

National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA) Professional Learning Community

Pennsylvania: Incubating State Partner

July 24, 2024

Agenda



Introductions (5 minutes)

NN4DA History and Overview (10 minutes)

NN4DA will share information related to NN4DA's founding, purpose, and expansion into Pennsylvania.

Cycle of Effective Authorizing (15 minutes)

NN4DA will provide an overview of the cycle and standards for quality charter school authorizing.

District Reflections (25 minutes)

Each district will have the opportunity to share what resonates with them, including points of pride and opportunities for growth.

Closing (5 minutes)

NN4DA will share reminders and next steps.

Introductions



Overview

- Name
- District, role, years at District
- District overview (location, size, demographics, # charter schools)

Fill in the Blank

- Summer is _____.
- Charter school authorizing is _____.

Who is the NN4DA?



National Network for District Authorizing

The National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA, or “the Network”) supports state-level initiatives that strengthen the charter school authorizing practices of school districts. The Network has three state association members and plans to incorporate additional state-based partners soon. Current members include the California Charter Authorizing Professionals (CCAP), the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA), and the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA).



NN4DA Collaboration Initiative

- Funded through a Charter School Program National Dissemination Grant - \$2.4 million over 3 years
- Phase 2 of CSP Tri-State Alliance to Improve District-Led Charter School Authorizing – focused on expansion into Incubating State Partners (ISP)
- NN4DA National Director, Alex Medler

State Partners

Primary State Partners:



Current Incubating State Partners:

Georgia
Idaho
Maryland
Oklahoma

Pennsylvania
Tennessee
Wisconsin

10 participating states represent more than:

- 66% of all authorizers
- 72% of district authorizers
- 42% of all charter school students

Project Goals

1. Create, evolve, and disseminate best practices for district-led charter-school authorizing to address emerging issues nationally and in each participating state.
2. Catalyze and support cross-agency collaboration to serve underserved students.
3. Expand NN4DA's impact nationwide by incubating similar statewide initiatives and helping more district authorizers to implement updated best practices in charter school authorizing.

Incubating State Partners – Year 1 & Beyond

Within these overarching project goals, 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



Increased
Connections

Increased Access to
Resources

Further Identification
of Needs

Charter Schools in PA

As reported by PDE for 2023-24:

- 152 brick and mortar charter schools statewide across 46 school districts
- 10 regional charter schools statewide across 19 school districts
- 13 cyber charter schools authorized by PDE
- 41 school districts only authorize one charter school

District	# Charter Schools
Philadelphia	82
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

What is a charter school authorizer?

- Authorizers are the entities that decide who can start a new charter school, set academic and operational expectations, and oversee school performance. They also decide whether a charter should remain open or close at the end of its contract (NACSA).
- *If and how authorizers fulfill their responsibilities—approving new schools, monitoring performance, and closing failing schools—determines the overall quality of charter schools in a community.*



Nearly 90 percent of authorizers across the country are local school districts

Principles of charter school authorizing

The following three core principles serve as overarching responsibilities to fulfill in all aspects of authorizing work (NACSA):



