Oregon's Model Charter School Application

June 18, 2015

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

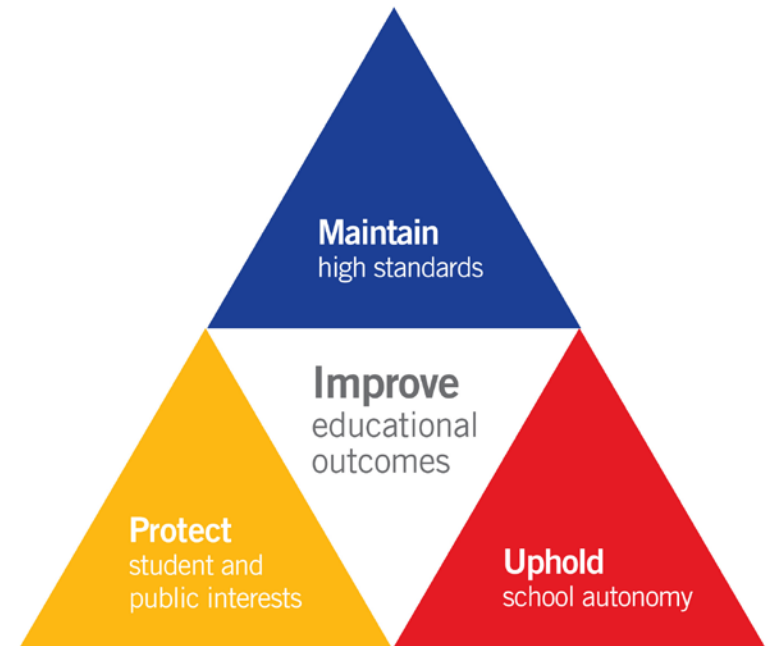# In this session you will learn...

- Who's NACSA?
- What is an authorizer's role?
- What's the plan for developing an Oregon model application?
- What does a quality application process look like?
- What does a quality application look like?
- How do you get to decisions?

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WHO IS NACSA?

About NACSA

- Mission: To achieve the establishment and operation of quality charter schools through responsible oversight in the public interest.

- Not-for-profit, non-partisan membership association since 2000

- Authorizer Development: application process management, strategic planning and training, models and templates, authorizer evaluation

Maintain high standards

Improve educational outcomes

Protect student and public interests

Uphold school autonomy

WHAT IS AN AUTHORIZER'S ROLE?

The Charter Bargain

School Autonomy

+

School Accountability

→

Improved Student Outcomes

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The Authorizing Process

The purpose is to improve the educational options available to children and families by...

Approving only strong, demonstrably viable applications

Renewing schools only if they meet or exceed performance expectations

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WHAT'S THE PLAN FOR DEVELOPING AN OREGON MODEL APPLICATION?

Why have a model application?

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that:

- includes **clear** application questions and guidance;

- follows **fair, transparent** procedures and **rigorous** criteria; and

- **grants charters only to applicants who demonstrate a strong capacity to establish and operate a quality charter school**.

OR Model Application Development Process

- Start with the NACSA Core and Crosswalk with Oregon Law
- Receive Feedback from OR Practitioners
  - "Designing Oregon's Model Charter School Application" 6/19, 11-12:00 Shilo, Whale 1
- Draft OR-Specific Application Materials
- Receive More Feedback from OR Practitioners
  - Webinar Tent. 6/30, 1-2:30
- Revise and Finalize

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WHAT DOES A QUALITY APPLICATION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

