Introduction

Utah State University Board of Trustees has authorized its Center for the Schools of the Future (CSF) to act as its designee to exercise its authority to authorize charter schools in Utah. This document provides procedural direction to existing charter school boards and leadership in formally requesting transfer of their charter to USU-CSF, and to have USU-CSF serve as their authorizer. This procedural direction starts with meeting the requirements of R277-552-7 (see at bottom of document), that identifies the minimal requirements for requesting transfer to another authorizer.

Transfer Process Stages

This document describes a process that allows the group requesting transfer and USU-CSF leadership to assess the fit between mission, vision and values between both organizations and determine if formation of a charter agreement would be mutually advantageous. This determination also requires USU-CSF to assess their own capacity to provide quality authorizing supports within its portfolio of charter schools.

USU-CSF’s charter school authorization transfer process consists of three foundational understandings. These foundational understandings guide USU-CSF staff in placing your transfer request and school in one of three learning profiles (see below). The learning profile your request is placed in directs the transfer request process you will follow. You will receive notification of your learning profile placement within 7-days of USU-CSF receiving a courtesy email of your intention to formally request a transfer to USU-CSF as an authorizer.

Foundational Understandings

1. Existing charter schools that want to transfer their charters to USU-CSF have student learning performance histories. Ones that can be examined in relationship to USU-CSF learning expectations.
2. Recognizing that assessments of student performance change, there seems to be sufficient stability in them that USU-CSF and CLP staff can assess the trajectories of these performance patterns.
3. Learning trajectories evidence one of several things about charter organizations. These evidences should inform USU-CSF’s actions in relationship to their interest in transferring. These evidences refer to student learning profiles or trajectories over time. Each of these three profiles/trajectories is described below, and along with each of USU-CSF’s corresponding transfer authorization processes.

As R277-552-7 identifies, USU-CSF is to approve or not approve a transfer request within 60-days. This 60-day timeline begins with electronic submission of the materials identified in stage 1 if your transfer request is placed in learning profile 1. Send these materials to David Forbush, Associate Director of the Center for the School of the Future at david.forbush@usu.edu. If your transfer request is placed in learning profile 2 or 3, submit R277-552-7 required materials to start the 60-day review timeline. In
advance of submitting these materials and initiating the timeline, please send a courtesy email of your intention to formally request a transfer to USU-CSF as authorizer to david.forbush@usu.edu.

Profile 1 - Flat or Descending Student Learning Trajectories - Below existing Utah performance averages in multiple areas, coupled with flat or descending student performance trajectories.

The USU-CSF system for transferring these charter schools into their portfolio will include the required information specified in R277-552-7 while also requiring additional information to clearly articulate the school’s commitment and capacity for student learning improvement. The process for assessing the fit of these schools is as follows, and in the order of stages noted. Additionally, these stages pre-suppose that applicants participated in a USU-CSF orientation, and as a result, understand the USU-CSF focus on student learning, and can thereby assess their values alignment with USU-CSF values prior to requesting transfer. As R277-552-7 identifies, USU-CSF is to approve or not approve a transfer request within 60-days. This 60-day timeline begins with electronic submission of the materials identified in stage 1 below to David Forbush, Associate Director of the Center for the School of the Future at david.forbush@usu.edu. In advance of submitting these materials and initiating the timeline, please send a courtesy email of your intention to formally request a transfer to USU-CSF as an authorizer.

Stage 1 – Preliminary Application Documents - The applicant will submit three products to USU-CSF. Product 1 - the requirements associated with R277-552-7 will be submitted. Product 2 - the applicant will submit a copy of their current charter mission, vision and values, and a re-written copy of the same with highlighted changes in language to better align (if needed) with USU-CSF’s learning mission. Product 3 – applicants will submit a strength, weakness, opportunity, threats analysis (SWOT) that is no more than 2-pages in length. Based on the assessment of these products the authorization review will continue to stage 2, or the transfer request will be denied.