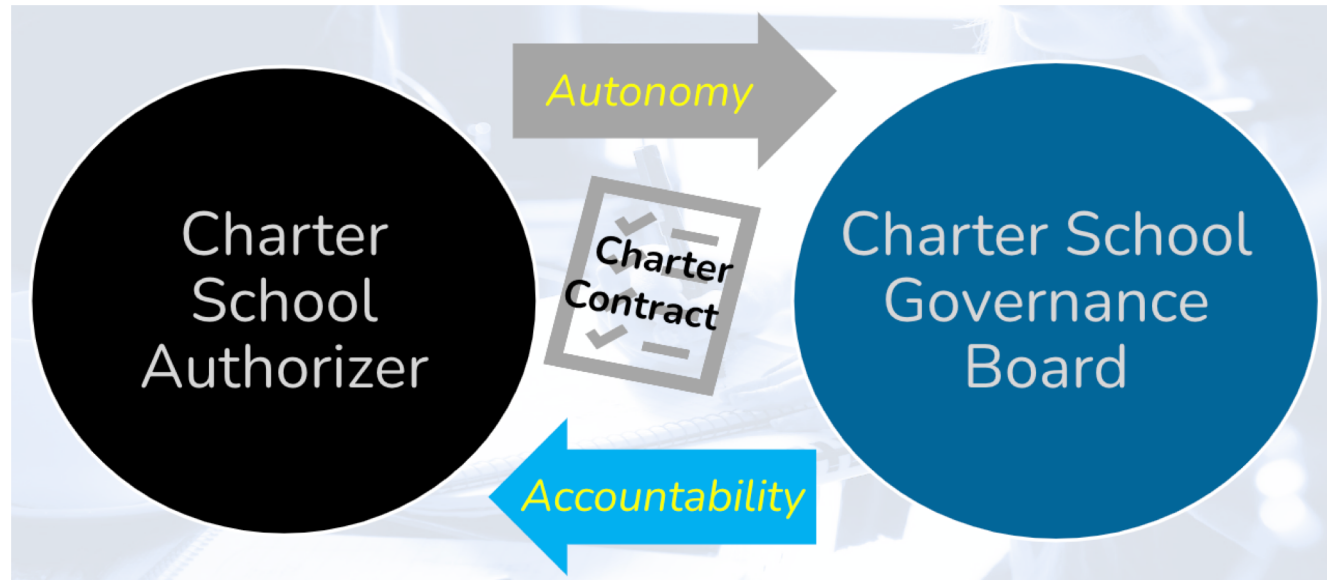
Maintain high standards for schools



Uphold school autonomy



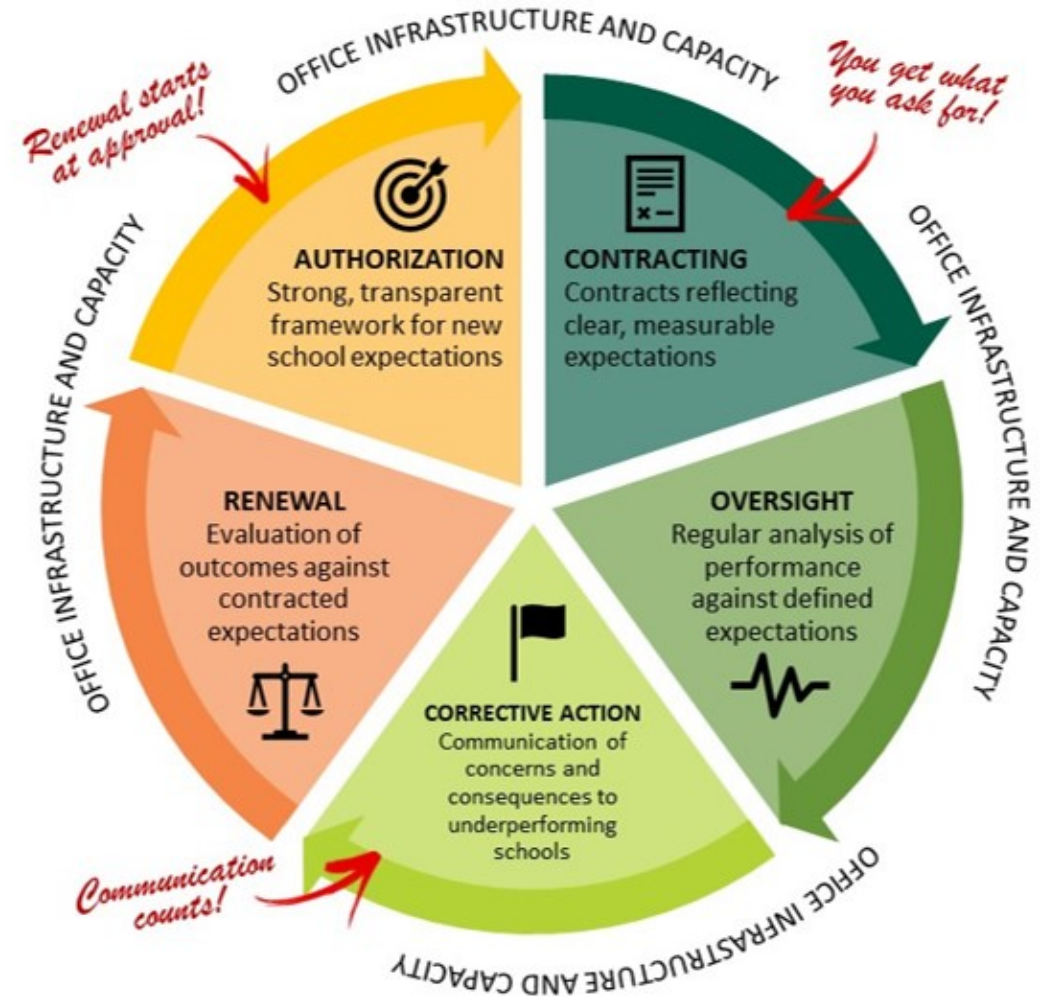
Protect student and public interests



Cycle of charter school authorizing

Authorizing can be viewed as a cycle:

- Authorization (new applications)
- Contracting (performance framework)
- Oversight (doc & data collection, reporting)
- Corrective Action (possible tech assist too)
- Renewal (or possible nonrenewal/revocation)



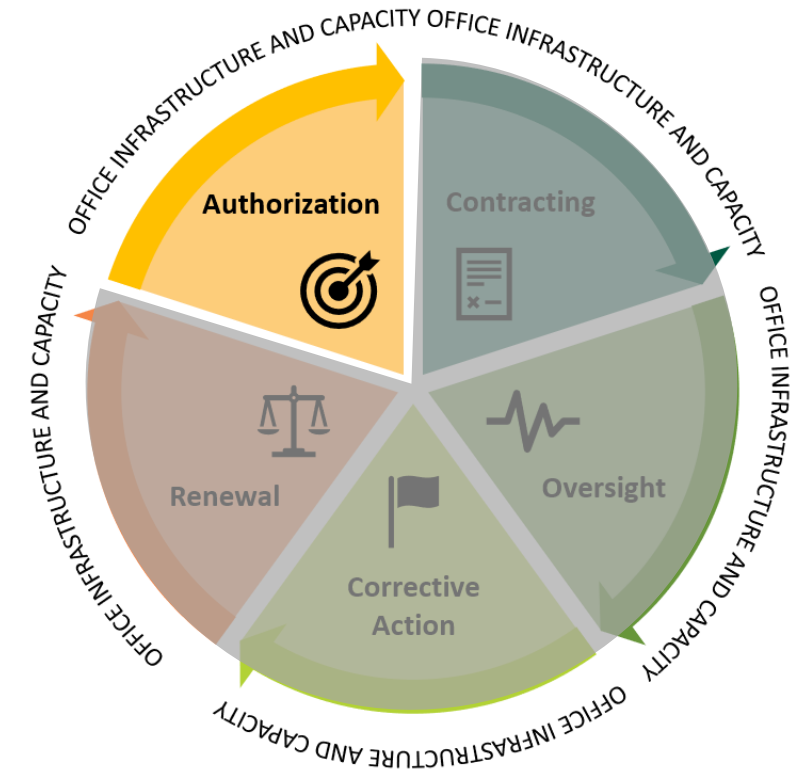
Authorization



Application Process and Decision Making

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that includes clear application questions and guidance; follows fair, transparent procedures and rigorous criteria; and grants charters only to applicants demonstrating a strong capacity to establish and operate an effective charter school.

- Proposal info, questions, guidance
- Fair, transparent, quality-focused procedures
- Rigorous approval criteria
- Rigorous decision making