National Trends in Application Approval Rates
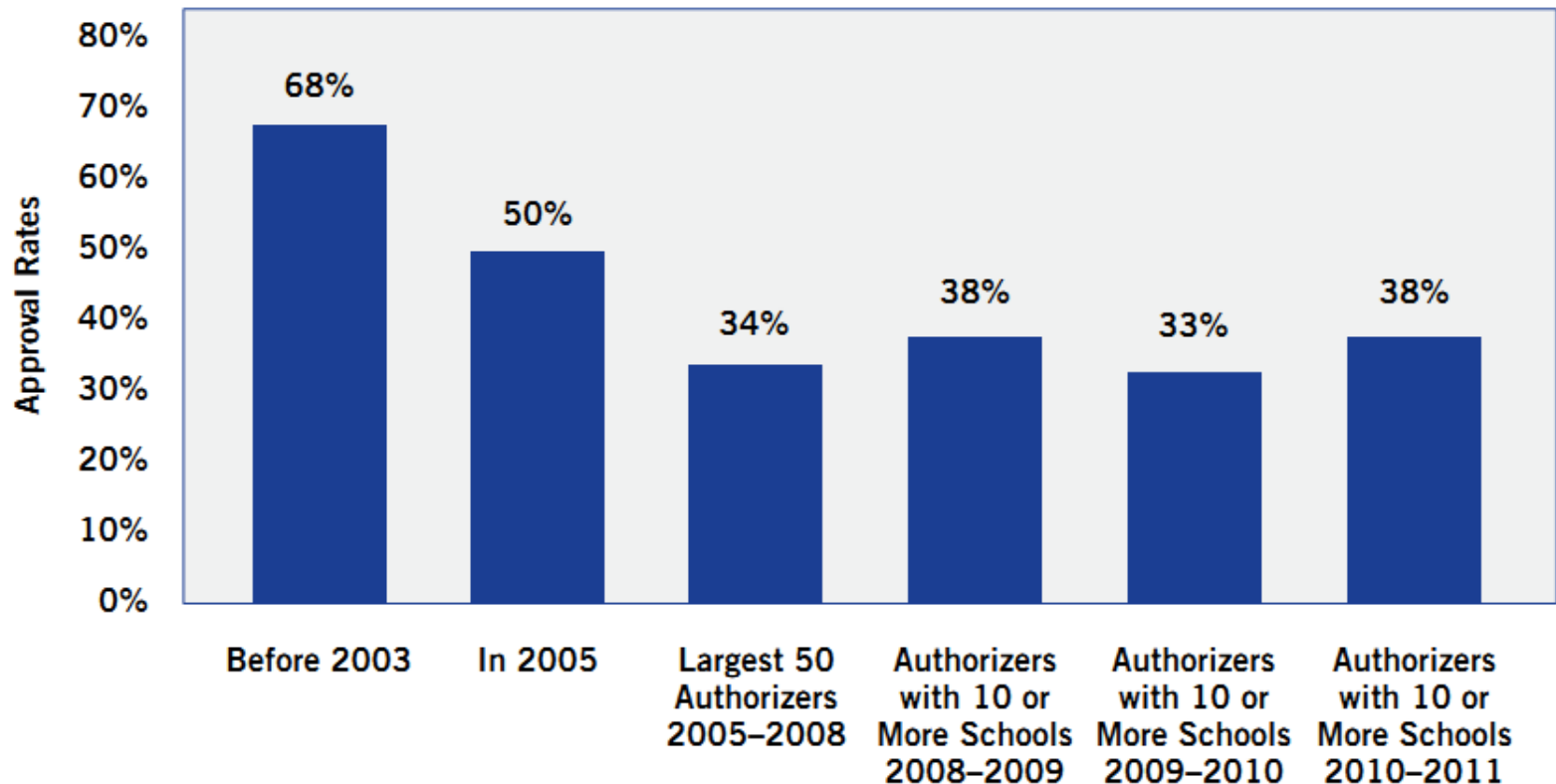
NACSA Decision Management

- Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
  - 10 application cycles (as of summer 2011)
  - Total applications: 136
  - Approval Rate: < 40%
- Florida Schools of Excellence Commission
  - 1 cycle
  - 52 applications
  - Approval Rate: 6%
- Orleans Parish (LA) School Board
  - 2011, 2012
  - Approval Rate: 14%
- Jefferson Parish Public School System
  - 2011
  - Approval Rate: 18%
- Tennessee Achievement School District
  - 2011, 2012, 2013
  - Approval Rate: 25%

