

B.1 – New Charter School Decisions:

Innovative Quality Schools has in place a comprehensive approach that it deploys in the evaluation and approval of new school applications. In carrying out its responsibilities, IQS utilizes its full complement of IQS management team leaders as well as members of its Cadre team whose experience and expertise align with potential new charter schools.

Approval Criteria for New School Applications- As a “Single Purpose Authorizer,” Innovative Quality Schools is prohibited by law from limiting the applications which it solicits, considers, or approves to any single curriculum, learning program or method. Therefore, a variety of models of schools and schooling will be considered. The framework for IQS’s review of new charter school applications is as follows:

1. IQS will only consider authorizing schools that are designed to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement and meet one or more of the additional five (5) statutory criteria as provided in section 124E.01 Subd. 1
2. Proposals for new schools will only be considered if they include substantive involvement from one or more teachers licensed under section 122A.18 Subd 1 or a group of individuals that includes one or more teachers licensed under that section.
3. IQS will not authorize a school that is being proposed as a means to keep open a school that otherwise would be closed or to reestablish a school that has been closed. Applicants in these cases will have the burden of proving that conversion to a chartered school or establishment of a new chartered school fulfills the purposes specified in section 124D.10 Subd 1. independent of the school’s closing.
4. The granting of renewal of a charter by IQS will not be contingent on the bargaining unit status of the employees of the school.

5. A charter school must be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations.

It is understood that IQS will not be a provider of services for the operations of any schools in its portfolio or schools being considered to become a part of its portfolio. As such, IQS will not enter into any contracts to provide management, financial services or any other services for a school authorized by IQS.

Applicants interested in developing a school will also be advised to submit a “Letter of Intent” although submission of this is not a requirement **[Attachment B.1.1]**.

Process Standards for New Charter School Approval- Innovative Quality Schools will use a three- tiered system of review when giving consideration to support an application to form a new charter school. The framework for the approval of an applicant **[Attachment B.1.2]** to organize a new charter school must be consistent with Minnesota Statute 124E.06 and contain at least the following components:

1. Vision/Mission statements that support the primary purpose of a charter school and align with the vision/mission of IQS
2. School and student performance expectations and how the goals that support those expectations will be measured and met
3. The innovative aspects of the school
4. A clear description of the primary instructional model(s) of the school
5. The alignment of the curriculum with the MN learning standards are specific
6. The special education, early intervening and child-study process and the continuum of special education services
7. The model the school will use to meet the needs of educationally and economically disadvantaged students and students with English language learning needs
8. Preoperational plans for school governance and a succession plan consistent with Minnesota Statute
9. Preoperational plans for school operations and management
10. Preoperational plans for facility identification
11. Preoperational plans for staff acquisition and professional development
12. Preoperational plans for marketing and outreach
13. Preoperational plans for budget planning

The applicant’s capacity is also a significant IQS requirement. To that end, in order to be considered for application approval, the school founders must have, i) experience in preK-12 education, ii) a commitment to long-term service as either board membership and/or school employment, iii) evidence of criminal background checks for all board members.

In reviewing the application, the following steps will be taken:

1. An IQS Cadre of Professionals will be assigned to review the proposed application of the school. Team members will be determined based on the model of the school

design. The Cadre team will review the request using the IQS rubric contained within the application for this purpose.

2. The IQS Management Leadership Team, based upon the evaluation of the Cadre, will make a recommendation to the IQS Board for application approval.
3. Following approval by the IQS board, the application will be submitted to the MDE for approval.

The decision-making process described in this section is based upon five key aspects of the school performance: (1) school mission/vision and model; (2) governance; (3) student and school evaluation planning; (4) financial competence and adequacy; and (5) competent management of the school in compliance with standards. **[Attachment B.1.3]**

Application Timelines for New Schools- Innovative Quality Schools will use the calendar outlined below as a guideline for soliciting, reviewing and approving new charter school applications.

