



## Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Authorizer Annual Report

Enter responses where prompted. Enter an “x” in underlined space before “Yes” or “No” responses. Only provide information for one school in each table row. Add additional rows to tables, as needed.

### Authorizer Information

**Name of Authorizing Organization:** Novation Education Opportunities (NEO)

**Mailing Address:** 3432 Denmark Ave #130 Eagan, MN 55123

**Name and Title of Primary Authorizer Contact:** Wendy Swanson Choi, Executive Director

**Telephone of Primary Authorizer Contact:** 612-889-2103

**Email Address of Primary Authorizer Contact:** executive.director.neo@gmail.com

**Authorizing Mission:** NEO’s mission is to authorize and oversee charter schools through consistent, ongoing, and robust evaluation to achieve significant and measurable student growth. NEO’s vision is to be a leading authorizer of innovative, diverse, and effective charter schools.

### Authorizer Summary

**Background.** In 2009, Minnesota passed revised charter school law effectively holding charter school authorizers to higher standards in overseeing the charter school performance in the areas of student achievement, governance, operations, and finance. Due to the revised charter school law, essentially all the 52 prior authorizers which included districts, colleges/universities, and large non-profit organizations, had to be reapproved by the state if they intended to continue to serve as an authorizer. In addition, the revised law called for a new category of authorizers, ‘single purpose authorizers’, whose sole mission is chartering schools to achieve the primary purpose of improving all student pupil learning and all student achievement.

At that time, primarily due to capacity issues, many authorizers did not resubmit their application, and some were denied. NEO was one of the first single-purpose authorizers approved and received approval to authorize 12 schools that transferred from authorizers that no longer continued. NEO has grown since then to serve as the authorizer of 30 schools.

NEO is governed by a Board of Directors which makes the final decision to approve or reject charter school applications in consideration of the recommendations of the NEO Advisors (contracted experts) and the NEO Executive Director. The Board of Directors also makes final decisions regarding charter renewals, terminations, and expansions, supervises the Executive Director, and carries out all duties of a nonprofit governing board.

In 2022-23, NEO was governed by five board member directors.

As a volunteer body, the NEO Board is assisted by the NEO Advisors and the NEO staff including the Executive Director who serves as the main charter school liaison. The NEO Advisors are independent contractors who have experience and expertise in charter school oversight, monitoring, and evaluation. The NEO Advisors evaluate new school and expansion applications, conduct board meeting observations to assist with oversight, provide authorized schools with technical assistance with compliance, facilitate sharing of effective practices and resources, and conduct fact finding in response to complaints.

As an authorizer, the three main ways that NEO works collaboratively with charter schools to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement are by starting high quality charter schools to meet the needs of underserved students, supporting continuous improvement of operating charter schools, and promoting the replication and expansion of high-quality schools and effective practices. The goals of NEO align to the primary purposes of charter schools which is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.

### **Overview of NEO's 5-Yr Strategic Plan and Organization Goals**

NEO monitors and evaluates progress toward three main organizational goal areas. The first goal area focuses on improvement in the percent of students in schools collectively authorized by NEO who meet and exceed grade-level standards in reading, math, and science. The second goal area focuses on improvement in the growth students in schools collectively authorized by NEO make in reading and math. The third goal area focuses on improvement in graduation rates of students in schools collectively authorized by NEO.

#### **Goal 1. Collective Improvement in Achievement.**

Results indicate that the schools that NEO authorizes are rebounding from the negative impacts of the pandemic at a faster rate than Minnesota schools on average in achievement, as measured by the percent of students scoring proficient on state assessments.

Collectively, the percent of students who scored proficient (meets or exceeds) as measured by state tests (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) increased post-pandemic in charter schools that NEO authorizes:

- by 7 percentage points from 37% in 2021 to 44% in 2023 in reading,
- by 7 percentage points from 23% in 2021 to 30% in 2023 in math,
- and by 3 percentage points from 27% to 30% in science.

In terms of number of students scoring proficient (meets and exceeds) NEO met the goal that NEO set in 2020 for improvement from 2,472 to at least 3,000 students (3,171) in authorized schools collectively scoring meets or exceeds in math, reading and science state assessments by 2025.

For reference, statewide, the percent of students who scored proficient statewide in 2023 compared to 2021 increased by only one percentage point in math, decreased by three percentage points in reading, and decreased by four percentage points in science.

## **Goal 2. Collective Improvement in Growth.**

NEO's goal in the past had been to exceed 55% of students exceeding their Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) projected growth scores in reading and math.

However, MDE changed the way growth is reported and no longer provides information on projected growth scores for each student, so NEO can no longer report on progress with that goal.

Instead, MDE provides information on students advancing at least one full achievement level which is typically a more rigorous growth measure.

The growth results currently available from MDE as measured by the North Star Academic Progress system are available for grades 4 through 8. State reading and math assessments are administered in grades 3-8, 10, and 11 only, and therefore, the only grades with consecutive grade level scores from which growth can be measured are grades 4 through 8.

NEO analyzed the North Star Academic Progress results according to 1) students below grade level making high growth (students who did not score "Meets" or "Exceeds" the prior year who advanced at least one achievement level) and 2) students at or above grade level making medium or high growth (who scored "Meets" or "Exceeds" the prior year and who maintained or improved their achievement level).

Schools authorized by NEO with results for at least two consecutive years improved the percent of students below grade level making high growth in reading (advancing an achievement level) by eight percentage points from 29% in 2021 to 37% in 2022. Despite a decrease to 33% in 2023, the schools collectively authorized by NEO outperformed the statewide average of 27% of students below grade level making high growth.

Schools authorized by NEO with results for at least two consecutive years collectively improved the percent of students at or above grade level making medium or high growth (maintaining or advancing an achievement level) in reading by six percentage points from 73% in 2021 to 79% in 2022. Despite a decrease to 77% in 2022, the schools authorized by NEO collectively outperformed the statewide average of 74% of students at or above grade level making medium or high growth in reading.

Schools authorized by NEO with results for at least two consecutive years performed at the same level as the statewide average in the percent of students below grade level making high growth in math (advancing an achievement level). 20% of students below grade level made high growth in math (advanced an achievement level) statewide and in schools that NEO authorizes.

Statewide, 72% of students at or above grade level made medium or high growth in math in 2023 compared to 63% of students collectively in schools that NEO authorizes.

Math continues to be an area of focus for improvement for most of the schools that NEO authorizes.

### **Goal 3. Collective Improvement in Graduation.**

NEO has authorized seven high schools for at least ten years and began authorizing a new high school, Hmong College Preparatory Academy in 2022-2023. MDE reported the following graduation rates for those schools that NEO authorized for more than one year. Note that the results lag one year due to the data availability.

#### **4-year Graduation Rate**

Collectively the high schools had a 4-year graduation rate of 64% in 2022, an improvement from the prior year graduation rate of 59%.

#### **5-year Graduation Rate**

Collectively the high schools had a 5-year graduation rate of 74% in 2022, an improvement from the prior year graduation rate of 69%.

#### **6-year Graduation Rate**

Collectively the high schools had a 6-year graduation rate of 75% in 2022, an improvement from the prior year graduation rate of 72%.

#### **7-year Graduation Rate**

Collectively the high schools had a 7-year graduation rate of 77% in 2022, compared to the prior year graduation rate of 80%.

#### **New School: Hmong College Prep Academy**

In 2022-2023, NEO also began authorizing an additional high school, Hmong College Prep Academy, after Bethel University, the school's former authorizer, resigned from authorizing. Because NEO began serving as the school's authorizer this past year, and therefore the school was not in the prior year data set for comparison purposes, Hmong College Prep Academy was not included in the prior data set and results.

Following are the 2022 graduation results (most current available) of Hmong College Prep Academy.

- 4-year graduation rate: 96% (151/158)
- 5-year graduation rate: 98% (142/145)
- 6-year graduation rate: 96% (127/132)
- 7-year graduation rate: 93% (103/111)

Six of the eight high schools that NEO authorizes serve a high percentage of students in grades 9-12 who were not successful in a larger traditional school environment and who needed to make up credits to be on track to graduate. Therefore, a focus of these schools has been on reengaging students in college and career plans.

The results show that the schools have been graduating a greater percentage of students as the students remain enrolled more than four years and make up the credits needed for graduation. Given an additional year or two beyond the traditional 4-year trajectory, many more students enrolled completed graduation requirements.

NEO had set a goal for the schools collectively authorized to exceed a combined 4, 5, and 6-year graduation rate of at least 75% by 2025. At the time the goal was set, MDE did not report 7-year graduation rates.

In 2022-2023, the schools collectively authorized by NEO exceeded the goal (based on most current graduation data available) by reaching 81% of students graduating in the combined 4, 5, and 6-year graduation cohorts from a baseline of 67% in 2019.

**Strategies for Meeting Goals**

Collectively, the NEO team includes NEO staff, contracted experts (“Advisors”), school leaders, school board members, and students and their families. NEO used several strategies to support school and student success in 2022-2023. Generally, the work fell into supporting the authorized schools in three categories: 1) starting high quality schools, 2) improving the school performance of operational schools, and 3) expanding effective practices and high-quality programs.

More specifically, NEO worked to 1) prioritize, align, and clarify work and expectations, 2) provide high quality feedback, 3) facilitate sharing of effective practices, and 4) provide technical assistance with compliance through technical assistance sessions, document review-and-comment, board observations, site visits, data meetings, learning walks, and annual meetings of all school leaders and board members.

In addition, NEO continued to leverage technology to coordinate and streamline reporting to improve the rate of on-time and accurate submissions and reduce the amount of time schools must spend on meeting reporting requirements.

Collectively, the schools that NEO authorizes continued to reach more students each year with quality education choices so that all students could learn in a supportive and responsive learning environment that most effectively met their needs.

**Enrollment Trends: Schools Authorized by NEO**

Grade	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2014-15	NA	280	297	263	277	258	277	165	192	180	204	181	189	217	2930
2015-16	NA	330	329	324	284	274	257	212	184	217	198	279	288	513	3689
2016-17	34	413	423	427	403	337	291	237	238	194	190	197	215	235	3834
2017-18	94	439	464	425	412	408	348	304	244	250	188	213	196	257	4242
2018-19	86	463	488	467	450	450	413	363	330	275	229	236	227	259	4739
2019-20	115	462	508	503	477	430	426	374	347	324	267	250	240	281	5013
2020-21	108	398	541	527	520	466	437	392	382	361	251	272	252	286	5196
2021-22	112	520	581	564	569	543	502	431	409	375	253	251	275	328	5713
2022-23	112	745	809	770	792	763	749	686	696	632	501	456	430	503	8644

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education Data and Analytics

## Authorizer Processes

### New Charter School Applications in FY 2023 (B.1)

Did your organization review any new charter school applications?

