

Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Commissioner-Approved Authorizing Plan (AAP)

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Osprey Wilds

Environmental Learning Center

Five-Year Authorizing Plan

Introduction

The Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (Osprey Wilds) is a non-profit, residential environmental learning center nestled on the shores of Grindstone Lake near Sandstone, Minnesota. The Center offers a great variety of environmental learning experiences for people of all ages, with programming in natural history and science, team building, adventure programming, and outdoor/environmental education. The mission of Osprey Wilds is to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning. The vision of Osprey Wilds is a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

Osprey Wilds began in 1968 when the current property was bequeathed to the National Audubon Society by Dr. Marguerite Schwyzer. The land was then transferred to the Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, a separate private, 501(c) non-profit organization. Since that time, Osprey Wilds has served as a residential and day-use education facility for small groups of international students, college students, adults, and school groups.

In 2003, Osprey Wilds became a sponsor of charter schools in order to further its mission and expand its educational programming. That year, Osprey Wilds was granted authority by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to sponsor charter schools under Minnesota statute. In response to statutory change in 2009, Osprey Wilds renewed its commitment to charter schools and became an approved charter school authorizer in December 2010. Since that time, Osprey Wilds has grown to become the largest authorizer of charter schools in Minnesota by number of schools authorized. Osprey Wilds remains committed to authorizing charter schools as an effective vehicle for advancing the organization's mission and vision.

The Osprey Wilds Charter School Division (CSD) is located in Minneapolis and conducts oversight and evaluation of all schools authorized by Osprey Wilds throughout the state. The CSD is comprised of professionals with charter school authorizing and evaluation expertise. This includes both employees of Osprey Wilds and contracted evaluators. The CSD is overseen and monitored by the Charter School Committee (CSC) and the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors.

Ultimately, it is the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors that makes the high-stakes decisions regarding the ongoing authorization of any particular school.

In 2015, Osprey Wilds participated in MDE's Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) and earned an overall score of 3.44 out of 4.00 and an overall performance rating of Satisfactory. As such, Osprey Wilds is eligible to submit its authorizing plan for the next five years to replace its current approved authorizer application. The following is Osprey Wilds' five-year authorizing plan; it is directly aligned to the performance measures in MAPES and is divided into two parts: Part A – Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure, and Part B – Authorizer Processes and Decision Making. The primary purpose of Part A is to demonstrate Osprey Wilds' capacity and commitment to further the purposes of Minnesota's Charter School Law, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 124E. The primary purpose of Part B is to describe Osprey Wilds' standards, practices, and processes for determining high-stakes decisions regarding schools' academic, operational, financial, and environmental education performance.

Statement of Public Domain

Osprey Wilds places this document in the public domain for the charter school community. The charter school community is free to adopt and utilize this document provided Osprey Wilds is acknowledged.

Part A: Authorizer Capacity and Infrastructure

Measure A.1 – Authorizer Mission: *The authorizer has a clear and compelling mission for charter school authorizing.*

Essential Elements:

- The mission is stated and fully aligns with Minnesota charter school law.
- The response includes a description of how the process of chartering schools is a way for the organization to carry out its mission.

Narrative:

The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for Minnesota students through effective charter school authorizing. This mission is distinct from and aligned to the organization’s overall mission to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning.

Osprey Wilds’ authorizing mission fully aligns with Minnesota charter school law and its requirements of authorizers. Additionally, Osprey Wilds’ mission is aligned to the primary purpose of the charter school law which is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement (by ensuring quality academic outcomes for students). The authorizing mission also aligns to the first additional purpose, which is to increase learning opportunities for all pupils (by ensuring environmental literacy outcomes for students). Osprey Wilds is unique as an authorizer in that we use the charter contract to require schools to engage students in experiential environmental education activities designed to increase students’ environmental literacy (i.e., “a connection and commitment to the environment”). Osprey Wilds monitors and evaluates the environmental education performance of schools as a “fourth pillar” of school performance alongside academic, financial, and operational performance, and ultimately makes high-stakes decisions based on performance in all four areas.

Measure A.2 – Authorizer Vision and Organizational Goals: *The authorizer has a comprehensive vision for charter school authorizing with clear organizational goals and time frames for achievement that are aligned with the purposes of Minnesota law.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer’s vision addresses, with specificity, the desired characteristics of the schools it will charter.
- The authorizer’s vision includes organization-specific purposes, if applicable.
- The authorizer’s organizational goals align with chartering vision and statutory purpose(s) per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, Subdivision 1.
- The organizational goals are measurable.

Narrative:

The authorizing vision of Osprey Wilds is to authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth. This vision is distinct from and aligned to the organization's overall vision of a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth. For Osprey Wilds, a high performing charter school demonstrates strong performance in the areas of academics, finance, operations, and environmental education as outlined in Osprey Wilds' Performance Evaluation Frameworks. Osprey Wilds' authorizing vision is aligned to Minnesota charter school law, as the primary purpose is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. The authorizing vision also aligns to the first additional purpose, which is to increase learning opportunities for all pupils. As an authorizer, we require schools to engage students in environmental education learning activities designed to increase students' environmental literacy.

Osprey Wilds' authorizing mission and vision are aligned to the organization's FY20-25 strategic plan and associated outcomes. **OW's primary goal is to strengthen the quality of its charter school portfolio.** The organizational strategic priorities that support this goal, as determined by the Osprey Wilds board, include the following:

1. Increase / improve school and portfolio academic performance.
2. Strengthen portfolio / schools' student environmental literacy.
3. Expand geographic diversity of schools.

Osprey Wilds' progress on this goal will be measured annually by the following:

Strategic Priority 1: Increase / improve school and portfolio academic performance.

1. Increase the percentage of schools that earn at least 75% on the Academic Performance Evaluation;
 - a. *Baseline:* In FY18, 48% of schools earned at least 75% of points. (Based on the most recent data available when the strategic plan was developed; FY19 evaluations are based on FY18 academic data.)
2. Reduce the percentage of schools that earn less than 50% on the Academic Performance Evaluation or maintain below 20%.
 - a. *Baseline:* In FY18, 15.2% of schools earned less than 50% of points. (Based on the most recent data available when the strategic plan was developed; FY19 evaluations are based on FY18 academic data.)
3. Increase the percentage of schools that Meet Standard on 100% (3 of 3) of governance measures on Operations Performance Evaluation.
 - a. *Baseline:* Through the FY19 evaluation (which includes data from the schools up to FY18), data shows that 30.3% (10/33) of schools met standard on 100% of governance measures (O.2.1, O.2.2 and O.2.3).
4. Increase the percentage of schools that Meet Standards on 100% (4 of 4) of financial management measures on Financial Performance Evaluation.

- a. *Baseline:* Through FY19 evaluation (based on FY18 year-end financial data), data shows that 52.9% (18/34) of schools met standards on 100% of financial management measures (F.1.1, F.1.2, F.1.3 and F.4).

Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen portfolio / schools’ student environmental literacy.

1. Increase the percentage of schools that earn an EE Program Rating of Well-Developed or Approaching Well-Developed.
 - a. *Baseline:* In FY19, 54.5% earned an EE Program Rating of Well-Developed or Approaching Well-Developed.

Strategic Priority 3: Expand geographic diversity of schools.

1. Authorize new or transfer into the portfolio at least one school from outside the seven-county metro area.

Measure A.3 – Authorizer Structure of Operations and Measure A.4 – Authorizer Staff Expertise: *The authorizer has a clear structure of duties and responsibilities and sufficient resources to effectively oversee its portfolio of charter schools. The authorizer has appropriate experience, expertise and skills to sufficiently oversee the portfolio of charter schools.*

Definitions:

- **“Expertise”** is defined as having knowledge, education, training, etc. in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.
- **“Experience”** is defined as length of time working in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.
- **“Skills”** is defined as effective application of experience and expertise in the areas of charter schools, curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law.

