

National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA) Professional Learning Community

Pennsylvania: Incubating State Partner

May 28, 2025

Agenda



Introductions (5 minutes)

Updates (20 minutes)

NN4DA will share state, national, and NN4DA updates.

Problem of Practice Consultancy (30 minutes)

NN4DA will facilitate a problem of practice consultancy related to renewals and charter agreements.

NN4DA Sustainability (15 minutes)

Group will brainstorm feasible avenues for NN4DA sustainability in PA.

Other Discussion (15 minutes)

Remaining time will be used to share other pressing updates and questions amongst the group.

Closing (5 minutes)

NN4DA will closeout meeting and share next steps.

Introductions



- Name
- District, role, years at District
- Number of charter schools

Who is the NN4DA?



National Network for District Authorizing

The National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA, or “the Network”), funded through a Charter School Program National Dissemination Grant, supports state-level initiatives that strengthen the charter school authorizing practices of school districts. The Network has three state association members (more coming): California, Colorado, and Florida and seven incubating state partners (including PA). The 10 participating states represent 72% of all district authorizers and 42% of all charter students.



Incubating State Partners – Year 1 & Beyond

Incubating State Partner Year 1 objectives include:

- Convene District authorizers at least quarterly
- Complete a needs assessment and asset map
- Identify priorities for 2+ model materials and 2+ professional development forums
- Begin work on model materials
- Develop sustainability plan

Increased
Connections

Increased Access to
Resources

Further Identification
of Needs

Charter Schools in PA

As reported by PDE for 2024-25:

- 153 brick and mortar charter schools statewide across 47 school districts
- 10 regional charter schools statewide across 23 school districts
- 14 cyber charter schools authorized by PDE
- 43 school districts only authorize one charter school, 9 school districts authorize two charter schools, 9 school districts authorize 3+

As reported by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for 2022-23:

- Roughly 162,000 students in PA charter schools, 6th largest enrollment in the country
- Roughly 1/3 of charter students are in cyber charter schools

District	# Charter Schools
Philadelphia	81
Pittsburgh	12
Harrisburg	4
Allentown	4
Bethlehem*	3
York City*	3
Woodland Hills*	3
Erie City*	3
State College*	3

*Bethlehem has 2 regional charter schools and York City, Woodland Hills, Erie City, and State College have 1 regional charter school

State Updates

Charter School Appeal Board Decisions

- CAB voted to deny the appeal of two revised new charter applications, by a vote of 3-2, on 2/18/25; decisions were posted at the end of March.
- The applications were to locate in Norristown and West Chester and were both affiliated with established management organizations
- Grounds for denial included:
 - Curricula do not align to PA standards
 - Insufficient detail for meeting the needs of SPED, EL and gifted learners and not addressed in curriculum (e.g., sending students with disabilities to the home district)
 - Missing budget items: (1) no startup budget for year 0; (2) missing/inadequate healthcare and retirement information; (3) not differentiating SPED and regular rates; (4) no repayment plan for start-up loan
 - Inadequate sustainable support – minimal emails of support from target district, minimal pre-enrollments from district; unclear if proposed board and founding coalition even live in district
 - Not addressing defects in the revised application undermines ability to be a model for other public schools
 - Non-arm's length management agreement (same legal representation, interest free loan, waiving management fees without written evidence and with major financial implications)

National and NN4DA Updates

- Authorizer self-assessment – summer project
- Artificial Intelligence initiative – role in authorizing
- U.S. Department of Education update
- Supreme Court case on religious charter schools

Problem of Practice Consultancy

Problem of Practice Consultancy Protocol

- Overview of issue
- Clarifying and probing questions
- Group discussion
- Final observations

Problem of Practice Consultancy

Problem of Practice Consultancy Protocol **Focus area for May**

Renewal and charter agreement breakdown when a school is requesting an expansion (or other material amendment) that will not be entertained by the district

NN4DA PA Sustainability

How can we best continue these efforts?

Options

- Funds raised to continue current efforts (e.g., new dissemination grant)
- Established entity assumes facilitation role
- Group self-sustains with volunteer work/advisory board
- A new 501c3 is established

Quick End of Year Survey

Quick EOY Survey – Access [HERE](#)

- Usefulness of the past year
- Sustainability
- Other ideas for NN4DA PA

Next Steps

1. Utilize [Model NN4DA PA Tools](#) and share any feedback with Lauren via email

Tools specifically created this year include: (1) Performance standards; (2) Site visit protocol; (3) Renewal guide; and (4) Renewal application

2. Take authorizer self-assessment over summer – reach out to Lauren if your district would like to take part and discuss results

3. Be on lookout for summer (hopefully in-person) gathering to plan our NN4DA priorities for SY 2025-26

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