



BIRCH GROVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ANNUAL SCORECARD REPORT

PUBLISHED WINTER 2026 for FY25

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2021-2022 VOA-MN SCHOOL SITE VISIT DATES: October 4, 2021; April 29, 2022

2022-2023 VOA-MN SCHOOL SITE VISIT DATES: September 21, 2022; March 15, 2023

2023-2024 VOA-MN SCHOOL SITE VISIT DATES: October 9, 2023; March 14, 2024

2024-2025 VOA-MN SCHOOL SITE VISIT DATES: October 25, 2024; May 14, 2025

2025-2026 VOA-MN SCHOOL SITE VISIT DATES: September 17, 2025

2021-2022 VOA-MN SCHOOL BOARD OBSERVATION DATES: September 20, 2021; April 19, 2022

2022-2023 VOA-MN SCHOOL BOARD OBSERVATION DATES: July 18, 2022; June 20, 2023

2023-2024 VOA-MN SCHOOL BOARD OBSERVATION DATES: September 19, 2023; May 21, 2024

2024-2025 VOA-MN SCHOOL BOARD OBSERVATION DATES: September 27, 2024; May 14, 2025

Volunteers of America of Minnesota Accountability Plan

According to Minnesota Statute 124E.01, subd.1, *The primary purpose of mission-driven charter schools is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students.* VOA-MN holds the schools it authorizes accountable in five major areas: academic performance, fiscal management, board governance, management and operations, and legal compliance. Each area may have multiple indicators of success and the charter school’s performance on each indicator will be rated.

Rating Scale: For each standard, a school earns points for contract renewal as follows:

- 2 = Meets Standard
- 1 = Partially Meets Standard
- 0 = Does Not Meet Standard

Weighting of Performance Measures used during the contract renewal process is as follows:

- 50% weighting: Academic Program (statutory purposes, including primary purpose)
- 20% weighting: Financial Sustainability
- 30% weighting: Organization
 - 15% governance
 - 15% management & compliance

Combining Data Over the Contract Term

Annual school performance results will be combined each successive year of the contract term wherever possible so that fluctuation due to small group size will be minimized and overall performance is accurately reflected.

Contract Renewal Eligibility

VOA-MN schools must achieve at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal and at least an Exemplary Rating (80% of points possible) in the

Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

Renewal contract length is based on an average of school's performance over the term of the contract. Renewal decisions for a three-year or five-year contract term will be based on two and four fiscal years of data respectively.

If a school is performing below standard to receive a three-year renewal contract, but has agreed to the authorizer terms and conditions set forth in the School Improvement Plan to correct areas of deficiency, VOA-MN may agree to extend a school's contract (not to exceed five years) to provide additional time for a school to improve performance as an alternative to termination. If sufficient school improvement is not being made by the end of the 1st year of the extension, termination proceedings will commence.

Intervention and Corrective Action

VOA-MN schools that, prior to their year of contract renewal, fall below a Satisfactory Rating in the Performance Framework overall and/or in any performance area (Academic, Finance, Governance, Management/Operations) must enter into a School Improvement Plan that addresses the specific standards in the Performance Framework where the school performance is below Satisfactory.

Closure Plan

If the school does not meet the terms of the School Improvement Plan and attain a Satisfactory Rating by the end of the contract term, the school is a candidate for nonrenewal. If the school's contract is not renewed, the school must implement the Closure Plan as described in the school's charter contract.

Three essential questions guide our VOA-MN authorizer oversight and charter school accountability plan.

- **Academic Program Performance** - Is the school's Learning Program a Success?
- **Financial Sustainability** – Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial Health?
- **Board Governance & Management/Operations** - Is the organization effective and well run?

In addition to VOA-MN defined "performance standards," a charter school must also be meeting their statutory purposes which are measured as part of Academic Performance Oversight.

REPORT PURPOSE: The Annual School "Scorecard" Report is the VOA-MN Authorizing Program's official communication to the school on performance meeting statutory purposes and VOA-MN Performance Standards. The report is comprised of three sections aligned to the three essential questions that guide our authorizer oversight and charter school accountability plan.

SECTION ONE

Academic Program Performance - Is the school's Learning Program a Success?

All public schools, including charters, must fully participate in the state assessments - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Data from state assessments and Title I Designation consistent with the state North Star system will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are required to meet the academic performance standards for which they agree to be held accountable in their charter contract. The extent to which a school is meeting their Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness requirements and additional statutory purposes are also measured in the Learning program section.

The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually an Academic Performance Report on their network of authorized charter schools. The report serves as a single annual source of academic program and performance information for all of our VOA-MN operational charter schools. The report contains an analysis of annual and cumulative academic program, performance, and professional development data for each school.

Content from the annual Academic Performance Report also serves as the basis for the school academic performance analysis contained in the statutorily required Contract Renewal Evaluation Reports, including evaluation of the extent to which the school has met their primary purpose during the contract term.

The VOA-MN determined academic performance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school academic performance and contract renewal determinations. VOA-MN’s academic performance standards/expectations are scored below.

SCHOOL STATUTORY PURPOSES:

- ❑ **PRIMARY PURPOSE (M.S. 124E.01):** The primary purpose of mission-driven charter schools is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students.
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS / EXPECTATIONS: VOA-MN Academic Performance Standards 1-3.
MEASURE: MCA exams and locally determined supplemental data based on nationally normed assessments.
REPORTING: Progress meeting these expectations is a required element of the Annual Report and Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Plan.
- ❑ **STATUTORY PURPOSE II (MS 124E.01):** Increase quality learning opportunities for all students.
PERFORMANCE STANDARD / EXPECTATIONS: VOA-MN Academic Performance Standard 5. Locally determined, board approved annually.
MEASURE: Locally determined, board approved annually.
REPORTING: Progress meeting these expectations is a required element of the Annual Report and Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Plan.
- ❑ **ADDITIONAL PURPOSE (M.S. 120B.11):** The school is to meet the outcomes adopted by the Commissioner for all public school students under Minnesota Statutes § 120B.11 (Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness), applicable to elementary schools, specifically: all children are ready for school; all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
PERFORMANCE STANDARD / EXPECTATIONS: VOA-MN Academic Performance Standard 6. Locally determined, board approved annually.
MEASURE / GOALS: locally determined, board approved annually for each of the outcomes.
REPORTING: Element of the Annual Report and Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Plan.

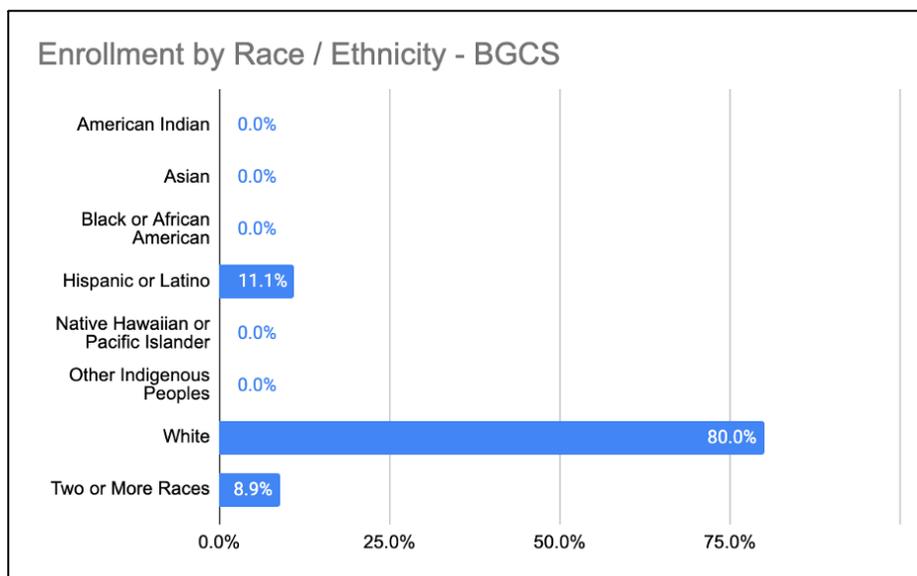


Figure 1 – Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (Federal Definition)

