environment for chartering in the Beehive state has grown increasingly open, with a number...

Choice Programs (Scholarships, Vouchers, Tax Credits, etc.)

Score: **65%**
Grade: **D**
Rank: **#19**

A new Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program was signed into law in April 2020 adding to the first ever state special needs...

Teacher Quality

Score: **77%**
Grade: **C**
Rank: **#6**

Utah has rigorous content test requirements for prospective elementary teachers; licensure eligibility is based on passing four subtests...

Innovation

Digital & Personalized Learning

Score: **78%**
Grade: **C**
Rank: **#17**

Utah is a leader in promoting and understanding what is necessary for digital education. The Utah Education Network provides free digital tools...

COVID-19 Response

On March 13, Gov. Hebert closed schools temporarily in reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak, and on April 14 announced they would remain closed...

Fast Facts:

- **4th Grade Math Proficiency:** 46%
- **8th Grade Math Proficiency:** 37%
- **4th Grade Reading Proficiency:** 40%
- **8th Grade Reading Proficiency:** 38%
- **Average SAT Score:** 1204/1600
- **Average ACT Score:** 20.2/36
- **Graduation Rate:** 87%

Policy Environment

Leadership

Governor Spencer Cox, won the Beehive State. In January 2021, he stated, "We need to unleash innovation, we need to cut regulation and ...

Constitutional Issues

The state has a Blaine Amendment but it does not limit the ability of students to "use publicly funded scholarships to attend private, religious...

Transparency

Utah gives parents access to a lot of data. Report cards are easily accessible in two clicks on Utah's DOE homepage by clicking Data Gateway...

QUALITY AUTHORIZING

One definition of what an authorizer is in Utah states:

> *A charter authorizer is an entity approved by the Utah State Legislature to bring charter schools into existence. Authorizers set up application processes and approve or deny charter school applications. Most importantly, authorizers are accountable for managing and monitoring their charter schools' academic record and organizational viability, while also ensuring that they are in compliance with all applicable laws. (State Board of Education website, https://schools.utah.gov/charterschools)*

This definition of a charter authorizer reveals a perspective of authorizing that is both instructive and problematic. The main function of an authorizer is accurately described as being a conduit for the creation and oversight of public charter schools. However, this definition also goes beyond what a quality authorizer should do in that it could be read that authorizers would be accountable for school management and over focuses on compliance. Quality authorizing allows, encourages, and defends school autonomy. Authorizers hold charter schools accountable to high standards in academics and organizational management, but quality authorizers allow for great flexibility in *how* charter schools manage their own academic record and organizationally run their school. Authorizers should never manage or govern a charter school.

Authorizers monitor their charter schools so that they meet high standards. To do this well, quality authorizers focus on outcomes, not processes. While public charter schools must comply with all applicable laws, such compliance should be viewed as part of the assessment of a school's organizational viability rather than the focus of an authorizer's oversight. Quality authorizers do not ignore compliance. A school not in compliance with law could be at risk for loss of funds, corrective action, or other repercussions including closure. Legal and financial compliance may be the primary focus of other agencies who monitor all public schools within their area of oversight. However, an authorizer goes beyond legal and financial compliance to monitor how well charter schools perform.

Given these distinctions, perhaps a better definition would be:

> *A charter authorizer is an entity approved by the Utah State Legislature to be a conduit through which charter schools can receive public funds. Authorizers set up application processes and approve or deny charter school applications. Most importantly, authorizers are accountable for setting academic and operational expectations, monitoring charter schools according to those expectations, and taking remedial action when those expectations are not met.*

This new definition improves upon the first definition in a number of ways. First, authorizing is more than just bringing schools into existence. Authorizers do approve new charter schools and satellites. This approval is not merely for a school to exist, as a private school may exist without being authorized. The key factor authorizers provide is the *authorization* to receive public funds. Further, authorization does not end with new school approvals; it continues through to the charter contract or charter agreement. This agreement is between the school and its authorizer. It allows a charter school to be a public school and receive public funds, while outlining the duties and responsibilities of the charter school. Through the charter agreement and this authorizing function, quality authorizers foster choice while protecting student and public interests.

Second, authorizers monitor (not manage) charter schools' academic record and organizational viability through expected outcomes. Quality authorizers focus on outcomes over processes. Valuing outcomes protects charter school autonomy that fosters innovation and choice. Holding charter schools accountable for high but appropriate outcomes promotes quality choice and student success.

The academic and operational expectations can be divided into four overall categories: school academic performance, market demand, financial performance and viability, and overall governance and administration.

Academic Performance

The foundation of every charter school is to educate students and prepare them for the next stages of their lives. While there is a wide range of ideas on what this purpose exactly looks like, the State has identified core academic standards all publicly funded schools must meet. There may be additional measures of academic performance beyond identified by the State, but as the conduits through which charter schools receive public funds, quality authorizers should establish measures of academic performance relative to the State's adopted standards.

In setting academic performance expectations quality authorizers ensure expectations do not hinder a school's mission. For example, if a school's mission is to serve educationally underserved students, expectations using only proficiency or status metrics may hinder a school's ability both to serve their populations and meet the proficiency expectations. However, not having any expectations or allowing for low expectations also fails to serve the students and provide for quality choice. Thus, it is important to have high, but appropriate and applicable, expectations that preserve a school's academic autonomy to provide a quality education and fulfill its contracted mission.