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

Enter response here

If yes, complete the table below for each application.

Name of Charter School Applicant	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
Irrawaddy Academy	Approval	Approval	NA	NA
Sky High School	Disapproval	NA	Did not meet Satisfactory evaluation for approval (enrollment in targeted location not supported by need and demand).	NA

## New Charter School Openings in FY 2023 (B.2)

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

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

Enter response here

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

<b>Name of Charter School Projected to Begin Serving Students in FY 2023</b>	<b>Projected Opening Date</b>	<b>Did this School Open as Planned?</b>	<b>If No, Provide Reason(s) and Revised Projected Opening Date</b>
Bultum Academy	September 5, 2022	Yes	NA
Enlighten Academy	September 5, 2022	No	Could not secure facility in the location of the community to be served. Projected opening date is September 3, 2024.

**Charter School Expansion Applications (to add primary enrollment sites or grades, including instructional prekindergarten or preschool programs) in FY 2023 (B.2)**

Did your organization review any site and/or grade expansion applications (including instructional prekindergarten or preschool programs)?

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

NA

If yes, complete the table below for each application.

Name of Charter School	Proposed Additional Grades to be Served (including prekindergarten and/or preschool) and/or Location of New Site	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
Universal Academy	Location of new site will be Hopkins area (west metro).	Approval	Approval	NA	NA



## Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Requests in FY 2023 (B.2)

Did your organization review any requests for official early childhood health and developmental screening program recognition?

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

No school applied for an official health and developmental screening program recognition.

If yes, complete the table below for each request.

Name of Charter School	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
Enter name of charter school	Enter: Approval, Disapproval, or N/A	Enter: Approval, Disapproval, or N/A	Enter reason(s) for disapproval or N/A	Enter: Yes, No, or N/A

## Charter School Change in Authorizer Requests in FY 2023 (B.2)

Did your organization review any change in authorizer requests?

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation: No schools applied to change to or from another authorizer.

If yes, complete the table below for each request.

Name of Charter School	Authorizer Charter School Requested to Transfer From	Authorizer Approval or Disapproval	MDE Approval or Disapproval	If Disapproved, Reason(s) for Disapproval	Application Withdrawn by Applicant
Enter name of charter school	Enter name of charter school authorizer	Enter: Approval, Disapproval, or N/A	Enter: Approval, Disapproval, or N/A	Enter reason(s) for disapproval or N/A	Enter: Yes, No, or N/A

## Charter Contract Renewals in FY 2023 (B.9)

Did your organization engage in charter renewal activities in FY 2023?

Yes

No

If no, please provide an explanation:

Enter response here

If yes, complete the table below for each school.

Name of Charter School	Was Contract Renewed?	If Yes, Term of Contract Renewal	If No, Reason(s) for Nonrenewal
New Century Academy	Yes	07/01/2023 – 06/30/2026	NA

## **Additional Authorizer Activities**

### **Authorizer Organizational Goals (A.2)**

**Describe the progress your organization made on its organizational goals related to authorizing in FY 2023.**

Please see pages 2 – 5 for an overview of organizational goals and progress toward them.

### **Authorizer Structure of Operations (A.3)**

**Describe changes, if any, to your organization’s structure of operations related to authorizing in FY 2023 (for example, organizational changes, new positions, updated full-time equivalencies of authorizing positions, etc.).**

NEO continued to maintain a ratio of at least 1 Full-time Equivalency (FTE) authorizing position to 7 authorized schools through a combination of staffing and contracting with independent contractors with expertise and experience.

The Executive Director of NEO possesses day-to-day management responsibilities, and the NEO Board of Directors makes final new school, readiness to open, expansion, and contract renewal, termination, and amendment/revision decisions based on recommendations from the Executive Director.

The Executive Director reports to the NEO Board of Directors and manages the implementation of the strategies and progress monitoring, as well as the board-approved budget.

The Executive Director oversees the NEO Advisors, leveraging their experience and expertise in academics, operations, governance, and finance to ensure that NEO effectively and efficiently starts, oversees, monitors, and evaluates schools authorized by NEO as well as provides technical assistance and facilitates sharing of best practices.

The NEO Advisors are independent contractors that NEO engages as necessary for specific contracted work for their skills and expertise in support of NEO’s mission and vision and organizational goals.

The specific work for which NEO contracted with NEO Advisors included 1) desktop review and evaluation of new, contract renewal, and expansion applications, 2) financial monitoring and evaluation reports, 3) conducting annual site visits as part of evaluation of compliance, 4) conducting fact finding and investigations in response to complaints, 5) facilitating sharing of effective school practices, and 6) providing technical assistance with compliance.

NEO contracted with 10 Advisors and employed 3 full-time staff to conduct the work of authorizing 30 charter schools in 2022-2023. In doing so, NEO maintained a ratio of 1 FTE to 6 authorized charter schools. To achieve the organizational goals, NEO will continue to maintain 1FTE per no more than 7 schools authorized.

Should an authorized school have transferred or closed, NEO would have had the flexibility to adjust work with independent contractors to maintain NEO’s Fund Balance Policy end of year target of 30%, which NEO maintains in the event of unforeseen expenditures or loss.

## **Authorizing Staff Expertise (A.4)**

**Briefly describe the background and experience, in the areas of charter school academics, finance, operations, and law, of any authorizing staff, committee members, board members, consultants, etc. new to your organization in FY 2023.**

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Aleem Roshan Mahammad became the board chair of NEO.

Aleem works with Global Security Solutions COE at Medtronic as Information Technology Program Manager. In that role he develops and reviews all information security plans and processes throughout the organization's network to ensure alignment between data security and U.S. and global privacy practices, and acts as a liaison to the information systems department, legal department, and IT internal Audit team. He develops and manages preferred vendor relationships in collaboration with strategic sourcing to provide Medtronic with the highest value, lowest overall cost with highest quality service globally. He evaluates technologies, processes, and vendors, negotiates, and selects superior service and acts as liaison to the IT security risk assessments for new vendors. He, therefore, brings additional skills and experience in systems, regulatory compliance, and risk mitigation to the NEO board.

Aleem also brings a wealth of experience gained serving as a charter school board chair of a charter school authorized by a different authorizer than NEO.

While serving as a charter school board chair, Aleem directly experienced the challenges of charter school leadership. He coordinated and led board meetings, worked with the board and school leadership in strategic planning, and provided leadership in overseeing the academic, operational, and financial performance of the charter school. His experience serving as board chair of a charter school and working with another authorizer afforded him valuable insights, knowledge, and experience in serving in the role of board chair of NEO.

In addition, NEO board added Jawad Lodhi to the board. Jawad brings a strong background and expertise in the areas of data and analytics and use of technology to optimize workflow and improve organizational performance. In addition, he brings a strong background and expertise to NEO in the areas of coaching and leading and empowering teams by establishing a culture that encourages smart risk-taking, embraces innovative solutioning, and participates in development to further team growth.

## Authorizing Leadership and Staff Skill Development (A.5)

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

- A. NEO staff attended the NACSA Leadership Conference from October 24 - 27, 2022, to learn nationally recognized effective authorizer practices from sessions and participants.
  - 1. Let's Talk Special Education Oversight: Requirements, Challenges, Tools
  - 2. Evolving for Excellence: Moving Beyond Compliance for Students
  - 3. Defining What Matters When Supporting a Large Portfolio
  - 4. Evaluating specialized charter schools pre and post covid 19
  - 5. Are you authentically engaging your community? Strategies for authorizers
  - 6. Community & Student-Centered Decision Making
  - 7. Humanistic Authorizing
  - 8. Leveraging Technology: Create Consistency and Enhance Quality and Efficiency
  
- B. NEO staff actively participated in the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA) as a member, and NEO served as a board member and served on the MACSA Effective Practices Committee to facilitate sharing of practices. NEO gained information, resources and ideas through planning and creating materials for, and engaging in, the Effective Practices Committee sessions.
  - 1. Effective Practices Committee In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (12/2/22)
    - o Charter School Need and Demand Facilitated by the Effective Practices Committee
    - o Anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) Facilitated by Emily Edstrom Moore of Osprey Wilds
    - o Update on Initiatives of the Policy Committee and Dialogue Facilitated by the Policy Committee
  - 2. In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (3/3/23)
    - o Anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) Small Group Discussion
    - o Charter Board Training and Development Site and Board Governance Facilitated by the Effective Practices Committee
    - o Potential New Legislative Action and Impact on Authorizing Facilitated by the Policy Committee
  - 3. In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (5/5/23)
    - o Board Governance Facilitated by the Effective Practices Committee (continued)
    - o Anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) Small Group Discussion
    - o Need and Demand Plan of Action Facilitated by the Effective Practices Committee

C. NEO is an active member of MACS and attended the MACS Policy Forum and Annual Meeting September 29, 2022, to help NEO remain current in knowledge related to charter schools and authorizing.

1. NEO participated in the MACS survey of school needs to share and gain information on current charter school needs.
2. NEO built our knowledge base and skill base of authorizing leadership by learning more about charter school funding, advocacy, accountability and autonomy, and facility.
3. NEO learned about the Innovation Award recipients to facilitate sharing of their effective practices:
  - a. Lakes International Language Academy developed a purposeful and engaging co-teaching model.
  - b. Twin Cities German Immersion School developed curriculum-based measurement literacy assessments in-house.

D. NEO staff participated in several MDE trainings and learning opportunities.

1. NEO staff attended the following “MDE Charter School Bootcamps” to obtain information and material that may be necessary for oversight and monitoring of charter schools that it authorizes. Additionally, by attending the bootcamps NEO seeks to gain information to facilitate sharing of information and resources with the schools, provide technical assistance where appropriate, and stay up to date on the various reporting requirements and programs.