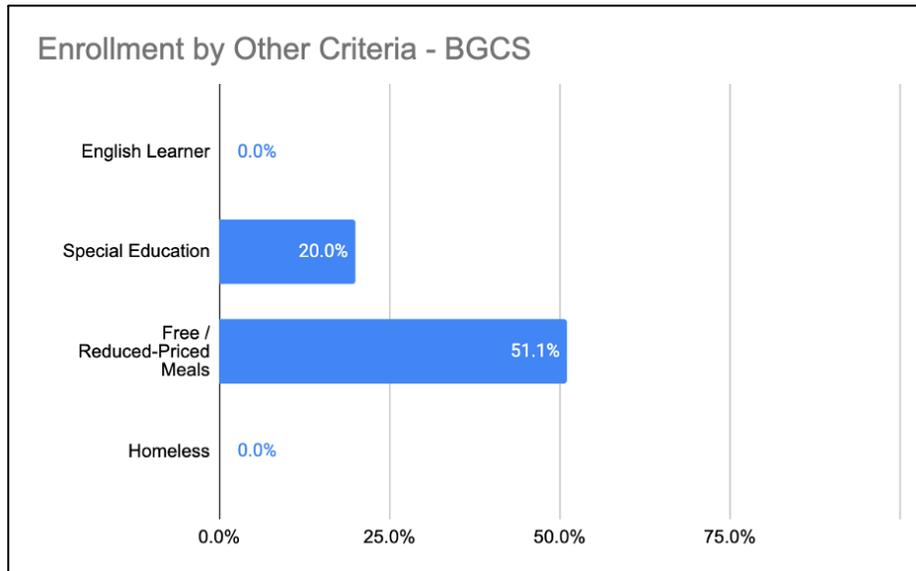


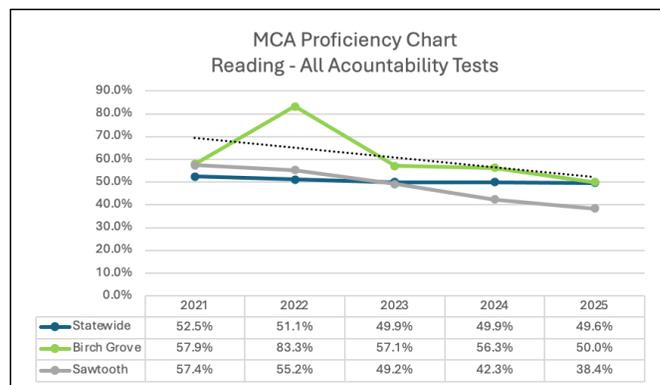
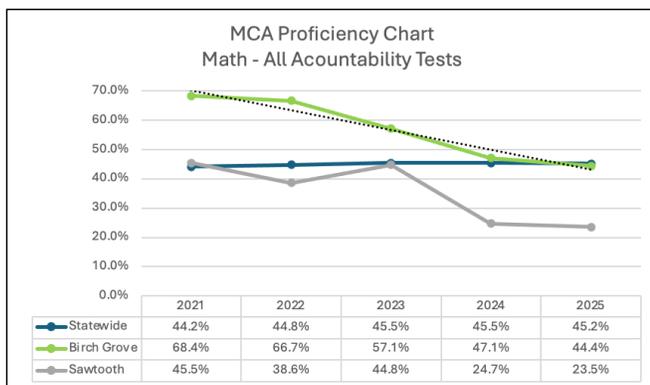
Figure 2– Enrollment by Other Criteria

Academic Performance Standard 1 - Students are performing well on state examinations in comparison to students at schools they might otherwise attend (with similar demographics) as evidence of meeting the statutory purpose of mission-driven charter schools, which is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students. A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator.

X	2: Meets - School’s average proficiency rate exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.
	1: Partially Meets - School’s average proficiency rate meets or exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend in one or two subjects (math, reading and science) but not all three.
	0: Does Not Meet - School’s average proficiency rate is less than the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend.

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Analysis: BGCS is currently outperforming the comparison school, Sawtooth Mountain Elementary, in both math and reading. The school’s testing cell size is too small to report a science proficiency rate.



Academic Performance Standard 2 - Over the term of the contract, the school will maintain a combined average state-determined minimum achievement level of (Improved + Maintained) as evidence of meeting the statutory purpose of mission-driven charter schools, which is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students. (In 2025, the combined statewide average was 56.1% in math and 60.6% in reading.)

N/A	2: Meets - School's achievement level of "improved and maintained" is equal to or higher than the statewide average in both math and reading.
	1: Partially Meets - School's achievement level of "improved and maintained" is equal to or higher than the statewide average in either math or reading but not both.

	0: Does Not Meet - School's achievement level of "improved and maintained" is below the statewide average in both math and reading.
Data Source: North Star Academic Progress. A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator.	
Analysis: Due to a small testing cell size, the data is not available for this standard.	

Academic Performance Standard 3 - The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate in the School and any reportable student group proficiency rate will be reduced over the term of the contract in both reading and math using state examination data as evidence of meeting the statutory purpose of mission-driven charter schools, which is to improve the learning, achievement, and success of all students. Imbedded CACR Standard: all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.	
N/A	2: Meets - The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and all student group proficiency rates has been reduced.
	1: Partially Meets - The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and at least one student group proficiency rate has been reduced.
	0: Does Not Meet - The difference between the “all-students” proficiency rate and all reportable student group proficiency rates has increased.
Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education. A school may also use a nationally normed exam as a supplemental indicator.	
Analysis: Testing cell sizes at the school were too small to generate any reportable student groups.	

Academic Performance Standard 4 - All teachers are supported through a school-wide professional development plan that is based on analysis of assessment data and directly linked to improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students.	
X	2: Meets - The school has adopted and followed a school-wide, data-driven professional development plan.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has a school-wide professional development plan, but the reviewer could not conclude that the plan was tied to data-driven decision-making.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school has not adopted a school-wide professional development plan.
Data Source: School Annual Report	
Analysis: BGCS has implemented a data driven, school-wide professional development plan. Throughout the 24-25 school Year, weekly teacher meetings included discussions on student growth, testing scores, child find, modifications to learning, IEP review, and LETRS training. The school participates in Q-Comp. Observations and evaluations occur three times annually. Teachers observe each other, have a discussion on the observation with peers, and write up a self-reflection on their classroom observation.	

Academic Performance Standard 5 - The school is meeting their additional statutory purposes (MS 124E.01, Subd 1; Charter Contract Addendum B).	
X	2: Meets - The school has a plan and is meeting their additional statutory purposes.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has a plan for meeting their additional statutory purposes and is partially meeting them.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school does not have a plan for meeting their additional statutory purposes and measuring progress.
Data Source: School Annual Report	
Analysis: BGCS works hard to ensure a productive academic environment where students feel safe, comfortable, respected and challenged. The school provides increased quality learning opportunities through multi-grade classrooms which allows for instructional flexibility as well as the development of unique social skills among its students. In addition, BGCS employs a looping strategy with its students where students are with the same teachers for at least two years. BGCS school also takes advantage of its location in northern Minnesota. Activities in the school’s program include cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, as well as ice skating. The bonds that are created between students and staff through these programs and activities helps to contribute to the safe and comfortable academic environment that the school has created.	

Academic Performance Standard 6 - The school is meeting the Comprehensive Achievement Civic Readiness goals (MS 120B.11; Charter Contract Addendum B). Refer to VOA Standard #3 for Achievement Gap goals.	
	2: Meets - The school has a plan for meeting their Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) goals. The school met all its CACR goals as reported in the annual summary report submitted to MDE by the deadline established by MDE.
X	1: Partially Meets - The school has a plan for meeting their CACR goals. The school met some, but not all its CACR goals as reported in the annual summary report submitted to MDE by the deadline established by MDE.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school does not have a plan for meeting their CACR goals. The school did not meet any of its Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness goals as reported in the annual summary report submitted to MDE by the deadline established by MDE; or did not submit the annual summary report to VOA-MN.

Data Source: School Annual Report / CACR Summary Report

Analysis:

Goal #1 All Students Ready for School

BGCS will increase the percentage of children who are ready for school each year. Measure: Birch Grove Community School will continue to offer the Saplings Program (licensed daycare run as a pre-school) for children ages 3-5.

