



FY 2017 Authorizer Annual Report

Authorizer Information

Name of Authorizing Organization: Student Achievement Minnesota LLC

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Authorizer Summary:

Student Achievement Minnesota LLC (SAM), established in 2010, is a “single-purpose authorizer”: by law, it conducts no activities other than authorizing public charter schools.

SAM’s mission is to improve student achievement through quality authorization of charter schools. Its vision is to authorize high-quality charter schools demonstrated to increase student achievement when measured against resident district or state average performance.

SAM welcomes existing and developing organizations with programs demonstrated to improve student achievement to apply to SAM for authorization.

In 2017, SAM authorized three charter schools serving 944 students:

NECP - Northeast College Prep, a K through five inner city school located in Northeast Minneapolis is in its third year of operation serving 260 students. The school continues its growth trajectory of adding an additional grade each year, up to 8th grade. In 2017, NECP moved into its permanent location. The new facility fostered a 40% increase in student enrollment compared to the previous year. The school’s reputation in the community continues to spread, resulting in high interest and increased enrollment.

MSA- Math and Science Academy, a six through twelve suburban school located in Woodbury is in its seventeenth-year of operation. Student enrollment is strong peaking at 515. Interest remains strong, the school’s waiting list continues to grow, and school diversity continues to increase; 41%. Consistently, MSA significantly outperforms the local district and the state average in reading, math, and science proficiency on state assessments. ACT results indicate students are highly prepared for college coursework.

WSS- West Side Summit, a K through six, inner city school located in West St. Paul is in its fourth year of operation providing service to 165 students. WSS is home to a large Hispanic student population. The school launched middle school during 2017-2017. The school’s extended school day supports academic initiatives.

Contributions to SAM are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and SAM is registered with the Minnesota Attorney General’s office.

Authorizer Processes

New Charter School Applications in FY 2017 (B.1)

Did your organization review any new charter school applications in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no new charter applications for 2016- 2017, but received several inquiries. During this exchange prospective candidates were provided information about SAM to help candidates assess whether SAM is the right choice in helping them achieve their goal.

If yes, complete the table below for each application:

Name of Charter School Applicant	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

New Charter School Openings in FY 2017 (B.2)

Did your organization engage in ready-to-open activities in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no applications.

If yes, complete the table below for each charter school scheduled to open:

Name of Charter School Projected to Begin Serving Students in FY 2017	Projected Opening Date	Did this School Open as Planned?	If No, Provide Reason(s) and Revised Projected Opening Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter School Expansion Applications in FY 2017 (B.2)

Did your organization review any site and/or grade expansion applications in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no expansion applications for 2016-2017. However, NECP and WSS continue to expand grade levels to satisfy their charter contract agreements.

If yes, complete the table below for each application:

Name of Charter School	Proposed Additional Grades to be Served and/or Location of New Site	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Official Early Learning Program Recognition Requests in FY 2017 (B.2)

Did your organization review any requests for official early learning program recognition in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no early learning program applications because per MSA, NECP and WSS’ adopted school policy, no early learning programs are offered.

If yes, complete the table below for each request:

Name of Charter School	Early Learning Program Seeking Recognition	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter School Change in Authorizer Requests in FY 2017 (B.2)

Did your organization review change in authorizer requests in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no applications for a change in authorizer.

If yes, complete the table below for each request:

Name of Charter School	Authorizer Charter School Requested to Transfer From	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter Contract Renewals in FY 2017 (B.9)

Did your organization engage in charter renewal activities in FY 2017?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

No schools were in renewal.

If yes, complete the table below for each school:

Name of Charter School	Was Contract Renewed?	If Yes, Term of Contract Renewal	If No, Reason(s) for Nonrenewal
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additional Authorizer Activities

Authorizing Leadership and Staff Skill Development (A.5)

Describe how your organization built the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development over the past year.

SAM routinely participates in professional development in three core areas: authorizer practices, school operations, and student achievement. In FY2017, SAM personnel attended:

Professional Development	When	Student Achievement Minnesota Personnel Attending		Area Addressed			Purpose
		Staff	Leadership	Authorizer Practices / Oversight	School Operations	Student Achievement	
MDE ESSA	7/20/16	✓	✓	✓		✓	School accountability per state mandate
Columbia Teachers College Writing Workshop	7/26/16	✓				✓	Effective writing strategies and structures
Friends /SAM United in Best Practice 3.0	8/5/16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Best practices exchange amongst teachers and instructional leaders
MDE Academic Growth Webinar	9/20/16		✓	✓		✓	Interpreting academic data; student learning
NACSA Conference	10/24/16		✓	✓	✓	✓	Authorizing PD & Networking
Friends/SAM DDI Reading I Workshop	11/15/16	✓	✓			✓	Main idea and summary; effective instructional practices
MDE ESSA Webinar	1/6/17		✓	✓		✓	Federal/State: School accountability
MDE Data Reports & Analytics Webinar	1/23/17		✓	✓		✓	Using data to improve student learning and teacher instruction