1. New school information will be disseminated throughout the year utilizing a variety of communication strategies including:
 - a. The use of the IQS website to develop and issue Requests for Proposals (RFP's) for school models that are new and/or innovative in their entirety, or schools that have a research or best-practice base. IQS will consider both, although all proposals to be considered by IQS must have some aspect which is innovative and which is being further researched as a part of the school design.
 - b. Engagement in on-going discussions with communities and other interested parties that have missions consistent with IQS. The intent of these ongoing discussions is to generate and/or support interest in new school creation to better serve the children and youth.
 - c. Requests to be included on the website of the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) and other professional organizations interested in the formation of new schools.
2. Summer/Fall: The Board of IQS will determine how many new and/or transfer schools it will consider authorizing during the year. This decision will be made after the MDE makes approval decisions on the schools submitted in the previous July. The IQS Board will consider a variety of options and models for authorizing.
3. Fall: The Board of IQS will consider a variety of designs and models; the Board will also solicit applications for some specific models as well and will use its website to disseminate a Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the models of schools it is soliciting for consideration during the year.
4. November-January: IQS will conduct discussions with organizations and potential operators regarding the IQS application process, RFP, and any other models under consideration by potential operators that may be different than that in the RFP.

5. February 1: Letters of Intent are due to IQS. This is an optional step. The purpose of the “Letter of Intent” is threefold fold:
 - a. To provide IQS with an idea of the kinds and numbers of applications under consideration so that preparation can be made for application review
 - b. To review the IQS authorizing processes and rigorous expectations so the applicant has a thorough understanding of the IQS process including the requirement for innovation; and,
 - c. To discourage applicants who either are interested in developing models which are not likely to gain IQS authorization

However, if submitted, it will be suggested that the letter of intent consist of a 4-6 page document that includes a general description of the kind of school the applicant is considering. At a minimum, this description would include:

- a. Statutory purpose(s) of the school
 - b. School mission, the general learning model
 - c. The innovation aspect of the school
 - d. Goals and evaluation summary
 - e. Governance structure
 - f. Operations summary including general location
 - g. The individuals involved in the development of the application and in the future operation of the school. This must include at least one licensed teacher
5. Financing of the application development process
 6. February 1-10: Screening of the “Letter of Intent” according to clearly defined evaluative rubric. Following this review, applicants will be informed as to whether IQS will invite a full application. Although the “Letter of Intent” is optional, it does provide the applicant useful information which will be of use as it considers its full proposal.
 7. February 10 – March 10: Applicants will complete the application with on-going discussion and assistance from the MLT as deemed necessary.
 8. March 10: Applications will be due to IQS. [Note: This date is intended to be two months prior to the date that IQS must submit and affidavit to the MDE. All subsequent dates are adjusted based upon the submission date established by the MDE.
 9. March 10 – March 15: Applications will be reviewed by members of the MLT as well as IQS Cadre members. The review team will include professionals with expertise in the instructional model proposed by the applicant school. The IQS review team will use the IQS designed rubrics for application evaluation. Based upon the results of the Cadre member reviews, the Management Leadership Team will make a final recommendation (to approve or not approve) the school application.
 10. March 15 – April 1: The IQS Board will approve/not approve the recommendation

of the MLT related to each application. Should the Board of IQS decide to approve the application, it will authorize the MLT to fill an affidavit with the commissioner stating its intent to charter one or more schools. A separate affidavit will be filed for each school and the affidavit will include the required provisions as defined in Minnesota Statute.

11. May 1: An affidavit for each approved application will be completed collaboratively between the MLT and the applicant and submitted to the MDE for approval.
12. Within 60 days of receipt of the affidavit from IQS, the Commissioner must approve or disapprove the affidavit. If the affidavit is disapproved, the Commissioner will inform IQS of the deficiencies in the submittal and IQS will have 20 business days to address the deficiencies. If the deficiencies are not addressed to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, IQS will not have the authority to charter the school that was the subject of the affidavit.

B.2 – Interim Accountability Decisions (i.e. site/grade level expansions, official early learning program(s) recognition, ready to open and charge in authorizer):

Innovative Quality Schools has in place a comprehensive approach that it deploys in providing oversight in opening a new school, evaluating and supporting site/grade level expansions, initiating prekindergarten programs and in considering the transfer of existing charter schools. As in the case of considering new school applications, it utilizes its full complement of IQS management team leaders as well as members of its Cadre team whose experience and expertise align with charter school requests.