Results: Goal Met

The Saplings program was operational.

Goal #2 All Students prepared to be Lifelong Learners

The percentage of third graders meeting or exceeding reading proficiency will surpass the State of Minnesota’s MCA scores by 2% in 2024-2025.

Results: Goal Not Met

The percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard on the MCA reading assessment at BGCS in 2025 was 43.0%. The statewide average for 3rd grade students was 46.1%.

SECTION TWO

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY – Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial Health?

Charter schools receive public funds and must meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. It is VOA-MN’s duty to ensure that the schools are responsible stewards of public funds. The charter school shall provide VOA with a copy of its draft and final annual budgets and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA-MN shall use submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan for the current year. VOA-MN shall use the financial statements presented in the charter school’s annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior year. Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings.

The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Financial Oversight Report on their network of authorized charter schools. The parties acknowledge that the Minnesota Charter Schools Law requires a charter school to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. This requirement has two underlying purposes: to monitor the financial health of the school and compliance with state and federal laws, including proper use of public funds. The report will contain an evaluation of school performance meeting the VOA-MN financial standards.

The VOA-MN determined school financial standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school financial health and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer will monitor school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Finance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. VOA-MN’s school financial standards/expectations are scored below.

Financial Standard 1 - The School maintains a balanced budget (not including a board-approved General Fund balance spend down).	
X	2: Meets - Surplus position
	1: Partially Meets - N/A

	0: Does Not Meet - Deficit position
Data Source: Original and revised budgets, annual financial audit report, monthly income statements.	
Analysis: The school’s original FY 2025 budget approved in June 2024 was based on 47 ADM with a projected surplus of \$30,250. The school did not revise the budget in FY 2025.	
The school ended the year with 43 ADMs and a FY 2025 General Fund surplus of \$270,494 resulting in an ending General Fund balance of 64.99%.	
Overall, the school has maintained a balanced General Fund budget for FY 2025.	

Financial Standard 2 - The school is compliant with state and federal financial reporting deadlines and laws (including the proper use of public funds) and the submission of financial items on the VOA-MN Annual Submissions Calendar, excluding the financial audit covered in Standard Three.	
X	2: Meets - 2 = Never missed
	1: Partially Meets – Missed one time
	0: Does Not Meet - Missed > 1 time
Data Source: Preliminary UFARS data, ADM report, final UFARS data.	
Analysis: The VOA-MN financial analyst did not discover any delinquent or late payments to vendors of the school through June 2025.	

Financial Standard 3 - The School’s financial audit is submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education, Office of the State Auditor and the authorizer by December 31.	
X	2: Meets - Submitted
	1: Partially Meets – N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - Not submitted
Data Source: Email and attached MDE documentation from the School confirming the submission of the audit report.	
Analysis: The school submitted its financial audit to the MDE by December 31, 2025.	

Financial Standard 4 - Schools are expected to have audits that are free of all findings. (If the school receives a legal compliance finding for late payment of bills that is also uncovered in the financial analyst’s review of the check registers, it will be rated in Standard Four and noted in Standard Five.)	
	2: Meets – No findings
X	1: Partially Meets - 1 or more “significant deficiency” finding(s)
	0: Does Not Meet - 1 or more “material weakness” or legal compliance finding(s)
Data Source: The School’s financial audit report.	
Analysis: The school’s FY 2025 financial audit contained one finding considered to be a significant deficiency in internal control - Preparation of Financial Statements as noted on page 61 of the audit report.	

Financial Standard 5 - The School is current on all financial obligations, including, but not limited to: pension payments, payroll taxes, insurance coverage and loan payments. The school reports late payments in the monthly financial reports. Data	
X	2: Meets - Never late
	1: Partially Meets - Late 1-2 times
	0: Does Not Meet - Late > 3 times
Data Source: Monthly check registers, cash flow projections, board meeting agendas and minutes.	
Analysis: The VOA-MN financial analyst did not discover any delinquent or late payments to vendors of the school through June 2025.	

Financial Standard 6 - The school provides VOA-MN and school board members with monthly financials. June financial reports may be delayed until year-end journal entries are completed. Monthly financials include at least the following: 1) detailed income/expense report, 2) cash flow projection, 3) check register, and 4) current enrollment (Average Daily Membership). The board should review and approve the financials at each board meeting. (The school is responsible for including a description for each item on the check register and an explanation for any check sequence gaps.)

X	2: Meets - Never missed
	1: Partially Meets - Missed 1-2 times
	0: Does Not Meet - Missed > 2 times

Data Source: Board packets.

Analysis: The school board reviews and approves various financial reports at each meeting and regularly receives an update from the finance and fundraising committees. The school provided all monthly financial reports in a timely manner in FY 2025.

Financial Standard 7 - The School develops and maintains a targeted General Fund balance determined by the School Board. For the finance report, VOA-MN also determines a standard for fund balance annually based on items such as school funding trends and funding holdbacks.

X	2: Meets - 20% or >
	1: Partially Meets -15-20%
	0: Does Not Meet - < 15%

Data Source: The school’s General Fund balance policy, monthly financial reports, board meeting agendas and minutes.

Analysis:

The table below contains the history of the school’s General Fund balance/SOD calculation:

FOUR YEAR FUND BALANCE HISTORY				
	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Fund Balance Amount	\$127,527	\$150,309	\$272,483	\$542,977
Fund Balance Percent	22.92%	23.13%	32.64%	64.99%

The school’s FY 2025 General Fund balance increased greatly from the prior year primarily due to additional revenue related to the employee retention credit. The school has a fund balance policy in place which states:

The school will strive to maintain a minimum unassigned general fund balance of 20-25% of the annual expenditure budget.

The school has met the goals set in the General Fund balance board policy for the past four years and the VOA-MN standard of 20% or greater.

Financial Standard 8 - The School Board has a finance committee that meets regularly to review financial reports.

X	2: Meets - 8-12 meetings/year
	1: Partially Meets -5-7 meetings/year
	0: Does Not Meet - 0-4 meetings/year

Data Source: Board meeting agendas and minutes.

Analysis: The school has a finance committee that met eight times in FY 2025.

Financial Standard 9 - All finance committee members exhibit working knowledge of financial oversight.

X	2: Meets - All committee members have received formal/informal training during the year relating to their roles and responsibilities on the finance committee.
	1: Partially Meets – N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - Some committee members have not received formal/informal training during the year relating to their roles and responsibilities on the finance committee.
Data Source: Query school board members, board meeting agendas and minutes.	
Analysis: The school director provided evidence via emails that all finance committee members received training in FY 2025. An excerpt from an email received demonstrates this:	
<p><i>Committee Members:</i></p> <p>Judy Motschenbacher, BGCS School Board Chair – Founder and on the Finance Committee for 20 years</p> <p>Skip Lamb, BGCS Treasurer – On the board and finance committee for 18 years</p> <p>Sara Knottski, BGCS board member – on the board and finance committee for 10 years.</p> <p><i>July 16, 2024: Members received training and review from the school director prior to the July school board meeting. Training/review on how to read financial reports. In attendance: Motschenbacher, Lamb, Knottski</i></p>	

Financial Standard 10 - The school is not in Statutory Operating Debt (SOD).	
X	2: Meets - The school is not in SOD
	1: Partially Meets – N/A
	0: Does Not Meet – The school is in SOD
Data Source: The School’s budget, board meeting agendas and minutes, financial audit.	
Analysis: The school is not in Statutory Operating Debt.	

SECTION THREE
SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS - Is the organization effective and well run?

PART ONE: SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

Effective board governance is essential to the successful start-up and operation of a public charter school. The diversity of charter school board memberships – teachers, parents, community leaders, and volunteers – heightens the importance of consistent expectations and development activities.

The authorizer regularly monitors the performance quality of the school board based on authorizer observations; interviews with the director, board and faculty; and the review of school policies, reports and board meeting minutes. A school must have a governance model that provides quality oversight by ensuring that there are checks and balances between the board and the school administrators.

A school board is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing policy; defining sound employee relations; conducting open meetings; recognizing and conforming to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws; and governing within the limits of a delegation of state authority – as a nonprofit and public-school board. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; inform the public of all deliberations and decisions; promote accountability; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Board Governance Report on their network of authorized charter schools. The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source on the board operations and compliance of VOA-MN authorized charter schools. Authorizer VOA-MN also observes a minimum of two school board meetings annually.