In setting expectations on academic performance, it is also important to understand that it may take time for a school to reach expectations after initial authorization. Innovative models or community-driven schools tend to take additional time to fully realize their program's potential. As long as a school has sufficient enrollment and funds, quality authorizers provide new schools time to show academic success.

Market Demand

As schools of choice in education, market demand is an important measure of a charter school's success. It is an important factor when considering a new charter school proposal, and it remains an important factor after a school is open. Enrollment and retention not only provide a greater likelihood of financial viability; they also provide information on continued demand (need) and a school's climate.

Communities benefit when they have access to quality charter schools. Given this, quality authorizers consider community needs and wants. Students vote for their school of choice with their feet. Continued high demand points to a community's value of the school. Continued low demand or low retention of existing students may be due to low or declining desire for the school model or due to poor implementation of what would otherwise be a desirable model. Poor enrollment or retention can indicate other problems or concerns at the school that may not show in specific metrics until much later.

Quality authorizers take student and family demand into account. If there is demonstrated and continued demand, an authorizer should provide opportunities for the school to succeed academically

and operationally. Quality authorizers also watch market demand to provide additional choice where it is needed and desired.

Financial Performance and Viability

Given that authorizers allow charter schools to receive public funds, it is essential that authorizers monitor charter school stewardship of those funds. The specifics in how a charter school spends their funds is up to the charter school's governing board and administration. How the school uses those funds must be within law, and the results of their use should yield positive outcomes for students. As the governing entity of a public school, charter governing boards have a fiduciary responsibility over all public funds received. A quality authorizer monitors charter school governing boards to ensure that these public funds are adequately overseen and used. Charter school financial performance is also monitored through outcomes on key financial indicators.

It is vital that a charter school has sufficient funds to provide for its operational needs and to achieve positive academic outcomes. Lack of adequate financial controls or poor financial oversight can threaten a school's organizational viability. A quality authorizer monitors charter schools' financial viability, and it takes action when a school is in danger of not being able to meet its financial obligations.

School Governance

The charter contract is between the authorizer and the charter governing board. The charter governing board is responsible for the governance of the school and ensuring the management of the charter school according to legal requirements. The governing board must also ensure the school's fidelity to its charter agreement, and that the school continues to be responsive to the interests of its students and community. These responsibilities place much trust in the governing body of the charter school. Quality authorizers carefully monitor charter governing boards and hold them accountable for the governance, administration (as they hire the school director), and performance of the charter school. Such monitoring must be done so that governing boards retain their independence and flexibility to govern in ways that may be unique, as long as they are legal, appropriate, and effective.

Measuring governing board performance is difficult. Arguably, a charter school's academic performance, continued market demand, and fiscal performance and viability are the best measures of a charter school governing board's success. However, such metrics are delayed and are considered trailing indicators. Quality authorizers use such trailing indicators measuring for governing board success, but they also use other, more timely indicators of governance and administrative performance.

Conclusion

In summary, quality authorizing leads to quality choice while protecting student and public interests. Quality authorizers set high but appropriate expectations and standards while protecting and fostering school autonomy. According to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), "When authorizers overregulate schools, they create the same box-checking, red tape, and one-size-fits-all directives that sparked the creation of charter schooling in the first place. When they create too many obstacles to opening a charter school, they do a disservice to kids and families that need options. And when they turn a blind eye to quality—or completely forgo their responsibilities—they fail children by allowing mediocre schools to remain open." In short, "smart, proactive authorizing can transform public education." (NACSA website, https://www.qualitycharters.org/authorizingmatters/) Quality authorizing can not only produce better choices for students, but it can also positively impact public education in general. Authorizing done well provides greater access to quality education that meets students' unique learning needs.

STATE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD PRIORITIES

Building a Strong Organization

- Recruit and retain qualified staff members by building a staff of dedicated individuals with the skills and experience to conduct authorizing responsibilities effectively and with an allegiance to the mission and vision of the SCSB.
    - Actively recruit qualified personnel from education stakeholders, charter schools, higher education, and institutions or corporations with innovative practices;
    - Ensure that SCSB staff are paid competitively;
    - Encourage and support staff members in attending conferences, professional development, and other career-enhancing experiences.
- Ensure that all SCSB board members are regularly trained on board responsibilities, Utah Administrative Code, Board Rule, SCSB bylaws, policies, and processes.
- Ensure that all SCSB board members attend at least one NACSA or similar conference during each of their terms of service.
- Submit proposals from the SCSB staff and board members to present to NACSA on an on-going basis.
- Lobby to host NACSA at a venue in Utah.
- Establish protocols for using external resources strategically to supplement internal staff capacity.
- Providing summaries of the formal reasons for the SCSB's high-stakes decisions.
- Ensure that stakeholders are provided the regular opportunity to complete anonymous surveys in order to rate the SCSB on a variety of categories of authorizing – a sort of "authorizer report card."
- Ensure that the SCSB engages an independent, third-party to review the SCSB's strategic plan, practices, and organizational capacity at least every four years.
- Seek additional funding, as needed, to increase support for high-quality practices of SCSB's authorizing, oversight, support of charter schools, and support of other authorizers.