School Opening Decisions- Minnesota Statute 123E.06 subd.3(g) provides broad latitude in determining a school's readiness to open, to wit, *"The authorizer may prevent an approved charter school from opening for operation if, among other grounds, the charter school violates this chapter or does not meet the ready-to-open standards that are part of the authorizer's oversight and evaluation process or are stipulated in the charter school contract..."* After the MDE has approved a new school affidavit, IQS will begin to work with the school board to develop the authorizer/school contract. In addition, IQS will utilize a comprehensive "checklist" to determine whether or not a school is ready to open [**Attachment B.2.1**]. This checklist serves as a roadmap for the school in its preparations to accept students. IQS, in assisting schools in preparing for a successful opening will:

1. From time to time attending board meetings
2. Meet with the board chair and/or school start up coordinator regarding progress in planning for the school to open
3. Complete a performance contract within MDE guidelines

Site/Grade Level School Expansion – When a current school wishes to add sites and/or grades to be an approved school, IQS will provide guidance to the school in examining the

feasibility and rationale behind such a request. Minnesota Statute 124E.06 subd. 5 describes the criteria upon which such expansion should be considered. In carrying out the provisions of the law, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires the submission of a supplemental affidavit *“prior to a charter school expanding to add sites, grades or an officially recognized pre- kindergarten or preschool instructional program.”* A supplemental affidavit will be submitted by IQS to the MDE on behalf of the existing charter school. Charter school requirements must be based on statutory requirements and will be reviewed by IQS and evaluated by the MDE against the terms and conditions set forth in the Commissioner approved authorizer application and the quality of materials submitted.

When considering a request to expand a school, the IQS Management Leadership Team, on behalf of the Innovative Quality Schools Board, will give consideration to such a request following its criteria and in accordance to its evaluation process **[Attachment B.2.2]** as applicable. Criteria to be considered includes:

1. The need for expansion with supporting long-range enrollment projections.
2. A longitudinal record of demonstrated student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments in Chapter 120B and/or on other academic assessments that measure longitudinal student performance and growth benchmarks identified in its ScoreCard, approved by the charter school’s board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer. [Note: A school with an overall performance level below a 3.0 in the area of student and school performance (Category 3 of the ScoreCard) will not be considered for school expansion.]
3. A history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner that promotes the schools’ financial sustainability, and
4. Board capacity and an administrative and management plan to implement its expansion board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer

Official Early Learning Program(s) Recognition- A charter school that is a member of the IQS portfolio and did not, as a part of their original application elect to provide an early learning program, may choose to organize and operate a prekindergarten program under the provisions of Minnesota Statute 124E.06 subd. 3(a). To be considered, the charter school must:

1. In a timely manner and in collaboration with the authorizer, complete all submittals as outlined and required in the “Officially Recognized Charter School Early Learning Program(s) Request Instructions” found on the MDE website to include:
 - a. A brief summary of the school’s early learning program(s) seeking official MDE recognition including whether the program will be free to all participants or fee-based.
 - b. If fee-based, the proposed fee structure that will be used.
 - c. An indication if it will provide enrollment preference to kindergarten students participating in a free early learning program as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11(c)

d. A detailed description of the school's plans to fund the early learning program(s)

When considering a request from a school to expand its program to include an early learning component, the IQS Management Leadership Team, on behalf of the Innovative Quality Schools Board, will give consideration to such a request followed in accordance to the "Officially Recognized Charter School Early Learning Program(s) Request Instructions." In addition to the criteria cited in Minnesota Statute and as noted above, other factors to be considered by IQS in its evaluation process will include:

1. Evidence of a need for a pre-school program in the area served by the school
2. A longitudinal record of demonstrated student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments in Chapter 120B and/or on other academic assessments that measure longitudinal student performance and growth benchmarks identified in its ScoreCard, approved by the charter school's board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer. [Note: A school with an overall performance level below a 3.0 in the area of student and school performance (Category 3 of the ScoreCard) will not be considered for expanding into a pre-k program.]
3. A history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner that promotes the schools' financial sustainability, and
4. Board capacity and an administrative and management plan to implement its expansion board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer

The IQS process for considering an expansion to include a pre-K program will utilize the criteria outlined in **[Attachment B.2.3]**. The steps in the review process will include:

1. An IQS Cadre of Professionals will be assigned to review the proposed application of the school. Team members will be determined based their experience in a pre-K model of instruction.
2. Cadre team will review the request using the IQS rubric contained within the application for this purpose.
3. The IQS Management Leadership Team, based upon the evaluation of the Cadre, will make a recommendation to the IQS Board for application approval.
4. Following approval by the IQS board, the application will be submitted to the MDE for approval.

The decision-making process described in this section is based upon five key aspects of the school performance: (1) school mission/vision and model; (2) governance; (3) student and school evaluation planning; (4) financial competence and adequacy; and (5) competent management of the school in compliance with standards.