The VOA-MN determined school board governance standards contained below are uniform for all VOA-MN charter schools. The standards are contained in VOA-MN Charter Contract Addendum B (School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System) and serve as the basis for both annual authorizer monitoring of school board performance and contract renewal determinations. The authorizer monitors school performance meeting these standards on an ongoing basis and the standards will be evaluated in the annual VOA-MN Network Governance Report. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. VOA-MN's school board governance standards are scored below.

Governance Standard 1 - The board of directors met its governance model requirements laid out in its bylaws and membership requirements as required by Minnesota Statute.	
X	2: Meets - The board structure meets bylaws and state statute.
	1: Partially Meets - The board did not meet requirements for the entire fiscal year.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board's structure does not meet bylaws and/or state statute.
Data Source: School Annual Report, School Website, Bylaws	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board structure meets bylaws and state statute.	

Governance Standard 2 - The board of directors has the necessary knowledge to fulfill the responsibilities contained in Minn Stat 124E.07, Subd. 6. (Duties), including knowledge in finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.	
X	2: Meets - The board has a plan with evidence of training consistent with the plan to ensure members have the necessary knowledge in the areas of finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.
	1: Partially Meets - The board has a plan but is unable to provide evidence of completion of board member training to ensure members have the necessary knowledge in the areas of finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board does not implement a plan to ensure board members have the necessary knowledge.
Data Source: Board Development and/or Board Training Plan and/or Training Table or Calendar, Board Development Committee Minutes, Board Minutes, Annual Report, School Website	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board had a training plan to ensure members have the necessary knowledge in the areas of finance/budget, policy/legal, personnel/employment, and education. A board development plan/training plan has been submitted to VOA-MN.	

Governance Standard 3 - The board adheres to an orientation process for bringing on new members.	
X	2: Meets - The board adheres to a thorough process for the orientation of new board members.
	1: Partially Meets - The board has a process for the orientation of new board members, but it is not consistently followed.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board does not have a membership orientation process for new board members.
Data Source: The school submits a completed Board Roster Table twice a year that includes information confirming that new board members received orientation. The first is submitted by January 15. The second is sent at the end of the fiscal year by June 30.	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The board has an orientation process in place; however, there were no new board members in FY25.	

Governance Standard 4 - The board of directors complies with initial and ongoing training requirements set forth in Minn. Stat 124E.07, Subd 7 (Training): governance, financial, and employment policies and practices.	
X	2: Meets - All board members comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements.
	1: Partially Meets - One board member did not fully comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements and was removed.
	0: Does Not Meet - More than one board member did not fully comply with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements.
Data Source: Annual Report, School Website, Board Minutes and Documents	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The school provided evidence that all ongoing and new board members received required training per page 13 of the school's Annual Report.	

Governance Standard 5 - The board of directors completes a self-evaluation each year.	
X	2: Meets - The board completes a formal self-evaluation each year.
	1: Partially Meets - The board competes informal self-evaluations during one or more board meeting(s).
	0: Does Not Meet - The board did not complete a self-evaluation.
Data Source: Board Minutes, Board Development Committee Minutes	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board completed a formal self-evaluation and discussed the results at the June 17, 2025 board meeting.	

Governance Standard 6 - The board of directors will comply with MN Open Meeting Law, Chapter 13D, and maintain a quorum for all board meetings.	
X	2: Meets - The board has no infractions of MN Open Meeting Law.
	1: Partially Meets - The board has 1 infraction of MN Open Meeting Law.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board has 2 or more infractions of MN Open Meeting Law.
Data Source: Monthly Logs of Meeting Minutes, Meeting Minutes, Interview	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board was compliant with MN Open Meeting Law. The date, time, and location of all meetings are listed on the website. Links for agendas and up-to-date minutes are on the school's website. An opportunity for the public to address the Board is provided during all Board meetings. Meetings are held in person.	

Governance Standard 7 - The board regularly reviews, updates, and approves its bylaws. The bylaws are consistent with state law.	
X	2: Meets - Bylaws are consistent with state law and the board reviews them regularly.
	1: Partially Meets - Bylaws are consistent with state statute but are not reviewed regularly.
	0: Does Not Meet - Bylaws are inconsistent with state statute.
Data Source: School Website, Board Minutes, Bylaws, Interview	
Analysis: The school met this standard. Bylaws are consistent with state law and the board reviewed them at the Annual meeting.	

Governance Standard 8 - The Board of Directors adheres to board member election requirements set forth by state statute.	
X	2: Meets - All requirements were met.
	1: Partially Meets - N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - Election requirements were not met.
Data Source: Board Minutes, Bylaws, Board Policies, Interview	
Analysis: The school met this standard. There were no elections this year due to no terms expiring.	

Governance Standard 9 - The board conducts an annual evaluation (including all aspects of the position description) of the performance of the school leader through a defined annual evaluation process.	
X	2: Meets - The board completed a formal evaluation of the school leader including all aspects of the job description.
	1: Partially Meets - The board completed an evaluation of the school leader but not on all aspects of the job description.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board did not complete an annual evaluation of the school leader.
Data Source: Annual Report, Board Minutes, Committee Minutes, Board Documentation	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board conducted an evaluation of the school leader at the June board meeting and published the results in the Annual Report.	

Governance Standard 10 - The board has a board-approved professional development plan for the school director (if applicable as required by Minn. Stat. 124E.12, Subd. 2).	
X	2: Meets - A professional development plan for the non-licensed individual(s) was documented in the school's annual report or the school's director holds an administrative license.
	1: Partially Meets - N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - A professional development plan for the non-licensed individual(s) was not documented in the school's annual report.
Data Source: Annual Report, Board Minutes, Board Chair Communication.	
Analysis: Diane Blanchette is not a licensed administrator. The school met this standard. The Board had a board-approved professional development plan for the School Director and documented it in the Annual Report.	

Governance Standard 11 - The board of directors monitors the organization's adherence to school board policies.	
X	2: Meets - Meeting minutes include three or more examples of the board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.
	1: Partially Meets - Meeting minutes includes one or two examples of the board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.
	0: Does Not Meet - Meeting minutes include no evidence of the board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies.
Data Source: Board Meeting Minutes, Interview	
Analysis: The school met this standard. Meeting minutes include three or more examples of the board monitoring the organization's adherence to school board policies, such as ensuring the school follows policies on equal educational opportunity, admissions and enrolment, school-sponsored student publications and activities, and purchasing, procurement and contracting (including fund balance and employment background check policies).	

Governance Standard 12 - The board of directors provides ongoing oversight of school academic performance.	
X	2: Meets - Meeting minutes include evidence of regular oversight of school academic performance.
	1: Partially Meets - At least half of the board meeting minutes include evidence of oversight of school academic performance.
	0: Does Not Meet - Less than half of the board meeting minutes or less include evidence of oversight of school academic performance.
Data Source: Board Meeting Minutes	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The board minutes provide evidence of 9/12 regular meetings where the school reviewed academics: August, September, October, November, January, February, March, May and June. Some academic performance data shared include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly School Newsletters from classroom teachers • World's Best Workforce Report 23-24 • MCA Data • Wolf Ridge Writings • Weekly newsletters from classroom teachers • Fastbridge results • World's Best Workforce Goal Revision • Read Act 	

Governance Standard 13 - The school maintains a high level of parent, teacher and student satisfaction rates based on school-conducted surveys and student/faculty retention rates.	
	2: Meets - All of the following criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.
X	1: Partially Meets - Two of three criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.
	0: Does Not Meet - Less than two of three criteria are met: high levels of satisfaction of parent satisfaction is based on survey results of over 80%; high levels of student satisfaction based on achieving over 80% retention rates; and high levels of teacher satisfaction based on achieving over 80% staff retention rates.
Data Source: School Annual Report, Board Minutes, School Data, Interview	
Analysis: The school partially met this standard. The school met two of the three criteria. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff retention rate was 80%. 2. Student retention rate was 74%. 3. Parent survey satisfaction rate was above 80%. The school did not report on the question of "how satisfied" with BGCS in the Annual Report; however, all questions reported on were above the 80% requirement. 	