Authorizing Quality Charter Schools

- Employ a variety of evaluation methods to assess applicant's capacity, such as a multistage application process, in-person meetings, and reviews by internal and external teams.
- Use the application process to ensure that schools are in touch with the communities they intend to serve, such as by requiring letters of support or evidence of claimed partnerships with community organizations.
- Balance the risk involved in authorizing innovative charter programs by carefully evaluating applicants' capacity to implement their plans.
- Work to create a marketplace of authorizers including the expansion of both the number and types of charter school authorizers in Utah through encouraging currently allowed authorizers to become active and seeking changes in statute to allow additional authorizers.

Increasing Innovation and Choice

- Establish an administrative process that includes SCSB consent by which charter schools can adjust their charter agreements easily to include new or innovative programs, additional

provisions or systems of educational delivery, or adjustments to existing charter agreements to encourage increased autonomy, innovation, and student outcomes.

- Determine which exemptions from state law should be sought in order to create a less restrictive or more flexible, innovative environment for charter schools.
- Launch a micro-credential system that provides access to all charter school governing board members within its portfolio. Collect data on usage and set requirements for board participation in micro-credential system.
- Establish partnerships to ensure the recognition of the micro-credentials by an outside or crediting institution (such as LinkedIn, Pluralsight, or similar)
- Engage in strategic recruitment of local and national school models that show strong potential for operating successful charter schools.
- Build criteria into the application process that provide an opportunity to align selection with the authorizer's organizational mission.

Charter Performance

- Intervene early when problems arise and follow a predetermined protocol when a school falls short of organizational, fiscal, or performance expectations.
- Collect sufficient evidence on student performance (e.g., achievement test results), school performance (e.g., financial viability), and multiple indicators in order to build a solid case for school standing.
- Publish standing for all schools annually once the process for determining standing has been established.
- Using gathered data, set targets and provide support to improve performance of authorized schools.
- Make decisions about authorizing, intervention, standing, and closure that increase the quality of charter schools over time.

Providing Meaningful and Transparent Oversight

- Reduce compliance and reporting requirements to the SCSB and utilize information submitted to other agencies.
- Use focused site visits to gather information that can be observed only on site.
- Ensure that one or more SCSB members or SCSB staff members regularly meet with SCSB authorized charter schools.
- Engage in rigorous and transparent performance monitoring and provide appropriate and timely support and intervention.
- Create and maintain a dashboard of SCSB authorized charters and their standing for public review.
- Seek to update statutory language in 53G-5-205 related to the SCSB's monitoring function.
- Engage in a Public Relations campaign to ensure public awareness and knowledge of what the dashboard is and how to use it.
- Ensure that all SCSB-authorized schools will have had the opportunity to come to the SCSB meetings and present about themselves.

Supporting School Operators

- Ensure that each school has the support it needs between the initial grant of its charter and the first day of school and throughout the school's first year.

- Provide regular training to school operators in their first years to build a supply of strong charter school leaders.
- Ensure that charter schools authorized by the SCSB will have all required policies publicly available (Charter LEA Required Policies list May 2022); and will have posted their meetings, minutes, and recordings as required by the Open and Public Meetings Act.
- Provide SCSB-authorized charter schools with continual, updated guidance on required policies.
- Removal of a board member or board members at schools authorized by the SCSB with a track record showing an inability to follow OPMA.

Improving the Relationship Between the SCSB and USBE

- Ensure that SCSB board members begin to participate in joint visits with members of the USBE to charter schools authorized by the SCSB
- Seek legislative clarity on the relationship between the SCSB and USBE related to oversight, monitoring of schools' compliance to state and federal regulations, and autonomy.
- Execute a signed MOU with USBE that is favorable and fair to both the SCSB and the USBE.
- Study the advantages and disadvantages of establishing the SCSB as an independent entity with the authority to control the legislative funds allocated to it, to engage in procurement, and to make decisions independent of other entities in order to fulfill its statutory requirements; then if advantageous, seek this autonomy through statutory changes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Building a Strong Organization	Seek and acquire resources, training, and capacity	Ensure that SCSB staff are paid competitively Ensure that all SCSB board members are regularly trained on board responsibilities, Utah Admin. Code, Board Rule, SCSB bylaws, policies, and processes. Providing summaries of the formal reasons for the SCSB's high-stakes decisions Ensure that stakeholders are provided the regular opportunity to complete anonymous surveys in order to rate the SCSB on a variety of categories of authorizing – a sort of "authorizer report card" Ensure that the SCSB engages an independent, third-party to review the SCSB's strategic plan, practices, and organizational capacity at least every four years.	Actively recruit qualified personnel from education stakeholders, charter schools, higher education, and institutions or corporations with innovative practices Encourage and support staff members in attending conferences, professional development, and other career-enhancing experiences Submit proposals from the SCSB staff and board members to present to NACSA on an on-going basis	Ensure that all SCSB board members attend at least one NACSA or similar conference during each of their terms of service Establish protocols for using external resources strategically to supplement internal staff capacity Lobby to host NACSA at a venue in Utah	Seek additional funding, as needed, to increase support for high-quality practices of SCSB's authorizing, oversight, support of charter schools, and support of other authorizers