10/12/22

- Extended Time Revenue
- Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant
- Next Steps for Charter Schools and Opening a Charter School
- Avoiding Common Pitfalls: Enrollment, Board Composition, Conflict of Interest, Procurement

11/16/22

- Compensatory Revenue
- Early Childhood Screening, American Printing House for the Blind Annual Federal Census
- UFARS Audit Intro
- Indoor Air Quality

12/21/22

- Test Security and Data Integrity
- IDEAS State Aid Payments
- Teacher Development and Evaluation
- Lease Aid
- School Nutrition Program Procurement

1/18/23

- Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems
- New School Nutrition Program Sponsor Process
- Minnesota Student Survey
- American Indian Education Requirements and Resources

3/15/23

- School Nutrition Program Procurement
- Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Plan Basics
- Accountability
- STAR Reporting Overview
- Migrant Education Program

5/17/23

- Working Through the Legal Framework of School Discipline
- Restorative Practices

6/21/23

- Family and Community Engagement
- Teacher Mentoring and Induction
- Average Daily Membership
- Ensuring Appropriate Licensure and Permissions for the Start of School
- Board of School Administrators (BOSA)
- School Nutrition Program Procurement
- Kindergarten Eligibility and the Successful Learner Equation

2. On March 31, 2023, NEO participated in the Minnesota Department of Education State Demographer Presentation to Authorizers. NEO built the knowledge and skill base of authorizing leadership by learning more about state enrollment trends, though information specifically about enrollment trends at charter schools was lacking in the presentation.
- E. NEO Advisors are independent contractors with whom NEO contracts for expertise in various areas of oversight. NEO conducted the annual orientation and technical assistance session for NEO Advisors on September 8, 2022, to review NEO procedures, policies, and systems for preventing conflicts of interest, evaluating new school and expansion applications, conducting board meeting observations and school site visits, resolving complaints, and reviewing and commenting on key documents, as well as to gain feedback and learn ideas for continuous improvement and areas of interest from Advisors (independent contractors) for working with NEO.
  - F. On January 19, 2023, NEO conducted a NEO Advisor (contracted experts) training to facilitate interrater-reliability training in preparation for new school application reviews.
  - G. NEO board, staff and advisors participated in Authorizer Self-Evaluation by reviewing progress toward implementation of key authorized school touchpoints during the year utilizing a “touchpoint dashboard” weekly. The NEO board also reviewed the dashboard, the financial status and compliance with NEO’s fund balance policy, and adherence to the approved budget at board meetings throughout the year.
  - H. NEO staff participated in the Minnesota Charter School Leadership Conference June 12-14 in Bemidji, Minnesota where NEO staff attended sessions on charter school strategic planning, financing, and literacy strategies that developed knowledge of issues charter schools are facing and ideas and contacts to facilitate sharing.

## Authorizer Self-Evaluation (A.9)

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

- A. NEO board members conducted board meetings throughout the year to review and monitor capacity, infrastructure, processes, and practices including implementation of NEO's Business Plan and the allocation of resources for overseeing the portfolio of charter schools and school performance. For example, the NEO board regularly reviewed, monitored, and approved monthly financials in comparison to the approved annual budget. The NEO board regularly reviewed and monitored progress toward implementation of NEO authorizer strategies for supporting authorized school success via a Touchpoint Dashboard.
- B. The NEO board treasurer and contracted financial service provider (EdFin) regularly reviewed and monitored the authorizer fee collection, independent contractor invoicing and payment, and reimbursement processes, and thereby served as an important financial internal control as part of NEO's internal control system.
- C. NEO engaged NACSA to conduct an external evaluation of its ability to effectively authorize charter schools in 2014-15 to gain feedback to improve the organization, and then again in 2018-2019. NEO continued to use the feedback in 2022-23 in its continuous improvement in authorizing. MDE also evaluated NEO in 2015 and in 2020 and NEO continued to utilize the feedback from the Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) in 2022-23. Evidence of NEO's continuous improvement is the improvement from the Satisfactory level of performance as measured through MAPES in 2015, to the Commendable level of performance as measured through MAPES in 2020.
- D. NEO staff continued to recruit and engage NEO Advisors who are independent contractors that serve as external experts with the capacity (knowledge and skill) to provide high quality observations and questions related to overseeing, monitoring, and evaluating authorized charter schools. The NEO Advisors were contracted for specific services and paid specific amounts for those services in the areas of academic, organizational, governance, and financial oversight, monitoring, and evaluation. The NEO Advisors provided feedback on NEO processes and procedures including new charter school applications, school site visits, school document review, school board meeting observations, and school expansions. NEO staff regularly reviewed and used the feedback in continuous improvement.
- E. At the NEO Celebrations of Leading and Learning NEO staff surveyed school leaders and board members about ways to improve the authorizing work and NEO staff used the feedback to improve the work. NEO staff made it a point to regularly ask authorized school board members and school leaders about how NEO could best support the school success, within the role of the authorizer (while remaining within the authorizer lane) and used that feedback to improve the work.



F. NEO staff met weekly throughout 2022-23 for the purpose of authorizer self-evaluation.

1. NEO staff regularly evaluated progress with implementation of the strategies that NEO utilizes to support school success using the NEO Touchpoint Dashboard. The NEO Touchpoint Dashboard was developed to monitor and evaluate progress during the year with completing scheduled meetings with authorized schools including board meeting observations, formal site visits, informal learning walks, data meetings to examine progress toward contract goals, finance meetings to examine current financial status compared to budgeted and projected, and readiness to open site visits. The Touchpoint Dashboard informs NEO staff and board if completion of the meetings is keeping pace with the percent of the year passed, if and when the meetings have been scheduled so NEO staff can follow up as needed to schedule them, and if and when the meetings are completed and for which schools.
2. NEO staff continued to update systems and associated resources to remain current and improve our work in response to feedback from NEO Advisors, staff, authorized school leadership, and external organizations including but not limited to MDE, NACSA, MACSA, and MACS. For example, in the past authorizer evaluation (MAPES), NEO received a relatively lower score in “self-evaluation”. NEO had engaged the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to evaluate NEO to gain feedback that NEO used to improve our work. MDE took the position that NACSA conducted an external evaluation and therefore, the evaluation was not a self-evaluation. NEO has continued to be intentional about self-evaluation and document the self-evaluation in which the NEO board and staff regularly engage.
3. NEO staff regularly reviewed and improved systems for how NEO facilitates sharing of effective practices. For example, NEO continued to improve the process for facilitating sharing of effective charter school practices at the NEO Celebration of Leading and Learning by continuing to refine associated templates, resources, and trackers. In addition, for example, NEO continued to refine associated templates, resources, and process for managing sessions with MDE officials to facilitate sharing of information in response to authorized school needs.
4. NEO staff regularly reviewed and improved how NEO provides oversight, monitoring and evaluation of authorized schools’ on-time and accurate submissions. For example, NEO continued to refine and improve associated templates, resources, and process for facilitation of sharing of information to support on-time and accurate submission rates. In addition, NEO staff continued to refine and improve associated templates, resources, and process with authorized schools to monitor and evaluate progress toward contract goals to support clarity and a shared understanding of the progress and next steps.
5. NEO continued to improve workflow by improving access to templates, tools, and trackers to oversee and monitor the work. For example, NEO staff continued to review and improve how NEO coordinates work with independent contractors and with NEO staff utilizing Google sheets to house, allocate appropriate permissions, and update authorized school Performance Frameworks. NEO staff continued to review and improve how NEO coordinates work with independent contractors and with NEO staff utilizing Google sites, a NEO workflow calendar, and NEO Touchpoint Dashboard.

## Authorizer High Quality Authorizing Dissemination (A.10)

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

- A. NEO staff served on the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizer (MACSA) Effective Practices Committees to help plan and implement the agendas and facilitate continuous improvement and sharing of effective practices among authorizers at monthly MACSA meetings.
  - 1. Effective Practices Committee In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (12/2/22)
    - NEO staff ran the technology for the meeting and helped prepare for the session on need and demand as it relates to high quality authorizing.
  - 2. In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (3/3/23)
    - NEO staff prepared and facilitated the presentation on the [www.mncharterboard.com](http://www.mncharterboard.com) charter board training and development site as well as discussion related to high quality authorizing and charter board governance issues.
  - 3. In-Person Authorizer Professional Development Session (5/5/23)
    - NEO staff helped develop the presentation for the session on need and demand as it relates to high quality authorizing.
  - 4. NEO staff facilitated sharing of statewide charter school data with MACSA after making a data request to MDE for the dataset, so that MACSA could monitor and evaluate the performance of the sector.
- B. NEO participated in the Minnesota Charter School Leadership Conference June 12-14 in Bemidji, Minnesota where we shared the [www.mncharterboard.com](http://www.mncharterboard.com) charter board training and development site with charter board members and facilitated use of the site. We developed the charter board training and development site through a CSP grant administered by MDE to meet need for accessible charter board training modules and shared resources.
- C. NEO continued to share ideas for improving communication and collaboration with authorizers and MDE for improving school/student success. Some of the MDE divisions/centers and officials provided timely and valuable information to charter school leaders at facilitated meetings in response. We look forward to continued progress with other items.
  - 1. [Facilitate Meetings between School Leaders and MDE Officials](#) from different divisions/centers based on school needs.
  - 2. Make the 'High-Quality Charter School Eligibility List for Expansion and Replication' criteria spreadsheet more transparent. Schools and authorizers should be able to understand why schools were or were not identified as high-quality by MDE.
  - 3. Identify the submissions required for the 'High-Quality Eligibility List for Expansion and Replication' in the 'Reporting Calendar' for charter schools.
  - 4. Provide notifications of critical authorizer and charter school submissions including those required for the 'High-Quality Eligibility List for Expansion and Replication'.

5. Survey authorizers and charter school leaders, including leaders of new charter schools, for ways to improve service.
  6. Provide a guide for schools with clear charter school Start-up Grant (CSP) guidelines informed by other states such as Washington and Michigan that have excellent guides.
  7. Make statewide charter school performance data more accessible, for example, via the Report Card website (include all charter school data in the drop-down menus regarding performance).
  8. Copy Authorizers on timely MDE communications to schools if communication is compliance related. Develop and use a system to alert charter schools and authorizers if MDE payments exceed reported average daily membership (ADM).
  9. Alert the legislature of the statewide auditor shortage, update information available regarding available auditors, and work with the legislature and other agencies to address the issue.
- D. NEO also provided and continues to disseminate practices to individual authorizers upon their request.
- E. NEO applied for and received a continuation of a federal grant administered by the Minnesota Department of Education for the purpose of disseminating information about charter school board roles and responsibilities to charter school board members and school leaders to support the sustainability of charter schools. NEO provided the opportunity for authorizers to engage in the project to assist in disseminating information to the charter schools that they authorize. NEO continued to work during the 2022-23 year to integrate feedback into the modules to target charter school issues and needs.