Note - Each stage that follows will conclude with the team determining if the evidence gathered directs continuing, or discontinuing the authorization review process. The process may conclude at the close of any step.

Stage 2 – USU-CSF Accountability Assessment - School personnel will supply the information needed for USU-CSF to score the school using the USU-CSF accountability plan. See the USU-CSF Multi-Tiered System of Support – Remediation Plan at https://csf.usu.edu/projects-services/files/charter_school_authorizing/Multi-System%20of%20Support--Remediation%20Plan%20-%20CSF%20-%202019-2020.pdf If evidence provides an even more positive view of the organization meeting USU-CSF’s learning expectations in the future, than formed in the previous step, then the review continues to stage 3.

Stage 3 – Gap and Root-Cause Analyses - School personnel will complete a narrow, single item multi-prong analysis and provide a related report to USU-CSF. Two analyses will be conducted and reported on by applicants. Analysis 1: Complete a gap analysis in either language arts, mathematics or science and describe the gap between where the school is currently performing and where they should be performing. Analysis 2: Complete a root-cause analysis to determine at the lowest level the causes producing the gaps analyzed. If evidence provides an even more positive view of the organization meeting USU-CSF’s learning expectations in the future, than formed in the previous step, then the review continues to stage 4.

Stage 4 – Intervention Plan Addressing Root-Cause + Discontinuation Analysis - School personnel will develop an intervention plan addressing a single root cause believed to drive a
problem discovered in the gap analysis completed in stage 3. It is important that this plan be written to the audience of the school’s stakeholders versus to USU-CSF. We are interested in your internal plan versus what you will do under the influence of external pressures or accountability. This intervention plan will describe multiple levels of assessment of the intervention and it’s impacts. Level 1 - Measure of intervention implementation fidelity. Level 2 - Measure of the impact of the implemented intervention on student learning. Level 3 - Measure of how systemic evolution is occurring as a reactive result of the changes in student learning identified from the level 2 measure. Finally, this implementation plan requires completion of a “discontinuation analysis.” This requires that you describe programs or interventions that will be shuttered to allow your proposed intervention to be inserted and effectively operated to impact your identified gap. This intervention plan will be submitted to USU-CSF leadership. If evidence provides an even more positive view of the organization meeting USU-CSF’s learning expectations in the future, than formed in the previous step, then the review continues to stage 5.

Stage 5 – Internal Review - Need to Capacity Assessment - Based on information accrued via stages 1-4 USU-CSF will assess the school’s capacity and USU-CSF and its affiliates’ capacities to form a package of support that is proportionally correct so USU-CSF and its affiliates supplement their efforts, but do not supplant them. This assessment recognizes USU-CSF’s capacity related to the applicant school, but also recognizes remaining capacity based on deployment of its organization capacity to schools already in the USU-CSF portfolio. If a positive and properly sized package of support can be organized then the review will move to stage 6.

Stage 6 – School Visit, Board Meeting and Presentation - Recognizing the limitations of paper-based processes, USU-CSF and its affiliates will visit you and your team at your school. As part of this visit, they will conduct a full board interview. This experience will include the board and school personnel delivering a two-part 35-minute presentation. 20-minutes of the presentation is to describe how they will conduct a broad performance gap analysis, performance root cause analyses, and how they will complete a discontinuation analysis and form an alignment plan to align their current system with their charter’s learning ambitions and USU-CSF’s learning expectations. 15-minutes of the presentation are to focus on learning topic of choice. USU-CSF leadership and its affiliates will facilitate a discussion pertaining to the presentations among all persons present. A description of the resources they will employ to achieve this alignment will also be provided in the presentation. If this experience is perceived as positive then the review will move to stage 7, the final stage.

