



FY 2018 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.

SAM authorized three charter schools, two inner-city schools (Northeast College Prep and West Side Summit) and one suburban school (Math and Science Academy) serving approximately 915 students, kindergarten through twelfth grades in 2017-2018.

NECP - Northeast College Prep, a K through six inner-city school located in Northeast Minneapolis is in its fourth year of operation serving 282 students. The school is racially and ethnically diverse. The families’ native language is the primary language spoken in the home. The school added sixth grade in 2017- 2018, continuing its growth trajectory of adding an additional grade each year through 8th grade. Parent satisfaction remains healthy. The school’s academic program places an emphasis on International Baccalaureate, Responsive Classroom, ENVoY and Talent Development. 91% of students attend school on a regular basis compared to the state average regular attendance rate of 86%. The school’s FY18 retention rate suggest a decreasing trend for the third year.

The school performed below the resident district and state average in school-wide proficiency on reading, math and science (MCA) assessments. Increasing school-wide reading and math proficiency remain a constant challenge.

The school significantly surpasses most schools in hiring a diverse staff. 44% staff of color serves a diverse student population of 89%. The school ended FY18 with a slight decrease in fund balance compared to the previous year.

The school is governed by a five-member board with three director vacancies. The school was recognized by MDE as a “High-Quality Charter School” and received IB World School authorization this past year.

MSA-Math and Science Academy, a six through twelve suburban school located in Woodbury, is in its eighteenth year of operation. The school’s academic program places an emphasis on math, science and humanities. Student enrollment for the year peaked at 512. Attrition remains constant at about 10%. 96% of students attend school on a regular basis compared to state’s average regular attendance rate of 86%. Parent satisfaction and school interest remain high; the waiting list increased to 358 students this past year. Additionally, in the 2017-2018 school year, diversity increased to 42%; six years ago, the school diversity rate was 29%.

Consistently, the past five years, MSA significantly outperformed the local district and the state average in reading, math, and science school-wide proficiency on state assessments (MCA); an average of 25 points higher. High academic growth consistently exceeds low academic growth. High school graduation rates remained high; 100% of seniors that started in FY18 graduated by year-end. Six students qualified for the National Merit Scholarship with three reaching the semi-finalist level and one winning a national scholarship.

The school continues to increase the fund balance. The school’s nine-member teacher majority board with diverse expertise and a non-voting high school student is compliant with state statute; no current vacancies.

WSS- West Side Summit, a K through six, inner-city school located in West St. Paul is in its fifth year of operation. The school added seventh grade in 2017- 2018, continuing its growth trajectory of adding an additional grade each year through 8th grade. The school is 93% diverse and serves a large Hispanic population. Student enrollment increased to 184 students per middle-school expansion. The school’s academic program places an emphasis on adaptive individualized learning and inquiry-based learning. Attrition averaged 25% the past two years. 81% of students attend school on a regular basis compared to state’s average regular attendance rate of 86%.

The school performed below the resident district and state average in school-wide proficiency on reading, math and science (MCA) assessments. However, the ELL student group outperformed the resident district and state average in reading and math proficiency. Increased school-wide reading and math proficiency remain a constant challenge and topic of conversation.

The school ended 2017-2018 with a slight increase in the fund balance. The school’s nine-member governing board is compliant with state statute; no current vacancies.

SAM issued the school a two-year charter contract renewal because of the school’s weak academic performance.

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 2018 (B.1)

Did your organization review any new charter school applications in FY 2018?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no new charter applications for 2017- 2018 but received inquiries and met with interested parties per their request. During this exchange, SAM provided information and addressed questions about SAM’s authorizing beliefs, practices, expectations, and the application process.

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 2018 (B.2)

Did your organization engage in ready-to-open activities in FY 2018?

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 2018 | 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 2018 (B.2)

Did your organization review any site and/or grade expansion applications in FY 2018?

Yes

If no, please provide an explanation:

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 |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| MSA (Math and Science Academy) | 8400 Woodbury Crossing, Woodbury | Approval | N/A | The MDE determined the site expansion was unnecessary do to a review of MSA's initial charter application. Therefore, SAM withdrew the affidavit. | Yes |

Official Early Learning Program Recognition Requests in FY 2018 (B.2)

Did your organization review any requests for official early learning program recognition in FY 2018?

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

SAM received no early learning program applications. MSA, NECP and WSS' adopted school policies offer no early learning programs.