Essential Elements:

- Description of the capacity of the organization to serve as an authorizer, including the positions (e.g. employees, contractors, volunteers; both paid and unpaid positions) who will perform the authorizing duties and ratio of positions (FTE) to portfolio size.
- The authorizer describes a clear structure of duties and responsibilities, including required expertise, experience and skills in curriculum, instruction, management, facilities, finance and law in charter schools, at a level adequate to meet the needs of the portfolio.
- The authorizer describes how the organization will manage and safeguard information and records related to authorizing.
- An organizational chart that shows clear lines of reporting and authority/decision-making and, if applicable, showing projected organizational changes due to proposed expansion over the next five-year term.

Narrative:

Structure of Duties & Responsibilities

Osprey Wilds has a clear structure of duties and responsibilities to ensure effective oversight of its portfolio of schools. The Osprey Wilds Charter School Authorization Organizational Chart on page 10 identifies the key structure of the organization as it relates to charter school authorizing.

The Osprey Wilds Board of Directors is the party ultimately responsible for all Osprey Wilds authorizing decisions. The Osprey Wilds board oversees and engages in high-stakes decisions including new school proposals, contract renewal decisions, transfer schools, and expansions. The board also approves the organization's strategic plan and budget. The full board meets approximately six times per year, reviews Charter School Committee (CSC) reports at each board meeting and addresses action items as needed. At least one meeting / year includes training related to charter schools and authorizing.

All board meeting agendas include updates or action items from the Charter School Division and will follow the general schedule provided below:

- September: consider grade level / site expansion applications
- November: consider fast track renewal applications, consider CIA applications
- February: consider renewal applications
- March: consider new school applications
- April: new school RTO updates (as applicable), expansion RTO updates (as applicable)
- June: EOY updates
- Special meeting: training related to a variety of topics (e.g. equity, RTO processes, OW AAP, mergers, etc.)

The board uses a committee structure, including a Charter School Committee which is made up of four to seven members including at least three board members. This committee conducts reviews of authorizing activities including new school proposals, transfers, contract renewals, and expansions and makes recommendations to the full board for final decisions. The committee meets approximately six times per year and remains apprised of all authorizing activities of the organization through reports by the Director of Charter School Authorizing. The CSC also engages in training activities related to charter schools and authorizing.

CSC meeting agendas will follow the general schedule provided below:

- September: consider grade level / site expansion applications
- November: consider fast track renewal applications, consider CIA applications
- February: consider renewal applications
- March: consider new school applications
- April: training related to a variety of topics (e.g. equity, RTO processes, OW AAP, mergers, etc.), new school RTO updates (as applicable), expansion RTO updates (as applicable)
- June: training (as needed), EOY updates

The Director of Charter School Authorizing manages Osprey Wilds' Charter School Division, all day-to-day authorizing activities, CSD staff, and contracted evaluators. This position reports to the Osprey Wilds Executive Director who in turn reports to the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors.

The CSD is currently comprised of the following positions:

- Director of Charter School Authorizing (1.0 FTE)
The Director of Charter School Authorizing manages and oversees the CSD team to conduct oversight and evaluation of authorized schools. The Director of Charter School Authorizing is responsible for ensuring that the CSD implements Osprey Wilds' charter school authorizing responsibilities effectively in order to advance the mission and vision of the CSD. The Director ensures that the CSD implements its Commissioner-Approved Authorizing Plan with fidelity and consistency in order to strengthen the quality of Osprey Wilds' portfolio of charter schools.
- Associate Director of Charter School Authorizing (1.0 FTE)
The primary role of the Associate Director of Charter School Authorizing is to lead key evaluation areas, including academics and environmental education, as well as the new school start-up ready-to-open process. This position also takes a lead role on implementing key elements of the CSD strategic plan, which is designed to increase the quality of Osprey Wilds' charter school portfolio.
- Charter School Authorizing Specialist (1.0 FTE)
The primary role of the Charter School Authorizing Specialist is to work in collaboration with the CSD team to conduct oversight and evaluation of authorized schools. This position leads key elements of school performance evaluation and oversight, particularly in the area of school operations and governance performance as well as ongoing school improvement.
- Administrative Assistant (1.0 FTE)
The primary role of the Administrative Assistant is to gather, organize, and format charter school performance data to facilitate effective charter school performance evaluations. In addition, this position synthesizes portfolio-wide performance data for internal goal tracking and reporting, and supports organization-wide efficiency towards meeting strategic plan outcomes and other work outcomes.
- Finance Analyst (0.3 FTE)
The primary role of the Finance Analyst is to support execution of the financial performance evaluations, routine financial monitoring, and contracting processes.
- Contracted Evaluators (FTE varies from approximately 0.25 to 1.25 and based on need)
The CSD has consistently contracted with external experts to ensure sufficient staffing levels, expertise, experience, and skills to meet quality authorizing needs and the needs of Osprey Wilds' portfolio. These evaluators work under the direction of the Director of Charter School Authorizing to review new school proposals, transfer school applications, charter school renewal applications, and expansion applications and participate in ongoing oversight including site visits, board meeting observations, and monthly board and financial reviews. The number of contracted

evaluators and the number of hours or level of engagement of evaluators depends on CSD needs (see “Expertise, Experience, & Skills” section below).

In FY17 and beyond, Osprey Wilds anticipates an FTE to school ratio of approximately 1:8. This ratio is sufficient to meet the needs of the portfolio. Any future increases in portfolio size will result in increased FTE resources to maintain a comparable ratio.

Expertise, Experience, & Skills

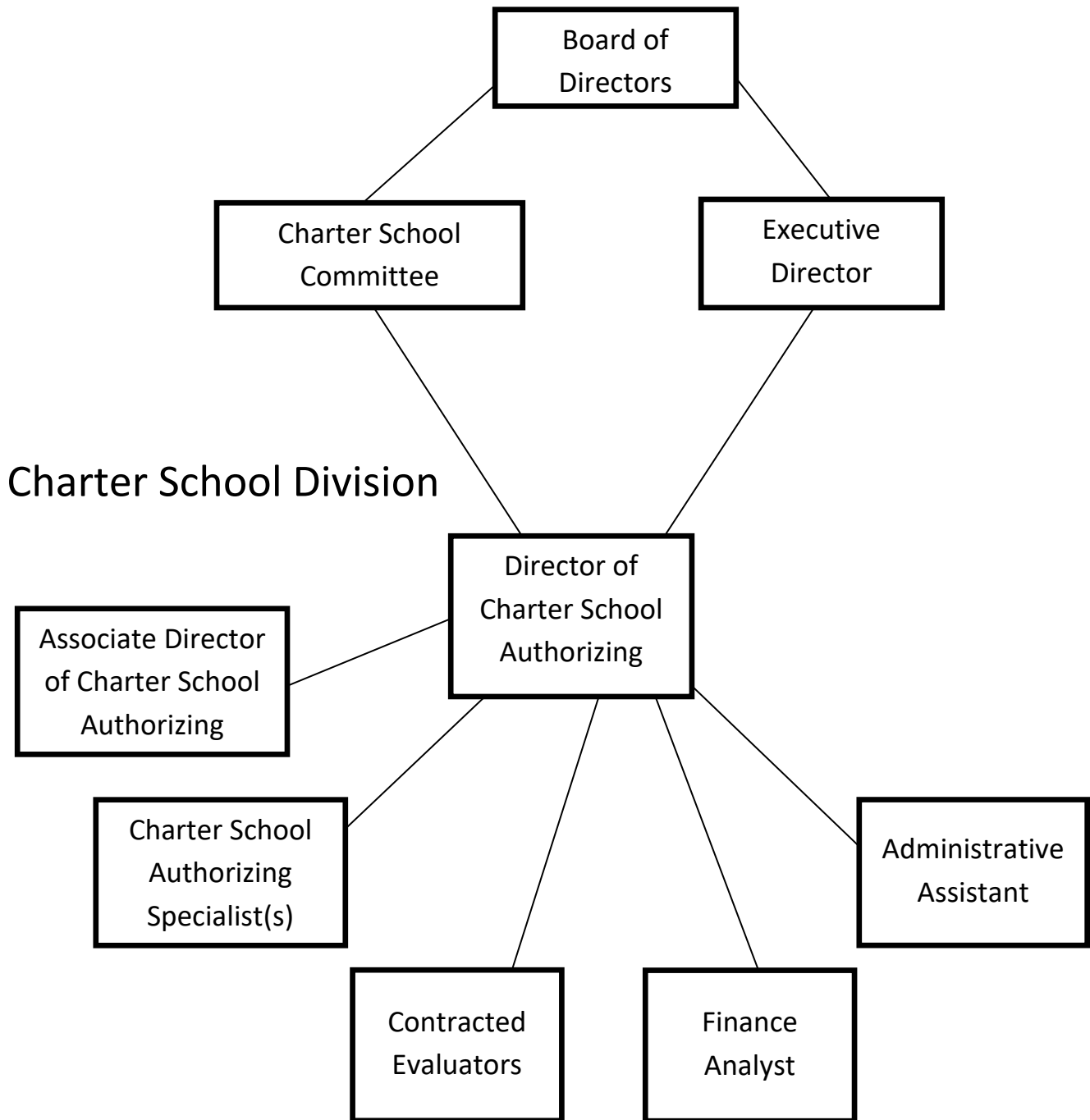
Osprey Wilds’ staff, consultants, and board members have extensive and diverse expertise, experience, and skills in five key areas: academics, finance, operations, law, and environmental education (EE). Osprey Wilds contracts with external consultants to supplement the experience, expertise, and skills of staff members; CSD staff also engage in professional development to increase the breadth and the depth of their expertise and skills. Staff and contracted evaluators are further supported by external legal counsel for additional expertise in specific matters, which is available as needed for any issues that arise.