Change in Authorizer: Transfer Schools- IQS may agree to accept an existing charter school into its portfolio of schools. If a school is interested in becoming a school authorized by IQS,

it must submit a letter indicating its desire to transfer. The letter must contain at least the following:

1. The reason for requesting the change in authorizer
2. Demonstrated alignment of the school's vision/mission of IQS
3. Desired time for the transfer.

When considering a request to assume authorization of an existing charter school currently under the auspices of a different authorizer, the IQS Management Leadership Team, on behalf of the Innovative Quality Schools Board, will give consideration to such a request following its criteria and in accordance to its evaluation process **[Attachment B.2.4]**.

1. The school has a performance history of learning success based on data in its annual report including parental satisfaction
2. The enrollment projections of the school are sufficient for it to operate
3. Neither the current authorizer, in its most recent renewal report or annual review comments, nor the MDE, report any significant issues regarding school performance, governance, finance or operations
4. The board of the school has demonstrated that it has been conscientious in its responsibilities as a board of a chartered school
5. The school is not in statutory operating debt and has a projected fund balance
6. The school's most recent audit does not include any on-going significant material weaknesses
7. The school is amenable to the IQS authorizing practices
8. A visit to the school by IQS results in a positive report
9. The current authorizer and the school mutually agree to terminate the current contract with each other
10. The MDE approves the authorization transfer to IQS.

While such a transfer may be initiated at any time, IQS's practice is to have requests from current schools made to IQS no later than December 1st. If the IQS Management Leadership Team deems the criteria has been met, further consideration of the transfer will be considered. The following steps will be taken to ensure the mission/vision of the transfer application is consistent with the mission/vision of IQS:

1. An IQS Cadre of Professional will be assigned to review the proposed transfer of the school. Team members will be determined based on the model of the school design and on performance issues, if any, that had been identified. The Cadre team will review the transfer request using the IQS performance rubric.
2. The IQS Management Leadership Team, based upon the evaluation of the Cadre, will make a recommendation to the IQS Board no later than at its regularly scheduled January meeting.
3. If the IQS Board tentatively agrees to serve as the authorizer of the school, the charter

school board, current authorizer and IQS will jointly submit a request to the MDE to approve the authorizer transfer to IQS.

4. Following approval of the authorizing transfer to IQS, a performance contract will be negotiated with the charter school board. The length of the contract term will be mutually agreed upon by both parties; said length of the contract consistent with Minnesota Statute and criteria for contract renewal as established by IQS. The contract will take effect on July 1 or the date with IQS becomes the authorizer.

B.3 – Contract Term, Negotiations and Execution

Minnesota Statute 124E.10 outlines the format and content of a contract between an authorizer and a charter school. By statute, the contract must contain fifteen (15) elements that define the relationship and performance expectations of both parties. All contracts between Innovative Quality Schools and its charter schools contain the required elements identified in law. **[Attachment B.3.1]** However, each contract will differ in terms of the performance expectations, the model of the school (instruction), and the age of students. Contract lengths also differ. The IQS contract contains a total of eight (8) addenda to support the body of the contract language and to ensure compliance with all aspects of the law.

Contract Outcomes and Goals- Innovative Quality Schools will follow a basic protocol when entering into contracts with the schools that it charters. Following the approval of the Affidavit by the MDE, IQS will begin the process of contract negotiations with the school. The body of the contract will align with all requirements found in Minnesota Statute 124E. 10 but will also contain a number of addenda. These addenda are intended to provide both transparency and clarity related to expectations for both parties. The first addendum will be a performance ScoreCard **[Attachment B.3.2]**. The ScoreCard will identify the goals of the school in each of five (5) critical performance areas, i) program mission/vision, ii) school governance, iii) school/student progress, iv) financial management and v) school operations. Benchmarks will be established as a means of mapping overall progress toward the attainment of those goals. This ScoreCard will be used as the basis of future oversight reviews that are conducted by the IQS Cadre team members assigned to the school. Annually, the ScoreCard will serve as the foundation in the development of the School Improvement Plan.

Contract Completion Timelines- The IQS management leadership team will be responsible for the development of contracts with newly approved charter schools. The contract will be negotiated in good faith by all parties within the forty-five (45) days as prescribed in Charter School Law. Recognizing the need for the boards of both parties to sign off on the agreement, the body of the contract will be completed within the first twenty (20) days following the MDE's approval of the affidavit and readied for charter school board approval within the following ten (10) days. The IQS board will subsequently approve the contract within ten (10) days following the charter school board's approval. In the case that there is a delay in meeting these timelines, IQS will notify the MDE and cite the cause for any such delay.