Friends/SAM DDI Reading II Workshop	1/24/17	✓	✓			✓	Story elements; effective instructional practices
Friends/SAM DDI Reading III Workshop	3/7/17	✓	✓			✓	Vocabulary; effective instructional practices
MDE MAPES	3/13/17		✓	✓			Authorizing review process

Authorizer Self-Evaluation (A.9)

Describe how your organization self-evaluated its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure, and practices) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools over the past year.

SAM continuously assesses its authorizing processes and practices to ensure its school are being adequately serviced and that its practices are aligned with NACSA standards for quality authorizing. A needs assessment is done to identify authorizing deficiencies and to determine professional development opportunities. SAM and Friends of Education routinely compare and contrast practices, processes, and outcomes sought to maximize authorizing effectiveness.

SAM’s school portfolio size did not change; thus, no changes in staffing.

Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination (A.10)

Describe how your organization disseminated best authorizing practices and/or assisted other authorizers in high quality authorizing over the past year.

SAM is a member of the MN Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) and regularly participates in the organization’s monthly meetings where other school authorizers gather to share information, brainstorm, problem solve and advocate for high- quality authorizing. SAM meets with Friends of Education on a regular basic to discuss authorizing strengths, successes, challenges, and areas in need of attention and improvement.

SAM accepted an invitation to present at the 2017 National Association of Charter School Authorizers Conference in Atlanta: *Lessons Learned as a School Leader that Help as an Authorizer.*

Charter School Support, Development, and Technical Assistance (B.7)

Describe how your organization supported its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings over the past year.

SAM provides direct technical assistance and professional development opportunities to its authorized schools. Technical assistance is not required and is provided free of charge. Professional development

offerings are generally based on needs identified by our schools. SAM monitors the impact of professional development provided.

Direct Technical Assistance

SAM retained a 0.2 consultant to assist schools with instructional coaching, data driven instruction, and data analysis. West Side Summit utilized this service to boost the implementation of data driven instruction, teacher development and coaching.

SAM Website Depository

SAM added a professional development depository to its website to promote instructional best practices. The depository includes power point presentations, student work examples, and recommended readings.

SAM Provided PD to School

SAM works in collaboration with Friends of Education to plan and provide valued professional development opportunities for its schools. School input is solicited to determine relevant topics/subjects.

2016-2017 professional development opportunities offered to schools include:

Teachers College Columbia University Writing Conference: 2016 July 26

United in Best Practice 3.0: 2016 August 5

DDI Next Steps: An Interactive Approach to Reading Strategies: 2016 November 15

DDI Next Steps: An Interactive Approach to Reading Strategies: 2017 January 24

DDI Next Steps: An Interactive Approach to Reading Strategies: 2017 March 7

Board of Directors Networking & Best Practice Event: 2017 May 11

Cognitive Coaching (Days 1-2): 2017 June 29, 30

High Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School Practices (B.8)

Describe how your organization planned and promoted, within its portfolio, the model replication and dissemination of best practices of high performance charters schools over the past year.

SAM constantly pursues opportunities to disseminate and replicate high quality essential practices that improve pupil learning. SAM and school leadership meet quarterly to advocate the importance of incorporating best practices, to share lessons learned, and to advance collective problem solving. Exemplars of excellence drive these best practice discussions.

Portfolio Information

General Charter School Portfolio Data (as of June 30, 2017)

Preoperational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio:

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number (if assigned)	Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Recipient	Grade Levels Approved to Serve	Projected Enrollment	Proposed Location	Proposed Opening Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Operational Charter Schools in Authorizer’s Portfolio:

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	CSP Grant Recipient	Grade Levels Served in FY 2017	Location	Charter School Demographic and Enrollment Information	Charter School’s World’s Best Workforce Report
Math and Science Academy	4043	Yes	6-12	8430 Woodbury Crossing, Woodbury, MN 55125	Hyperlink to MN Report Card	Hyperlink to School’s WBWF Report
Northeast College Prep	4219	Yes	K-5	300 Industrial Blvd. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413	Hyperlink to MN Report Card	Hyperlink to School’s WBWF Report
West Side Summit Charter School	4212	Yes	K-6	497 Humboldt Avenue, St Paul, MN 55107	Hyperlink to MN Report Card	Hyperlink to School’s WBWF Report

MDE Officially Recognized Early Learning Programs at Charter Schools in Authorizer’s Portfolio:

Name of Charter School	Officially Recognized for Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening	Officially Recognized for Preschool Instructional Program for Children 3-5 Years	Officially Recognized for Prekindergarten Instructional Program for Four Year Olds to Prepare Children for Entry into Kindergarten the Following Year
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter School Portfolio Activity in FY 2017

In FY 2017, did any charter schools leave your organization’s portfolio and transfer to another authorizer during or at the end of the year?