Governance Standard 14: Board documents are distributed to all board members and VOA-MN at least 3 days prior to a board meeting.	
X	2: Meets - Board documents were distributed to all Board members and VOA-MN at least 3 days prior to each board meeting.
	1: Partially Meets - Board documents were not distributed to all Board members and VOA-MN one or two times.
	0: Does Not Meet - Board documents were not distributed to all Board and VOA-MN members three or more times.
Data Source: Monthly Board Minute Review Logs, Board Chair Statement	
Analysis: The school met this standard. VOA-MN records show Board documents were distributed to all Board members and VOA-MN at least 3 days prior to each board meeting.	

Governance Standard 15 - The board of directors maintains a Board Documents Binder which includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements; and statutory requirements for posting board related information on the school’s website.	
X	2: Meets - A complete Board Documents Binder is kept includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements; and the school’s website includes the statutory requirements for posting board-related information.
	1: Partially Meets - Complete information is available both in a binder and on the school's website; but there are 1-2 incidents of minutes not being posted after board approval.
	0: Does Not Meet - Information is incomplete in the binder or on the school's website.
Data Source: School Website, Board Documents Binder	
Analysis: The school met this standard. Board documents are organized and stored in the school's office. A review of the school’s website demonstrated that the statutory requirements for posting board-related information was present.	

Governance Standard 16 - The board has a policy review calendar and reviews and updates its policies as needed or required by state law.	
X	2: Meets - The board has a thorough policy review calendar/plan and review policies as a regular component of regular board meetings.
	1: Partially Meets - The board has a policy review calendar/plan but policies were not regularly reviewed.
	0: Does Not Meet - The board did not have a calendar/plan for policy review and/or reviewed just a few policies during the year.
Data Source: School Website, Annual Report, Board Minute Review Log, Board Minutes, VOA Visit Review, Governance Committee Minutes, Interview	
Analysis: The school met this standard. The Board had a thorough policy review calendar and reviewed policies as a regular component of regular board meetings. Policies have been reviewed at the following meetings: July, September, November, January, February, March, April, May, and June. Some of the policies reviewed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Educational Opportunity and Purchasing, Procurement and Contracting Policy • School-Sponsored Student Publications and Activities • Library Materials Policy • Fund Balance Policy • Employment Background Checks • Whistle Blower Policy • Early Admission Policy • Family and Medical Leave Policy • Admissions and Enrollment Policy 	

SECTION PART TWO: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Effective day-to-day operations of a charter school support the Learning Program. A well-run school provides an environment in which staff and students can perform at the highest possible level and more effectively reach the school's goals. Management and operations of the school will be monitored and reported by the authorizer using the Formal Site Visit Rubric. The standards also serve as the criteria for contract renewal determinations. Authorizer standards for school management and operations are scored below.

M/O Standard 1 - Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.	
X	2: Meets - Mission and vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision-making processes. The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.
	1: Partially Meets - Mission and vision are displayed in the facility, on website and in annual report, but evidence that they guide decision-making and programming are missing.
	0: Does Not Meet - Mission and vision are not used to guide school's decision-making.
Data Source: Annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership	
Analysis: SCHOOL MISSION: Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence by utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners. DESCRIPTION OF HOW SCHOOL IS MEETING MISSION: Mission posted in every room, entry board, on newsletters, and mission read before every school board meeting. The school imbeds student outdoor experiences into their instruction model and curriculum, especially utilizing trails and "the campsite." In the winter, the school also has a skating rink, snow shoeing, and cross-country skiing. The school board could consider setting a goal concerning usage of the outdoor aspect of the school's program.	

M/O Standard 2 - The school has a plan for Service Learning that connects classroom learning with real life lessons that come through service.	
X	2: Meets - The school has a plan for Service Learning that connects classroom learning with real life lessons that come through service.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has a service-learning plan, but without evidence of a connection between the plan and service activities.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school does not have a plan for service learning. School does not engage in service.
Data Source: Annual school site visits, annual submission calendar, document review, discussions with school leadership	
Analysis: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS SERVICE-LEARNING PLAN: The school's service-learning plan is contained on the school website. Service-Learning-Plan.pdf The school's service-learning is BGCS- and community-based. A list of activities is included in the school's Annual Report each year. Every student does service-learning projects that have a learning component. The school now has a teacher that is contracted as the Service Learning Coordinator for additional oversight of this program. Examples: The community garden plots, partner reading, letter writing, <i>Let's Plant Trees</i> (501c3), school wide recycling project, etc.	

M/O Standard 3 - The school maintains a safe and healthy environment per state and federal guides and board policy. (e.g., facility /ADA, building inspections, school liability insurance, student medical / health matters, school drills).	
X	2: Meets - The school can provide evidence that it complies with health and safety requirements for public schools.
	1: Partially Meets - The school is making progress approaching standard.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence of compliance with health and safety requirements for public schools.
Data Source: Annual school site visits, annual submission calendar, document review, discussions with school leadership	
Analysis: Faculty have received required back-to-school training on health and safety procedures. <u> X </u> Yes <u> </u> No List of present school year back-to-school health and safety related professional development training: All completed at in-service on Aug 25-27, 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill Overview • Employee Handbook - Policies • Crisis Management 	

- Student/Family Handbook
- Mandatory Reporting
- Child Find Training
- Bloodborne Pathogens

School provides evidence of incorporating facility design elements, technology, and modifications in classroom practices and policies aligned to ADA requirements. Yes No

The building is wheelchair accessible; wheelchairs are available in the entry. End hall bathroom has wheelchair accessibility as well.

School provides evidence that educational opportunities, extracurricular activities, and facilities are open and accessible to all students. Yes No

School complies with MS 121A.035 – Crisis Management Policy. Yes No

806 CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Each classroom has a copy of the crisis management plan. Cook County is the school’s law enforcement agency responsible for responding.

Facility: School has cameras inside and outside the building, with one specifically on the entry trained to the Campsite. All staff carry walkie talkies on them inside and outside of the building. The school has received permission from the building owners to have film installed on classroom windows and entries to restrict visual access from the outside into the classroom. The school/township may also want to research the cost of installing shatter proof glass in entry windows.

Number of fire drills completed 24-25 school year 5. (req. five annually)

Number of lockdown/safety drills completed previous school year 5. (req. five annually)

Number of tornado drills completed previous school year 1. (req. one annually)

Number of bus evacuation drills completed previous school year: 1. (req. one annually)

Parents drive children to school and the rest of the students use public transportation. The school does not own any transportation vehicles. The school director or staff members speak to the students on the public transportation bus each afternoon about bus safety rules. A general bus safety video could be shown during school hours.

Designated crisis management person / team members: Head of School, Assist Head of School, Administrative Assistant, Building Manager, HR Coordinator, and BOD Executive Member (chair, secretary, or treasurer)

Classrooms & shared spaces contain evacuation plans / procedures. Yes No

NOTE: Drill logs reviewed by authorizer representative

Location of emergency drill log: Office

School complies with MS 299F.47 - School Inspections. Yes No

Date of most recent facility inspection by fire department: 4/11/25 (must be a minimum of every three years)

School maintains a log of all visitors. Yes No Location of visitor log: Facility entry

The school also has a doorbell entry and cameras.

School complies with MS 144.29 Health Records; Children of School Age. Yes No

Responsible employee: School Leader (Diane)/ Office Assistant (Jessica)/ school nurse (Gayle)

School complies with MS 121A.15 - Health Standards; Immunizations; School Children. Yes No

Designated responsible employee: Contracted Nurse Gayle Grinnell, LPN (Gayle does immunizations)

School Nurse and License Number: 80288-4

Frequency of school visits: scheduled on site every day as a paraprofessional.

School complies with MS 121A.21 and 121A.22 (1,000 pupils) – Administration of Drugs and Medicine.

Yes No NA

Designated responsible health aid/employee: Gayle Grinnell (School Nurse) and/or School Director (Diane Blanchette)

School Nurse License # 80288-4

Authorizer representative verified that the school has a system by which to record and store medicine and medical supplies.