To date, the charter board training website has engaged charter schools including those authorized by Friends of Education, Innovation Quality Schools, Volunteers of America, Chisago Lakes Public Schools, Minnesota Guild of Public Charter Schools, Minnesota Office of Charter Authorizing (MOChA), Northfield Public School District, Osprey Wilds, Pillsbury United Communities, Student Achievement Minnesota LLC (SAM), University of St. Thomas and Novation Education Opportunities (NEO).

The total courses completed to end of the fiscal year 2023 is about 6,000. This represents a 27% increase in the total number of courses that had been completed in January 2023.

With roughly 650 users having completed a course and with an estimate of 1,426 board members and school leaders across the state, about 46% of all board members and board leaders have completed at least one course.

The average number of unique users in October 2023 is 65, with an average of 40 users a month since the official site rollout in March 2022.

More than 200 users have completed at least ten training courses utilizing the [www.mncharterboard.com](http://www.mncharterboard.com) site.

Many charter boards have added training to their regular board meeting agenda and are taking courses together as a board at their board meetings as part of their charter board training and development plan.

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

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

NEO's mission is to authorize and oversee charter schools through consistent, ongoing, and robust evaluation to achieve significant and measurable student growth.

To operationalize the mission, NEO:

- A. Provided consistent, ongoing, and robust feedback to the schools that NEO authorizes. NEO conducted board meeting observations and site visits, reviewed key documents such as annual budgets, audits and annual reports, and reviewed the school's contract goals as articulated in each school's unique School Performance Framework, as well as communicated with the school leaders and board chairs throughout the year. NEO allocated resources to ensure that the feedback and evaluation that the schools received was the highest quality by contracting only with proven experts in the areas of charter school academic performance, compliance, governance, and financial oversight.
- B. Facilitated the exchange of successful practices among the authorized schools. NEO hosted the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Celebration of Leading and Learning to 1) clarify expectations and provide school leaders an opportunity to review the school status relative to those expectations, 2) facilitate sharing of successful practices, 3) provide technical support in areas of need, and 4) recognize schools for their successes.
- C. Provided technical support to authorized schools.

Following are examples of technical assistance sessions that NEO facilitated by engaging the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) in presentations to address charter school questions, areas of confusion, and areas where more information was needed to meet regulations.

**NEO is grateful for the support from those who have provided it at MDE and PELSB!**

Date	Facilitated Technical Support	MDE/PELSB Experts
7/7/2022	Using Ed-Fi On-Boarding and Q&A	Tara Chapa
7/21/2022	DIRS Information Session and Q&A	Carly Lykes
8/2/2022	PELSB Information Session and Q&A Re Staffing Shortages	Alex Liuzzi Tanwaporn Watanaporn Ohl Brian Rappe
8/30/2022	Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System (CLiCS) Information Session, Re Reporting and Accessing Food and Nutrition Funds	Richard Rodriguez Ann Iweriebor
9/14/2022	Providing Early Learning Services and Accessing Funds Q&A	June Reineke
9/27/2022	Accessing Title III Funds	Leigh Schleicher Julie Chi Barbara Al Nouri

10/11/2022	Title I, II, III Funding Access Information and Q&A Session	Alicia Waeffler
10/28/2022	STAR Information and Q&A Session	Katherine "Kat" Anthony-Wigle
11/2/2022	World's Best Work Force Information and Q&A Session	Michael Diedrich
11/21/2022	Annual Immunization Status Reporting	Lisa Harris
1/5/2023	Seclusion Reporting	Sara Wolf Carolyn Ellstra
1/20/2023	Updates to ESSER Fund Use	John Ford
2/7/2023	The Legal Framework of School Discipline: Part 1 - Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (PFDA)	Kimberly Cooper Sara Wolf
2/10/2023	The Legal Framework of School Discipline: Part 2 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Kimberly Cooper Sara Wolf
3/2/2023	Summer School Planning and Expanded Learning	Mary Barrie
4/18/2023	Minnesota Common Course Catalogue Refresher Session	Karen Millette
4/28/2023	Mandated Reporting Information Session	Jodi Schommer Sara Wolf

- D. Maintained the Performance Framework of each authorized school. Each school has a unique Performance Framework that articulates the school's goals for the term of the contract. Each school's Performance Framework is maintained in a Google Sheet and shared with the board members and school leadership of the school so that the school and NEO have transparent, ongoing access to shared information about the school's progress toward contract goals. Each year, NEO meets with each authorized school leader, the board chair, board members and in some cases, the staff of the school, to review the school's current performance status and provide school support, development, and technical assistance with using the Performance Framework to monitor and evaluate progress toward contract renewal goals.
- E. Applied for and received continuation of a federal grant administered by the MDE for charter school support, development, and technical assistance. The Charter Board Training and Development Grant continued to support the work of disseminating information, ideas, and resources on the topics of the charter board's role and responsibilities, financial management, and employment policies and practices to charter school board members and school leaders to support the sustainability of charter schools. NEO continued to develop and update the training and development site and make it available to charter board members, school leaders, and other interested persons to improve knowledge and skill and support school success.

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

**Describe how your organization promoted model replication and dissemination of best practices of high-quality charters schools over the past year.**

NEO planned and promoted the replication and dissemination of successful high-quality school practices in the following ways:

A. NEO continued to disseminate information about and promote expansion and replication of high-quality school programs. Universal Academy was identified as “High Quality Charter School” for the purpose of eligibility to apply for a Charter School Expansion and Replication Grant. NEO disseminated information to the Universal Academy about applying for an expansion. Universal Academy received approval to expand to high school and to an additional site.

B. To facilitate exchange of effective practices among authorized schools for the purpose of each school’s continuous improvement NEO held fall and spring Celebrations of Leading and Learning:

### Fall 2022 Celebration of Leading and Learning Presentations, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

1. Lionsgate Academy; Dr. Diane Restorff – Strategic Planning
2. Innovation Academy; Dr. Olatoye Omotoke – Navigating Teacher and Paraprofessional Shortages
3. RSTEM Academy; Dr. Charlene Ellingston – Tutoring Models to Improve Language Arts and Math
4. Hmong College Prep Academy; Danijela Duvnjak – Supporting Student Mental Health
5. Achieve Language Academy; Dr. Curtis (Chipp) Windham – Supporting Staff Mental Health

### Spring 2023 Celebration of Leading and Learning Presentations, May 24, 2023

1. New Century Academy; Jason Becker and Kelsey Dolge – Reducing Burnout
2. Escuela Exitos and Quantum STEAM Academy; Luis Vanegas and Dr. Mahrous Kandil, Cresence Nabil – Teacher Recruitment and Retention
3. Great Oaks Academy; Paul McGlynn, Margie Wesling, Heith Wetzler – Keys to Successful Schoolwide Professional Development
4. SAGE Academy; Cari-Ana Garcia-Luna – Differentiating Instruction and Performance Measures to Ignite Learning
5. Nerstrand Elementary; Nicole Musolf – Navigating Financial Challenges

C. NEO also shared effective practices and useful resources identified during learning walks, site visits, and board observations, with authorized schools.

D. NEO facilitated informal site visits (learning walks) focused on the school’s current needs or priorities, with the goals of supporting a shared vision of the use of effective schoolwide strategies and of identifying successful practices and resources that were shared with other schools.

E. NEO provided a project management system (Basecamp) and shared resources to pre-operational schools working to meet readiness to open indicators.

F. NEO identified and recognized schools that demonstrated exemplary performance, through awards such as the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance and Academic Achievement Awards, to recognize, promote, and share successful practices.

G. NEO continued to procure resources and ideas from charter school board members about effective practices and useful resources to share through the [www.mncharterboard.com](http://www.mncharterboard.com) charter board training and development site. NEO continued to inform charter schools of the site, maintained the site, and facilitated access to the site to facilitate sharing of effective practices and resources that charter schools have found useful.

## Portfolio Information

### General Charter School Portfolio Data (as of June 30, 2023)

#### Preoperational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio

Name of Charter School	Charter School Local Educational Agency (LEA) Number (if assigned)	Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant Recipient	Grade Levels Approved to Serve	Projected Enrollment when Fully Enrolled	Proposed Location	Proposed Opening Date
Enlighten Academy	4281	Yes	PK-5	276 (year 8)	St. Paul	09/05/2024
Surad Academy	4301	No	PreK-12	360 (year 9)	128 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Faribault, MN 55021	09/05/2023 (opened)

#### Operational Charter Schools in Authorizer's Portfolio

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	CSP Grant Recipient	Grade Levels Served in FY 2022	Location
Achieve Language Academy	4018	Yes	PK-8	2169 Stillwater Avenue E, Saint Paul, MN 55119
Agamim Classical Academy	4220	Yes	KG-8	5300 France Avenue S, Edina, MN 55410
Aspire Academy	4280	Yes	KG-7	1210 Shakopee Town Square, Shakopee, MN 55379
Avalon School	4075-010	Yes	6-12	700 Glendale Street, Saint Paul, MN 55114



<b>Name of Charter School</b>	<b>Charter School LEA Number</b>	<b>CSP Grant Recipient</b>	<b>Grade Levels Served in FY 2022</b>	<b>Location</b>
Avalon Middle School	4075-020	Yes	6-8	700 Glendale Street, Saint Paul, MN 55114
Bultum Academy	4295	Yes	NA	1555 40 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421
Discovery Charter School	4221	Yes	KG-8	4100 East 66th Street Ste 2, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076
Great Oaks Academy	4268	Yes	K-5	6300 212TH ST W, Farmington, MN 55024
Great River Elementary School	4105-020	Yes	1-6	1326 Energy Park Dr, Saint Paul, MN 55108
Great River School	4105-010	Yes	7-12	1326 Energy Park Dr, Saint Paul, MN 55108
Hmong College Preparatory Academy	4103	Yes	K-12	1515 Brewster St, Saint Paul, MN 55108
Innovation Academy	4282	Yes	PK-5	3397 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Kato Public Charter School	4066	Yes	6-12	110 N 6th St, Mankato, MN 56001
Lionsgate Academy - Minnetonka	4183-010	Yes	7-12	5605 Green Circle Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55343
Lionsgate Academy - Lynx Program	4183-050	Yes	7-12	599 Cardigan Road, Shoreview, MN 55126