Collectively, the CSD’s current staff and external consultants possess the expertise, experience, and skills identified in the chart below:

Key Areas	Expertise, Experience, and Skills possessed by:
Academics	4 staff; 11 contract evaluators
Finance	3 staff; 6 contract evaluators
Operations	3 staff; 10 contract evaluators
Law	2 staff; 1 external consultant
EE	3 staff; 3 contract evaluators

Note: The chart above is current as of July 2020 and is subject to change. Regardless of individual FTE changes, Osprey Wilds will maintain expertise, experience, and skills in each category and will retain FTEs necessary to do so.

Osprey Wilds Charter School Authorization Organizational Chart



Manage & Safeguard Data

Osprey Wilds has systems in place to manage and safeguard school and student information, and records relating to authorizing. This is accomplished through three primary means:

First, Osprey Wilds uses Dropbox for Business for cloud storage of digital files. The CSD has moved away from paper files – files are maintained digitally, or scanned to become digital. (As appropriate, paper documents are shredded.) Osprey Wilds staff has developed an electronic folder structure to support effective management of authorizing, including all administrative files and all school files. Dropbox for Business is secure. Access to Dropbox is limited to CSD staff and contracted evaluators on an as needed basis, and data is backed up continuously. See attachment “Dropbox_Security Whitepaper_2019” for more on Dropbox’s security features.

Second, consistent with Osprey Wilds’ data sharing agreement with MDE for de-identified student level achievement data, Osprey Wilds follows protocols to ensure security and protection of that data according to the terms of the Data Sharing Agreement. See attachment “ACNW_MDE Authorizer Data Sharing Agreement_Executed 05.12.2015.”

Third, Osprey Wilds uses Epicenter, a software program developed by the National Charter Schools Institute (NCSI) for charter school and authorizer document compliance and cloud-based storage. See attachments “Epicenter Features and Functionality” for a description of this program and “Epicenter Datacenter Security Summary_01.23.2020” for the security protocols in place to protect data uploaded to and stored in Epicenter.

Attachments Referenced:

- Dropbox_Security Whitepaper_2019
- ACNW_MDE Authorizer Data Sharing Agreement_Executed 05.12.2015
- Epicenter Features and Functionality
- Datacenter Security Summary_01.23.2020

Measure A.5 – Authorizer Capacity and Skill Development of Leadership and Authorizing

Staff: *The authorizer has a plan to build the knowledge and skill base of its authorizing leadership and staff through professional development. The authorizer has a plan to provide professional development aligned with its operations, vision and goals for overseeing its portfolio of charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes a plan to offer professional development to authorizing leadership and staff.
- The authorizer describes the frequency and nature of potential professional development as well as personnel expected to attend.
- The authorizer describes how the professional development aligns with its operations, vision and goals for the portfolio of charter schools.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds is committed to and provides ongoing professional development to authorizing leadership and staff that aligns to our operations, vision, and goals for our portfolio of schools. This is accomplished by:

1. **Sending staff to specific mission- and vision-aligned conferences, workshops, and trainings in Minnesota and nationally.** Examples of potential trainings include: the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Leadership Conference, A-GAME convenings, and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Conference. In addition to participating in such professional development, Osprey Wilds staff members engage in pre-event planning and post-event reflection. Specifically, we collaboratively review session descriptions and discuss which are the most appropriate sessions for each staff person to attend in order to increase the breadth and depth of each staff member's expertise and skills. Moreover, we engage in post-event reflection discussions to highlight our learnings and takeaways.
2. **Engaging staff in job-embedded professional development.** This happens through staff meetings, internal staff trainings, ongoing consultations, and on-the-job training. Osprey Wilds staff and consultants leverage one another's expertise to develop the knowledge and skills of all staff members. Contracted evaluators and staff meet approximately quarterly to review site visit documents, governance evaluation tools, and performance frameworks to deepen our collective understanding and make improvements to our operations as appropriate. New staff and contracted evaluators accompany experienced staff or contractors on school site visits, board meeting observations, or other meetings to provide on-the-job training.
3. **Setting and evaluating annual professional development goals aligned to Osprey Wilds' operations, vision, and goals as part of the staff evaluation process.** Through the annual employee performance evaluation process, Osprey Wilds staff members engage in professional development goal setting, planning, and reflection. This process ensures that professional development is proactive, measured, and evaluated. Professional development is differentiated, customized to meet the needs of authorizing leadership and staff, and aligned to Osprey Wilds' operations, vision, and goals. For example, the staff person who leads environmental education evaluation regularly attends environmentally-focused professional development such as the North American Association for Environmental Education, while other staff more engaged with academic oversight and data attend trainings like the Minnesota Assessment Conference. National conferences, such as the NACSA Leadership Conference, are important professional development opportunities for all staff members to attend, not only to develop each individual's particular areas of need but also to make and continue to deepen connections with authorizers within Minnesota and across the nation. CSD staff members are expected to participate annually in at least one national or international professional development opportunity (such as the NACSA Leadership Conference or site visits to schools and authorizers outside of Minnesota) and at least one Minnesota PD opportunity (such as the MN Charter School Conference or the MN Assessment Conference). Staff will also participate in job-embedded professional development and other PD described in this section.

4. **Networking with authorizing colleagues in Minnesota and nationally.** Osprey Wilds staff and contractors actively engage with other authorizers in Minnesota and across the country to deepen knowledge and skills. This happens through ongoing participation in Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) meetings, consultations with other Minnesota and national authorizers, and working with other Minnesota authorizers on projects. Osprey Wilds contracted evaluators have active direct experience working with other authorizers and charter schools in Minnesota and share their learning with Osprey Wilds staff and leadership.
5. **Engaging in state and national charter school task forces, work groups, and other initiatives.** Osprey Wilds intends to keep abreast of and participate in other opportunities that impact the charter and authorizing sectors in Minnesota and nationally. In the past, CSD staff members have participated in such initiatives, including but not limited to CSP grant reviews, the MN Teacher Equity Steering Committee, and MDE work groups related to charter schools and authorizing.
6. **Training for Osprey Wilds Board and Charter School Committee.** The CSD staff provides ongoing training for Osprey Wilds board members at Charter School Committee meetings and board meetings. See section "Measure A.3 – Authorizer Structure of Operations and Measure A.4 – Authorizer Staff Expertise" above for more information on the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors and the Charter School Committee.

