## Tool 1: Performance Framework

High-quality authorizing begins with the establishment of a performance framework that will guide the authorizer’s oversight and accountability processes. A charter school performance framework articulates the district’s priorities and what is expected from charter schools. An authorizer’s performance framework should also be grounded in the intent of applicable laws, knowledge of best practices, and the needs of students in the community. This performance framework could inform performance rubrics used to evaluate new applications, annual reviews, and renewal applications from charter schools. For example, the categories, prompts, and statements in the performance framework can then become application prompts or rubric categories in future authorizing activities. Charter agreements may indicate that charter schools agree that oversight and accountability will be based on the framework.

Typically, a performance framework identifies the domains, or areas of performance, an authorizer will examine in evaluating charter school performance. Authorizers can then develop more detailed evaluation rubrics aligned to those domains. These rubrics can be used to make recommendations to the local school board, which will ultimately vote on applications and renewals. Annual reports highlight areas of deficiency or strength based on these rubrics and serve as written notice to charter schools and the community about schools’ performance.

Many authorizers choose to break their performance framework into three domains focusing on Academic, Financial, and Organizational practices (see SDP, NACSA, LDE frameworks in the [external resources](#_Pre-Authorizing_Stage_External) section). Some authorizers break their performance framework down further. For example, Pittsburgh’s Performance Framework has six categories: Mission, Purpose, and Needs; Marketing Data; Strategic Planning; Management Plan; Education Program; Operations; and Personnel/Leaders.

Tool 1 in the table below provides an example of a charter school performance framework with five main domains:

1. Access
2. Supporting All Students
3. Academics
4. Organizational
5. Financial

Tool 1 provides more detail on the first two domains (**Access** and **Supporting All Students**)as these inherently focus attention on aspects of school performance directly related to equitable practices. Complete performance frameworks should also consider equity when evaluating the other three domains of charter performance (**Academics**, **Organizational**, and **Financial**). Tool 1 below provides basic information about the content typically included in these domains as well as suggestions of relevant factors to support equity. However, as discussed above, this is not a comprehensive set of tools to address *all aspects* of charter school authorization. Authorizers should be sure to consult legal counsel and other resources to ensure they provide thorough accountability in all areas of authorizing.

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| Tool 1: Charter authorization performance framework |
| 1. **Access**   *Charter schools are public schools and must protect the rights of all students. Charter schools should employ practices that ensure equitable access and eliminate any barriers for students enrolling or remaining in their charter school. The following policies and practices should be present in all charter schools:* |
| **Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention:**   * Recruitment practices actively seek a student body that reflects the diversity of students' communities of origin. Charter schools should develop detailed plans regarding how they will disseminate information to prospective students and families, including efforts to reach families with diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, families of students with disabilities, students in poverty, students experiencing homelessness, students who are English Learners, and students who are system-involved (including students in foster care or other out of home placements, students in or returning from juvenile justice placements, and other students receiving services from the child welfare system). * Enrollment practices do not discriminate and are transparent, compliant with state and federal law, and follow best practices in admissions, lottery, waitlist, withdrawal, re-enrollment, and transfer policies, such that charter schools do not erect any improper preferences or barriers to admission. * Plans and practices that demonstrate a clear commitment to retaining all enrolled students, including those students who may be struggling academically or otherwise. Plans also reflect the practice of backfilling (i.e., enrolling additional students when spots become open throughout the year). * If permissible under the law, authorizers should consider incentivizing a unified enrollment system for all public schools in the community. * If permissible under the law, authorizers should consider the benefits of a weighted student lottery to provide greater opportunity to historically underserved students. |
| **Student Discipline/School Climate:**   * A non-punitive code of conduct and/or discipline policy that provides clear notice of behavioral expectations and consequences that emphasize fairness, positive behavior, and are proportionate to behavioral infractions, ensures due process for students at all levels of infractions, and includes plans to prevent discipline disparities. * Policies that clearly outline suspension and expulsion procedures, including procedures for students with disabilities, English Learners, and other historically underserved students. * Disciplinary policies and practices do not exceed the authority legally granted to schools in that they are reasonable, not arbitrary or capricious, not unconstitutionally vague, are limited to regulating conduct that occurs when students are under school supervision, and do not violate students’ civil rights to expression, religion, substantive due process, and equal protection. * Data on student discipline should be accurate, disaggregated by student subgroups, regularly reported to the public, reviewed by charter schools, and used to drive improvement and reduce disparities. |

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| 1. **Supporting All Students**   *Charter school should provide adequate and equitable supports to all students, including those who are historically marginalized. The following policies and practices should be present in all charter schools:* |