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Authorizing Quality Charter Schools	Developing a process that allows for more confidence in authorizing and taking risks in authorizing innovative schools	Employ a variety of evaluation methods to assess applicant's capacity, such as a multistage application process, in-person meetings, and reviews by internal and external teams	Use the application process to ensure that schools are in touch with the communities they intend to serve, such as by requiring letters of support or evidence of claimed partnerships with community organizations	Balance the risk involved in authorizing innovative charter programs by carefully evaluating applicants' capacity to implement their plans	Work to create a marketplace of authorizers including the expansion of both the number and types of charter school authorizers in Utah through encouraging currently allowed authorizers to become active and seeking changes in statute to allow additional authorizers

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Increasing Innovation and Choice	Provide opportunities for increased competency within the field, and provide more flexibility to authorized charter schools	Launch a micro-credential system that provides access to all charter school governing board members within its portfolio Build criteria into the application process that provide an opportunity to align selection with the authorizer's organizational mission	Establish an administrative process that includes SCSB consent by which charter schools can adjust their charter agreements easily to include new or innovative programs, additional provisions or systems of educational delivery, or adjustments to existing charter agreements to encourage increased autonomy, innovation, and student outcomes Collect data on usage, and set requirements for board participation in micro-credential system	Determine which exemptions from state law should be sought in order to create a less restrictive or more flexible, innovative environment for charter schools Engage in strategic recruitment of local and national school models that show strong potential for operating successful charter schools	Establish partnerships to ensure the recognition of the micro-credentials by an outside or crediting institution (such as LinkedIn, Pluralsight, or similar)

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Charter Performance	Assess and improve the overall performance of authorized charter schools	Intervene early when problems arise and follow an established protocol when a school falls short of organizational, fiscal, or performance expectations Make decisions about authorizing, intervention, standing, and closure that increase the quality of charter schools over time.	Collect sufficient evidence on student performance (e.g., achievement test results), school performance (e.g., financial viability), and multiple indicators in order to build a solid case for school standing Publish standing for all schools annually once the process for determining standing has been established	Using gathered data, set targets and provide support to improve performance of authorized schools	Increase the number of schools in top standing and decrease the number of schools in bottom standing

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Providing Meaningful and Transparent Oversight	Provide information to stakeholders about charter schools, compliance, and support	Reduce compliance and reporting requirements to the SCSB and utilize information submitted to other agencies Ensure that one or more SCSB members or SCSB staff members regularly meet with all SCSB authorized charter schools Seek to update statutory language in 53G-5-205 related to the SCSB's monitoring function	Use focused site visits to charter schools gather information that can be observed only on site Ensure that one or more SCSB members or SCSB staff members regularly meet with SCSB authorized charter schools Engage in rigorous and transparent performance monitoring and provide appropriate and timely support and intervention	Create and maintain a dashboard of SCSB authorized charters and their standing for public review Ensure that all SCSB-authorized schools will have had the opportunity to come to the SCSB meetings and present about themselves	Engage in a Public Relations campaign to ensure public awareness and knowledge of what the dashboard is and how to use it

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Supporting School Operators	Ensuring that school operators understand their obligations and responsibilities	Ensure that each school has the support it needs between the initial grant of its charter and the first day of school, and throughout the school's first year Provide regular training to school operators in their first years to build a supply of strong charter school leaders	Ensure that charter schools authorized by the SCSB will have all required policies publicly available (Charter LEA Required Policies list May 2022); and will have posted their meetings, minutes, and recordings as required by the Open and Public Meetings Act	Provide SCSB-authorized charter schools with continual, updated guidance on required policies Removal of a board member or board members at schools authorized by the SCSB with a track record showing an inability to follow OPMA	

Domain	Goal	Year 1 (2022)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 5 (2027)	Year 10 (2032)
Improving the Relationship Between the SCSB and USBE	Foster positive relationships with USBE and policy makers	Ensure that SCSB board members begin to participate in joint visits with members of the USBE to charter schools authorized by the SCSB	Seek legislative clarity on the relationship between the SCSB and USBE related to oversight, monitoring of schools' compliance to state and federal regulations, and autonomy Execute a signed MOU with USBE that is favorable and fair to both the SCSB and the USBE	Study the advantages and disadvantages of establishing the SCSB as an independent entity with the authority to control the legislative funds allocated to it, to engage in procurement, and to make decisions independent of other entities in order to fulfill its statutory requirements; then if advantageous, seek this autonomy through statutory changes	