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	<b>Charter School LEA Number</b>	<b>CSP Grant Recipient</b>	<b>Grade Levels Served in FY 2022</b>	<b>Location</b>
Lionsgate Academy – Aim Program	4183-030	Yes	7-12	2342 Helen Street, North Saint Paul, MN 55109
Nerstrand Charter School	4055	Yes	KG-5	205 S 2nd St, Nerstrand, MN 55053
New Century Academy	4093	Yes	6-12	950 School Road SW, Hutchinson, MN 55350
New City School	4089	Yes	KG-8	1500 6th St NE, Minneapolis, MN, 55413
North Metro Flex Academy	4243	Yes	KG-7	2350 Helen Street, North Saint Paul, MN 55109
Quantum STEAM Academy	4269	Yes	K-7	497 Humboldt Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55107
Rochester STEM Academy	4204	Yes	9-12	415 16th St SW, Rochester, MN 55902
SAGE Academy Charter School	4087	Yes	9-12	3900 85th Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443
Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy Charter School	4223	Yes	KG-5	1025 18th St N, Saint Cloud, MN 56303
Sejong Academy of Minnesota	4215-010	Yes	PK-6	1885 University Ave W, Saint Paul, MN 55104
Sejong Academy of Minnesota High School	4215-020	Yes	7-12	1885 University Ave W, Saint Paul, MN 55104

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	<b>Charter School LEA Number</b>	<b>CSP Grant Recipient</b>	<b>Grade Levels Served in FY 2022</b>	<b>Location</b>
Star of the North Academy Charter School	4224	Yes	KG-8	1562 Viking Blvd, East Bethel, MN 55011
STEAM Academy	4270	Yes	KG-5	4100 66 <sup>th</sup> St E, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076
TEAM Academy	4127	Yes	KG-6	220 17th Avenue NE, Waseca, MN 56093
Universal Academy Charter School	4225	Yes	PK-8	2919 26th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55406
Urban Academy		Yes	PK-8	1668 Montreal Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55116

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

Name of Charter School	Officially Recognized Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Program	Officially Recognized Instructional Preschool Program to provide early childhood education and preparation for transition to kindergarten for children ages three through five	Officially Recognized Instructional Prekindergarten Program for four-year-olds to prepare children for entry into kindergarten the following year
Achieve Language Academy	Yes	No	Yes
Lafayette Charter School	No	No	Yes
Sejong Academy	No	No	Yes
Universal Academy	No	No	Yes
Urban Academy	No	No	Yes
Innovation Academy	No	No	Yes
Bultum Academy	No	No	Yes
Aspire Academy	No	No	Yes
Enlighten Academy	No	No	Yes
Surad Academy	No	No	Yes

## Charter School Portfolio Activity in FY 2023

Did any charter schools leave your organization’s portfolio and transfer to another authorizer during or at the end of the year?

Yes

No

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

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	New Authorizing Organization	Effective Date of Transfer
NA	NA	NA	NA

Did your organization terminate or revoke the charter contract for any charter school before the end of the contract term?

Yes

No

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

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	Reason(s) for Contract Termination	Effective Date of Contract Termination
NA	NA	NA	NA

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

Yes

No

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

Name of Charter School	Charter School LEA Number	Reason(s) for Closure	Effective Date of Closure
Lafayette Charter School	4050-07	MN Teacher Shortage (school had successfully served the community for more than 20 years in the small town of Lafayette, Minnesota).	07/01/2022
LINK Public Schools	4286-07	Facility and Finance	08/11/2022

# Charter School Portfolio Performance

## Academic Performance

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

## Students Served

NEO monitored the collective demographic and enrollment information of the schools authorized by NEO to monitor and ensure that NEO continues to reach out to diverse communities that are currently underserved by the public school system. The vision of NEO is to be a leading Minnesota Authorizer of innovative, diverse, and effective charter schools.

### Enrollment by Special Populations

The schools that NEO authorized in 2022-2023 continue to serve a significantly higher percent of English learners, students receiving special education services, and students from low-income households than the statewide average according to the Minnesota Department of Education Data and Analytics reports summarized in the following tables. The schools that NEO authorized continue to experience increases in the percent of English learners, students receiving special education services, and students from low-income households.

Overall, the percent of English learners collectively served by schools authorized by NEO who took state assessments increased from 18% in 2015 to 32% in 2023. In third grade, the percent of English learners collectively served by schools authorized by NEO who took state assessments increased from 28% in 2015 to 45% in 2023. In contrast, the percent of all English learners statewide who took state tests in 2023 was 9%.

### Student Population: Percent of All Students Tested in Schools Authorized by NEO

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
English Learners	18%	24%	26%	31%	29%	NA	34%	29%	32%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	17%	17%	17%	18%	20%	NA	20%	19%	19%
Students Meeting State Guidelines for Free/Reduced Meals	53%	54%	56%	54%	55%	NA	58%	55%	64%

### Student Population: Percent of All Students Tested in All MN Public Schools

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
English Learners	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%	NA	7%	9%	9%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	13%	14%	15%	14%	15%	NA	15%	17%	16%
Students Meeting State Guidelines for Free/Reduced Meals	39%	38%	38%	37%	38%	NA	32%	32%	43%

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education School Report Card

## NEO Demographic Trends

NEO’s vision is to be a leading Minnesota Authorizer of innovative, diverse, and effective charter schools.

The schools authorized by NEO continued to serve families of diverse ancestry and ethnic origins as broadly categorized by the Minnesota Department of Education.

### Students Served by Schools NEO Authorizes

Year	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black, not of Hispanic origin	Two or More Races	White, not of Hispanic origin
2015	0.3%	15%	NA	9%	25%	NA	49%
2016	1%	13%	NA	8%	25%	NA	45%
2017	1%	14%	NA	10%	24%	NA	46%
2018	1%	17%	NA	10%	27%	3%	42%
2019	1%	16%	NA	11%	27%	4%	41%
2020	1%	17%	0.2%	11%	26%	5%	40%
2021	1%	18%	0.2%	11%	28%	5%	38%
2022	1%	18%	0.1%	11%	28%	5%	37%
2023	1%	39%	0	8%	23%	4%	25%

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education Data and Analytics



## World’s Best Workforce and Academic Achievement

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

**WBWF Goal 1: All children are ready for school.**

Schools that are authorized by NEO continued to implement a Prekindergarten Instructional Program that have the capacity and resources to provide high quality Prekindergarten instruction. The schools continued to work with NEO to gain approval from the Minnesota Department of Education and successfully implement a Prekindergarten Instructional Program to help ensure that all children are ready for school.

In 2022-23, 12 of the 20 elementary schools authorized by NEO (Achieve Language Academy, Sejong Academy of Minnesota, Universal Academy, Urban Academy Charter School, Quantum STEAM Academy, STEAM Academy, Great Oaks Academy, Innovation Academy, Enlighten Academy, Aspire Academy, Bultum Academy, and Surad Academy) were authorized to have a Prekindergarten Instructional Program.

Of those authorized to have a Prekindergarten Instructional Program, 6 school provided one.

NEO facilitated sharing of ideas and resources among Prekindergarten Instructional Programs through learning walks and verified compliance with laws and regulations at site visits.

The number of schools authorized by NEO with a Prekindergarten Instructional Program continued to increase.

Years	NEO Authorized Schools Adding Prekindergarten Instructional Programs
2014	Achieve Language Academy
2015	Lafayette Charter School (closed)
2016	Sejong Academy of Minnesota
2017	Universal Academy, Urban Academy Charter School
2018	Quantum STEAM Academy, STEAM Academy, Great Oaks Academy
2019	Innovation Academy, Enlighten Academy, Aspire Academy
2022	Bultum Academy
2023	Surad Academy (pre-operational)
2014-2023	12 Total Schools Authorized to Provide Prekindergarten Instructional Programs

NEO continued to contract with an expert in program oversight and early childhood education to assist with the oversight of schools that have Prekindergarten Instructional Programs. NEO developed a Prekindergarten Instructional Program evaluation tool that can be used by school leadership and NEO to evaluate the Prekindergarten Instructional Program to identify successful practices and facilitate sharing of them.

**WBWF Goal 2: All third graders can read at grade level (This goal was phased out in the 2023 legislative session but is included since it was in effect in 2022-2023).**

In schools that NEO authorizes, the percent of Grade 3 multilingual learners who are learning English language who take State Reading Accountability Assessments continued to increase and continued to be significantly higher than statewide average.

The percent of third-grade students who were multilingual learners learning English who took the state reading accountability assessments (MCA /MTAS) in 2023 at schools authorized by NEO was 45% compared to 13% statewide. It is more difficult for a student learning English language to score proficient on a state reading test than for a student who is proficient in English language.

**Percent of Grade 3 English Learners Taking State Reading Assessments**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Schools Authorized by NEO	28%	38%	38%	43%	43%	40%	NA	40%	39%	45% *
All Schools in the State	11%	12%	12%	13%	12%	13%	NA	12%	13%	13%

**Percent of Grade 3 Students Scoring Proficient as Measured by State Reading Assessments**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Schools Authorized by NEO	42%	47%	45%	39%	44%	43%	NA	34%	41%	39% *
All Schools in the State	59%	69%	58%	58%	57%	55%	NA	48%	49%	48%

\* Hmong College Prep Academy transferred to NEO in 2022-2023 and because the school was not in the data set in prior years, it was not included in this data set. Next year the results will be included because there will be two consecutive years of data and therefore, comparable results.

**Data Sources: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Report Card and MDE de-identified, student-level data.**

**Analysis.** In 2022-23, there was an increase of six percentage points in the percent of multilingual learners learning English and a 3-percentage point decrease of students in third grade scoring proficient.

The collective third-grade percent of all students who scored “meets” or “exceeds” on state assessments in schools authorized by NEO was 38% compared to 48% of all students statewide in 2023.

Due to the pandemic, there are no results for 2019-20.

In the 2021 school year there was a sharp decline in the percent of students scoring proficient due in part to the challenges of distance learning required due to the pandemic. In addition, schools were not able to consistently administer the state assessments in 2020-21 in that many students were not able to test, or tested under challenging circumstances, due to the periods of distance learning occurring in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. For example, in 2019, 98% of students in schools that NEO authorizes participated in statewide assessments. In 2021, only 74% of students were able to participate in the statewide assessments.

Each school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes measures for reading achievement as measured by the percent of students scoring meets or exceeds on state reading assessments.