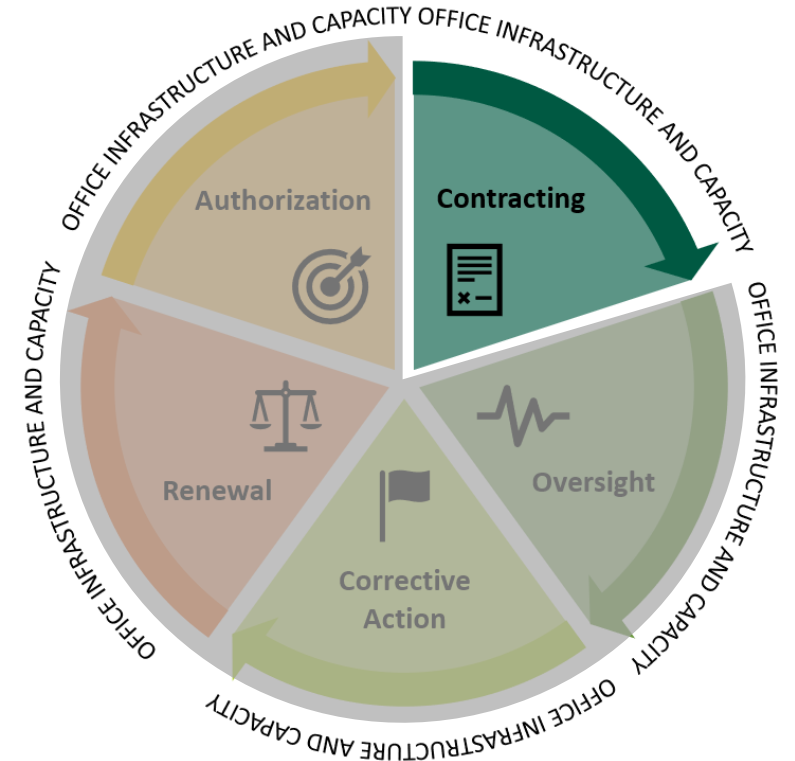
Performance Contracting



Performance Contracting

A quality authorizer executes contracts with charter schools that articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, funding, administration, oversight, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences, and other material terms. The contract is an essential document, that establishes the legally binding terms under which the school will operate and be held accountable.

- Contract term, negotiation, and execution
- Rights and responsibilities
- Performance standards, which guide oversight, corrective action, and renewal decisions
- Provisions for management contracts



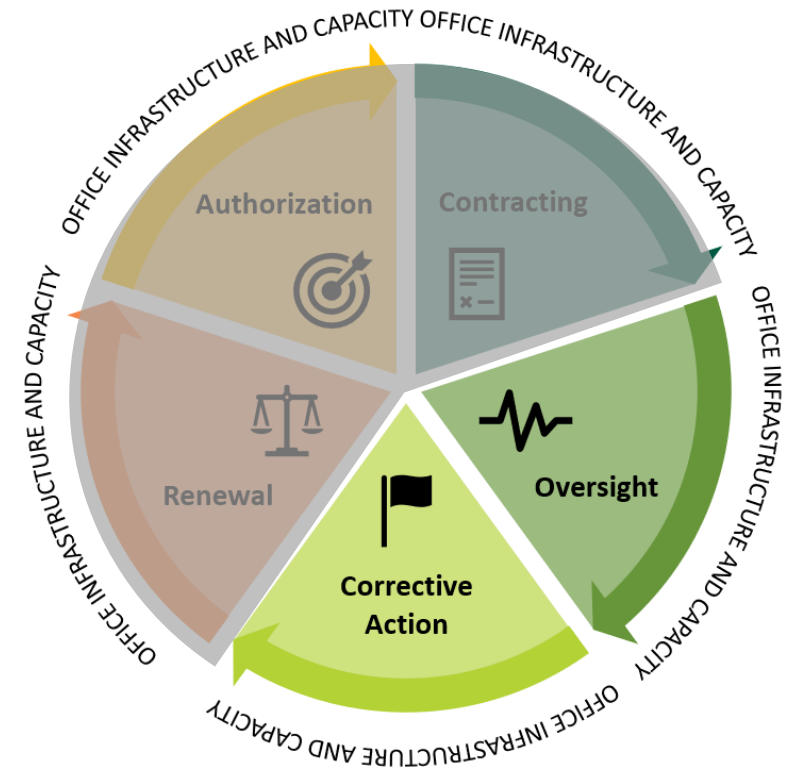
Oversight and Corrective Action



Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation

A quality authorizer evaluates performance and monitors compliance; ensures schools' legally entitled autonomy; protects student rights; informs intervention, revocation, and renewal decisions; and provides annual public reports on school performance.

- Performance evaluation & compliance monitoring
 - What is reviewed off vs. on site how often
- Respecting school autonomy
- Protecting student rights
- Intervention
- Public reporting