No

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	New Authorizing Organization	Effective Date of Transfer
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

In FY 2017, did your organization terminate or revoke the charter contract for any charter school before the end of the contract term?

No

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	Reason(s) for Contract Termination	Effective Date of Contract Termination
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

In FY 2017, did any charter schools voluntarily close (i.e., closure was initiated by the school) during or at the end of the year?

No

If yes, complete the table below for each applicable school:

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	Reason(s) for Closure	Effective Date of Closure
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Charter School Portfolio Performance

World’s Best Workforce

Describe how your organization incorporates achievement of World’s Best Workforce goals in its ongoing oversight and evaluation of charter schools.

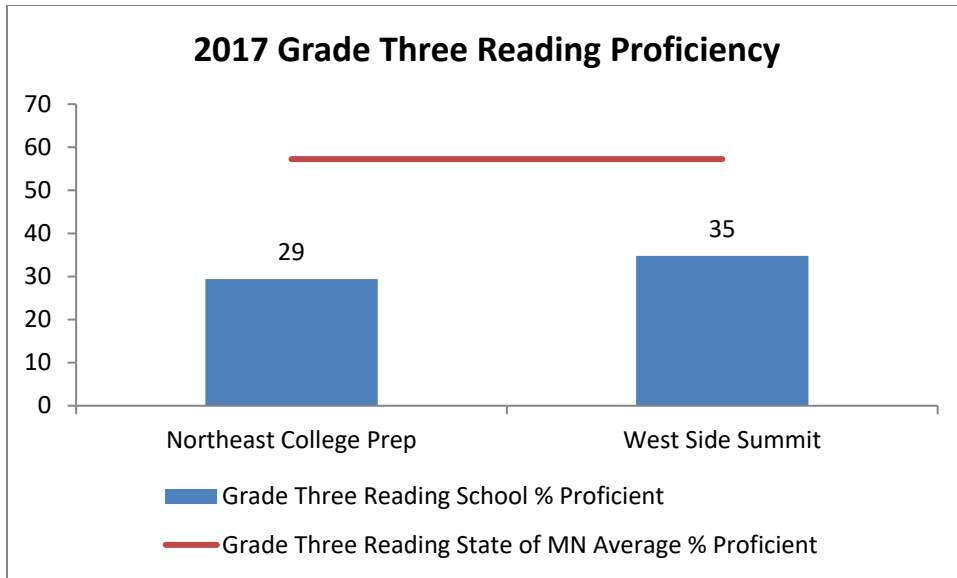
World’s Best Workforce

SAM believes the WBWF is principal because it provides insight into whether schools are making strides to increase the student performance based on key points and benchmarks. WBWF measurers are included in charter contracts and school oversight: Closing the Achievement Gap (FRL, ELL and Spec Ed); 3rd Grade Reading Level; College Readiness/ACT; State Assessment and Proficiency Greater than State Average; and Graduation Rate (if applicable).

SAM monitors student learning and achievement through the review of board minutes, annual report, site visit reports, required assessments and WBWF. Additionally, SAM monitors how the governing board is informed of student achievement and WBWF progress.