Stage 7 – Final Internal Decision & Charter Agreement Development - USU-CSF leadership will consider all information gathered and if the findings are positive, they will recommend to USU’s board of trustees that your charter be allowed to transfer to the USU-CSF portfolio. This decision is made by USU’s board of trustees. If they approve the request, then USU-CSF will develop a charter school agreement requiring the school to conduct root cause analyses in all areas, develop an action priority list and develop associated implementation plans with time frames and short-term goals to address prioritized root causes in year one of their occupancy in the USU-CSF portfolio. Additionally, the school will be reminded of its pre-portfolio status in the USU-CSF accountability framework (see stage 2) and that it will be held fully to the accountability timelines as they arise in the normal course of system operation. Each school will enter the USU-CSF portfolio as a tier I school (See the USU-CSF Multi-Tiered System of Support –
Remediation Plan) and will continue until within portfolio accountability processes discover otherwise.

**Profile 2 - Ascending Student Learning Performance Trajectories** - Ascending student performance trajectories evidence that the charter school is a learning organization and can respond to the product of their actions (student learning) and alter their systems in ways that improve subsequent student performance outcomes.

The USU-CSF system for transferring these charter schools into their portfolio will include the required information specified in R277-552-7 while also requiring additional information to clearly articulate the schools commitment and capacity for student learning improvement and will include an on-site school visit and full board interview and presentation (see presentation description in profile 1 stage 7) to assess the interests in transfer, assess goodness of fit and determine how the organization would be positioned in the USU-CSF accountability system. One aspect of the presentation is for their team to describe how they have established and sustain their student learning performance trajectory.

**Profile 3 - Steep Student Learning Performance Trajectories** - A steep trajectory suggests that the charter organization can respond to the product of their actions (student learning) and alter systems in ways that improve subsequent results. As evidenced by their data, the systems changes they make are high-leverage or more powerful than organizations producing flatter, but improving performance trajectories.

The USU-CSF system for transferring these charter schools into their portfolio should be as lean as possible and only what R277-552-7 requires, plus an on-site school visit and full board interview and presentation (see presentation description in profile 1 stage 7) to assess their interests in transfer, assess goodness of fit, and finally predict the added value USU-CSF will add to these high performing organizations (e.g., accelerate learning organization learning...increases in student proficiency doubles current levels of achievement). The board presentation will describe how they have established and sustain their student learning performance trajectory.
(1) A charter school may transfer to another charter school authorizer.

(2) A charter school shall submit an application to the new charter school authorizer at least 90 days prior to the proposed transfer.

(3) The charter school authorizer transfer application shall include:
(a) current governing board members;
(b) financial records that demonstrate the charter school's financial position, including the following:
   (i) most recent annual financial report (AFR);
   (ii) annual project report (APR); and
   (iii) audited financial statement;
(c) test scores, including all state required assessments;
(d) current employees and assignments;
(e) board minutes for the most recent 12 months; and
(f) affidavits, signed by all board members certifying:
   (i) the charter school's compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations;
   (ii) all information on the transfer application is complete and accurate;
   (iii) the charter school is current with all charter school governing board policies;
   (iv) the charter school is operating consistent with the charter school's charter agreement; and
   (v) there are no outstanding lawsuits, judgments, or liens against the charter school.

(4) The current authorizer of a charter school seeking to transfer charter school authorizers shall submit a position statement to the new charter school authorizer about:
(a) the charter school's status;
(b) compliance with the charter school authorizer requirements; and
(c) unresolved concerns.

(5) A new charter school authorizer shall review an application for transferring a charter school authorizer for acceptance within 60 days of submission of a complete application, including all required documentation.

(6) If an authorizer accepts the transfer of a new charter school, the new authorizer shall notify the Superintendent within 30 days.

(7) Prior to accepting a charter school from another authorizer, a new charter authorizer shall request and consider information from the Board and current authorizer of the charter school's financial and academic performance.

(8) The Superintendent and current authorizer shall provide the information described in Subsection (7) to a new charter authorizer within 30 days of request described in Subsection (7).