Part 1

AUTHORIZER-SPECIFIC UTAH CODE AND BOARD RULE

Utah Code 53G, Chapter 5: Charter Schools

- **Part 1 General Provisions**
  - Section 101 Title.
  - Section 102 Definitions.
  - Section 103 Charter School Funding.
  - Section 104 Purpose of Charter Schools.
- **Part 2 State Charter School Board**
  - Section 201 Charter School Board created.
  - Section 202 Status and powers of State Charter School Board.
  - Section 203 State Charter School Board – Staff Director – Facilities.
  - Section 204 Charter School innovative practices – Report to State Charter School Board.
  - Section 205 Charter School authorizers – Power and Duties – Charter application minimum standard.
- **Part 3 Charter School Authorization**
  - Section 301 State Charter School Board to request applications for certain types of charter schools.
  - Section 302 Charter school application – Applicants – Contents.
  - Section 303 Charter Agreement – Content – Modification.
  - Section 304 Charter schools authorized by the State Charter School Board – Application process – Prohibited basis of application denial.
  - Section 305 Charters authorized by the local school boards – Application process – Local school board responsibilities.
  - Section 306 Charter schools authorized by a board of trustees of a higher education institution – Application process – Board of trustees responsibilities.
  - Section 307 Charter school authorization – Initial review period.
- **Part 4 Powers and Duties**
  - Section 401 Status of charter schools.
  - Section 402 Property tax exemption for property owned by a charter school.
  - Section 403 Charter school assets.
  - Section 404 Requirements for charter schools.
  - Section 405 Application of statutes and rules to charter schools.
  - Section 406 Accountability – Rules.
  - Section 407 Employees of charter schools.
  - Section 408 Criminal background checks on school personnel.
  - Section 409 Regulated transactions and relationships – Definitions – Rulemaking.
  - Section 410 Safe technology utilization and digital citizenship.
  - Section 411 Charter school fiscal year – statistical reports.
  - Section 412 Contract with regional education service agencies.
  - Section 413 Charter school governing board meetings – Rules of order and procedure.
  - Section 414 Required provision of period products in schools.
- **Part 5 Noncompliance, Charter Termination, and Liability**
  - Section 501 Noncompliance – Rulemaking.
  - Section 502 Voluntary school improvement process.
  - Section 503 Termination of a charter agreement.

- Section 504 Charter school closure.
- Section 505 Tort liability.

- **Part 6 Charter School Credit Enhancement Program**
  - Section 601 Definitions.
  - Section 602 Utah Charter school Finance Authority created – Members – Compensation – Services.
  - Section 603 Powers and duties of authority.
  - Section 604 Limited obligations.
  - Section 605 State to succeed to property of authority when encumbrances paid or authority dissolved.
  - Section 606 Charter School Credit Enhancement Program – Standards for the designation of qualifying charter schools – Debt service reserve fund requirements.
  - Section 607 Charter School Reserve Account contribution requirements for qualifying charter schools.
  - Section 608 Bond issuance.
  - Section 609 Limitation on participation in Charter School Credit Enhancement Program.

Utah State Board of Education Administrative Rules
R277-550: Charter Schools Definitions
R277-551: Charter Schools General Provisions
R277-552: Charter School Timelines and Approval Processes
R277-553: Charter School Oversight, Monitoring and Appeals
R277-554: State Charter School Board Grants and Mentoring Program
R277-555: Corrective Action Against Charter School Authorizers
R277-556: Charter School Closure Reserve Account

APPENDIX B

SY 2022-23 PORTFOLIO

- Academy for Math Engineering & Science
- Advantage Arts Academy
- American Academy of Innovation
- American Leadership Academy
- American Preparatory Academy - Accelerated School
- American Preparatory Academy - Draper #1
- American Preparatory Academy - Draper #2
- American Preparatory Academy - Draper #3
- American Preparatory Academy - Salem
- American Preparatory Academy - The School for New Americans
- Ascent Academies of Utah Farmington
- Ascent Academies of Utah Lehi
- Ascent Academies of Utah Saratoga Springs
- Ascent Academies of Utah West Jordan
- Ascent Academies of Utah - West Valley
- Athenian eAcademy
- Athlos Academy of Utah
- Bear River Charter School
- Beehive Science & Technology Academy Elementary
- Beehive Science & Technology Academy Secondary
- Bonneville Academy
- Bridge Elementary School
- C.S. Lewis Academy
- Canyon Grove Academy
- Canyon Rim Academy
- Channing Hall
- City Academy
- Davinci Academy
- Mountain View Montessori
- Dual Immersion Academy
- Early Light Academy at Daybreak
- East Hollywood High
- Endeavor Hall
- Entheos Academy
- Entheos Academy Magna
- Esperanza School
- Excelsior Academy
- Franklin Discovery Academy
- Freedom Preparatory Academy
- Freedom Preparatory Academy - Vineyard
- Freedom Preparatory Academy – St. George
- Gateway Preparatory Academy
- George Washington Academy
- Good Foundations Academy
- Greenwood Charter School
- Guadalupe School
- Hawthorn Academy
- Hawthorn Academy South Jordan
- Highmark Charter School
- Ignite Entrepreneurship Academy
- Itineris Early College High
- Jefferson Academy
- John Hancock Charter School
- Karl G. Maeser Preparatory Academy
- Lakeview Academy
- Leadership Academy of Utah
- Leadership Learning Academy
- Leadership Learning Academy - Ogden
- Legacy Preparatory Academy
- Lincoln Academy
- Lumen Scholar Institute
- Mana Academy Charter School
- Maria Montessori Academy
- Merit College Preparatory Academy
- Moab Charter School
- Monticello Academy
- Monticello Academy West Point
- Mountain Heights Academy
- Mountain Sunrise Academy
- Mountain West Montessori Academy
- Mountainville Academy
- Navigator Pointe Academy
- No. UT. Acad. for Math Engineering & Science (NUAMES)
- No. UT. Acad. of Math Engineering & Science - Ogden
- Noah Webster Academy
- North Davis Preparatory Academy
- North Star Academy
- Odyssey Charter School
- Ogden Preparatory Academy
- Pacific Heritage Academy