School complies with MS 121A.21 – School Health Services (if applicable). Yes No NA

The school contracts with a licensed school nurse or organization. Yes No NA

Name/Organization: Gayle Grinnell

School has a designated 504 Coordinator: Yes No

504 Coordinator Name & Position: School Director (Diane Blanchette) This will be changing to the special education teacher, Sara Silence, with support from Noreen Foster, special education director, Indigo.

School has a process to ensure that student accommodations are consistent with 504 Plans. Yes No

Number of enrolled students during the 2025-2026 school year on a 504 plan: 1

* If needed, the school consults with Indigo Education (Sped director services provider)

Number of enrolled students during the 2025-2026 school year on a 504 plan: 1

Number of enrolled students during the 2024-2025 school year on a 504 plan: 1

Number of enrolled students during the 2023-2024 school year on a 504 plan: 0

M/O Standard 4 - The School complies with state and federal laws pertaining to data collection, storage, distribution, and privacy. (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13 and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Contract Article 8).

X	2: Meets - The school has required Data Practice policies with evidence that they are implemented in accordance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act. There is evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There were zero incidents of not following state and federal data practices policies and privacy laws.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has required Data Practice policies with evidence that they are implemented in accordance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act. There is evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There was one incident of noncompliance with state and federal data practices policies and privacy laws.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school does not have one or more required Data Practice policies in place and/or there was insufficient evidence that board and faculty are trained in Data Practices. There has been two or more incidence of noncompliance with federal data practices law and the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

Data Source: annual school site visits, annual submission calendar, document review, discussions with school leadership.

Analysis:

School Appointed DPA Responsible Authority (RA): School board secretary, Sarena Crowley
School Appointed DPA Designated Authority (DA): School director, Diane Blanchette
School Data Practices Compliance Official (DPCO): School board chair, Judy Motschenbacher

APPLICABLE BOARD POLICIES: (Titles and Numbers)

- 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records – on website
https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/515-Protection-and-Privacy-of-Pupil-Records-Birch-Grove.pdf

Board minutes contain evidence of board appointment of RA/DA/DPCO? Yes No

Designated at every annual meeting.

- Annual Meeting October 21, 2025
- Annual Meeting October 15, 2024
- Annual Meeting October 17, 2023
- Annual Meeting October 17, 2022

Authorizer representative verified that the school has a data retention plan: Yes No

Date of board approval: 2016

Date of Historical Society Approval: October 25, 2024

Authorizer representative verified that Student academic records are filed in a separate locked cabinet.

Yes No Location: school office

Authorizer representative verified that Student / Employee legal records are filed in a separate locked cabinet. Yes No
 Location: school office_

Authorizer representative verified that Student/Employee health records are filed in a separate locked cabinet. Yes No
 Location: school office (filed separately)

School verified that only designated school employees have access to files containing student/employee records.
 Yes No

Authorizer representative verified that the school has Tennessee Warnings for both the enrollment and employment process.
 Yes No Partial

School has a board approved Data Request Policy / Procedures. Yes No
 School policy name(s) and number(s): 722 Public Data and Data Subject Requests [722-Public-Data-and-Data-Subject-Requests.pdf](#)

Authorizer representative verified that the school maintains a detailed register/log of all data requests.
 Yes No Partial The school has had no data requests.

M/O Standard 5 - Evidence suggests that the school engages parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child’s learning.

X	2: Meets - The school provides ample evidence that the organization engages parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child’s learning.
	1: Partially Meets - The school is making progress approaching standard.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence that it has a plan or activities to engage parents and students in ways that build positive relationships and engages them as partners in their child’s learning.

Data Source: Annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership

Analysis:

Description of school plan for student / parent engagement and supporting evidence: The school has a weekly newsletter that is emailed home to all families and posted on the school website, school Facebook page, three schoolwide family events, two conferences per year, parent surveys, and website that houses relevant information for families to access. The school has an annual open house, annual Halloween carnival, winter musical performances, some after school programs where families are invited, Gala for the Grove event and a PTO.

Evidence suggests that the school maintains and distributes annually a student/ family handbook. Yes No
 Emailed to families each year and it is on the school website.

M/O Standard 6 - Evidence suggests that the schoolteachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards and engaging in data-driven decision-making.

X	2: Meets - Evidence suggests that the school has established a uniform system to ensure that the schoolteachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards and monitoring student progress toward comprehension.
	1: Partially Meets - The school leadership provided some examples of how he/she provides oversight that schoolteachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards, but systemic plan for monitoring progress and data-driven decision-making was lacking.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school does not have a system established to ensure that schoolteachers are covering the scope and sequence of the state academic standards &/or does not engage in data-driven decision-making.

Data Source: Annual school site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership

Analysis:

Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for language arts: 2019 (Houghton Mifflin-Journeys)
 Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for math: 2019 (Houghton Mifflin-Math Expressions)
 Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for science: 2019 (Houghton Mifflin)
 Most recent curriculum standards alignment review for social studies: 2016

Management requires that lesson plans and student learning targets are aligned to the state standards. Yes No
 Description of school requirement as provided by the school:

- The school requires that the state standards be imbedded in lesson plans that are reviewed weekly by the school director - Ms. Blanchette monitors blocking and spacing/progress meeting the standards during teacher meetings and blocking is addressed on the wall calendar in the school office.
- Staff reviews fall FastBridge data and previous year MCA results at the beginning of each school year. To help reduce “summer slide,” the school keeps the library open all summer and Campsite Kids summer program has 30 minutes of reading each day and is typically run by licensed teachers.
- The school now has a teacher contracted as the Curriculum/Literacy/Teacher Training Coordinator for additional oversight in this area.

School has a well-defined plan for ensuring that teachers engage in data-driven instruction to ensure student mastery of state standards.

Yes No

Description of school plan provided by the school:

- Assessment results are discussed after every FastBridge assessment period as well as throughout the year during weekly Q-Comp/Staff meetings. A benefit of being a small school is that each child’s academic progress is monitored at weekly meetings. The Literacy Plan is on the school website and will be followed by all staff with oversight from the school director as well as additional oversight by the Curriculum/Literacy/Teacher trainer.

M/O Standard 7 - The school employs highly qualified, appropriately licensed teachers.

X	2: Meets - The school provides evidence of exemplary hiring processes that ensure teachers are properly credentialed. There have been no license infractions.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has had two or fewer teacher license infractions and they were swiftly resolved. Evidence suggests that the school has systems to recruit quality licensed teachers.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school has had multiple license infractions.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership

Analysis: Director Blanchette is responsible for oversight of teacher licensing. Offer letters are distributed annually. Two annual submissions are made to VOA-MN concerning teacher licensing. Authorizer also verifies employee license compliance annually in the fall. Teacher file folder numbers are on the school website under About Us/Staff.

M/O Standard 8 - The school has adopted a formal teacher evaluation process and adheres to the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute 122A.40.

X	2: Meets - Meets all criteria and is adhered to.
	1: Partially Meets - Meets some of the criteria, but no evidence that process is followed.
	0: Does Not Meet - School has not adopted a teacher evaluation process.

Data Source: The teacher evaluation plan submitted to VOA-MN by September 1

Analysis: Evaluation information is included in the annual report and submitted to VOA-MN. Teachers receive three evaluations per year aligned to the school Q-Comp plan and one formal at year end with director. The process involves peer observations, written evaluations, feedback, self-reflection, and then end of year formal observation by the school director annually. School board members evaluate the director each summer using an evaluation form. Results are presented by school board members which inform the director’s professional goals.

M/O Standard 9 - Criminal background checks are conducted on all persons per the board policy and Minn. Stat. 123B.03, Subd.1.

X	2: Meets - The school provided evidence that it adheres to statute and policy pertaining to conducting criminal background checks on employees and school volunteers.
	1: Partially Meets – N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence that it adheres to statute and policy pertaining to conducting criminal background checks on employees and school volunteers.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership

Analysis:

Background Check Policy #404

https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/404-Employment-Background-Checks-Birch-Grove.pdf

Frequency of background checks on employees: Background checks are conducted at time of hire and every three years thereafter.

Frequency of background checks on volunteers: Background checks run on volunteers at first and then every three years. School does not utilize volunteers very often within the school and within the school year.