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 2018 (B.2)

Did your organization review change in authorizer requests in FY 2018?

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 2018 (B.9)

Did your organization engage in charter renewal activities in FY 2018?

Yes

If no, please provide an explanation:

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 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| West Side Summit | Yes | 07/01/2018-06/30/2020 Weak Academic Performance | 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’s professional development focused on three core areas: authorizer practices, school operations, and student achievement. In FY2018, SAM personnel attended:

| Professional Development | When | Student Achievement Minnesota Personnel Attending | | Area Addressed | | | Purpose |
|--------------------------|---------|---|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Staff | Leadership | Authorizer Practices / Oversight | School Operations | Student Achievement | |
| MDE MAPES | 7/12/17 | | ✓ | ✓ | | | Authorizing Review Process |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| NW Area Foundation | 7/13/17 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | Data Analysis & Interpretation |
| MACS/Clifton Allen Innovation | 7/19/17 | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | Rekindle Charter School Innovation Roots |
| Friends/SAM United in Best Practice | 7/28/17 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | Exchange of Best Practices Amongst Teachers and Instructional Leaders |
| Minnesota Association of Charter Schools | 9/11/17 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | Advancing Board Governance |
| Minnesota Department of Education MEIRS Webinar | 9/12/17 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | On Track Graduation |
| Minnesota Association of Charter Schools | 10/4/17 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | Advancing Board Governance |
| National Association of Charter School Authorizers Annual Conference | 10/17-10/19 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Sessions in authorizer oversight and monitoring school operations and student learning |
| MDE MAPES | 4/18/18 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | Authorizing Review Process |
| MDE ESSA Data and Communication Webinar | 6/14/18 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | Federal/State: School Accountability |
| ASCD Pathways to Equity | 6/28/18 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | Problems and Practices That Impede Educational Equity |

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 meticulously assesses its authorizing processes and practices to ensure its schools 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 needed professional development to perform at a high

level. SAM and Friends of Education work in partnership to maximize charter authorizing effectiveness on a routine basis.

SAM's school portfolio 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 accepted an invitation to chair the MACSA Standards and Principles Committee to draft charter school authorizer standards for the MACSA organization with the assistance of NACSA.

SAM meets with Friends of Education on a regular basis (weekly) to discuss authorizing strengths, successes, challenges, opportunities, and areas in need of attention and improvement.

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. Northeast College Prep and West Side Summit continued to utilize this service in 2017-2018 to boost the implementation of data driven instruction, teacher development and coaching.

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.

2017-2018 professional development opportunities offered to schools:

- *United in Best Practice : 2017 July 28*
- *Cognitive Coaching: 2017 August 10/11*
- *Board of Directors Networking & Best Practices Event: 2018 May 10th*

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 habitually seeks opportunities to disseminate and replicate high quality essential practices that increase pupil learning and school performance. SAM maintains a professional development depository found on the authorizer's website to offer added support to the schools. SAM and school leadership met as a group August 23,

2017 and February 22, 2018 and as individual leaders throughout the year to review annual reports, share lessons learned, solve problems and network best practices.

Portfolio Information

General Charter School Portfolio Data (as of June 30, 2018)

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 when Fully Enrolled | 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 2018 | Location | Charter School Demographic and Enrollment Information | Charter School’s World’s Best Workforce Report |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Math and Science Academy | 4043 | No | 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-6 | 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-7 | 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 Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Program | Officially Recognized Instructional Preschool Program to provide early childhood education and preparation for transition to kindergarten for children ages 3-5 | Officially Recognized Instructional Prekindergarten 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 2018

In FY 2018, 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 2018, 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 2018, 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.