Execution of Existing Contracts- The organizational structure of the IQS Management Leadership Team has been designed to ensure the needs of each charter school within the IQS portfolio are met. The process of contract initiation, on-going oversight, and renewal of existing contracts can be found in the Cadre Handbook as well as in Section 5.2 of the contract. These processes are the direct responsibility of each member of the MLT. Assignments are based upon an alignment of the school's program with the areas of expertise of each MLT member. The oversight process of new and existing schools begins annually prior to the first day of school and is described in detail in the Cadre Handbook. The oversight process for schools with contracts up for renewal begins not later than September 1 of the year in which the contract renewal process is set to begin. In this circumstance, IQS will provide the School with the specific details of the renewal process; **[Attachment B.3.3]** explained in detail in section 5 of the contract.

Contract Amendments – Amending a contract between IQS and the school is permissible under certain conditions. Section 8.1 in the contract articulates the limits placed upon the amendment process by requiring that both parties must be in agreement to any changes in the contract. It is further understood that any changes to the contract must be approved by the Charter School Center in the MDE.

B.4 – Performance Standards:

IQS has contracts that contain clearly defined measurable goals and objectives for each of its schools. Each contract contains performance elements as required by Minnesota Statute 124E.10. Oversight performance metrics have been developed to align with nationally recognized standards for operational excellence. In addition to defining the purpose of the school and its overall operating objectives, a set of school/student performance measures is incorporated into the ScoreCard **[Attachment B.4.1]** for each school and is used to benchmark the school's yearly progress. These practices align with on-going oversight and evaluation criteria as required in Minnesota Statute 124.E and as defined by NACSA's high quality authorizer.

The ScoreCard contains a grading rubric for each of the five (5) critical areas of school performance. Within each performance area is a set of measurements against which school performance is assessed on an annual basis by Cadre members utilizing the evaluation criteria found within the ScoreCard. The required set of measurements in each performance area reflect basic performance requirements outlined in Minnesota Statute 124E.01 subdivision 1 (13) and (14). Benchmarks for the school are developed when entering into a contract with IQS. While benchmarks for performance related to mission/vision, governance, finance, and operations reflect Minnesota Charter School requirements and, therefore, are essentially identical across the entire IQS charter school portfolio, performance benchmarks related to student achievement will be different for each school, reflecting the unique learning needs of student enrolled. In addition, in all performance areas, opportunities are provided for each school to add additional measurements against which their performance might be assessed. The opportunity to establish measurement and benchmarks in each performance area that are unique to the

mission and program of the school provides the school with the opportunity to have the unique nature of their program, and their program's success fairly and objectively determined.

B.5 – Authorizer's Processes for Ongoing Oversight of the Portfolio Charter Schools:

Innovative Quality Schools utilizes a transcript oversight process of the schools it authorizes by initiating practices of continuous evaluation and compliance monitoring which provide information that is useful to the school for its improvement purposes while ensuring the autonomy of the schools it authorizes. IQS follows a nationally recognized framework for providing oversight to its charter schools. This framework is overseen by the IQS MLT and administered by a cadre of professionals with expertise in areas specifically aligned with the five (5) principles of effective school operations: i) mission/vision, ii) governance, iii) student/school performance, iv) finance, and v) school operations. Cadre teams are assembled for each school based on the program model and operational needs of the school. Team members provide oversight through site visits, interviews, and on-line examination of performance metrics.

Process and Procedure – As noted above, Cadre team members are selected to provide oversight for an IQS school based upon an alignment of their professional expertise with the school program assigned to them as well as their expertise in the performance area assigned. The specific responsibilities of Cadre members are contained within the Cadre Handbook. This handbook is reviewed each fall prior to Cadre members meeting with their assigned schools. Cadre members are reminded of their role as 'observers' and 'overseers' and in that capacity are encouraged to engage in discussions with staff and students when appropriate; asking critical questions related to the five operating principles of school organizations as well as questions related to measurements contained in the school ScoreCard. Prior to making their first visit, Cadre members will review the ScoreCard that is in place for the school to ensure their oversight responsibilities are meaningful, intentionally supporting school improvement. Cadre members are instructed to ask more generic questions related to school performance such as those noted below as a means of framing their visits.