M/O Standard 10 - The school meets / maintains its enrollment goals.

X	2: Meets - The school could provide evidence that it is meeting its annual student enrollment goals.
	1: Partially Meets – N/A
	0: Does Not Meet - The school is not meeting its student enrollment goals.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership

Analysis:

Number of students (head count) served in current year: 43. The goal is to be within five students of the previous year. The previous year was 45 so the school met that goal.

Present School Year Student Enrollment / Headcount by Grade:

43 Total K-5

K-3

1st grade -3

2nd grade -13

3rd grade -9

4th grade -8

5th grade -7

Saplings (primarily ages 3-5): 10

Seedlings (primarily ages birth – 3): 5

Number of students (head count) served in previous year (24-25): 45

Number of students (head count) served in second previous year (23-24): 51

M/O Standard 11 - The school institutes a fair and open student admission process that complies with Minnesota law.

X	2: Meets - The school provides evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission.
	1: Partially Meets - The school provides evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission with 1-2 findings.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence of adherence with state laws and guidelines pertaining to student admission.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership, website.

Analysis:

Admissions Policy Number:

509 Admission and Enrollment on website

https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accent_8817/site_511375/Documents/509-Admission-and-Enrollment-Policy-Birch-Grove.pdf

Policy #402 – Disability Nondiscrimination on website: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accent_8817/site_511375/Documents/402-Disability-Nondiscrimination-Policy-Birch-Grove.pdf

Policy #102 – Equal Education Opportunity on website: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accent_8817/site_511375/Documents/102-Equal-Educational-Opportunity.pdf

Policies are contained on the school website: [Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School](#)

Authorizer Verifies that Student Application Form is Compliant: Yes No Partial

Authorizer representative verified that the school has Tennessee Warnings for enrollment process. Yes No Partial

M/O Standard 12 - The school's employment process complies with state and federal law.

X	2: Meets - The school provides evidence that its employment process complies with state and federal law.
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	1: Partially Meets - The school is making progress meeting standard.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence that its employment process complies with state and federal law.
Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership	
Analysis: RELEVANT POLICY NUMBERS: Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 401 – Equal Employment Opportunity: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/401-Equal-Employment-Opportunity-Birch-Grove.pdf • Policy 402 – Disability Nondiscrimination: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/402-Disability-Nondiscrimination-Policy-Birch-Grove.pdf • Policy 406 – Public and Private Personnel Data: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/406-Public-and-Private-Personnel-Data-Birch-Grove.pdf • Policy 422 – Nepotism: https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/Nepotism-Policy-Birch-Grove.pdf 	
Authorizer representative verified that the school has Tennessee Warnings for employment process. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
Evidence suggests that the school maintains and distributes annually an employee handbook <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

M/O Standard 13 - The school has defined job descriptions and defined evaluation process for all personnel.	
X	2: Meets - The school could provide evidence of job descriptions for all employee positions and aligned to an evaluation process.
	1: Partially Meets - The school could provide evidence of job descriptions for most employee positions but did not have a defined evaluation process.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence of job descriptions for all employee positions and aligned to an evaluation process.
Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership	
Analysis: Job descriptions verified by authorizer electronically, except for the new positions of the Service Learning Coordinator, Outdoor Learning & Experience Coordinator, and the Curriculum/Literacy/Teacher Training Coordinator, which were verified as completed during the winter 2025. Position descriptions and duties are updated annually and included with each employment offer. Evaluation information is included in the annual report. Teachers receive three evaluations per year aligned to the school Q-Comp plan and one formal at year end with director. The process involves peer observations, written evaluations, feedback, self-reflection, and then end of year formal observation by the school director annually. School board members evaluate the director each summer using an evaluation form. Results are presented by school board members which inform the director’s professional goals. Nonteaching staff are reviewed annually.	

M/O Standard 14 - The school complies with IDEA, special education laws and school’s TSES plan, including “Child Find.” Applicable training is provided to faculty annually.	
X	2: Meets - The school could provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school’s TSES plan, including “Child Find.”
	1: Partially Meets - The school could provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school’s TSES plan, including “Child Find.” However, the school has been the subject of MDE complaint investigation with findings.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence of compliance with IDEA, special education laws and school’s TSES plan, including “Child Find.”
Data Source: School site visits, interviews with school faculty, document review.	
Analysis: Brief description of school Child Find/Study Process: TSES Plan is on the school website. https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/Total-Special-Education-System.pdf	

Teachers adhere to the Child Study process – also a benefit of small learning environment. Child Find generally begins in the classroom, by classroom teacher. Due to small teacher to student ratios, concerns can be observed quickly and efficiently. Concerns are discussed at weekly teacher meetings that include the special education teacher. Appropriate interventions are discussed, implemented, documented and discussed to find if successful or if potential referral is needed. The special education director is also consulted when necessary. Parents and associated faculty are involved in all stages. Informal discussions also occur during weekly meetings and the special education teacher also participates.

Child Study Team Members: classroom teacher, sped teacher, sped director, and school director.

Name of special education teachers & license/file number:

Sara Silence – File Folder # 492349

Number of special education paraprofessionals: 2.75 FTE

Faculty Training Topic(s) and Dates(s):

Inservice: August 25-28, 2025

Drill Overview

Employee Handbook - Policies

Crisis Management

Student/Family Handbook

Mandatory Reporting

Child Find Training

Bloodborne Pathogens

Special Education Director and Special Education teacher review all IEPs with paraprofessionals

Sara Silence, Special education teacher, attends the annual Indigo Special Education conference each fall

School retains the students with disabilities that are enrolled: 67%

Percent of special education students served in 25-26: 20% (October 1)

Percent of special education students served in 24-25: 18%

M/O Standard 15 - The school is not subject to special education investigations by MDE and is not in Corrective Action.

X	2: Meets - The school is not subject to special education investigations by MDE and is not in corrective action or is adhering to their plan to resolve concerns.
	1: Partially Meets - The school has been the subject of MDE investigations with findings. Progress has been observed to resolve findings.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school has been the subject of MDE investigations with findings. Findings have not been resolved.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school leadership, MDE communications.

Analysis: To the authorizer’s knowledge, the school has not been subject to any special education related investigations by MDE. Director confirms there were no investigations.

If yes,

Isolated incident/complaint: n/a

Program systems complaint: n/a

Resolved: Yes / No n/a

School Evidence for Authorizer Review: n/a

ROUTINE SPECIAL EDUCATION AUDITS

On August 19, Special Education Director was notified that Birch Grove would be in cohort #5 with identification of who the lead monitor would be in the Special Education Program Monitoring Process.

Date of last special education program audit: 2020

CAP Items: None

Date of last special education financial audit: 2016

CAP Items: None

Current audit stage: The school is a part of Cohort 5 (current monitoring is Cohort 2) so the school will be part of the self-review in Fall 2027 and Full review in Fall 2028.

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M/O Standard 16 - The school is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC).

X	2: Meets - The school could provide evidence that it is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC).
	1: Partially Meets - The school contracts with a special education director but could not provide evidence that it has a SEAC that meets at least annually.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence that it is compliant with laws pertaining to special education directors and Advisor Council (SEAC).

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school faculty.

Analysis:
 Name of director and organization: Noreen Foster, Indigo Education
 Special Education Director License Number: 380968

 FY26 meeting date(s): October 22, 2025
 FY25 meeting date(s): November 19, 2024
 FY24 meeting date(s): February 13, 2024

M/O Standard 17 - The charter school disseminates information about the school's offerings and enrollment procedures in accordance with Minn. Stat. 124E.17. The school documents its dissemination activities in the school's annual report and in their VOA-MN compliance binder.

X	2: Meets - The school could provide evidence of compliance with laws and documentation regarding dissemination of information
	1: Partially Meets - The school could partially provide evidence of compliance with laws and documentation regarding dissemination of information.
	0: Does Not Meet - The school could not provide evidence of compliance with laws and documentation regarding dissemination of information.

Data Source: Annual site visits, annual submission calendar document review, discussions with school faculty.

Analysis: The school posts school information at the local post office, community center, and at resorts in employee lounges.