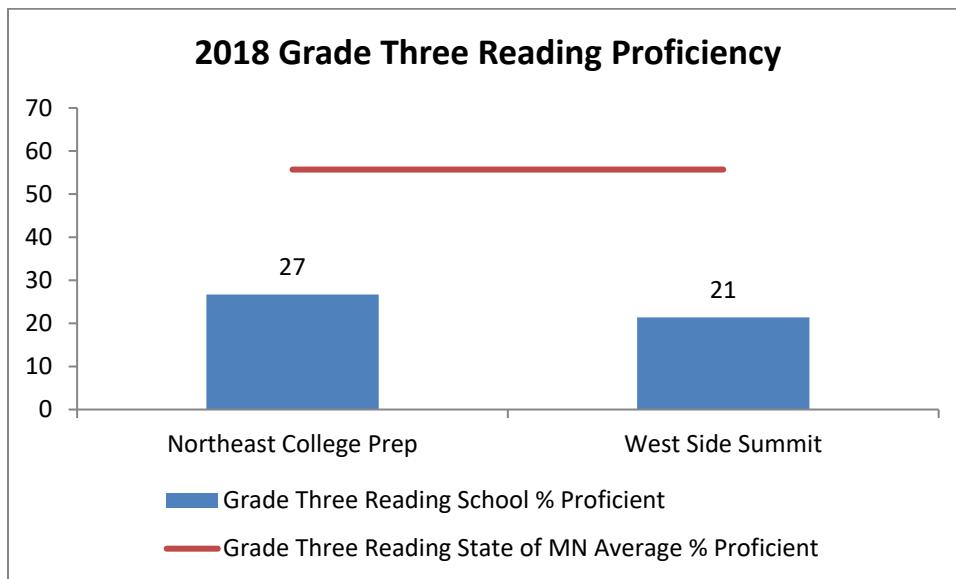
World’s Best Workforce

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 reports, site visit reports, required assessments and WBWF goals . Additionally, SAM monitors how the governing board is informed of student achievement and WBWF progress.

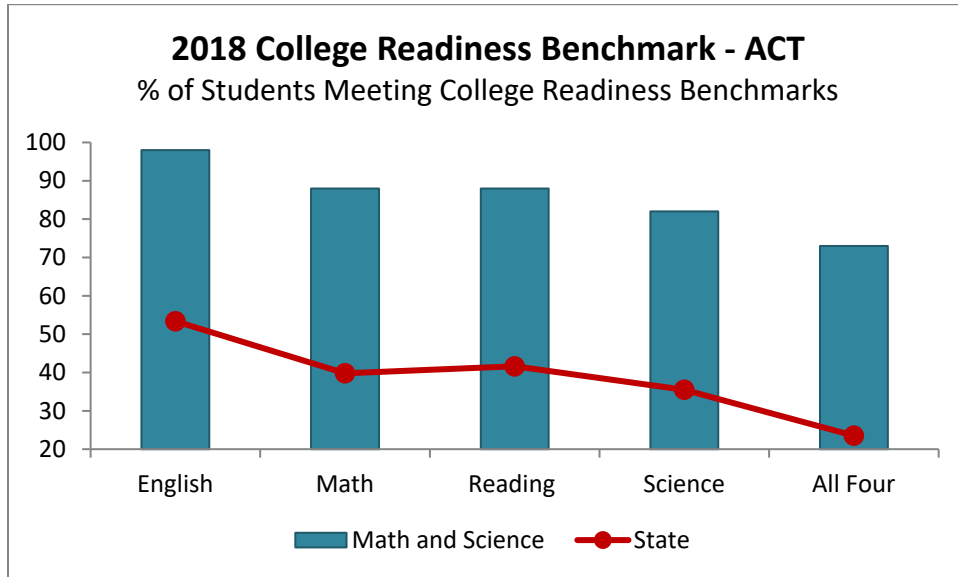
World Best Workforce Goal: All Third Graders Can Read at Grade Level

NECP and WSS continue to struggle to achieve the “all third graders can read at grade level” goal. SAM requires continuous improvement plans and progress updates to better understand and monitor the school’s plans to increase student reading. Technical support is provided to the schools per the school’s request.



World Best Workforce Goal: Graduation Rate and College Readiness

MSA’s ACT results show students are performing substantially higher in all content areas compared to the state. Per MDE NorthStar graduation/college readiness reporting (2017 data), MSA’s four-year graduation rate is 98% compared to the state’s four-year graduation rate of 83%. MSA’s graduation rate increased 8% over a three-year period; 90% to 98%. MSA’s seven-year graduation rate is 100% compared to the state’s seven-year graduation rate of 87%. 88% of MSA students earned one year of credit within two years of enrollment in a higher institution of learning compared to the state average of just 58%.