1. School Vision, Mission and Program Model – Cadre members are asked to pose questions such as "Do staff, board and students (when appropriate) have a clear understanding of the program model?" and "Does the curriculum support the mission and program model?"
2. Governance - Cadre members are asked to pose questions such as "Does the Board comply with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law?" and "Does the Board follow its By-laws and periodically reviews them?"
3. School/Student performance- Cadre members are asked to pose questions such as "Does the school have a process for determining the student's academic levels of performance when they enter school?" and "Is a growth model or value added growth model method of data analysis is used?"
4. School Finance- Cadre members are asked to pose questions such as "Is the school budget approved by the board prior to July 1 of each year?" and "Does the

Board monitor the budget on a regular basis?"

5. School Operations – Cadre member are asked to pose questions such as “Are staff qualifications/licensure in compliance with MDE rules?”

Academic, Financial and Operational Reporting – The Score Card contains clearly defined performance metrics in each of the areas of school performance, i) school mission/vision, ii) governance, iii) school/student performance, iv) finance, and v) operations. Each school with the IQS portfolio is required to complete a ScoreCard. The ScoreCard is reviewed annually and modified based upon the priorities established by the school board, school leadership, and the compiled observations of the IQS Cadre team. Cadre members will review the ScoreCard that is in place for the school to ensure their oversight responsibilities are meaningful; intentionally supporting improvement. At the end of each year, Cadre reports, including ScoreCard results, are compiled and a comprehensive report is provided by the IQS management leadership team to IQS Board for review and to the IQS portfolio of schools [**Attachment B.5.1**].

Frequency of Cadre Observations- Cadre observations can take a variety of forms including on- site meetings, web-ex, and on-line review of pertinent information and data. All Cadre are asked to carryout oversight responsibilities at least three (3) times annually. Following each observation, Cadre members are required to submit a written report through an electronic drop box set up exclusively for the school.

Intervention, Termination and Renewal Decisions- As noted above, following each visit, Cadre members file a report of their observations and findings and place it into a school folder. [**Attachment B.5.2**] This information is compiled by the Management Leadership Team member assigned to the school as liaison and used in formulating the year-end report of school performance. This report subsequently forms the basis of the annual School Improvement Plan. When a school is in its contract renewal year, the cumulative record of reports is utilized to determine the school’s renewal status.

It is within these constructs that the IQS oversight process takes place.

B.6 – Authorizer’s Standards and Processes for Interventions, Corrective Actions and Response to Complaints:

Complaint Process- Innovative Quality Schools recognizes that in the normal course of operations, a school will, from time to time, receive complaints from a key stakeholder. It is the practice of IQS to recognize this as a reality and to always act in a manner that will not be construed to be an infringement upon the autonomy of the schools in its portfolio. To that end, the Management Leadership Team evaluates any complaint or concern related to the operation of its schools very carefully. Complaints typically focus in two (2) areas:

Student/Parent Conflict with the school- IQS maintains on its website, the contact numbers for

members of the MLT. As a result, team members do receive periodic complaints from parents. IQS views the resolution of these complaints to be the sole responsibility of the school, but will act to serve as a mediator if requested by the school leadership

Alleged violation of Minnesota Statute – IQS will become directly involved in examining a matter related to the potential violation of Minnesota law. Examples of such instances include violation of data privacy, open meeting laws, harassment, Charter School statute and/or the application of MDE special education rules and regulations. In this instance, the IQS MLT will conduct a thorough review of all facts related to the incident. If, in its opinion, the school has been in violation of the rule of law, IQS will initiate its ‘Range of Intervention’ Policy [**Attachment B.6.1**].

Intervention Planning – As noted above, in the case where the IQS MLT finds a school to be in violation of a state and/or federal rule, mandate or law, IQS’s procedures for intervention as outlined in its ‘Range of Intervention’ policy, will be implemented. To that end, IQS will request that the:

- School provide, in writing a plan to address the cited violation
- Plan approved by the charter school board
- School, in accordance to the ‘Range of Intervention’ procedures report to IQS progress toward fulfilling its plan

If the school fails to take corrective action as articulated in its plan, IQS will require corrective action to be incorporated into its ScoreCard as a part of its annual review. Measurement and benchmarks will be developed that will ensure cited violations will not recur. Should a review of the ScoreCard reveal a failure of the school to reach the acceptable benchmark in the cited area of deficiency, the progressive steps of intervention outlined in the ‘Range of Intervention’ procedures will be followed.