Measure A.6 – Authorizer Operational Budget for Authorizing the Portfolio of Charter Schools: *The authorizer has a plan to allocate resources commensurate with its stated budget, needs and responsibilities of authorizing the portfolio of charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- Anticipated five-year budget (SYFY 16-SYFY 21) outlining the following:
 - Anticipated revenue sources such as fees collected annually from schools and additional funds from outside sources.
 - Anticipated expenditures such as staff, travel, consultants and office costs.
 - Anticipated authorizer staff increases in relation to portfolio growth.
- The budget projects the number and size of schools in the portfolio.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds' FY21-25 budget is included as an attachment. (See attachment "OW CSD FY21-25 AAP Budget 07.01.2020.") The budget is a five-year projection and necessarily requires flexibility.

Revenues assume no increase of the general formula in FY22 & 23 and a small increase of 1.5% per year, which corresponds to authorizer fees; however, actual increases require legislative action. Revenues also assume modest enrollment increases that would in turn increase the overall revenue from authorizer fees. Additionally, other revenues include grants and sponsorships to support authorizing activities.

Osprey Wilds is not able to predict with 100% certainty what expenses such as staffing costs, legal fees, the price of stamps, etc. will be in five years, though numbers presented in the budget are based on sound historical data and assumptions moving forward. Overall, Osprey Wilds believes that this five-year budget reflects reasonable income and expenditure projections.

Changes in the size of our portfolio are expected to be modest with up to two new or transfer schools per year as well as up to two closures or transfers out per year. The number of authorized schools may deviate from the numbers indicated in the budget, in which case revenues and expenditures (included staffing) would be adjusted as needed.

Osprey Wilds has set a cap of up to 45 schools for this five-year plan. This includes sufficient flexibility should the charter school landscape change significantly, such as the departure of a large authorizer or multiple authorizers from the field. Osprey Wilds will not exceed the number of schools cap without submitting a revision of this section of our AAP to MDE.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW CSD FY21-25 AAP Budget 07.01.2020

Measure A.7 – Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest: *The authorizer implements a clear policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- Clear policy to address conflicts of interest in all decision-making processes concerning the portfolio of charter schools.
- The authorizer describes how the policy will be implemented (forms, process, etc.) in order to avoid conflicts of interest that might affect the authorizer’s capacity to make objective, merit- based application and renewal decisions, including avoiding decisions and interventions that hold the authorizer accountable for the school’s performance.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds’ conflict of interest policy is included as an attachment (“OW_CSD Conflict of Interest Policy_05.25.2016”). This policy clearly articulates that Osprey Wilds functions “only to monitor and oversee authorized schools, to assure compliance with law, and to support the establishment and success of innovative public charter schools. Therefore, Osprey Wilds shall not enter into the following types of contracts with any schools it authorizes: “Financial management, Administration, Accounting or auditing services, Lease of space.” Moreover, the policy states: “Any individual with a conflict of interest is prohibited from participating in any aspect of charter school oversight or engage in any deliberation or decision-making involving an authorized charter school or a charter school applicant in which the individual has a conflict of interest.” All individuals involved in any aspect of charter school oversight and decision-making, including CSD staff, contracted evaluators, Osprey Wilds’ Executive Director, members of the CSC, and Osprey Wilds’ Board of Directors (see Osprey Wilds’ Charter School Authorization Organizational Chart on page 7), are required to sign the policy document and

disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest when first hired / contracted / seated and annually thereafter, and also upon any change of their personal status or the status of Osprey Wilds' portfolio (i.e., receipt of a new or transfer school notice of intent to apply for Osprey Wilds authorization).

Additionally, to further ensure that contracted evaluators have no real or perceived conflict of interests that can impact high stakes decisions, Osprey Wilds has all reviewers of any new, transfer, and/or renewal school applications sign a conflict of interest statement. Additionally, Osprey Wilds evaluators are precluded from soliciting work from Osprey Wilds authorized schools as per their signed evaluator agreement. If an Osprey Wilds authorized school should approach an Osprey Wilds evaluator, the evaluator must notify the Director of Charter School Authorizing and an appropriate course of action is then determined to ensure no conflicts of interest. See attachment "OW_Evaluator Agreement."

Osprey Wilds is a residential environmental learning center (RELC). Osprey Wilds authorized schools may choose to take students to the RELC as part of their academic and environmental education programming. In fact, some Osprey Wilds authorized schools have been taking their students to Osprey Wilds for many years, including years prior to being authorized by Osprey Wilds. Additionally, some schools that used to attend Osprey Wilds have stopped doing so, and other schools have never taken students to Osprey Wilds. Participation at any level is at the school's sole discretion and has no bearing whatsoever on Osprey Wilds' authorizing oversight or evaluation of a school. Per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 2, and through this authorizing plan, Osprey Wilds is disclosing to the commissioner of MDE that any Osprey Wilds authorized school may potentially contract or purchase services from Osprey Wilds in its role as an RELC. Any such contract or purchase of service will be completely separate from the charter contract. Furthermore, Osprey Wilds authorized schools are required to document the open bidding process used in selecting Osprey Wilds for RELC related services. The granting or renewal of a charter school by Osprey Wilds is not contingent on the charter school being required to contract, purchase services, or lease (as indicated in the conflict of interest policy) from Osprey Wilds.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_CSD Conflict of Interest Policy_05.25.2016
- OW_Evaluator Agreement

Measure A.8 – Ensuring Autonomy of the Schools in the Portfolio: *The authorizer implements a policy to preserve and support the essential autonomies of the portfolio of charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes a clear policy to ensure school autonomy.
- The authorizer describes processes and procedures for implementing and executing school autonomy.

- The authorizer describes a focus on holding schools accountable for outcomes rather than on processes.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds demonstrates its processes and procedures for implementing and executing school autonomy through 1) the charter contract, and 2) policies on charter school autonomy and conflicts of interest.

Charter Contract

The charter contract used by Osprey Wilds is designed to preserve the essential autonomies of schools in our portfolio. See attachment "OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021," specifically:

- Section 2.2 of the charter contract clearly states the independent status of the school and that Osprey Wilds has no authority or control over operation, administrative or financial responsibility of the school except those stated in the contract which comply with state statutes.
- Section 2.3 of the charter contract further articulates the separation of financial obligations of Osprey Wilds and its authorized schools.
- Section 2.4 of the charter contract clearly states that neither Osprey Wilds nor a school has authority to bind the other party to a third party contract or agreement.

Additionally, Section 11.1(a)1 of the charter contract states contract renewal is based primarily on achievement of improved student outcomes (i.e., "improving all pupil learning and all student achievement") rather than on the school's processes. Exhibit P of the charter contract reiterates this point. (See attachment "OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021")

Policies

Osprey Wilds' policy on charter school autonomy is titled "Policy on Authorizer Role and School Autonomy." (See attachment "OW_Authorizer Role and School Autonomy Policy_05.25.2016.") Our processes and procedures are aligned to this policy, which stipulates that "Osprey Wilds must engage in responsible oversight of charter schools by ensuring that authorized schools have the autonomy to which they are entitled while being held accountable to statutory and contractual expectations." The policy further states that Osprey Wilds as the authorizer is not responsible "for the success or failure of individual schools, but for holding authorized schools accountable for their performance."