Academic Performance

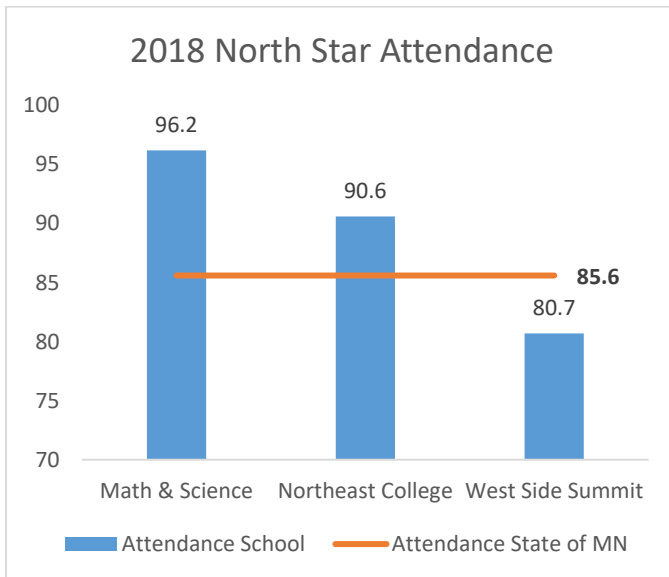
Present outcome data regarding key academic performance indicators your organization used when evaluating your portfolio of charter schools. Provide a narrative analysis of this data, indicating strengths and areas for improvement.

SAM’s portfolio of academic performance remains askew. MSA is high performing and consistently demonstrates stellar academic performance. The school consistently exceeds both the state and resident district in school-wide MCA (reading, math and science) proficiency. NECP and WSS, schools less than five years old and who continue to do yearly grade expansions struggle to improve student learning. The schools consistently perform below both the state and resident district in school-wide MCA (reading, math and science) proficiency. SAM’s observations and findings suggest deficiencies in the alignment of curriculum/standards, a weak implementation of data driven instruction, and low expectations of students are contributing factors. Most concerning, NECP and WSS lack a school culture conducive to strong academic and student success which is regularly conveyed to administration. How best to address the needs of the changing and diverse school demographics is an ongoing discussion.

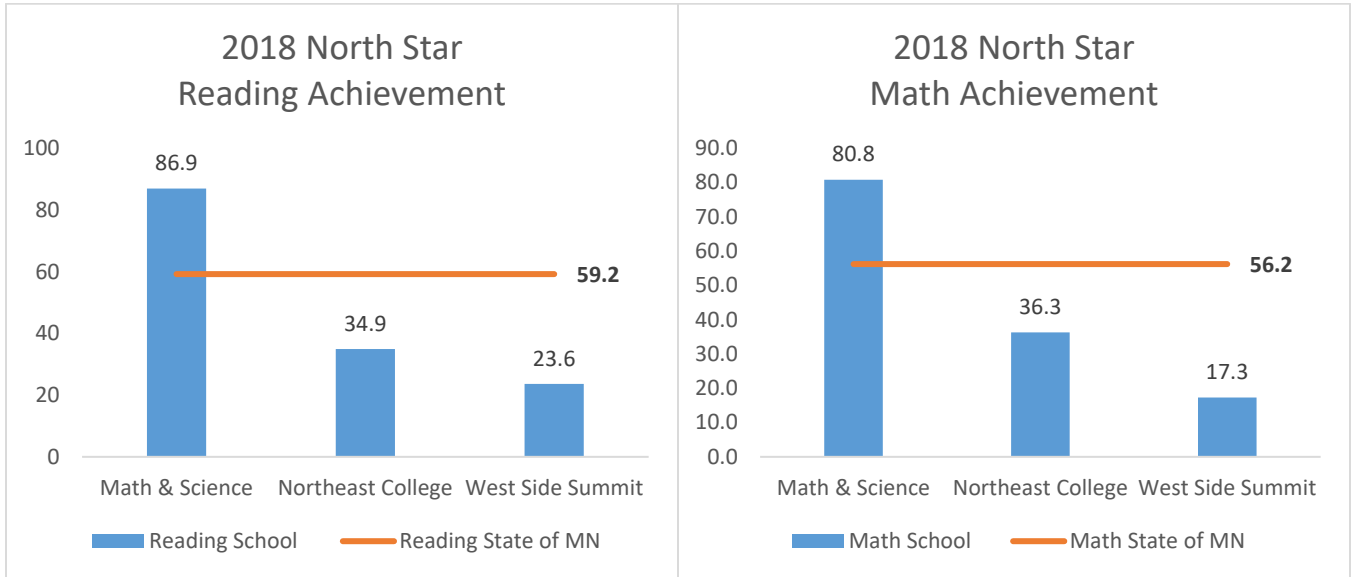
North Star Accountability System for Schools and Districts - In Support of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 Accountability Indicators:

| | State | MSA | NECP | WSS |
|--|-------|------|------|------|
| Continued Attendance | 85.6 | 96.2 | 90.6 | 80.7 |
| Achievement | | | | |
| • Reading | 59.2 | 86.9 | 34.9 | 23.6 |
| • Math | 56.2 | 80.8 | 36.3 | 17.3 |
| Math Progress | | | | |
| • Improved & Maintained | 64.9 | 81.2 | 52.0 | 25.4 |
| • Decreased | 35.1 | 18.8 | 48.0 | 74.7 |
| Reading Progress | | | | |
| • Improved & Maintained | 68.0 | 77.8 | 58.4 | 41.6 |
| • Decreased | 32.0 | 22.2 | 41.6 | 58.4 |
| ELL Progress Toward Target | 67.0 | N/A | 82.0 | 67.0 |
| ELL Met Target | 48.5 | N/A | 61.2 | 27.6 |
| Graduation Rate (year 2018 data from the prior year) | | | | |
| • 4 Year | 82.7 | 98.1 | N/A | N/A |
| • 7 year | 86.9 | 100 | | |
| College Readiness (High school graduation year 2017) | | | | |
| • IHE Enrolled After 16 Months | 71.0 | 92.0 | N/A | N/A |
| • Earned One Year Credit Within 2 Years | 58.0 | 88.0 | | |
| Participation | 97.7 | 99.7 | 100 | 100 |