CREDO Assessment of New Orleans Open Enrollment Charters

New Orleans Charters Significantly Outperform National Averages

2009–2011 ASSESSMENT COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGES IN 2009 STUDY
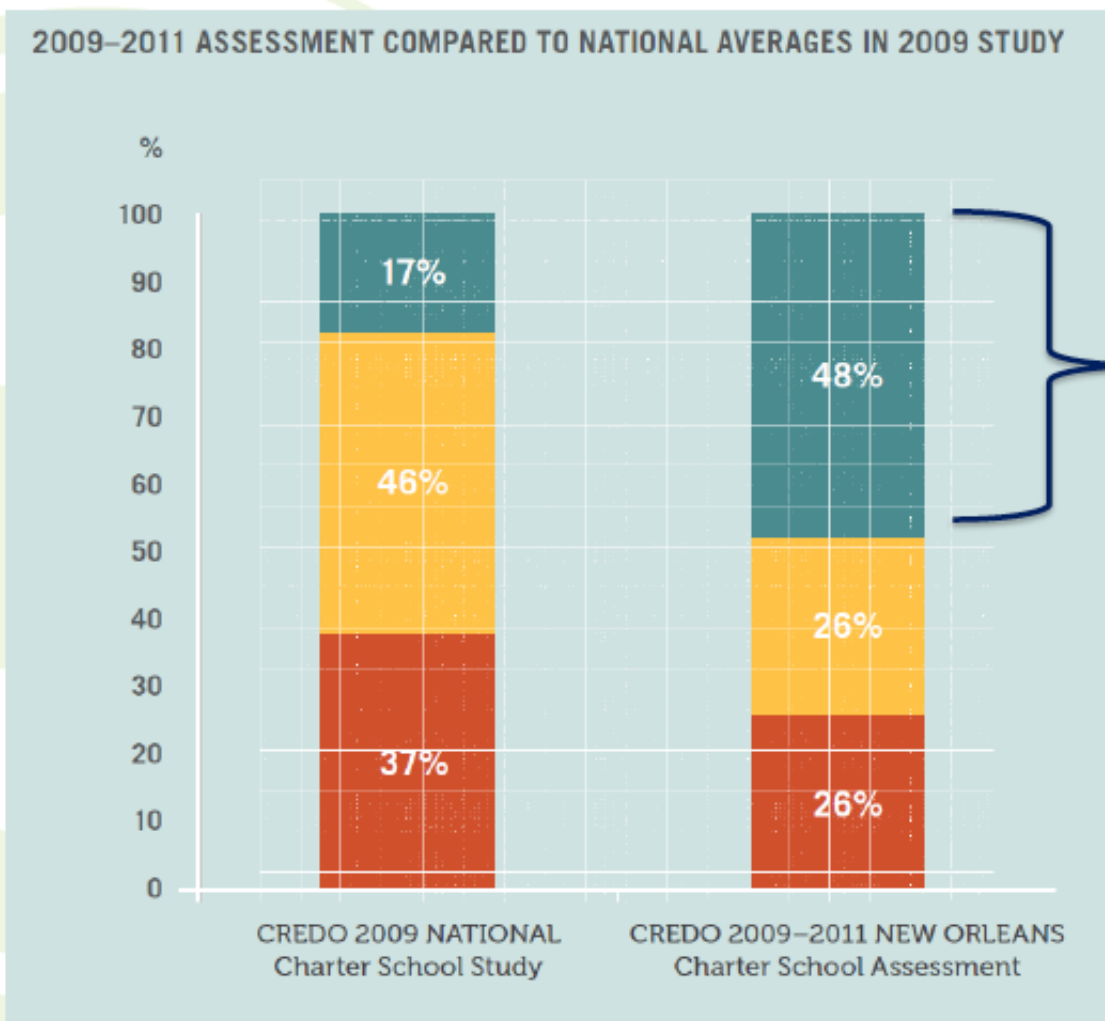
Almost **3X** as many NOLA charters achieve superior results compared to national averages.

- Results Superior to Statewide Traditional Public Schools
- Results Same as Statewide Traditional Public Schools
- Results Worse than Statewide Traditional Public Schools

CREDO 2009 NATIONAL Charter School Study: 17%, 46%, 37%

CREDO 2009–2011 NEW ORLEANS Charter School Assessment: 48%, 26%, 26%

Note: New Orleans data based on open-enrollment charter school achievement data only.
Source: LA Department of Education Data/Analysis by Center for Education Outcomes at Stanford University (CREDO)

Process Steps

- Assemble Evaluation Team
- Paper Review
- Due Diligence (experienced operators)
- Consensus Call
- Interview
- Written Recommendation
- Decision

Evaluation Teams

- Perspectives
  - National reviewers
  - Local reviewers

- Substantive experience/expertise
  - Educational program development and implementation
  - Organizational plan and implementation
  - Financial/business plan
  - Local context

- Team Size: 4-5 per team

Special Applicant Types

- Cyber Charter/Distance Learning
- Replication/Scale Up
- Alternative Education

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Evaluation basics

Evidence

- Application including attachments
- Due diligence (If applicable)
- Interview

Characteristics of a high-quality school plan

- Internally aligned
  - Cohesion of elements
  - Mission/vision connected
- Externally valid
  - Evidence based
  - Demonstrated track record
- Sufficient detail

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Rating categories

Rating	Characteristics
Meets/Exceeds the Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.
Partially Meets the Standard	The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet the Standard	The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission of the authorizer or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

WHAT DOES A QUALITY APPLICATION LOOK LIKE?