- Paradigm High School
- Pinnacle Canyon Academy
- Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning
- Providence Hall
- Quest Academy
- Ranches Academy
- Reagan Academy
- Renaissance Academy
- Rockwell Charter High School
- Roots Charter High School
- Salt Lake Arts Academy
- Scholar Academy
- Soldier Hollow Charter School
- Spectrum Academy
- Spectrum Academy - Pleasant Grove
- St. George Academy
- Summit Academy
- Summit Academy - Bluffdale
- Summit Academy - Independence
- Summit Academy High School
- Syracuse Arts Academy
- Syracuse Arts Academy - North
- Terra Academy
- The Center for Creativity Innovation and Discovery
- Thomas Edison
- Thomas Edison - South
- Timpanogos Academy
- Treeside Charter School
- Utah Arts Academy
- Uintah River High
- Utah Connections Academy
- Utah County Academy of Science
- Utah Military Academy
- Utah Military Academy - Camp Williams
- Utah Virtual Academy
- Valley Academy
- Vanguard Academy
- Venture Academy
- Vista School
- Voyage Academy
- Walden School of Liberal Arts
- Wallace Stegner Academy
- Wasatch Peak Academy
- Wasatch Waldorf Charter School
- Weilenmann School of Discovery
- Winter Sports School

APPENDIX C

ADOPTED POLICIES

- All Other Applications
- Bylaws
- Certification for Charter Schools Seeking Credit Enhancement
- Communications
- Charter School Accountability Framework (CSAF)
- Internal Financial Policy
- Member Code of Conduct
- New School Applications
- Optional "Fast Track" Replication and Satellite Application Process
- Oversight Model
- Pre-Turnaround Support
- Procedures
- Required Training Policy
- Requirement of Signed Charter Document for Full Approval and Prior to Release of Any Public Funds
- Review of Facilities Contracts or Financing Agreements for Charter Schools
- School Oversight
- Supportive Oversight Campaign Policy

Proposed Policy: Transparency and Stakeholder Input

APPENDIX D

APPROVAL PROCESS

FOR NEW SCHOOLS, EXPANSIONS, SATELLITES

Purpose

Charter School authorizing is the essence of the State Charter School Board (include link to the start of the strategic plan). This takes several different forms. First, the SCSB authorizes new schools, which means the SCSB accepts the plan presented by the community members and enters into a contract with them to allow them to receive funding and giving them authority to educate students. Second, the SCSB approves satellites and replications. When an LEA is doing particularly well at serving the needs of the student population, they can qualify to open additional campuses. Third, the SCSB approves expansions. Expansions afford LEAs the opportunity to enroll additional students, additional grades, or both, all within their existing school.

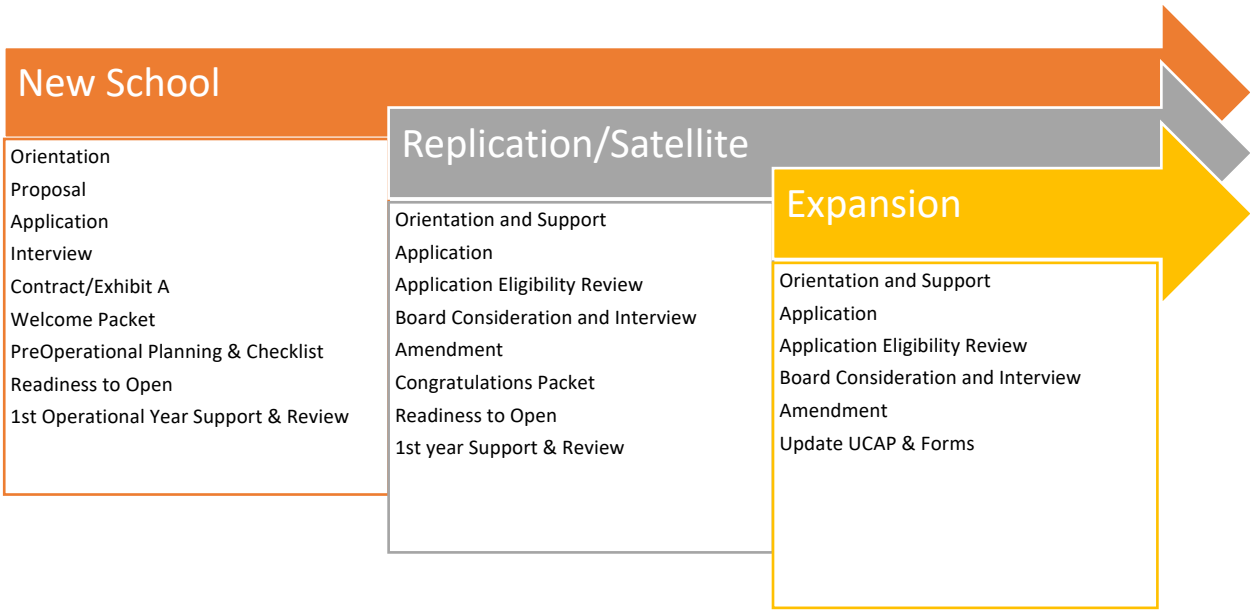
Philosophy of Approvals

The mission of the SCSB is to "advanc[e] quality choice, innovation, and student success." Our philosophy is that opening more charter schools for the sake of quantity does not advance the purpose of charter schools and can detract from the improved quality we promised stakeholders decades ago.

