



*NASCIO 2024 State IT Recognition Awards
Business Process Innovations*



Arizona State Board for Charter Schools Online Platform Modernization

Description: Modernizing the ASBCS online system to meet the needs of the Board, charter holders, and the public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (referred to as both ASBCS and “the Board”) is a charter authorizer responsible for overseeing public charter schools that operate under a contract with the Board. Overseeing more than 550 charter schools, the Board is the largest charter school authorizer in Arizona and is one of the nation’s largest independent state authorizers.

Situation

The Board utilizes an online solution to support its internal operations, meet the needs of the charter holders, and provide information to the public. Implemented in 2007, the ASBCS online solution is a custom-built solution that no longer meets the current needs of the Board, charter holders, and the public.

Problems

Due to the current system limitations, ASBCS staff have developed a multitude of workarounds and parallel processes to remain in compliance with both Statute and Rule. These workarounds create inherent inefficiencies, redundancy of effort, and waste. Additionally, there are a number of qualitative considerations and risks that the state must consider.

Solution

ASBCS will modernize its online system to meet the needs of the Board, charter holders, and the public.

By modernizing the platform, ASBCS will further its mission by:

- Improving equity and accessibility to all members of the public
- Providing improved accountability of charter holders
- Providing better transparency of the charter portfolio and charter performance
- Enhancing the ASBCS staff’s ability to receive, respond to, and investigate complaints, reducing potential safety issues and legal liability of the state
- Maintaining portfolio compliance by improving visibility of submission requirements and communications
- Increasing efficiency in executing staff processes (waste reduction)
- Providing improved access to public information regarding school choice
- Reducing school operating expenses (reduced administrative burden)

IDEA

The new system will reduce the current qualitative considerations and risks by improving equity and accessibility to all members of the public and providing improved accountability of charter holders.

IMPLEMENTATION

For the initial phase of this project, the Board partnered with a third party vendor, MSS Business Transformation Advisory, Inc., to review the current process, document and build out requirements, and create technical road maps based on goals and milestones established by the Board. Once the requirements were gathered and the vendor for the system was chosen, the Board completed a change request to alter the scope, time, and budget of the project.

During the Needs Assessment and Evaluation of Online Platform phases of the modernization effort, the consultant worked with the ASBCS staff, charter schools, members of the public, and other stakeholders to identify processes and requirements for its online platform. A total of 12 processes and 171 requirements were identified and 128 of these requirements were prioritized as 'must have'. The previous system was then evaluated against these requirements. Only 16 of the 128 'must have' requirements were fully met with the previous system.

Also during the Needs Assessment phase, the consultant developed a modernization roadmap that included a proposed program organizational structure for the Vendor Selection and Implementation Phases. ASBCS leveraged this work and the consultant's recommendations for third party oversight, as the Board lacked the technical capacity to internally manage these functions.

ASBCS also employed a third party consultant to manage the RFP process and provide program oversight during the implementation phase. This minimized project risk by filling a gap in technical capacity and provided for a responsible party to take accountability for overall project delivery.

IMPACT

The project to modernize the Board's online system was completed in September 2023.

By providing better transparency to the charter portfolio and charter performance, the Board has improved the staff's ability to receive, respond to, and investigate complaints, reducing many potential safety issues and legal liability of the state. Improving portfolio compliance through visibility of submission requirements and communications increases efficiency in executing staff processes. In addition, by providing improved access to information to the public on school choice there will be a reduction in school operating expenses with a reduced administrative burden.