Aligning Complaints with the Oversight Process – IQS maintains a comprehensive file on each of the schools in its portfolio. One file is specifically maintained for ‘complaints’ that might have been received over the course of its contract. As a part of the contract renewal process, the number of complaints, their nature, and the extent of resolution will be considered and will influence the term of a subsequent contract. If found to be egregious enough and/or a failure to successfully address the complaint(s) is evident, a letter of deficiency containing expected corrective action steps, will be forwarded to the school and placed on file. If it is determined that a pattern of non-compliance exists, consideration will be given to non-renewal of the contract.

B.7 – Charter School Support, Development and Technical Assistance:

Innovative Quality Schools provides intentional assistance in support of its portfolio of charter schools utilizing three (3) distinct and unique approaches to school improvement.

1. IQS provides intentional assistance to its portfolio of school through our process

of oversight review. As noted in a variety of places within this document, IQS's oversight process is grounded with a nationally recognized framework for organization excellence. This framework, the "Five Principles of Effective Schools," provide our schools with guideposts against which they might measure the effectiveness of their school improvement efforts. The IQS deliberative overview process assigns Cadre members with experience and expertise in each area to meet with school staff and review performance in each area. These Cadre members are recognized experts who have accepted responsibilities because of their desire to share their thoughts, ideas and expertise and to grow professionally along with those with whom they work. This first level of intentional assistance is designed to be collaborative in nature; promoting professional growth and school improvement simultaneously. It is founded upon Deming's concept of organizational management -- measure and adjust throughout the planning process.

2. IQS Cadre members are well respected and highly qualified in their area(s) of assigned oversight. When a need is identified within one of the five (5) principle core areas of school effectiveness, if called upon, a Cadre member may provide special assistance to the school. It is important to note however, that the Cadre member who might provide such assistance is not a member that is assigned to the school for oversight responsibility. Schools in the IQS portfolio have the ability to select and contact a member of the IQS Cadre team to provide special assistance at any time if they so choose.
3. Assistance is also provided by IQS to its school portfolio come in the form of conducting state-wide school meetings for school board chairs and school leaders. These meetings are held at least twice annually. Meeting topics are determined by a survey of charter school leaders.

It is important to note that none of the above noted support services are mandatory for the schools in the IQS portfolio. All schools maintain their autonomy in the process of school improvement. IQS, while remaining committed to continual improvement, recognizes that it is the responsibility of each school to share in that commitment and to work in a collaborative manner to ensure that improvement is on-going.

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

Innovative Quality Schools' mission is to. "...is to authorize charter schools that are innovative and successful in preparing students to achieve their full potential..." As noted in Section A.5 of this submittal, our mission has two (2) underlying purposes. The first is to identify and support schools that have some aspect of innovation in their approach to either school operations and/or school instruction. The second is to carry out our oversight responsibilities in a manner that help ensure students served in our portfolio of schools have the opportunity to reach their full potential; conceivably in a manner not otherwise available to them in more traditional settings.

Promoting Model Replication Within Its Portfolio – The IQS portfolio of schools currently focuses on instructional innovations including:

1. Project-based learning
2. School-wide application of multi-tiered support system (MTSS) of instruction
3. Experiential learning, and
4. Language Immersion

Its portfolio also includes operational innovations including:

1. Teacher-led schools and
2. Multi-site school governance

IQS recognizes that innovation is more than the ‘simple’ implementation of a new ‘idea’ in the field of education. There is little that is truly innovative under such a definition. More important then, is to focus on student achievement. And it is only through our schools’ commitment to learn, grow and change as a result of data analysis and collaborative sharing that innovation truly takes place.

To that end, the IQS plan for model replication within our portfolio includes the following strategic activities:

1. Establishing an electronic network where schools in our portfolio practicing similar innovations share successes and failures. Participation in this network will be incorporated into the ScoreCard of each school in the IQS portfolio to underscore the importance of this activity to the innovative efforts of the school.
2. Annually assign a Cadre member(s) with special background and expertise in organizational performance, to schools within the IQS portfolio. The purpose of this assignment will be to identify multiple measure of school success that extend beyond the Minnesota required performance examinations and the IQS required ScoreCard.
3. Include within the required School Improvement Plan (SIP) at least one new ‘practice’ designed to build upon the innovation of the school.