Osprey Wilds' Conflict of Interest Policy is also relevant to school autonomy. See attachment "OW_CSD Conflict of Interest Policy_05.25.2016" and section "Measure A.7 – Authorizer Operational Conflicts of Interest" above. This policy clearly articulates that Osprey Wilds functions "only to monitor and oversee authorized schools, to assure compliance with law, and to support the establishment and success of innovative public charter schools. Therefore, Osprey Wilds shall not enter into the following types of contracts with any schools it authorizes: Financial management, Administration, Accounting or auditing services, Lease of space."

Processes and Procedures

Osprey Wilds holds schools accountable for outcomes rather than processes. This is evident in Osprey Wilds' charter contract (see above), performance evaluation frameworks, and process for charter renewal. For a more in-depth discussion of Osprey Wilds' performance standards, holding schools accountable to outcomes, and making merit-based renewal decisions, see sections "Measure B.4 – Performance Standards" and "Measure B.9 – Charter School Renewal or Termination Decisions" in Part B below.

Osprey Wilds' evaluation and feedback processes provide another example of protecting school autonomy. Outcome-based performance evaluations, annual report evaluations, and board of directors' feedback all include both required and recommended actions as appropriate. Required actions stem from school performance deficiencies that relate directly to contractual expectations or statutory requirements. Recommendations reflect best practice but do not obligate a school to any particular course of action. These are clearly indicated as recommendations and not requirements.

Any technical assistance offered by Osprey Wilds to authorized schools is completely voluntary and not required. Osprey Wilds' approach to providing technical support to schools is further outlined in "Measure B.7 – Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance." As also described in that section, occasionally Osprey Wilds receives requests from schools for support that could potentially infringe upon their autonomy. Osprey Wilds thoughtfully considers our role as authorizer when preparing a response to these requests, and takes the opportunity to clarify the school-authorizer relationship.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021 (pp. 3, 7, 18)
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021 (pp. 39, 44 [Exhibit P pp. 2, 7])
- OW_Authorizer Role and School Autonomy Policy_05.25.2016
- OW_CSD Conflict of Interest Policy_05.25.2016

Measure A.9 – Authorizer Self-Evaluation of Capacity, Infrastructure and Practices: *The authorizer plans to self-evaluate its internal ability (capacity, infrastructure and practices) to oversee the portfolio of charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes a plan to regularly review its internal ability to oversee the portfolio of charter schools.
- The authorizer describes the organization's process to implement continuous improvement plans which will result in more effective authorizing practices.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds regularly evaluates its internal ability to oversee its portfolio of schools. We intentionally work to build capacity, infrastructure, and oversight practices through multiple

means. At the staff level, we engage in ongoing and planned self-evaluation of our internal capacity and practices to oversee our portfolio of charter schools. Staff meets approximately monthly to reflect on progress toward the strategic plan. These meetings also provide an impetus to identify new tools or strategies for conducting quality oversight. Through regular reviews of our mission- and vision-driven strategic plan, we routinely review our internal practices against our ability to oversee Osprey Wilds' portfolio of charter schools. Osprey Wilds tracks progress on meeting outcomes and tasks in our strategic plan through a monitoring tool that is reviewed and updated at each strategic plan meeting. If we determine we are not on track to meet outcomes or complete tasks in the strategic plan, we engage in a process of continuous improvement in which we: 1) identify the issue/deficiency, 2) identify the actions/strategies to resolve the issue/deficiency with corresponding deadlines, 3) identify the individual(s) responsible for carrying out the continuous improvement actions/strategies, 4) track progress of implementation at future meetings, and 5) upon completion, reviewing the impact/effect on the strategic plan/outcomes.

Additionally, as part of our self-evaluation activities, we ensure that we gather feedback from our portfolio of schools. For example, we gather feedback from schools at our annual Leaders Retreat, as well as through periodic surveys on Osprey Wilds processes and procedures (such as use of Epicenter and performance evaluation frameworks).

Measure A.10 – Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination: *The authorizer plans to disseminate best authorizing practices and/or assist other authorizers in high quality authorizing.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes the organization's process to share best practices and/or provide assistance to other authorizers.
- The authorizer describes the organization's intent to engage with other professionals (such as state or national associations) in order to promote high quality authorizing dissemination.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds is a leader among authorizers in Minnesota, sharing best practices and assisting other authorizers in high quality authorizing. Osprey Wilds engages with other Minnesota authorizers through MACSA (and other channels), as well as other authorizers nationally through NACSA (and other channels), to promote dissemination of high quality authorizing policies and practices. Osprey Wilds promotes mutual sharing of effective practices by:

- Participating in MACSA, including participation in MACSA committees.
- Collaborating with other authorizers on specific joint projects.
- Presenting high quality authorizer practices at conferences and workshops.
- Providing technical assistance to other authorizers in response to individual requests.
- Reaching out to other authorizers to offer or request support when warranted.
- Participating in NACSA, including the NACSA Leaders Program.

Measure A.11 – Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute: *The authorizer intends to comply with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statute.*

Essential Element:

- The authorizer describes its internal process which will ensure that it will comply with reporting, submissions and deadlines set forth in Minnesota Statute.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds staff use a shared electronic calendar to track all compliance deadlines, including reporting and submission due dates. Upcoming deadlines are discussed at weekly staff meetings as a standing agenda item to ensure that all staff members are aware of and that Osprey Wilds completes its compliance requirements on time. Additionally, Osprey Wilds meticulously follows the very clear directions provided by the highly qualified MDE Charter Center staff for submission of reports, affidavits, etc. in order to ensure they are fully compliant (i.e., submitted by the deadline and completed according to MDE's instructions).

Part B: Authorizer Processes and Decision Making

Measure B.1 – New Charter School Decisions: *The authorizer has clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate new charter school proposals. The authorizer outlines new charter school decision-making processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- Comprehensive new school application instructions, evaluative criteria, procedures, timelines and review process that address all the following elements:
 - Mission/Vision
 - Need/Demand
 - Primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement (Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, Subdivision 1) and how the school will report the implementation of it to the authorizer.
 - Additional purpose(s) and how the school will report the implementation of said purpose(s) to the authorizer.
 - Program designed for students to meet or exceed the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students (Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(15)(b)).
 - Academic plan: description of the school program, specific academic and nonacademic outcomes that students must achieve, educational philosophy and approach, school culture, curriculum and instruction, assessment and services for special populations.
 - Operational plan: governance and management, administration, human resource recruitment and development, student recruitment and enrollment, admission policy, school calendar, parent and community involvement, operational outcomes and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
 - Financial plan: short and long-term financial projections, budget(s), business management procedures, financial outcomes and facility planning.
- The authorizer’s review process includes clear and transparent procedures and rigorous criteria to evaluate new charter school applications.
- The authorizer describes the timeline of the new school application process consistent with statutory deadlines per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06.
- The authorizer’s new charter school application criteria are consistent with the authorizer’s performance standards/framework as described in B.4: Performance Standards.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds’ new school application and review process is explained in attachment “OW_New Charter School Application Guide (updated annually).”

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_New Charter School Application Guide (updated annually)

Measure B.2 – Interim Accountability Decisions (i.e. site/grade level expansions, official early learning program(s) recognition, ready to open and change in authorizer): *The authorizer has clear and comprehensive approval criteria and process standards to rigorously evaluate school opening decisions as well as proposals of existing charter school expansion requests and interim changes. The authorizer outlines interim accountability decision-making processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

Essential Element:

- Comprehensive application instructions, evaluative criteria, procedures, timelines and review processes, including academic, operational and financial conditions upon which the authorizer approves or denies the following:
 - Site/grade level expansion per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, Subdivision 5.
 - Official early learning program(s) recognition per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, Subdivision 3(a) and Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.16 to 121A.19.
 - Change in authorizer requests per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 5.
 - Ready to Open per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, Subdivision 3(g).