NEO met with the leaders of authorized schools to examine the school performance and identify successful practices as well as learn ways that the school is working to improve results.

NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and needs to help facilitate sharing of successful practices.

NEO followed up with the schools to plan for ways to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

For example, Agamim Classical Academy, Great River School, and New City School significantly improved the grade 3 reading scores and outperformed the grade 3 state average.

- Agamim Classical Academy demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 48% to 60% with 100% of their students participating in statewide assessments, outperforming the statewide average percent of students scoring proficient of 48%.
- Great River School demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 64% to 71% with 92% of their students participating in statewide assessments, outperforming the statewide average percent of students scoring proficient of 48%.
- New City School demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 58% to 68% with 100% of their students participating in statewide assessments, outperforming the statewide average percent of students scoring proficient of 48%.

In addition, North Metro Flex Academy, Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy, Urban Academy, and Quantum STEAM Academy significantly improved the grade 3 reading scores.

- North Metro Flex Academy demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 38% to 45% with 100% of their students participating in statewide assessments.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 30% to 38% with 100% of their students participating in statewide assessments.
- Urban Academy demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 21% to 32% with 78% of their students participating in statewide assessments.
- Quantum STEAM Academy demonstrated an increase in grade 3 reading proficiency from 8% to 27% with 84% of their students participating in statewide assessments.

Some of the leaders from these schools (New City School, North Metro Flex Academy, Quantum STEAM Academy) shared effective practices at the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Celebration of Leading and Learning.

**WBWF Goal 3: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.**

NEO evaluated the academic performance of Focus Groups including “Special Education” (students receiving special education services), “English Learner” (multilingual learners learning English language), and “Free/Reduced-Price Meals” (students from households with an income that meets guidelines for free and reduced school meals) in terms of progress in closing economic and other opportunity/achievement gaps. The goals are to exceed the statewide and resident district averages and/or improve as measured by state tests.

**READING**

The percent of students by Focus Group who scored proficient on All State Reading Accountability Assessments exceeded the state in all years for the Focus Group “English Learners” (multi-lingual learners learning English language), and in most years for the Focus Group of “Special Education” (students receiving special education services). The percent of students scoring proficient is about the same for the Focus Group of “Free/Reduced-Price Meals” (students from low-income households). Due to the pandemic, there are no results for 2019-20. In the 2021 school year, the student assessment results decreased as measured by the percent scoring proficient, due in part to the limitations of distance learning when students could not attend school in person.

**MCA Reading Results (Percent Proficient)**

Year	Focus Group: English Learner		Focus Group: Special Education		Focus Group: Free/Reduced-Price Meals	
	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE
2015-2019	28%	15%	32%	29%	41%	40%
2020	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2021	15%	9%	23%	26%	27%	32%
2022	22%	12%	27%	26%	33%	32%
2023	20%	12%	28%	26%	33%	34%
Analysis	<p><u>English Learner Focus Group</u> In all years measured, schools authorized by NEO collectively outperformed the state as measured by the percent of students who scored proficient in the Focus Group, ‘English Learner’.</p>					
	<p><u>Special Education Focus Group</u> In three of the four years, schools authorized by NEO collectively outperformed the state as measured by the percent of students who scored proficient in the Focus Group, ‘Special Education’.</p>					
	<p><u>Free/Reduced-Price Meals Focus Group</u> In two of four years, schools authorized by NEO collectively outperformed the state as measured by the percent of students who scored proficient in the Focus Group, ‘Free/Reduced-Price Meals’.</p>					
	<p>The results of Hmong College Preparatory Academy (HCPA) are not included in the table above. NEO will include the results of HCPA after two consecutive years of serving as the charter school’s authorizer at which time there will be two consecutive years of results for comparison purposes.</p>					

**Data Source: MDE de-identified, student-level data.**

Each school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes measures for proficiency of Focus Groups in reading.

NEO met with the leaders of authorized schools to examine the school performance and identify successful practices as well as learn ways that the school is working to improve results.

NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and needs to help facilitate sharing of successful practices.

NEO followed up with the schools as available to plan for ways to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

Several schools that NEO authorizes significantly improved the reading scores of different Focus Groups and/or significantly outperformed the statewide average for the respective Focus Groups in 2022, as measured by the percent of students meeting grade level standards (scoring meets or exceeds on the state reading assessments).

For example,

- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 29% to 43%, outperforming the statewide average of 33%, post pandemic.
- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students receiving special education services from 29% to 52%, post pandemic, outperforming the statewide average of 26%.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 14% to 27% to 37%, outperforming the statewide average of 33%, post pandemic.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of multilingual learners learning English language from 15% to 21%, outperforming the statewide average of 13%, post pandemic.
- Urban Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 26% to 29% to 37%, outperforming the statewide average of 33%, post pandemic.
- Urban Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of multilingual learners learning English language from 14% to 17% to 28%, outperforming the statewide average of 12%, post pandemic.
- Discovery Charter School achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 33% to 43%, outperforming the statewide average of 33%, post pandemic.
- Great River School achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 56% to 63%, outperforming the statewide average of 34%, post pandemic.
- Great River School achieved an increase in reading proficiency for the focus group of students receiving special education services from 38% to 48%, outperforming the statewide average of 26%, post pandemic.

Some of the leaders from these schools shared effective practices at the 2021 Fall and 2022 Spring Celebration of Leading and Learning, depending on their availability.

**MATHEMATICS**

The percent of students by Focus Group who scored proficient on All State Math Accountability Assessments exceeded the state in all years except for 2021 for English learners. Due to the pandemic, there are no results for 2019-20. In the 2021 school year, the student assessment results decreased as measured by the percent scoring proficient, due in part to the limitations of distance learning when students could not attend school in person.

**MCA Math Results (Percent Proficient)**

Year	Focus Group: English Learner		Focus Group: Special Education		Focus Group: Eligible for Free/Reduced	
	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE
2015-2019	29%	18%	21%	29%	34%	38%
2020	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2021	8%	9%	12%	23%	15%	23%
2022	13%	12%	16%	24%	19%	24%
2023	15%	13%	17%	25%	22%	27%
Analysis	<p><u>English Learner Focus Group</u>                      In three of the four years measured by state test math proficiency results, schools authorized by NEO collectively performed higher than the state for the Focus Group, English Learner. In 2022-23, the percent proficient increased by 2 percentage points. This Focus Group was most severely impacted by the mandated shift from in-person to distance learning during the pandemic.</p>					
	<p><u>Special Education Focus Group</u>                      In most years as measured by state test math proficiency results, schools authorized by NEO collectively do not yet outperform the state in the Focus Group, Special Education. In 2022-23, the percent proficient increased by 1 percentage point.</p>					
	<p><u>Free/Reduced Price Meals Focus Group</u>                      In most years as measured by state test math proficiency results, schools authorized by NEO collectively do not yet outperform the state in the Focus Group, Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals. In 2022-23, the percent proficient increased by 3 percentage points.</p>					
	<p>Note: The results of Hmong College Preparatory Academy (HCPA) are not included in the table above. NEO will include the results of HCPA after two consecutive years of serving as the charter school’s authorizer at which time there will be two consecutive years of results for comparison purposes.</p>					

**Data Sources:** MDE de-identified, student-level data.

Each school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes measures for proficiency of Focus Groups in math.

NEO met with the leaders of authorized schools to examine the school performance and identify successful practices as well as learn ways that the school is working to improve results.

NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and needs to help facilitate sharing of successful practices.

Several schools improved the math scores of different Focus Groups by at least 10 percentage points and/or significantly outperformed the statewide average for the respective Focus Groups (comparisons between the school and state results are for the same grade levels).

NEO followed up with these schools based on their availability to plan for ways to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

For example,

- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of multilingual learners learning English from 10% to 24% post pandemic, outperforming the statewide average of 16%.
- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 18% to 35% post pandemic, outperforming the statewide average of 25%.
- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of students receiving special education services from 10% to 47% post pandemic, outperforming the statewide average of 26%.
- Avalon Charter school achieved 21% of students in the focus group of students receiving special education services scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 17%, post pandemic.
- Bultum Academy, in its first year, achieved 28% of students in the focus group of multilingual learners learning English language scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 20%, post pandemic.
- Discovery Charter School achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 23% to 36%, outperforming the statewide average of 28%, post pandemic.
- Great Oaks Academy achieved 38% of students in the focus group of students receiving special education services scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 30%, post pandemic.
- Lionsgate Academy achieved 19% of students in the focus group of students receiving special education services scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 15%, post pandemic.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of multilingual learners learning English language from 8% to 22% with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments, outperforming the statewide average of 19%, post pandemic.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 11% to 22% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.
- TEAM Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency for the focus group of students from low-income households from 20% to 35% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.

Based on the statewide assessment results, the mandated distance learning during the pandemic had a more severe negative impact in math and for Focus Groups that include students receiving special education services, students from low-income households, and students who are multilingual learners learning English language.

**WBWF Goal 4: All students are ready for career and college.**

NEO examined the percent of students in schools that NEO authorizes that score proficient in reading and math, with the goal of exceeding the statewide and resident district proficiency rates.

	All Students: Reading Percent Proficient		All Students: Math Percent Proficient	
	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE	NEO Authorized Schools	STATE
2014	51%	60%	42%	61%
2015	54%	61%	43%	62%
2016	55%	61%	42%	62%
2017	53%	61%	40%	61%
2018	52%	61%	44%	60%
2019	48%	60%	40%	56%
2020	NA	NA	NA	NA
2021	37%	53%	23%	44%
2022	45%	52%	28%	46%
2023	44% (excluding new transfer school) 37% (including new transfer school) *	50%	30% (excluding new transfer school) 25% (including new transfer school) *	46%
Analysis	<p>Schools authorized by NEO did not yet collectively outperform the state as measured by the percent of students who scored proficient in reading and math.</p> <p>* Note that the results for 2023 are impacted by the transfer of a large school to NEO from another authorizer.</p>			

**Data Sources: MDE de-identified, student-level data.**



Each school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes the charter contract goals and measures for reading proficiency.

NEO met with the leaders of authorized schools to examine the school performance and identify successful practices as well as learn ways that the school is working to improve results.

NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and needs to help facilitate sharing of successful practices.