Promoting Dissemination of Best School Practices – Minnesota Statute 124E.17 subdivision 1(b) states in part, “...Authorizers, operators, and the department also may disseminate information about the successful best practices in teaching and learning demonstrated by charter schools...” While the language in the law suggests the dissemination of best practices is optional, IQS is committed to providing opportunities for other charter schools and/or interested parties to learn about successful school innovations. To that end, IQS is committed to:

1. Annually ‘spotlight’ no fewer than two (2) IQS schools in our spring school conference; asking each to present their ‘stories’ of success with other school in the portfolio

2. Annually, publish a comprehensive report detailing the successes of the schools in the portfolio and distributing the report to all schools in the portfolio.

B.9 – Charter School Renewal or Termination Decisions:

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers states that, "...A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive data to make merit-based renewal decisions..." Innovative Quality School's approach to the contract renewal process, as well as our deployment, meets the NACSA standards.

Evaluation Standards and Processes for Contract Renewal – As defined in the contract between IQS and the school, the evaluative process for contract renew begins in the fall. A description of this process is found in the contract section 5.2. To wit, "...Prior to renewing the contract with the School, IQS will conduct a performance evaluation specifically addressing each of the performance indicators contained within their contract. The School must demonstrate satisfactory performance on these performance indicators in order for the contract to be renewed. Not later than September 1 of the year in which the contract renewal evaluation is to be conducted, IQS will provide the School with the specific details of the renewal process. This evaluative process will include visits to the school by a cadre of IQS professionals. It may also include interviews with board, the director of the school, teachers, parents, students and others involved with the school as deemed necessary and appropriate. It will include a review of the school governance, the financial status of the school, a review of the student progress and a review of the operations of the school. The school's ScoreCard will be the standard used to determine whether the contract will be renewed and if so, for the number of years..." Transparency in this process is ensured through the communication that takes place in this meeting as well as through a collaborative review of year to date findings of school performance outcomes found in the cumulative record of the ScoreCard.

Eligibility for a Contract Renewal – Meeting the provisions of the contract with IQS is key to continued authorizing by IQS. The renewal process is the culmination of an ongoing and transparent oversight process which includes frequent dialogue between the school and IQS. The renewal process includes data and information obtained throughout the term of the contract with the school. In accordance with Minnesota Statute 124E.10 which states in part that, "...the primary focus of contract renewal should be the determination of the performance of all students (124E.01 subd. 1)..." the actual renewal process of IQS expands this evaluation to include all elements of school operations. IQS utilizes its performance rubric to determine the length of a new contract, should it be determined that such a renewal is appropriate. To ensure consistency in its oversight and renewal process, the contract contains an addendum (Addendum 6) that outlines the rubric for renewal. The following is the criteria that will be applied in determining the length of the new contract:

Recognizing the importance of school/student achievement, if a school receives an average

score below 2.0 in performance category Section 3 over the term of the contract, the school will be recommended for a one-year contract and a School Improvement Plan must be implemented. If the Plan does not cause the school to improve, it will be recommended for closure.

1. If a school receives an average score performance category Section 3 in the range of 2.0 to 3.0, the school will be placed on probation and a school improvement plan will be put in place. The length of the contract will not exceed three (3) years.
2. If a school received a score below 2.0 in any of the other performance categories in the evaluation, the school will be placed on probation. The length of the contract will not exceed three (3) years.
3. If a school receives an average score above 3.0 in all five (5) of the performance categories, the length of the contract will be five (5) years.

School Closure Plans – Minnesota Statute 124E.10 outlines the process for closing an underperforming school. To wit, "...the plan for an orderly closing of the school under chapter 317A, whether the closure is a termination for cause, a voluntary termination, or a nonrenewal of the contract, ...[should include]... establishing the responsibilities of the school board of directors and the authorizer and notifying the commissioner, authorizer, school district in which the charter school is located, and parents of enrolled students about the closure, information and assistance sufficient to enable the student to re-enroll in another school, the transfer of student records under section 124E.03, subdivision 5, paragraph (b), and procedures for closing financial operations..."

Innovative Quality Schools has in place a plan for the closing of a school. To ensure transparency in this process, the plan is included as an addendum to the contract and is reviewed with the school leadership at the time of the signing of the contract. **[Attachment 9.1]** Should such a closure be necessary, IQS will guide, assist and monitor the process until all steps have been taken and all conditions have been met.