Narrative:**Site/Grade Level Expansions (including Official Early Learning Program Recognition)**

Osprey Wilds' application and review process for site and grade level expansions is explained in attachment "OW_Expansion Application Guide."

Enrollment Cap Expansion

Osprey Wilds' application and review process for requests to increase the contractual enrollment cap is explained in attachment "OW_Student Number Increase Application Guide."

Change in Authorizer Requests

Osprey Wilds' change of authorizer application and review process is explained in attachment "OW_Change of Authorizer Application Guide."

Ready to Open

Once a charter school application is approved, Osprey Wilds will monitor the start-up group's progress as they lay the foundation for the school's success. Osprey Wilds is committed to working with the developers to ensure the creation of a successful school. To this end, Osprey Wilds will require developers to create and maintain a start-up task table specific to their school which includes at least the elements in the Osprey Wilds New School RTO Guide. (See attachment "OW_New School RTO Guide.")

The start-up period for a new charter school is typically quite challenging. The founders may encounter unforeseen difficulties in any of the areas noted in the start-up task list. Osprey Wilds will monitor authorized schools' start-up efforts to ensure the school is ready before it opens using the Osprey Wilds Charter School Ready-to-Open Calendar. (See attachment "OW_New School RTO Calendar.") In order to gain Osprey Wilds' final approval for opening, a new charter school must meet certain conditions for opening set forth in the RTO Guide.

As the school gets closer to its opening date, the founders will use the checklist in consultation with Osprey Wilds. If the start-up school's board is unable to meet one or more of the conditions, it will submit a plan detailing how the condition will be accomplished by June 1. In the event the conditions are not met by the deadline, Osprey Wilds may, at its own discretion, decide to postpone the opening of the school by one year. The developing school may also decide on its own to delay a year to have more time to open successfully.

Expansion Ready to Open

Once a charter school expansion (site, grade level, or early learning program) is approved, Osprey Wilds will monitor the school's implementation plan described in its application. The period prior to implementing an expansion or replication is critical in laying the foundation for future school success. As such, Osprey Wilds has established a series of benchmarks and required actions to ensure key pieces are in place prior to opening. These indicators are aligned with Osprey Wilds' environmental education, financial, and operations performance frameworks for operating schools.

As the expansion or replication gets closer to its opening date, the school will use its checklist in consultation with Osprey Wilds to help determine readiness to open. If the school is unable to meet one or more of the required conditions, it will submit a plan detailing how the condition will be accomplished by July 1. The planning year culminates in a final Ready-to-Open (RTO) meeting approximately 12 weeks prior to the start of the expansion or replication's first operational year (and typically no later than June 1).

The RTO meeting will allow the school to demonstrate work that has been done and will also serve as a checkpoint to ensure that the RTO benchmarks have been met. In the event that the school is unable to satisfy the RTO benchmarks, the school must provide a plan to fulfill the RTO requirements in a timely fashion or postpone the expansion or replication by one year.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Expansion Application Guide
- OW_Change of Authorizer Application Guide
- OW_New School RTO Guide
- OW_New School RTO Calendar
- OW_Expansion & Replication Ready-to-Open Calendar
- OW_Expansion & Replication Ready-to-Open Guide
- OW_Student Number Increase Application Guide

Measure B.3 – Contract Term, Negotiation and Execution: *The authorizer has contracts that clearly define material terms and rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer.*

Essential Elements:

- Sample charter contract that meets all following elements:
 - All current statutory requirements per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10.
 - Clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer.
- The authorizer describes a plan to establish contract outcomes/goals that are strategic, specific, measurable and time-bound.
- The authorizer describes its process for how its new contract(s) will be completed within 45 business days of the commissioner’s approval of the authorizer’s affidavit and the authorizer will submit to the commissioner a copy of the signed contract within 10 business days of its execution.
- The authorizer describes how its existing contract(s) will be fully executed no later than the first date of the renewal period.
- The authorizer describes how the contract will be amended for material contract changes when applicable.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds’ charter contract template is attached. (See attachments “OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021” and “OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021.”) The charter contract meets all statutory requirements. The relationship between Osprey Wilds as the authorizer and authorized schools is clearly defined in Article II of the charter contract, including the voluntary nature of this relationship. Section 2.2 specifically states that, except as provided in the contract, Osprey Wilds has no authority or control over operational, administrative, or financial responsibility of the school. Additionally, Article III identifies the primary role of Osprey Wilds as oversight of the school’s academic, financial, operational, environmental education, and student performance. School obligations are set forth primarily in Articles VI, VII, and VIII.

Osprey Wilds’ contracting process is explained in attachment “OW_Contracting Process (updated annually),” which includes a timeline to ensure that existing contracts are fully executed no later than the first date of the renewal period.

Note: The timeline in the contracting process guide is updated annually and will remain consistent with Osprey Wilds and statutory deadlines.

Osprey Wilds’ goal-setting requirements are provided in attachment “OW_Guide to Developing Contractual Goals_06.02.2016,” which specifically states that a school’s contractual outcomes “need to be written in SMART goal format” (i.e., outcomes are Strategic and Specific, Measurable, Ambitious and Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).

Osprey Wilds uses the process outlined in section “Measure A.11 – Authorizer Compliance to Responsibilities Stated in Statute” to ensure new charter contracts are completed within 45 business days of the commissioner’s approval of the new school affidavit and that signed copies of the contracts are submitted to the commissioner within 10 business days of execution.

When warranted, Osprey Wilds executes contract amendments for material changes in current school plans. Article IX of the charter contract outlines contractual requirements for amendments, specifically that all amendments must be in writing and signed by the contract parties (Osprey Wilds and the school’s board). Material changes that would warrant a contract amendment include but are not limited to: revised performance outcomes between Osprey Wilds and school, grade level expansions approved by MDE, and contract term extensions (not to exceed five operational years per contract). Osprey Wilds provides MDE with a copy of contracts with material amendments within ten business days of execution of the amendment.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021 (and specifically pp. 3-15)
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021
- OW_Contracting Process (updated annually)
- OW_Guide to Developing Contractual Goals_06.02.2016

Measure B.4 – Performance Standards: *The authorizer has a performance framework under which it executes contracts with clear, measurable and attainable performance standards.*

Essential Elements:

- Performance framework addressing all the following elements:
 - States the primary purpose of the charter schools in its portfolio is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement and identifies additional purposes per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.01, Subdivision 1, Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivisions 1(a)(1) and 1(a)(2).
 - The performance framework defines clear, measurable and attainable academic, operational and financial performance standards for all schools in its portfolio per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10.
 - The performance framework is designed to achieve outcomes that meet or exceed expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(15)(b).
 - Commissioner’s outcomes for public school students are the five goals of World’s Best Workforce:
 - All children are ready for school.
 - All third-graders can read at grade level.
 - All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
 - All students are ready for career and college.
 - All students graduate from high school.

Narrative:**Performance Frameworks**

Osprey Wilds' four up-to-date performance frameworks (Academic, Environmental Education, Financial, and Operations Performance) are provided as separate attachments, which states fulfillment of the primary purpose of charter schools is "the most important factor Osprey Wilds will consider in determining charter school renewal." (See attachments OW_Academic Performance Evaluation Framework, OW_EE Performance Evaluation Framework, OW_Financial Performance Evaluation Framework, and OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework.) These performance standards are set forth in Exhibit P of the charter contract, which also reiterates the importance of the primary purpose in renewal decisions. (See attachment "OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021.") Schools' fulfillment of additional statutory purposes is evaluated in Operations Performance Measure 1.1 – Mission & Vision.