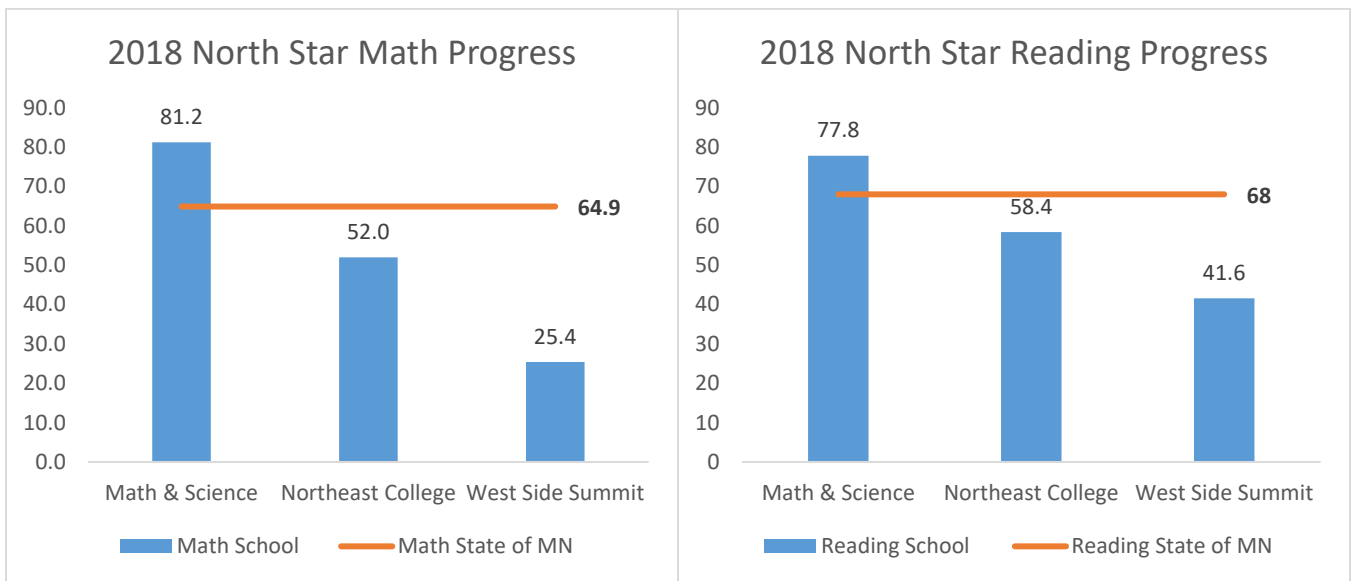
Students Attending School Regularly



Academic Achievement

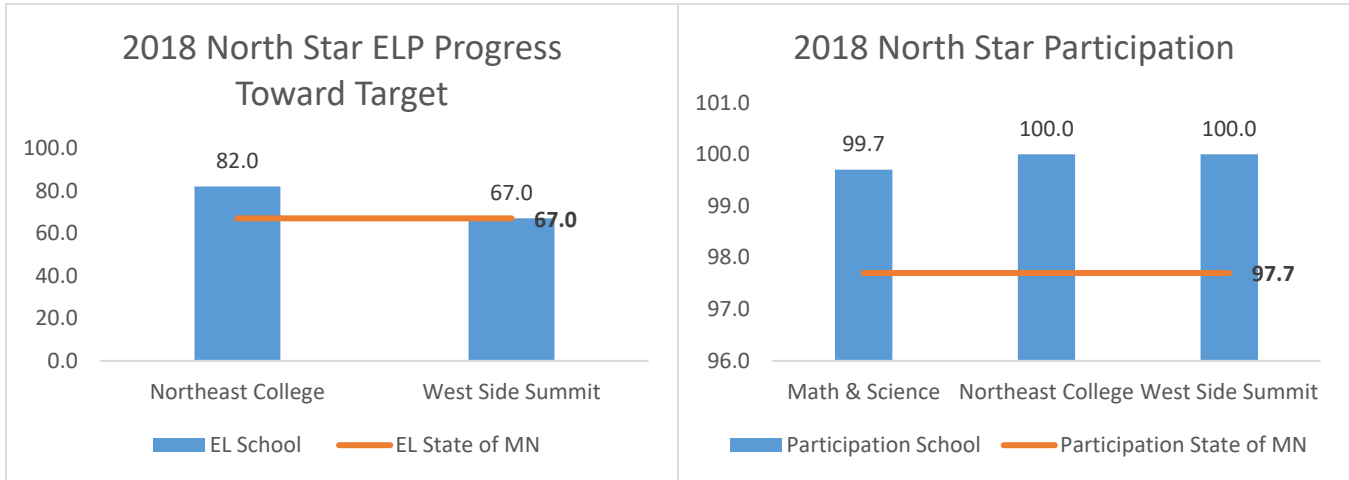


Academic Progress



Progress Toward English Language Proficiency

Test Participation



of SAM schools
Achieving Indicators
/ # SAM schools with
reportable results
2018 2017 2016

| Academic Indicators | | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 |
|---------------------|---|------|------|------|
| | 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 | 1/3 |
| | FRL proficiency rate > state FRL proficiency rate | 1/3 | 1/3 | 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.

All schools (MSA, NECP and WSS) continue to display mission and vision fidelity. Governance data suggests all school boards are diverse, satisfactorily competent and effective in school oversight. All schools conducted board meetings on a regular basis (monthly) with the recording and website posting of meeting minutes reviews school policies and practices. All schools used board committees to increase board effectiveness and efficiency. All schools include academic performance as an agenda item in board reporting. All schools provided board trainings/professional development as determined by school needs. All schools held annual board elections per school policy.

Law/regulation compliance and mandated reporting remain a challenge for two of the three schools (NECP and WSS) and needs improvement and the attention of both the board and administration. The omission and timeliness of data/information is pervasive. Minimal progress was made even with authorizer communications of concern. An authorizer corrective action mandate with a correction due date produced better results.

of SAM schools
Achieving Indicators
/ # SAM schools with
reportable results
2018 2017 2016

| 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.

Two-of the three (MSA and NECP) schools received the MDE 2018 Finance Award for 2017 reporting. Financial audits (FY18) for all the schools were conducted in a timely manner and cited as “clean”; no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. A monthly authorizer review of finance reports shows all schools are fiscally responsible in managing cash flow. Two of the schools (MSA and WSS) increased the fund balance in FY18. One school (MSA) continues to increase their fund balance and exceeds the fund balance charter contract requirement by 15%.

SAM reviewed all 2017-2018 charter school and WBWF annual reports, year-end finance audits, audited school websites for compliance and met with school administration to dialogue about successes, areas in need of improvement and those in need of immediate attention.

MSA’s waiting list continues to grow. NECP and WSS on the other hand continue to experience enrollment shortfalls, thus impacting the school’s ability to increase the fund balance. NECP and WSS are informed increasing the fund balance to assure fiscal viability and charter contract compliance are areas in need of improvement and must be addressed.

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.

The charter contract agreement and strategic plan achievements are also considered as performance indicators in the evaluation of SAM’s portfolio. MSA, the mature school consistently meets and or exceeds its charter contract goals. Whereas, NECP and WSS, less developed and growing pains, continue to struggle when meeting charter contract goals, academic goals specifically. Conversely, MSA and NECP were designated by MDE as high-quality charter schools.

All schools are actively implementing strategic plans to further school improvement and effectiveness.