MISCELLANIOUS CHARTER CONTRACT COMPLIANCE ITEMS
 Provisions not included in M/O Standards but required by law or charter contract thus verified by authorizer annually. These items are not included in the annual and renewal evaluations and ratings.

ITEM	CONTRACT PROVISION	YES	NO
I	Evidence suggests that the school is adhering to their plan for standardized interim assessments and utilizing that student performance data (contract Article 7).	X	

School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review:

2025-2026 School Plan for Standardized Assessments:
 Authorizer representative was able to verify that the testing calendar is on website per state statute
 ___X___ Yes ___ No
 Submission due on October 1.
 SCHOOL WEBSITE URL CODE FOR CALENDAR: [Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School](#)
 Evidence suggests that the school has designated an Assessment Coordinator and process for ensuring compliance with state examination administration ___X___ Yes ___ No
 Sara Knottski is the assigned DAC.

II	Evidence suggests that the Board of Directors maintains at least the amount and types of insurance coverage up to the applicable tort liability limits under Chapter 466.04 and Article six of the contract – Types and Amounts of Insurance. The School provided	X	
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	the Authorizer with certificates of insurance at least annually (contract Article 6).		
Insurance Policy Renewal Date: 7-25 to 7-26. Insurance submission sent to VOA-MN on 8.19.25.			
III	Evidence suggests that the school is only serving their authorized grades and approved school sites (contract Article 4 and 5).	X	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Grades Served Present School Year: K-5 Grades Served Past School Year: K-5 State Approved Grades: K-5 Number of Approved School Sites/Buildings: 1 Number of School Sites/Buildings Operated: 1 Evidence Provide by the School for Authorizer Review: walk through of the facility.			
IV	Evidence suggests that the school is non-sectarian in its program, admission policies, and employment practices, and for all other purposes (contract Article 4 and 6).	X	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: LIST OF APPLICABLE SCHOOL POLICY TITLES AND NUMBERS: <u>102 - Equal Educational Opportunity</u> https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/102-Equal-Educational-Opportunity.pdf <u>609 - Religion</u> https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/609-Religion-Birch-Grove.pdf			
V	The school's VOA-MN Compliance Binder is complete (contract Addendum B). <i>NOTE: The school should obtain a copy of their Renewal Notice from the MN Office of the Attorney General.</i>	X	
VI	Evidence suggests that the school adheres to their human resources policies and procedures (contract Article 6 and Article 8).	X	
Explanation: School Evidence for Authorizer Review: Binder, HR policies on website. Background checks are done at employment / first volunteer activity, and then every 3-4 years. Policies on website: Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School Policy #401 – Equal Employment Opportunity Policy #402 – Disability Nondiscrimination Policy #406 – Public and Private Personnel Data Policy #422 – Nepotism Evidence verified by authorizer.			
VII	Evidence suggests that the school complies with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A, which prohibits unfair discriminatory practices in employment, public accommodations, public service, or education (contract Article 8).	X	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Policy review and discussion. Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School LIST OF APPLICABLE SCHOOL POLICY TITLES AND NUMBERS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy #401 – Equal Employment Opportunity • Policy #402 – Disability Nondiscrimination • Policy #102 – Equal Education Opportunity • Policy #509 – Admission and Enrollment School Designated Human Resources Person: Diane Blanchette EEO Grievance Designee: Diane Blanchette School District Human Rights Officer: Diane Blanchette (Board Chair is back-up)			
VIII	Evidence suggests that faculty performance observations and evaluations are conducted according to established policy/manual and consistent with state law, including director evaluation (contract Article 6 and Addendum A).	X	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: Authorizer reviewed a redacted completed evaluation. Teachers receive three evaluations per year aligned to the school Q-Comp plan and one formal at year end with director. Non-teaching staff are reviewed annually. The process involves peer observations, written evaluations,			

feedback, self-reflection, and then end of year formal observation by the school director annually. School board members evaluate director each summer using an evaluation form. Results are presented at school board meeting to inform director professional goals.			
IX	A review of extra-curricular activities verifies school compliance with Minn. Stat. 121A.04, equal opportunities for members of both sexes to participate in athletics (contract Article 8).	N/A	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: The school does not offer extra-curricular activities.			
X	Evidence suggests that the school complies with laws pertaining to student discipline and Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (121A.40)	X	
School Evidence Provided for Authorizer Review: The authorizer verified that the school complies with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.			

XI. School Website Content Requirements <i>(School will walk through website during visit to verify compliance)</i>		URL
Provisions not included in M/O Standards but required by law or charter contract, thus verified by authorizer annually.		
a.	Current Annual Report (required components in MS 124E.16, Subd 2)	https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/Annual-and-Worlds-Best-Workforce-Report.pdf
b.	Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Report (MS 120B.11)	Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School
c.	Identity of and contact information for the authorizer (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)	School Authorizer: VOA-MN - Birch Grove Community School
d.	Directory information for board and committee members (name, phone, email, affiliation) (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)	School Board - Birch Grove Community School
e.	Board and committee meeting minutes (if authority) for at least one calendar year. (MS 124E.07, Subd 8)	School Board - Birch Grove Community School
f.	Literacy plan including English Learners (for schools with grades K-3) (MS 120B.12, Subd 4)	Literacy-Plan.pdf
g.	Collaborative Agreements (if they exist) (MS 124E.08)	N/A
h.	Wellness Policy / Plan (if applicable) (MS 121A.215)	N/A
i.	Lottery and enrollment policy and process (MS 124E.11, Subd. (b))	https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/509-Admission-and-Enrollment-Policy-Birch-Grove.pdf
j.	Calendar of standardized tests to be administered during the year (with rationales) (MS 120B.301)	Policies, Reports, and Documents - Birch Grove Community School
k.	School Bullying Policy (MS 121A.031)	https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/514-Bullying-Prohibition-Policy.pdf
l.	Policy for group health (if applicable) (MS 124E.12, Subd 5)	N/A
m.	Early admission policy (if applicable for admission of kindergarteners and/or first grade students at an earlier age than the age(s) required by statute) (MS 124E.11, Subd. (d))	https://www.birchgroveschool.com/accnt_8817/site_511375/Documents/Kindergarten-Early-Entrance-Application-Birch-Grove.pdf
n.	PSEO Dissemination of Information (124D.09, Subd 7)	N/A
o.	Name, mailing address, bylaws, minutes of board meetings, names	N/A

	of the current board of directors of the affiliated nonprofit building corporation (if exists) (MS 124E.13)	
p.	A link to information on how to obtain an application and application assistance for Minnesota health care programs (MS 256.962. subd. 6)	(i.e., this link must be included on the charter school's website) Home - Birch Grove Community School
q.	School's restrictive procedures plan for children with disabilities (if applicable) (MS 125A.0942, subd. 1)	https://www.birchgroveschool.com/acct_8817/site_511375/Documents/Total-Special-Education-System.pdf

Legal and Contractual Compliance - Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. VOA-MN expects compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a Compliance Binder on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed Annual Submission Calendar. The school's management and operations will be monitored by the authorizer and reported in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. This section is not scored individually. The compliance binder and submission calendar are systems for ongoing monitoring of school performance and compliance and compliance requirements are imbedded in previous sections.

CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATION

VOA-MN schools must achieve at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal and at least and an Exemplary Rating (80% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

2024 - 2025 SCHOOL YEAR PERFORMANCE (FY25)						
	Meets Standard Points	Partially Meets Standard Points	Does Not Meet Standard Points	Total Points	Weight	Percent
Academic	3	1	0	7/8	.50	44%
Finance	18	1	0	19/20	.20	19%
Governance	30	1	0	31/32	.15	15%
Mgmt/Operations	34	0	0	34/34	.15	15%
Grand Total					1.00	93%

CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATIONS
CHARTER CONTRACT TERM: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2026

	YR 1 Rating FY22	YR 2 Rating FY23	YR 3 Rating FY24	YR 4 Rating FY25	Average Rating
ACADEMIC (50%)	45%	45%	45%	44%	45%
FINANCE (20%)	18%	19%	19%	19%	19%
ORGANIZATION (30%)					
BOARD GOVERNANCE (15%)	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS (15%)	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
TOTAL	93%	94%	94%	93%	94%
CUMULATIVE AVERAGE 94%					

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