Approval Process

Of the three different forms SCSB authorizing takes each is followed with an approval and a signed document. This document is a legally binding document between the LEA's governing board and the SCSB. Changes cannot be made without the other parties being involved. To provide consistency and equanimity the SCSB has adopted processes for the approval of new schools, the approval of satellites and replications, and the approval of expansion.

See https://www.utahscsb.org/prospective-applicants



APPENDIX E

OVERSIGHT MODEL

Purpose

The State Charter School Board (SCSB) is charged with the task of implementing a system for monitoring the performance of the schools authorized by the SCSB in accordance with UCA §53G-5-501, UCA §53G-5-202(1), and Utah Administrative Rule R277-553. The Charter School Oversight Model details the steps SCSB staff will take to resolve concerns/deficiencies as well as the Warning and Probation statuses outlined in Utah Administrative Rule R277-553. Schools will have the opportunity to respond and correct identified deficiencies throughout this process until closure. This model is flexible, and depending on the situation, a school may advance or regress through the different phases at any time.

It is hoped that through effective implementation of this model, the SCSB will lift the quality and reputation all charter schools.

Oversight Model

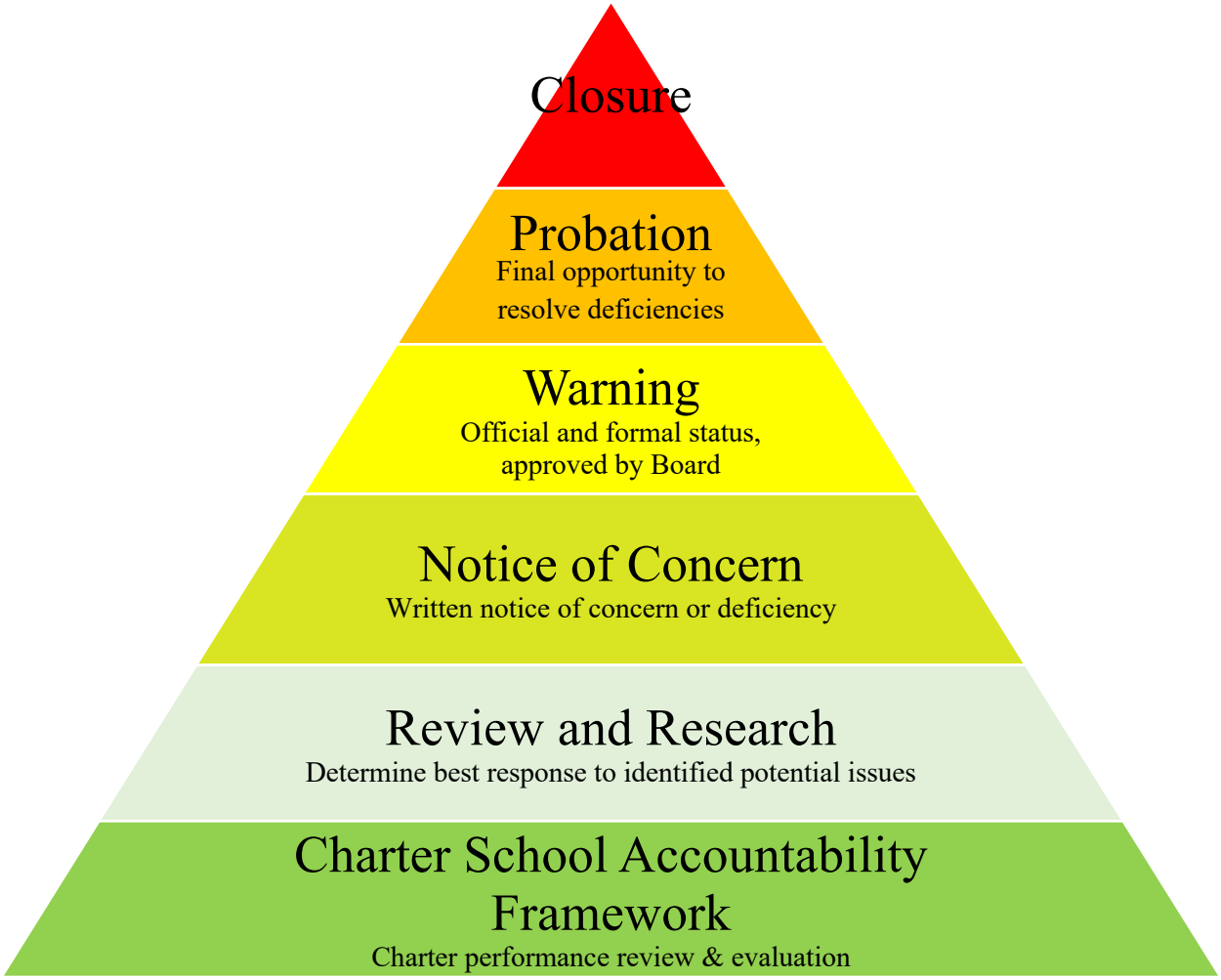
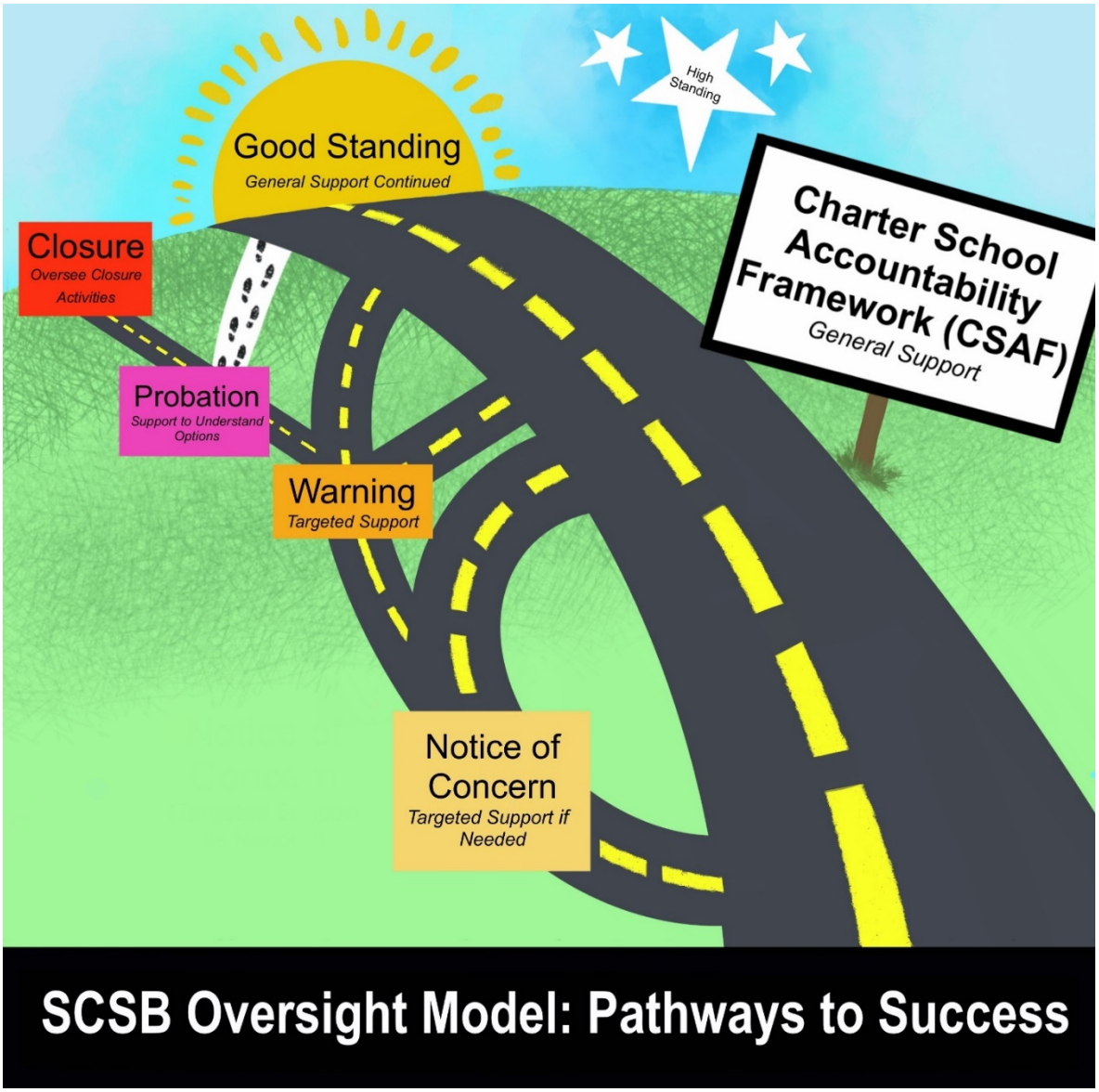
The oversight model is based on the theory that a concern or deficiency is best resolved at the least intrusive stage possible, and that support is a better response to deficiencies than punishment. However, if support is not effective, there are consequences that aim to protect students and public funds, and to provide for positive student outcomes. The oversight model also assumes that any metric not met in the Charter School Accountability Framework (CSAF) is only a potential concern that must be further assessed. Thus, any CSAF metric not met is further reviewed and researched to assess if further action is necessary.

Depending on the severity of the concern and the charter school's response or ability to resolve deficiencies determines the level in the oversight model. A school may successfully exit any level without going back through the levels. For example, a school that successfully resolves all deficiencies while in probation would not be placed on warning or a lower level of monitoring.

Charter School Accountability Framework (CSAF)

CSAF seeks to provide objective, reliable, and verifiable indicators of school performance and viability. CSAF allows the SCSB to proactively identify and address potential areas of concern in accordance with its statutory obligations and each charter school's charter agreement. CSAF is only an indicator of potential concerns. CSAF does not alone identify if there are deficiencies needed to be resolved. Each indicator not met must be first reviewed and researched to assess context and risk.

Graphic Depicting Remediation Stages



Graphic to Show How the Oversight Model Leads to School Success