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# From Campus to Classroom: The Expanding Role of Colleges in Charter School Innovation

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# Why this Matters

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## The evolution of the charter school movement in Florida

- Local School Districts (traditional authorizers)
- Statewide Authorizers
  - Florida Charter School Review Commission / State Board of Education
    - District becomes the sponsor, but approval authority rests with the state
- State University System
- Florida College System Institutions (New Authority)



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# Operate/Authorize/Partner: What is the difference?

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**Operate:** Gives colleges direct influence over curriculum and culture but comes with heavy management responsibilities.

**Authorize:** Provides broader impact by setting standards and oversight for multiple schools, though it demands strong governance and compliance systems on the college side.

**Partner:** Allows colleges to collaborate without assuming full legal or operational risks, such as through dual-enrollment or workforce pathways.



**Operate**



**Authorize**



**Partner**



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# Strategic Decisions for Colleges\*

**\*when considering charter school involvement:**

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- Should you open a charter school through the traditional route or apply to become an **authorizer**?
- What are the regulatory, financial and operational implications of **authorizing** vs. **operating**?
- How does the charter school model support college enrollment, workforce pipelines, and community engagement goals?



# Authorizing vs. Operating Charter Schools

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## Authorizing

Definition: The authorizer is the entity legally empowered to approve, oversee, renew or close a charter school.

### Responsibilities:

- Review Applications
- Negotiate and Enforce Contracts
- Monitor Academic, Financial and Organizational Performance
- Intervene or close schools that fail to meet expectations

NOT Day to day management - but higher level oversight

Arms length relationships

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# Authorizing vs. Operating Charter Schools

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## Operating

Definition: The operator is the entity responsible for running the school and must be governed by a board.

Responsibilities:

- Hire staff, manage curriculum, oversee daily instruction
- Manage finances, facilities and compliance with state/federal law
- Report to the governing board and authorizer

DIRECT management of the school and responsible for student outcomes.

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# Key Differences

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## Authorizer

Set Expectations

Hold Schools Accountable

Oversee multiple schools

Ensure public trust and quality



## Operator

Execute expectations set by authorizing body

Accountable to Authorizers and Board

Run individual schools

Ensure strong teaching, learning, culture



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# Authorizing 101



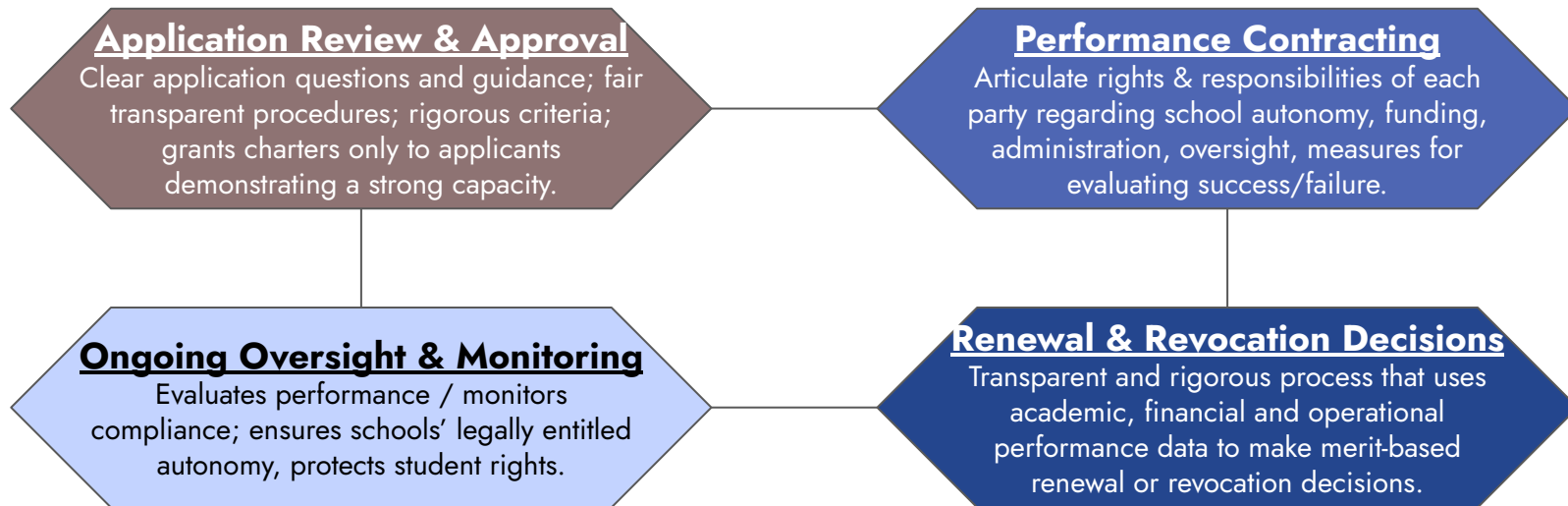
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# Authorizing 101

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The core responsibilities of Authorizers:



# Authorizer Quality

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## **NACSA Principles & Standards** [\(Click Here\)](#)

- Set the national benchmark for effective charter school authorizing, outlining clear expectations for:
  - Rigor,
  - Accountability
  - Transparency
  - Equity
- Define authorizer quality by ensuring sponsors:
  - Create strong performance contracts
  - Monitor schools fairly
  - Make high-stakes decisions
  - Prioritize student outcomes over politics/convenience.