NEO followed up with the schools based on their availability to plan for ways to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

Several schools that NEO authorizes outperformed the statewide average and/or improved reading proficiency by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percent of students who scored “meets” or “exceeds” on the state reading assessments. For example,

- Avalon Charter School achieved 62% of students scoring proficient in reading, outperforming the statewide average of 49%, post pandemic.
- Agamim Classical Academy achieved 64% of students scoring proficient in reading, outperforming the statewide average of 50%, post pandemic.
- Discovery Charter School achieved 56% of students scoring proficient in reading, outperforming the statewide average of 50%, post pandemic.
- Great Oaks Academy achieved 63% of students scoring proficient in reading, outperforming the statewide average of 53%, post pandemic.
- Great River Academy achieved 69% of students scoring proficient in reading, outperforming the statewide average of 51%, post pandemic.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency from 29% to 39% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.
- Urban Academy achieved an increase in reading proficiency from 26% to 29% to 37% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.

In addition, several schools that NEO authorizes outperformed the statewide average and/or improved math proficiency by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percent of students who scored “meets” or “exceeds” on the state math assessments. For example,

- Agamim Classical Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency from 45% to 59%, post pandemic.
- Avalon Charter School achieved an increase in math proficiency from 26% to 37%, post pandemic.
- Discovery Charter School achieved an increase in math proficiency from 33% to 46%, post pandemic.
- Great Oaks Academy achieved 63% of students scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 51%, post pandemic.
- Nerstrand Elementary School achieved 57% of students scoring proficient in math, outperforming the statewide average of 54%, post pandemic.
- Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency from 12% to 33% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.
- TEAM Academy achieved an increase in math proficiency from 20% to 35% post pandemic, with 100% of students participating in statewide assessments.

NEO followed up with these schools based on their availability to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

## Academic Performance

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

### Reading Growth Results

In addition to regularly overseeing and evaluating student progress toward career and college readiness by overseeing and evaluating progress toward grade level proficiency, NEO and the schools authorized by NEO, oversee, and evaluate the percent of students below grade level making high growth and the percent of students at or above grade level making medium or high growth.

If students below grade level are making high growth, they are making the ‘catch up’ growth they need to make to be on track for a successful transition to career and college, and if students who are at or above grade level make medium or high growth, they will remain on track for a successful transition to career and college.

### Students Below Grade Level Making High Growth in Reading

The percent of students below grade level making high growth in reading as measured by the state assessments in grades 4 - 8 and high school demonstrate that collectively, the schools that NEO authorizes meet or exceed the state in reading growth. Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2020 and 2021, results are not available for those years.

### Percent of Students Scoring “Does not Meet” or “Partially Meets” the Prior Year Advancing a Proficiency Level

Year	Schools Authorized by NEO	State
2016	33%	31%
2017	33%	31%
2018	35%	30%
2019	29%	29%
2020	NA	NA
2021	NA	NA
2022	37%	31%
2023	33%	27%
Analysis	Schools authorized by NEO for at least two consecutive years collectively outperformed the state in 2023 as measured by the percent of students below grade level making high growth in reading. Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2019-2020 and for 2020-21, there are not results available for these years.	

Data Sources: MDE de-identified, student-level data.

### Students At or Above Grade Level Making Medium and High Growth in Reading

Collectively the schools that NEO authorizes have not yet consistently exceeded the statewide average in the percent of students above grade level making medium and high growth in reading as measured by the state assessments in grades 4 – 8 and high school.

Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2020 and 2021, results were not available for those years.

### Percent of Students Scoring “Meets” or “Exceeds” the Prior Year Maintaining or Advancing a Proficiency Level

Year	Schools Authorized by NEO	State
2016	71%	73%
2017	72%	74%
2018	75%	75%
2019	73%	73%
2020	NA	NA
2021	NA	NA
2022	79%	76%
2023	77%	74%
Analysis:	Schools authorized by NEO for at least two consecutive years collectively outperformed the statewide average in 2023 as measured by the percent of students at or above grade level making medium or high growth in reading. Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2019-2020 and for 2020-21, results were not available for those years.	

**Data Sources:** MDE de-identified, student-level data.

## Math Growth Results

### Students Below Grade Level Making High Growth in Math

The percent of students below grade level making high growth in math as measured by the state assessments in grades 4 - 8 and high school, demonstrate that collectively, the schools that NEO authorizes exceeded the statewide average in math growth in some years.

Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2020 and 2021, results were not available for those years.

### **Percent of Students Scoring “Does not Meet” or “Partially Meets” the Prior Year Advancing a Proficiency Level**

Year	Schools Authorized by NEO	State
2016	29%	26%
2017	22%	25%
2018	29%	24%
2019	25%	22%
2020	NA	NA
2021	NA	NA
2022	20%	24%
2023	20%	20%
Analysis:	Schools authorized by NEO for at least two consecutive years collectively performed about the same as the state as measured by the percent of students below grade level making high growth in math in 2022. Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2019-2020 and for 2020-21, there are not results available for these years.	

**Data Source:** MDE de-identified, student-level data.

### Students Above Grade Level Making Medium and High Growth in Math

Collectively the schools that NEO authorizes have not yet exceeded the statewide average in the percent of students above grade level making medium and high growth in math as measured by the state assessments in grades 4 – 8 and high school.

Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2020 and 2021, results were not available for those years.

### Percent of Students Scoring “Meets” or “Exceeds” the Prior Year Maintaining or Advancing a Proficiency Level

Year	Schools Authorized by NEO	State
2016	71%	74%
2017	60%	74%
2018	66%	73%
2019	64%	71%
2020	NA	NA
2021	NA	NA
2022	64%	75%
2023	63%	72%
Analysis:	Schools authorized by NEO for at least two consecutive years collectively did not outperform the state as measured by the percent of students at or above grade level making medium or high growth in math. Due to the pandemic and state reporting limitations for 2019-2020 and for 2020-21, results were not available for those years.	

**Data Source:** MDE de-identified, student-level data.

Each school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes measures for growth of students below grade level making high growth and students at or above grade level making medium or high growth.

NEO met with the leaders of authorized schools to examine the school performance and identify successful practices as well as learn ways that the school is working to improve results.

NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and needs to help facilitate sharing of successful practices.

NEO followed up with the schools to plan for ways to facilitate sharing of the successful practices.

**WBWF Goal 5: All students graduate from high school.**

Schools authorized by NEO have collectively demonstrated improvement in graduation rates since the baseline year of 2013.

**4-year Graduation Rate (Due to state reporting, graduation data lags one year)**

Year	School Authorized by NEO	State
Baseline 2013	40%	80%
2014	43%	81%
2015	46%	82%
2016	53%	83%
2017	47%	83%
2018	62%	83%
2019	59%	84%
2020	63%	84%
2021	59%	83%
2022	64%	84%
Analysis:	From the baseline year rate of 40% in 2013, the graduation rate increased to 64% in 2022. Schools authorized by NEO are not yet exceeding the statewide average 4-year graduation rate.	

**5-year Graduation Rate (Due to state reporting, graduation data lags one year)**

Year	School Authorized by NEO	State
Baseline 2013	45%	82%
2014	48%	84%
2015	51%	84%
2016	53%	85%
2017	60%	86%
2018	67%	86%
2019	75%	86%
2020	68%	87%
2021	69%	87%
2022	74%	87%
Analysis:	From the baseline year rate of 45% in 2013, the graduation rate increased to 74% in 2022. Schools authorized by NEO are not yet exceeding the statewide average 5-year graduation rate.	

**6-Year Cohort (Due to state reporting, graduation data lags one year)**

Year	School Authorized by NEO	State
2013	49%	82%
2014	52%	83%
2015	52%	85%
2016	56%	86%
2017	59%	86%
2018	78%	87%
2019	70%	87%
2020	77%	88%
2021	72%	88%
2022	75%	88%
Analysis:	From the baseline year rate of 49% in 2013, the graduation rate increased to 75% in 2022. Schools authorized by NEO are not yet exceeding the statewide average 6-year graduation rate.	

**7-Year Cohort (Due to state reporting, graduation data lags one year)**

Year	School Authorized by NEO	State
2019	81%	88%
2020	74%	88%
2021	80%	89%
2022	77%	89%
Analysis:	MDE began calculating 7-year graduation rates in 2020. From the baseline year rate of 2019, the graduation rate decreased in 2022. Schools authorized by NEO are not yet exceeding the statewide average 7-year graduation rate.	

**Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Report Card**

Note: Hmong College Preparatory Academy transferred to NEO this past year after their former authorizer retired from authorizing. Their results are not included above since NEO did not have comparative data for prior years.

The following are the results for Hmong College Preparatory Academy for 2023.

- 4-year graduation rate: 96%
- 5-year graduation rate: 98%
- 6-year graduation rate: 96%
- 7-year graduation rate: 93%

Each high school that NEO authorizes has a Performance Framework that includes measures for graduation. Schools that did not meet the satisfactory level of results at any point during the contract term, met more often with NEO to examine the school performance and actions that the school has been taking to improve the results. NEO also identified areas where schools met the exemplary level of results. NEO connected school leaders based on areas of strengths and relative weakness to help facilitate sharing of successful practices and support school success.

## Operational Performance

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

### Attendance Rates.

Due to the state reporting timeline, attendance data lags one year.

### Percent of Students Attending More than 90% of the Time Enrolled in Schools Authorized by NEO

Group	Year	Attendance Rate
All	2015	83%
All	2016	85%
All	2017	85%
All	2018	85%
All	2019	86%
All	2020	89%
All	2021	NA
All	2022	76%

### Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Report Card

**Results.** Note that attendance data reporting from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) lags one year. Therefore, data for 2022 is the most current available data.

Collectively, the schools authorized by NEO improved the attendance rate from 2015 to 2020, but post-pandemic many schools experienced a decrease in attendance rates.

Statewide, the attendance rate fell from 85% in 2020 to 70% in 2022 post pandemic.

The consistent attendance rate is calculated by MDE as the percent of students who attend at least 90% of the total days enrolled. MDE did not report attendance results for 2021 due to the pandemic conditions.

The statewide consistent attendance rate was 70% for the 2021-2022 school year, thus, for the 2021-2022 school year, the average consistent attendance rate of the schools that NEO authorizes was six percentage points higher than the state average.



**Compliance.** NEO verified that schools met key compliance indicators through site visits, board meeting observations, and website and document reviews.

Statutory infractions were documented, and if a school was unable to correct each infraction within the period for corrective action, the school's Performance Framework rating for the indicator for Compliance/Operational Performance was adjusted.

This may have resulted for example, in a school achieving a three-year contract term instead of a five-year contract term, or even the potential of a nonrenewal.

