Grand Rapids Public Schools authorizes just one school – Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center.

Just a few years ago, Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center was one of the worst performing schools statewide. Over the past few years, the school has seen some of the largest learning gains of any public school in Michigan. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, the school jumped from the seventh percentile to the 44th percentile on the state’s accountability rating.

In the 2013-14 school year, 81 percent of low-income students at Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center were proficient in reading, according to the 2013-14 accountability scorecard. In fact, low-income students at Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center are outperforming low-income students from Kent County – where Grand Rapids is located – and the state average for low-income students on the state assessment.

Grand Rapids Public Schools leaders believe that some of these learning gains can be attributed to the strong support services, like professional development and evaluations, provided directly by its authorizer. This also shows the potential of strong authorizers, not only in opening great schools, but improving those that need attention.