Environmental Education

Per Minnesota's statutory requirements for authorizing, Osprey Wilds evaluates authorized schools' academic, operational, and financial performance. Osprey Wilds is unique as an authorizer in that we also evaluate the environmental education performance of authorized schools via the Environmental Education (EE) Performance Framework. The EE Performance Framework was created in FY14 and has gone through two distinct iterations (one in FY15 and one in FY16) since its inception. (See attachment "OW_EE Performance Evaluation Framework," which represents its current iteration.) EE performance outcomes and expectations set in Exhibit H (Environmental Education Goals) of authorized schools' charter contracts are aligned to the most up-to-date iteration of the EE Performance Framework at the time of contracting.

World's Best Workforce

Osprey Wilds and authorized schools agree to academic goals and performance measures that are part of the charter contract through Exhibit G. Most academic performance measures in these contracts are aligned to a WBWF goal area. A small number of contractual measures are not directly related to WBWF goal areas but are aligned to performance in the Osprey Wilds indicator areas of mission-fulfillment and attendance. Each measure is weighted to indicate its overall significance in fulfilling the primary purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. These weighted percentages are agreed upon by Osprey Wilds and the school and are included in Exhibit G. The school earns a rating on each measure based on the school's performance over the term of the contract. Each performance rating is assigned a point value.

Osprey Wilds conducts an Academic Performance Evaluation annually and a final Academic Performance Evaluation as part of the Renewal Evaluation to determine progress on overall student achievement at the school as evidenced by the school's attainment of the contractual goals in the charter contract. Because the WBWF goal areas are aligned to the Osprey Wilds indicator areas, this serves as an annual analysis of the school's progress toward its WBWF goals.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Academic Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_EE Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_Financial Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021 (Exhibit P, pp. 38-45)

Measure B.5 – Authorizer’s Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio Charter

Schools: *The authorizer has processes to monitor and oversee the schools in its portfolio in the areas of academic, operational and financial performance.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes the criteria, processes and procedures it will use to monitor and evaluate the fiscal, operational and academic performance of the schools in its portfolio per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(7).
- The authorizer describes required academic, financial and operational reporting by the schools to the authorizer.
- The authorizer describes an oversight plan that clearly establishes the criteria, processes and procedures that the authorizer will use to evaluate performance and monitor compliance, ensure school autonomy and protect student rights.
- The authorizer describes how its ongoing oversight informs its standards and processes for intervention, termination and renewal decisions of the portfolio of charter schools (i.e. performance measures B.6 and B.9).

Narrative:

A school’s operating requirements, including its required reporting to Osprey Wilds, is provided in Article VI of the charter contract. (See attachment “OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021.”) Osprey Wilds’ ongoing evaluation criteria, processes, and procedures (including how this ongoing oversight informs our standards and processes for renewal decisions) are provided in Exhibit P of the charter contract. Based on Osprey Wilds’ ongoing oversight and evaluation, a school may be placed on formal intervention as indicated in Exhibit P and as fully described in Exhibit Q of the charter contract. (See attachment “OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021.”) Performance Indicator 4 of the Operations Performance Framework directly addresses student rights and includes measures related to admissions and enrollment, and due process and privacy of students. In addition, Operations Performance Measures 1.4 and 1.5 focus on protecting the rights of students with disabilities and English learners. (See attachment “OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework.”) See section “Measure A.8 – Ensuring Autonomy of the Schools in the Portfolio” above for Osprey Wilds’ processes and procedures related to school autonomy.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021 (pp. 5-11)
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021 (Exhibit P, pp. 38-45; Exhibit Q, p. 46)

- OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework (pp. 3-4, 10)

Measure B.6 – Authorizer’s Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Action and Response to Complaints: *The authorizer has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to address complaints, interventions and/or corrective action.*

Essential Elements:

- The authorizer describes standards, procedures and processes to address and resolve complaints, including forms if applicable.
- The authorizer describes standards, procedures and processes for intervention and a plan for implementing corrective action.
- The authorizer describes how its standards and processes for intervention, corrective action and response to complaints align with its ongoing oversight of the portfolio of charter schools (i.e. performance measure B.5).

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds’ standards, procedures, and processes for addressing and resolving complaints are provided in attachment “OW_Grievance Policy_05.25.2016.” Osprey Wilds’ standards, procedures, and processes for implementing interventions and corrective actions are provided in Section 6.7(c) and Exhibit Q of the charter contract. (See attachments “OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021” and “OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021.”) Based on Osprey Wilds’ ongoing oversight and evaluation, a school may be placed on formal intervention or corrective action as indicated in Exhibit P and as fully described in Exhibit Q of the charter contract. In response to a complaint, Osprey Wilds may engage in additional oversight activities as warranted, such as a focused site visit.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Grievance Policy_05.25.2016
- OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021 (pp. 7-8)
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021 (Exhibit P, pp. 38-45, Exhibit Q, p. 46)

Measure B.7 – Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance: *The authorizer has an established process to support its portfolio of charter schools through intentional assistance and development offerings.*

Essential Element:

- The authorizer describes its plan to provide support and technical assistance and in a manner to preserve school autonomy.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds provides proactive support and technical assistance that is based on demonstrated need and designed to promote excellent performance of, prevent problems in, and protect the

autonomy of the schools in our portfolio. In efforts to protect schools' autonomy, technical assistance offered by Osprey Wilds to authorized schools is completely voluntary and not required. Osprey Wilds' approach to preserving school autonomy is further described in section "Measure A.8 – Ensuring Autonomy of the Schools in the Portfolio" above.

Osprey Wilds engages in the following strategic support and technical assistance activities:

Resources & Strategic Support

- Osprey Wilds publishes and disseminates via e-mail and its website *The Sounding Board*, a regular resource designed to promote quality charter school governance. The content of these publications is specifically designed to prevent problems and identified primarily through OW oversight and evaluation activities (e.g. board meeting observations, review of monthly board meeting minutes, questions / concerns submitted by schools, etc.) and questions from school leaders and board members.
- During the school year, Osprey Wilds sends a monthly Environmental Education Update to schools with resources, ideas, and upcoming professional development opportunities. Archives of these updates are available in the Publications section of our website at <https://ospreywilds.org/charter-school-division/csd-resources-for-schools/>.
- Osprey Wilds' website includes an entire section devoted to resources for schools at <https://ospreywilds.org/charter-school-division/csd-resources-for-schools/>. These resources include Osprey Wilds related process documents such as Site and Grade-Level Expansion applications, as well as samples of our evaluation frameworks. This section also includes links to useful websites for charter schools, non-profit organizations, and environmental education resources. Furthermore, this section provides information on upcoming trainings and events that may be of interest to schools. Finally, this section includes a growing collection of strategic support resources that are proactive, responsive to needs, and promote excellence.
- The development of a quality annual report is important for charter schools as this is a key document for communicating the school's story to stakeholders and the general public and to provide key data to Osprey Wilds. Osprey Wilds creates guidelines for the development of the Annual Report/World's Best Workforce Report that will ensure the report meets statutory requirements and facilitates the creation of a high quality report. Schools are not required to use this template.

Compliance & Contractual Expectations

- Epicenter is a tool that serves as a key resource for Osprey Wilds authorized schools, empowering Osprey Wilds and its authorized schools to manage compliance and accountability while serving as a cloud based storage for important documents. Specifically, Epicenter provides schools with a calendar of compliance tasks for both MDE and Osprey Wilds to support school's administrative efficiency. We continually review how we use Epicenter to ensure that it meets our needs while maintaining school autonomy. Schools have the opportunity to add items that are useful to them and remove items that are not (assuming they are not required by Osprey Wilds).