# Oversight and Accountability

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- Balancing autonomy and accountability
- Role of governing boards in oversight
- Authorizer Ethics
- Funding authorizing work
  - Oversight fees
  - Sustainability strategies
- Common pitfalls of weak authorizing:
  - Rubber-stamping
  - Inadequate oversight
  - Political interference
  - Inadequate systems and abilities



## Thinking question:

What does a high-quality authorizer look like in practice, and how can colleges build the capacity to not just oversee schools, but actively support them in delivering excellent outcomes for students?



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# Support Systems

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Florida Charter Institute's Role

Collaborative/Shared-service authorizing model

Tools for oversight: (Dashboards, compliance trackers, site visit protocols)

Training for college administrators and those on the authorizing team

Building capacity without recreating the wheel



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# Panel Discussion Prompts



# Authorizing Considerations

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What factors should college leaders consider before pursuing authorizer status?

How do you balance the mission of the college with the responsibilities of sponsoring a K-12 charter school?



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## Regulatory, Financial and Operational Implications

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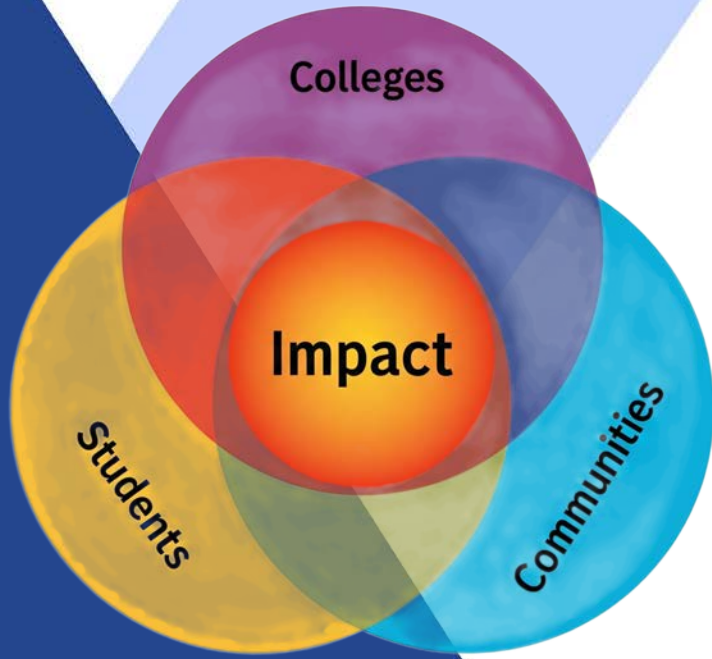
What are the biggest regulatory hurdles colleges face as new authorizers?

How should colleges prepare for the financial implications- both costs and potential benefits of sponsoring schools?

What operational systems must be in place for effective oversight? (compliance, data, governance)



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## **Impact on Students, Colleges, and Communities**

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How does the charter school model support a college's enrollment pipeline and long-term student success?

What role do these schools play in addressing local workforce needs?

How do campus-based charter schools strengthen a college-going culture starting in 9th grade?



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## Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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What lessons can Florida borrow from successful models like SUNY?

From your own experience, how can colleges ensure they maintain high standards for quality while expanding access and innovation?

Any lessons learned?



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# Future Outlook

## Future Outlook

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What is the long-term vision for state colleges as charter sponsors in Florida?

How do you see this shift affecting district-college relationships in the upcoming years?

What supports or policy changes are still needed in order to continue to make this model successful and sustainable?



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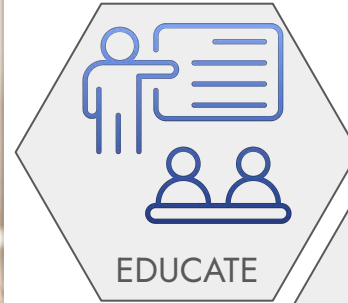
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# FCI "At a glance"

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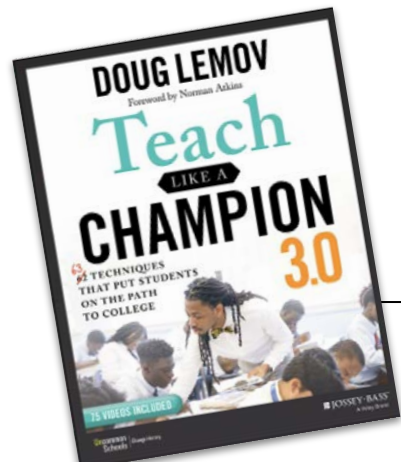


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