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| **Supporting Students with Disabilities:**   * Systems are in place to identify, serve, and monitor the progress of students with disabilities, including educating students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment[[1]](#footnote-1). * To ensure that all students receive a Free Appropriate Public Education,[[2]](#footnote-2) programming is available for students with all types of disabilities, including specially designed instruction, accommodations and modifications, and a continuum of placements; systems are in place to modify curricula and instructional delivery in order to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. * Compliance with all legal requirements of IDEA, Section 504, ADA, and applicable state laws, including Chapter 711-Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities. |
| **Supporting English Learners (ELs):**   * Plans are in place to identify and appropriately place ELs into a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP), monitor their progress, and exit students from EL services when appropriate. * Policies that ensure equitable access to the curriculum for ELs at all language proficiency levels, including plans to incorporate English language development into all classes. * Plans are in place to ensure appropriate translation and interpretation services. * Compliance with all legal requirements and civil rights protections. |
| **Supporting Other Students Who Have Been Historically Underserved:**   * Plans are in place to ensure that students in poverty, students experiencing homelessness, and students who are system-involved (including students in foster care, students in or returning from juvenile justice placements, and other students receiving services from the child welfare system) receive services and programming to ensure equal access to a Free Appropriate Public Education. * Plans are in place to address the needs and monitor progress of students and comply with all legal mandates, including the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Every Student Succeeds Acts. |
| 1. **Academics**   *Charter school should improve learning opportunities for all students and encourage new and innovative teaching methods. Accordingly, the following elements should be present in all charter schools:* |
| **Elements typically included in this domain:**  Pedagogical Approach, Curriculum Scope and Sequence, Instructional Materials, Student Placement Procedures, Student Assessment and Testing, Professional Development |
| **Academic domain elements to support equity:**   * Plans and practices provide equitable and robust learning opportunities to all students, including equitable access to gifted and talented programming, advanced coursework, art, music, physical education, extracurricular activities, and other programming. * Setting and making progress toward academic achievement and growth targets, aligned with state and federal accountability measures, for all students and student subgroups. * Plans for assessment and grading that include provisions for students with disabilities and English Learners. * Professional development plans include training in cultural competency, trauma-informed practices, and in providing support to all learners, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and other students who have been historically underserved. |
| 1. **Organizational**   *Charter schools should be effective, viable organizations that adhere to their mission and vision, support program delivery, and establish appropriate systems and policies. In order to do so, the following elements should be present in all charter schools:* |
| **Elements typically included in this domain:**  Mission, Vision, and Need; Organizational Structure, Strategic Planning/Goals, Board Governance, Staffing Plan, Service Providers/Contractors, Legal Compliance, Facilities Plans, Attendance Policies, Reporting, Transportation, Food, Safety, School Calendar, Parent and Community Engagement, Extracurricular Activities, Health Services, Insurance Coverage, Historical Performance/Outcomes (if applicable), Employee Evaluation, Recordkeeping and Confidentiality, Labor Relations (if applicable) |
| **Organizational domain elements to support equity:**  Mission, Vision, and Need:   * A mission and/or vision that defines the purpose, key design elements, and expanded educational opportunities offered by the school. * A mission and/or vision that articulates the school’s target community (geographic, demographic, grade level, etc.) and includes a commitment to equitably serving all students within that community. * A mission and/or vision that responds to demonstrated needs of students’ communities of origin and is informed by data and meaningful support from diverse constituencies. * Alignment between school mission, vision, and all other school elements.   Parent, Family, and Community Engagement   * Active engagement with diverse students and families and the larger community in decision-making, including plans to actively disseminate information to families and the community. * Transparency and access to board actions, meetings, and school governance. * Processes for parent complaint review and dispute resolution.   Staffing:   * A staffing model that meets legal requirements for teacher and leader certification and includes sufficient numbers of certified special education teachers, certified ESL teachers, counselors, and nurses to support the student body. * Assignment and public identification of the charter school’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison. * Diversity among the charter school’s board members, school leadership, and staff. |
| 1. **Financial**   *Charter schools should be fiscally sound organizations. In order to do so, the following elements should be present in all charter schools:* |
| **Elements typically included in this domain:**  Budgeting and Long-Range Financial Planning, Internal Controls/Procedures, Financial Resources |
| **Financial domain elements to support equity:**   * Budgeting aligns with staffing model. * Adequate resources allotted for recruitment of historically underserved students and to effectively implement EL program, special education program, and any other supports for at-risk student populations. |
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1. U.S. Department of Education. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). Retrieved from https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.114 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. U.S. Department of Education. Free Appropriate Public Education for students with disabilities: Requirements under Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)