Key Sections of Model Application

School Overview

- ORS 338.045.2.a,b,c,g,h,u

1. **Educational Program Design & Capacity**

   - ORS 338.045.2.d,e,l,l,o,p,r,s,t

2. **Operations Plan & Capacity**

   - ORS 338.045.2.f,i,j,k,q,v,*w,y*

3. **Financial Plan & Management Capacity**

   - ORS 338.045.2.m,n,x

4. **CMO/Network Replication (if applicable)**

School Overview
ORS 338.045.2.a,b,c,g,h,u

- Mission and Vision
- Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population
- Education Plan/School Design
- Community Engagement
- Leadership and Governance
- Enrollment Summary

Educational Program Design & Capacity

ORS 338.045.2.d,e,I,l,o,p,r,s,t

- Program Overview
- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Pupil Performance Standards
- High School Graduation Requirements
- School Calendar and Schedule
- School Culture
- Supplemental Programming
- Special Populations and At-risk students
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- Student Discipline
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Educational Program Capacity

Educational Program and Capacity: Critical Questions

- Are choices for curriculum and instruction supported by evidence?
- Who will be responsible for developing and executing the educational plan?
- Are goals and expectations ambitious but realistic?
- Does the applicant have sound plans for serving students with special needs?
- Are the education plan priorities and needs accounted for adequately in the budget?
- Does the team have a strong track record and sufficient expertise to implement the educational program?

Operations Plan & Capacity
ORS 338.045.2.f,i,j,k,q,v,*w*,*y*

- Governance
  - Legal Status and Governing Documents
  - Organization Charters
  - Governing Board
  - Advisory Bodies
  - Grievance Process
- Staffing
  - Staff Structure
  - Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation
  - Professional Development
  - Performance Management
- Facilities
- Start-Up and Ongoing Operations
  - Start-Up Plan
  - Transportation
  - Student Safety
  - Insurance
- Operations Capacity

Operations Plan and Capacity: Critical Questions

- Has the team appropriately planned for all components of non-academic operations?

- Are anticipated operations costs reflected appropriately in the budget?

- Does the applicant have a reasonable and thorough start-up plan?

- Does the team have experience with non-academic operations?

- Does Board composition include experience and expertise necessary to ensure success and sustainability?

Financial Plan & Capacity

ORS 338.045.2.m,n,x

- Financial Plan
  - Plans for Financial Management
  - Plans for Annual Audit
  - Start-Up Budget/Cash Flow
  - Five-Year Budget/Workbook
  - Budget Narrative

- Financial Management Capacity

Financial Plan and Capacity: Critical Questions

- Does the budget accurately reflect the available funding sources?
- Does the budget include all the major cost centers associated with the operation of a charter school?
- Does the budget reflect going market rates (e.g., salaries, contracted or inter-organizational services and fees, facilities)?
- Does the budget include all expenses outlined throughout the proposal?
- Does the team have experience to meet fundraising goals?
- Does the team have the capacity to manage the finances to ensure financial sustainability and good stewardship of public resources?

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Evaluating ESPs/Networks/Existing Operators

- **Track record**
- Capacity (especially locally)
- Rationale for growth
- Financial viability
- Independence of governing board
- Management contract
- Rationale for changes to school model
- Plans to serve different student populations

HOW DO YOU GET TO A DECISION?

Consensus Calls

- Evidence-based discussion of the application sections
- Grounded in the rubric criteria
- Sometimes used to determine whether an applicant will advance to interview round/determine areas for further clarification

Capacity Interview

- In-person interview with the applicant
- Opportunity to follow-up on particular sections of the application
- Assess capacity of founding team to implement the proposed plan

Final Recommendation

- Evaluation Criteria Ratings
- Capacity Interview
- Due Diligence

Board Decision

Discussion

www.qualitycharters.org