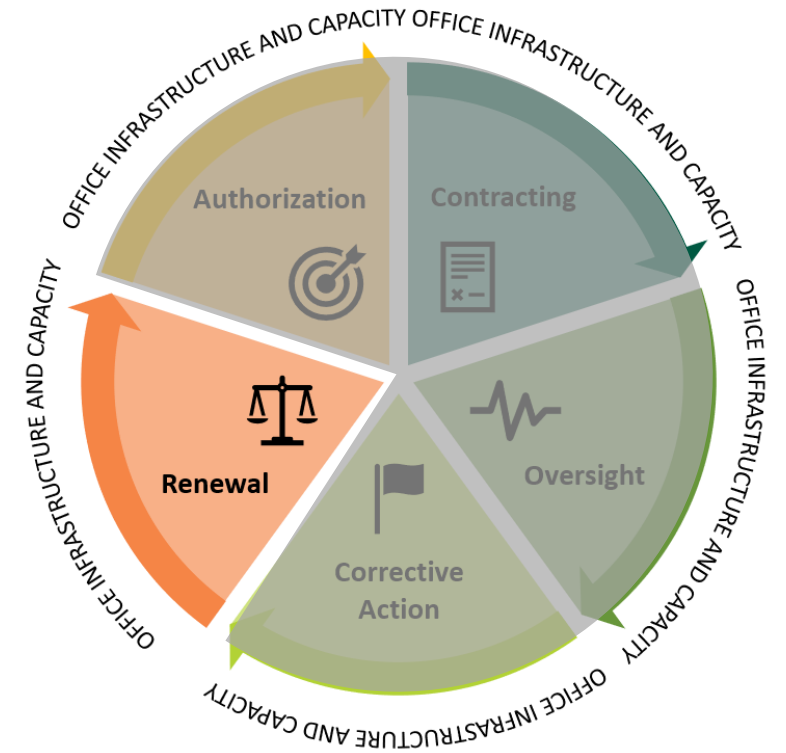
Renewal



Revocation and Renewal Decision Making

A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions, and revokes charters when necessary to protect student and public interests.

- Revocation
- Renewal decisions based on merit & inclusive evidence
- Cumulative report and renewal application
- Fair, transparent process
- Closure



District reflections

- What resonates with you from the authorizing overview?
- What questions does it raise?
- What are you currently doing well related to the cycle and categories?
- Where are areas of need?
- What do you most want to discuss further?

Preliminary areas of need

Based on initial survey and conversations, desired areas of focus include:

- Performance frameworks
- Annual oversight systems and authorizer-led reporting
- Site visits – annual and renewal
- Renewal process & decision-making
- Evaluating individualized mission/model and key components of application (as incorporated into agreement)
- Streamlining support of other District staff in authorizing functions
- Transparency – what and how much to report publicly
- Relationship/trust building

Resources

NN4DA Resource Library

<https://nn4da.org/resource/>

Look for: NN4DA Resource Documents

NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers)

<https://qualitycharters.org>

Look for:

- Subscribe to Our Newsletter – bottom right of homepage
- Authorizer Resources under Authorizers tab at top

*NACSACon 2024 – Oct 21-24, 2024
Houston, TX

							
Model Resource	NACSA	CACSA Resource Library	CCAP Resource Library	FACSA Resource Library	Wisconsin Resource Library	Maryland Resource Library	Oklahoma Resource Library
Initial Application Resources							
Application		Resource Library Link for Application Materials 2020 Revised Standard Application	Petition Toolkit for New School	Florida DOE Resources for authorizers Florida Application Review Training Materials Charter Review Team Training Template	Wisconsin Resource Center Model Application Process	Anne Arundel How to Start a Charter School Arundel Application Baltimore City New Application Baltimore City New Application Forms	
Application Rubric		2020 Revised Application Rubric	Evaluation rubric			Baltimore City New School Rubric	Application Rubric



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

NACSA advances and strengthens the ideas and practices of authorizing so students and communities—especially those who are historically under-resourced—thrive.



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SUBSCRIBE

Resources

A-GAME (National Charter Schools Institute)

<https://nationalcharterschools.org/agame/>

Join for free under Access A-Game Resources for:

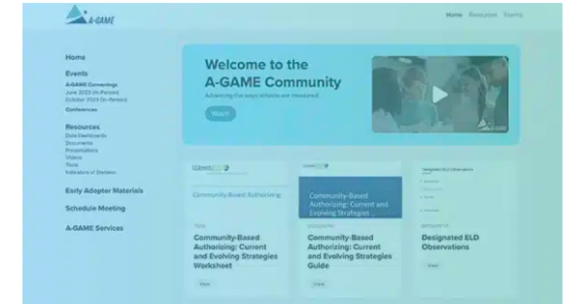
- Upcoming webinars and virtual events
- Resources and tools across a host of topics



Join Community

The A-GAME Community is free to all board members, leaders of schools, authorizing agencies and their advocates. Be part of creating NEXT practices in school oversight and support.

[Learn More](#)



Access A-GAME Resources

Free videos, data, documents and resources are available when you sign up for the A-GAME Community Dashboard in the Charter Network!

[Login | Join](#)

Next Steps

1. Share current authorizing tools with Lauren (e.g., new charter application, renewal application, sample site visit report)
2. Share any feedback or ideas related to this session or group with Lauren
3. Share interest in attending NACSACon & NN4DA pre-meeting with Lauren
4. Complete authorizer needs assessment – Lauren to send via email

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