NEO has developed a series of courses to provide technical assistance to charter board members and school leaders with compliance.

NEO requested that the board members and school leaders complete training in areas of any documented infraction.

NEO monitored and evaluated compliance with applicable laws and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) regulations and contractual requirements through site visits and school reporting, including but not limited to the following areas.

Board Member Composition and Background Checks

- NEO verified compliant board composition and background checks during an annual formal site visit.
- The schools authorized by NEO were able to provide evidence of compliant board member composition and up-to-date background checks.

Board Training (new and ongoing)

- The schools authorized by NEO were able to provide evidence of meeting charter board training requirements.

School Leadership Evaluation and Professional Development Plan (as applicable)

- The schools authorized by NEO were able to provide evidence of meeting requirements for leadership evaluation and professional development.

Staff and Volunteer Background Checks

- The schools authorized by NEO were able to provide evidence of staff and volunteer background checks.

Teacher Licensure

- The schools authorized by NEO were compliant with licensure requirements.

Teacher Evaluation and Peer Review Process

- The schools authorized by NEO completed a teacher evaluation and peer review process.

Alignment of Education Program to MN Academic Standards

- The schools authorized by NEO showed evidence of the processes to align curriculum of the academics to MN Academic Standards.

#### Nonsectarian School Facilities and Program

- The schools authorized by NEO met requirements related to nonsectarian facilities and programming.

#### Current Certifications/Inspections (Certificate of Occupancy, Food and Nutrition Program)

- The schools authorized by NEO met requirements for completing and posting certifications and inspections.

#### Safety and Security

- The schools authorized by NEO were able to provide evidence of meeting requirements related to safety and security.

NEO monitored and evaluated compliance with applicable laws and contractual requirements through board meeting observations, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Compliance with Minnesota Open Meeting Laws
- Compliance with School Bylaws

NEO monitored and evaluated compliance with applicable laws and MDE regulations and contractual requirements through website reviews, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Current Board Roster
  - The schools authorized by NEO kept their board roster updated on their websites.
- Website Requirements as Specified by MN Statutes and MDE Requirements
  - The schools authorized by NEO were compliant with website requirements.
- On-time and Accurate Submissions
  - The schools submitted documents via Epicenter, a document collection and storage system, to NEO and to MDE, on-time and accurately to assist NEO with monitoring compliance and to meet statutory requirements.

NEO monitored and evaluated compliance with applicable laws and MDE regulations and contractual requirements through document reviews, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Required Policies and Assurances
- Certificates of Insurance
- School Calendars (Instructional Days and Assessments)
- Board-approved Annual Budgets and Revisions
- Required Reports (Audit, Charter School Annual Report, World's Best Workforce Plan, Report and Summary)
- Board Meeting Materials (Including Recorded Votes, Financials and Policy Review Cycle)

NEO has developed a series of minicourses that include compliance with applicable laws and requirements.

NEO recommended that schools complete training based on their compliance issue(s).

**Mobility.** NEO had been monitoring the state reported student mobility rates to understand the mobility of students enrolling and unenrolling. Mobility rates included percent of students who transfer into the school after October 1, and the percent of students who transfer out of the school after October 1.

**Collective Mobility Results for Schools Authorized By NEO**

In the 2022-2023 school year, 95% of students remained enrolled from October 1 to the end of the school year in the schools that NEO authorizes collectively, with only 5% transferring out during the school year, compared to 94% remaining enrolled from October 1 to the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

Data source: [School Reported Through Student Information Systems](#)

Based on available data from MDE, MDE reports that enrollment in schools authorized by NEO has increased steadily over the past nine years from 2,930 to 8,644.

Grade	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2014-15	NA	280	297	263	277	258	277	165	192	180	204	181	189	217	2930
2015-16	NA	330	329	324	284	274	257	212	184	217	198	279	288	513	3689
2016-17	34	413	423	427	403	337	291	237	238	194	190	197	215	235	3834
2017-18	94	439	464	425	412	408	348	304	244	250	188	213	196	257	4242
2018-19	86	463	488	467	450	450	413	363	330	275	229	236	227	259	4739
2019-20	115	462	508	503	477	430	426	374	347	324	267	250	240	281	5013
2020-21	108	398	541	527	520	466	437	392	382	361	251	272	252	286	5196
2021-22	112	520	581	564	569	543	502	431	409	375	253	251	275	328	5713
2022-23	112	745	809	770	792	763	749	686	696	632	501	456	430	503	8644

## **Financial Performance**

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

NEO analyzed 14 indicators to evaluate financial sustainability and to determine finance awards. They included:

### **Statutory Reporting Deadlines**

1. Preliminary UFARS data was submitted to MDE by September 15.
2. Final UFARS data was submitted to MDE by November 30.
3. The current year audit was submitted to MDE and the authorizer by December 31.
4. Preliminary budgets are approved prior to July 1 of a new fiscal year.

### **Reporting and Oversight Quality**

5. UFARS and Audit data agree (compliance table from MDE).
6. The audit is free from material and significant deficiencies—no findings in audit.
7. Financial Reports are submitted to the NEO EpiCenter in a timely manner.
8. The board conducts financial oversight (reviews a quality set of financials) at each regular meeting.

### **Financial Sustainability**

9. A fund balance policy is used in oversight.
10. The general fund unreserved balance is at least 20% unless SPED population is 75% or greater.
11. Fund Two (2) unreserved balance is zero or positive.
12. Fund Four (4) unreserved balance is zero or positive.
13. The organization has a positive current ratio (assets to liabilities).

### **Use of Public Funds**

14. The school properly used public funds.

NEO also used the analysis to provide feedback to schools, personalize technical assistance, and share successful practices.

The end-of-year school fund balance was one of the indicators of school sustainability.

**Average Fund Balance of Schools that NEO Authorizes**

Year	Average Fund Balance
2015	29%
2016	32%
2017	33%
2018	31%
2019	32%
2020	28%
2021	29%
2022	30%
2023	37%

**Data Sources: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Data and Analytics**

**Results.** The average fund balance for schools that NEO authorized in 2022-23 was 37%.

All operational schools that NEO authorizes had a positive fund balance except for two schools, one of which was closed.

NEO has developed a series of courses on financial oversight and recommended that all board members and school leaders from schools with a fund balance less than 10% complete training on adopting the budget and monitoring pupil units, cash flow, and fund balance.

16 out of 29 schools with financial activity had reserves (fund balance as a percentage of annual expenditures) of at least 20%.

63% of schools authorized by NEO (17 out of 27) that were required to complete an audit in 2022-23 for the Fiscal Year ending June 2022 had clean audits (no findings). NEO has developed a series of courses on preventing audit findings and recommended that all board members and school leaders from schools with audit findings complete training related to the findings.

21 out of 29 of the operational schools that NEO authorizes eligible to earn the MDE School Finance Award, earned the MDE School Finance Award in 2023 based on 2021-2022 financials.

MDE has not yet awarded the 2022-2023 School Finance Awards.

NEO has developed a course on earning the MDE School Finance Award and recommended that all board members and school leaders from schools that did not earn the School Finance Award complete training related to meeting the standards for earning the School Finance Award.

**Overview of Strengths and Areas of Improvement in Financial Performance Through FY2023**

<b>Financial Indicators</b>	<b>'13</b>	<b>'14</b>	<b>'15</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'18</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'20</b>	<b>'21</b>	<b>'22</b>	<b>'23</b>
Total Number of Schools Including Pre-operational	15	15	19	21	23	21	26	26	28	30	31
Eligible Operational Schools Earning the MDE School Finance Award	13/15	14/15	13/18	17/19	20/21	19/21	19/20	16/20	17/21	16/23	21/27
Operating Schools in Statutory Operating Debt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2
Percent w/No Audit Finding	53%	53%	50%	68%	76%	71%	76%	59%	65%	68%	63% *

\* 2 audits were not completed due to extenuating circumstances and status is not known.

<b>Financial Indicators</b>	<b>'13</b>	<b>'14</b>	<b>'15</b>	<b>'16</b>	<b>'17</b>	<b>'18</b>	<b>'19</b>	<b>'20</b>	<b>'21</b>	<b>'22</b>	<b>'23</b>
Total Number of Schools with Financial Activity	15	15	19	21	23	21	21	21	22	27	29
Fund Balance is less than 0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Fund Balance 0 to 9.99%	4	2	4	4	5	3	4	2	2	3	6
Fund Balance 10 to 19.99	2	4	3	5	5	7	2	4	4	7	8
Fund Balance 20 to 29.99%	1	2	3	3	2	1	4	5	5	4	2
Fund Balance 30% or Greater	8	7	9	9	10	9	9	8	9	11	11

**Data Sources:** Minnesota Department of Education Data and Analytics and charter school audited financials.

**NEO Stewardship Award in Finance**

NEO awarded schools that achieve exemplary financial performance with the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance. Most criteria for the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance are taken directly from the NEO Contract and/or Minnesota Statutes. The criteria that separated out many of the schools that reach higher levels of achievement are:

1. The Board of Directors demonstrates consistent financial oversight through use of quality financials including balance sheet, transaction register, budget vs. actual revenues and expenses including budgeted and current projected enrollment (ADM) assumptions, and cash flow projections.
2. Schools must be free from all audit findings (significant and material).
3. The general fund unreserved balance was at or above 20%.
4. The Board of Directors demonstrates consistent financial oversight through use of a fund balance policy.

9 of 29 eligible schools (not all pre-operational and new schools have audited financials and are eligible for the Finance Award from MDE) met the criteria for earning the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance in 2022-2023 based on 2021-2022 financials compared to 11 in 2021-2022. The 9 schools that earned the NEO Stewardship Award in Finance for 2022-2023 were Avalon Charter School, Great Oaks Academy, Hmong College Prep Academy, Nerstrand Elementary, New City School, Rochester STEM Academy, Saint Cloud Math and Science Academy, Sejong Academy, and Urban Academy.

## Other Performance (if applicable)

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

NA

## Gratitude

We express our gratitude to the boards, leaders, business managers, and other staff, as well as the families and students that make up the community of each authorized school for the privilege to work with you to support school success and improve student learning!

In addition, we express our gratitude to the Advisors (independent contractors), who work as part of the team to support school success and improve student learning with their experience and expertise!

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (MACSA), the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS), the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for the support you continued to provide this past year!

With Gratitude,

*Wendy Swanson Choi on behalf of  
Novation Education Opportunities (NEO)*