- Osprey Wilds regularly engages with schools to provide ongoing feedback in a variety of compliance-related areas. For example, Osprey Wilds staff and evaluators regularly attend board meetings to observe, followed by feedback to the school to highlight strengths and point out compliance issues. Osprey Wilds presents at board meetings regarding school expectations; for example, staff present at the boards of schools in renewal to communicate expectations and describe the renewal process. Osprey Wilds staff and evaluators review monthly board minutes and financial reports, which are compiled in semi-annual board review documents.
- Osprey Wilds conducts evaluations on each school in our portfolio in the areas of academic, environmental education, finance, and operations performance. When possible, feedback from evaluation activities is presented to the schools' boards during a regular meeting to ensure their understanding of the criteria and the school's performance in relation to those criteria. We believe this provides critical technical assistance to guide schools' ongoing improvement efforts. Additionally, as school performance dictates, Osprey Wilds issues interventions. These interventions are designed to provide specific feedback to schools on areas of performance that are of concern along with key requirements to address those concerns. While Osprey Wilds does not provide direct assistance to support schools in addressing concerns, we strongly believe that through these interventions and the specific requirements we outline for schools to address, we are providing schools with needed guidance to improve their performance.

Professional Development

- Osprey Wilds hosts an annual Leaders Retreat. The annual Leaders Retreat is a professional development opportunity Osprey Wilds offers to school leaders, board chairs, and other key staff of Osprey Wilds authorized schools. Participation by each school at this retreat is voluntary with the goal of having a school leader and at least one board member from each school in attendance. Breakout sessions are led by school leaders, Osprey Wilds staff and evaluators, and other external experts and focus on improving capacity in the areas academics, finance, governance, and environmental education. Sessions are designed both in response to demonstrated needs of schools and proactively to address emerging issues. Overall, the conference is designed to promote excellence by connecting school leadership with people, information, and resources that can be tapped into to strengthen school performance.
- Osprey Wilds also hosts Environmental Education Workshops for teachers and leaders from Osprey Wilds authorized schools. This professional development opportunity is designed to build teacher confidence and capacity in relation to implementation and measurement of environmental education outcomes, as well as providing ideas on how to integrate EE in content areas other than science.

Measure B.8 – High Quality Charter School Replication and Dissemination of Best School

Practices: *The authorizer has an established process to promote, within its portfolio, the model replication and dissemination of best practices of high performing charter schools.*

Essential Element:

- The authorizer describes a clear plan for successful model replication and dissemination of best practices.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds disseminates best practices of high performing charter schools to school leaders, board members, and other key staff at Osprey Wilds authorized schools. Osprey Wilds' plan includes the following strategies:

- The **Sounding Board** is a publication of the Charter School Division that promotes high quality charter school governance practices. The content of these publications is specifically designed to prevent problems and identified primarily through OW oversight and evaluation activities (e.g. board meeting observations, review of monthly board meeting minutes, questions / concerns submitted by schools, etc.) and questions from school leaders and board members.
- During the school year, OW sends monthly **Environmental Education (EE) Updates** that include information and resources on best school practices and highlights specific successes of Osprey Wilds authorized schools. An archive of EE Updates is available in the Publications section of the CSD website at <https://ospreywilds.org/charter-school-division/csd-resources-for-schools/>.
- The annual **Osprey Wilds Leaders Retreat** brings together school leaders, teachers, and board members from Osprey Wilds authorized schools to learn about and share best practices. Sessions included a mixture of school leaders, Osprey Wilds staff or evaluators, and hired experts sharing their best practices.
- Osprey Wilds provides exemplars of best school practices to all schools via **Epicenter**. Such exemplars include but are not limited to sample policies, templates, and guidance documents.
- **Promoting school networking and sharing.** Osprey Wilds provides all school leaders and board chairs with easy access to colleagues to support the dissemination of best practices among schools via its [School leaders and board chairs contact list](#).
- Osprey Wilds hosts an **Environmental Education Workshop** for teachers and leaders from Osprey Wilds authorized schools. The workshop is designed to disseminate best school practices for environmental and experiential education.
- **Encouraging high quality charter schools to expand, replicate, and document best practices** by providing voluntary technical assistance, such as review of grant applications to pursue such activities prior to submission by schools.

Measure B.9 – Charter School Renewal or Termination Decisions: *The authorizer has clear and comprehensive standards and processes to make high stakes renewal and termination decisions. The authorizer outlines charter school renewal and termination decision standards and processes that will promote the growth of high quality charter schools.*

Essential Elements:

- Comprehensive evaluative standards, procedures, timelines and review processes to evaluate a school's academic, operational and financial performance for high-stakes renewal and termination decisions consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivisions 1(a)(7), 1(a)(8), 1(a)(13), 1(a)(14) and Subdivision 3(a) and includes the following:
 - Standards and process to evaluate the school's performance in meeting or exceeding outcomes adopted by the commissioner for public school students (Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(15)(b)).
 - Standards and process to issue a formal written performance evaluation of the school's contract outcomes to determine eligibility for contract renewal per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(8).
 - The authorizer describes clear standards for consequences for meeting or not meeting performance standards.
- School closure plan and describes the authorizer's role in the orderly closure of a school in the event of revocation, non-renewal or voluntary relinquishment of the charter per Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.10, Subdivision 1(a)(15), Subdivision 4 and Subdivision 6.

Narrative:

Osprey Wilds' renewal standards and processes are set forth in Section 11.1(a) and Exhibit P of the charter contract. (See attachments "OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021" and "OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021.") Exhibit P summarizes the renewal process:

During the final year of an authorized school's active contract, the school is required to submit an application for renewal that summarizes how it fulfilled the terms of its active contract, the strategic direction it plans for the years of a subsequent contract, and potential performance goals for a subsequent contract. Osprey Wilds CSD reviews that application, conducts a Renewal Site Visit, completes a Renewal Evaluation Report, and compiles a recommendation to the Osprey Wilds Board. Those recommendations are reviewed and accepted or amended by the Charter School Committee (CSC). The CSC's recommendations are then presented to the Osprey Wilds Board for adoption or amendment.

The Osprey Wilds renewal evaluation team, which consists of two to four staff and contracted evaluators, reviews the application and all available information and data, and conducts a renewal site visit. While site visits and evaluations are conducted annually, Osprey Wilds conducts a more in-depth site visit in the renewal year, informed by and building on previous years' evaluations and site visits. Osprey Wilds has protocols for site visits which include classroom observations, interviews of key stakeholders, board meeting observations, and facilities assessment.

Key documents related to charter school renewal include:

- A timeline and detailed description of the renewal process is provided in attachment “OW_Renewal Process (updated annually).”
- The renewal application and guide is included as attachment “OW_Renewal Application Guide (updated annually).”
- The renewal performance evaluation is comprised of the Academic Performance Evaluation Framework, EE Performance Evaluation Framework, Financial Performance Evaluation Framework, and Operations Performance Evaluation Framework. These frameworks are used to complete the Renewal Evaluation Report with a recommendation for the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors. (See attachments OW_Academic Performance Evaluation Framework, OW_EE Performance Evaluation Framework, OW_Financial Performance Evaluation Framework, and OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework.) This comprehensive Renewal Performance Evaluation Report includes the evaluation of the school’s performance in meeting its World’s Best Workforce outcomes (as explained above in section “Measure B.4 – Performance Standards”). The Renewal Evaluation Report becomes Exhibit O of a subsequent charter contract, should one be offered.

Note: The timeline in the renewal process guide is updated annually and will remain consistent with Osprey Wilds and statutory deadlines.

Grounds and procedures for charter revocation/termination and nonrenewal are provided in Article X of the charter contract. Osprey Wilds’ school closure process and plan is included as Exhibit M of the charter contract.

Attachments Referenced:

- OW_Contract Template-FINAL_Updated 07.01.2021 (pp. 15-19)
- OW_All Contract Exhibits_ Updated 10.08.2021 (Exhibit M, pp. 23-33; Exhibit P, pp. 38-45)
- OW_Renewal Process (updated annually)
- OW_Renewal Application Guide (updated annually)
- OW_Academic Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_EE Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_Financial Performance Evaluation Framework
- OW_Operations Performance Evaluation Framework