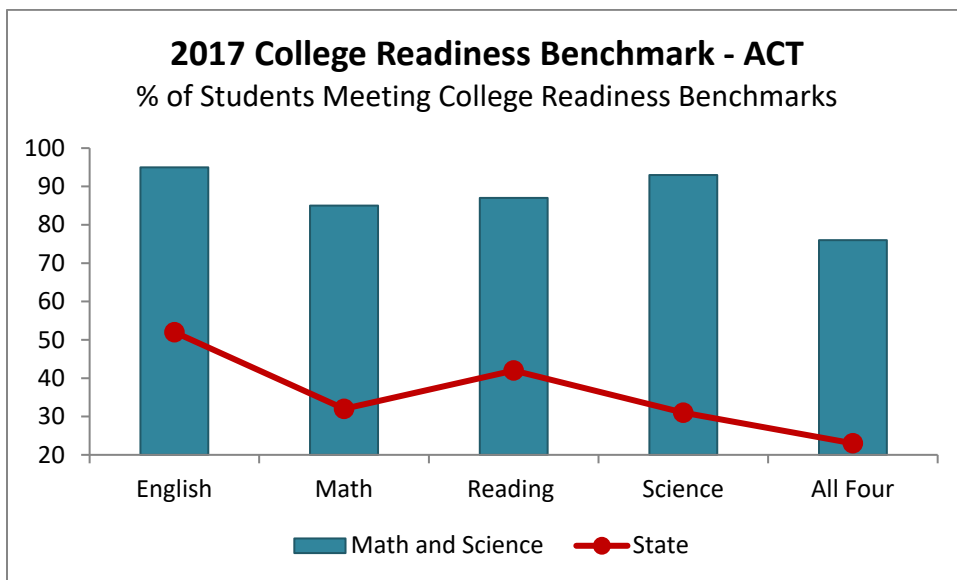
World Best Workforce Goal: All Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level

NECP and WSS struggle to achieve the third-grade reading goal of all third graders reading at grade level. In situations like this academic oversight is scrutinized, expectations reinforced, and technical support offered to improve student learning.



World Best Workforce Goal: Graduation Rate and College Readiness

MSA’s ACT results show students are performing substantially higher in all subject areas compared to the state; a composite score differential of 5.3. MSA exceeds the state’s graduation rate by more than 10%. On the Minnesota State assessments, MSA demonstrates an average proficiency rate of 20% above the state average in all content areas.



Academic Performance

Present outcome data regarding key academic performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

SAM’s three school portfolio is skewed. The secondary school is mature, highly successful, and consistently demonstrates stellar academic performance. The two elementary schools who have been in operation less than five years, struggle to find solid footing and direction because of leadership turnover and rapid expansion. The elementary schools are repeatedly informed about the need to improve student learning. SAM’s observations suggest deficiencies in the alignment of curriculum/standards, data driven instruction implementation, and expectations of students. An ongoing discussion with our schools is how to become more effective in meeting the needs of the school’s diverse student body.

of SAM schools
Achieving Indicators
/ # SAM schools with
reportable results
2017 2016 2015

Academic Indicators		2017	2016	2015
	MCA Proficiency > resident district	1/3	1/3	1/3
	MCA Proficiency > state average	1/3	1/3	1/3
	On-track growth > state average	1/3	1/3	1/1
	FRL proficiency rate > state FRL proficiency rate	1/3	0/2	0/2

Operational Performance

Present outcome data regarding key operational performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

SAM schools do a great job displaying fidelity to their mission and vision. Schools are demonstrating increased commitment to data driven instruction and recognize its value and importance. As best practice schools administer a needs assessment in support of the academic program and teacher development. Technical support is provided by the authorizer per school request.

NECP and WSS must improve submitting mandated reports by the due date. Compliance is not always timely. Maintaining the school’s website with updated information presents a problem for the schools too.

of SAM schools
Achieving Indicators
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2017 2016 2015

Operation Indicators				
	Educational Program contained in charter implemented	3/3	3/3	3/3
	Instruction/assessment aligned to standards, emphasizes student achievement	3/3	3/3	3/3
	Complies with ALL applicable laws and reporting requirements	1/3	1/3	1/3

Financial Performance

Present outcome data regarding key financial performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

All of SAM school’s external financial audits for FY2017 were “clean”; no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Two- thirds of SAM’s schools received the State Finance Award. A monthly review of finance reports indicates all schools are fiscally responsible in managing cash flow.

For NECP and WSS an area in need of improvement includes growing the fund balance to assure fiscal viability and charter contract compliance. Enrollment shortfalls and rapid expansion significantly impacted growing the fund balance.

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Financial Indicators				
	External Audit = no material or significant deficiencies	3/3	3/3	3/3
	State Finance Award Recipient	2/3	2/3	2/3
	Per Pupil Cost < Resident District Cost	Not	3/3	3/3
	Taxpayer Value	Available	2/3	2/3
	Fund Balance \geq 25%	1/3	1/3	1/3

Other Performance

Present outcome data regarding other key performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

Charter contract and strategic plan successes are considered as performance indicators in the evaluation of SAM's portfolio too. MSA, highly developed, routinely meets its charter contract goals. Whereas, NECP and WSS, less developed, struggle to meet their charter contract goals. All SAM schools are actively implementing strategic plans to further school improvement and to enhance the student educational experience.