



Components and Guidelines for Submitting a Charter School Renewal Application

For Charter Schools Seeking Renewal in the 2024-2025 School Year

The Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia presents this Charter School Renewal Application. Schools must submit an application for an existing Charter School to be renewed in the 2024-2025 school year. All charters renewed through this process will be public schools in Philadelphia, in accordance with the Pennsylvania Charter School Law.

Effective: May 14, 2024

**The School District of Philadelphia
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INTRODUCTION

As required by the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, at the end of a school's charter term, a local board of school directors shall conduct a comprehensive review of a Charter School prior to granting a renewal of the charter. Unless additional information is necessary to evaluate the Charter School, charters are renewed for only five-year terms in Pennsylvania. The Charter Schools Office ("CSO"), on behalf of the School District of Philadelphia's Board of Education ("Board"), conducts this comprehensive review and then presents a renewal recommendation to the Board. The comprehensive review and recommendation are based on the [Charter School Performance Framework](#) ("the Framework"). Renewal recommendations are detailed in a publicly available report for each Charter School.

The Renewal Application allows the Charter School to examine, analyze, and reflect on its practices and decisions over the course of its charter term. The Charter School may offer explanations for the data presented, identify action steps taken to address any concerns, and provide detailed plans relating to the school's goals. This document provides an overview of the renewal process while also outlining the specific questions a Charter School must respond to in its Renewal Application Narrative.

The recommendation to renew a Charter School is based on a comprehensive review of the three domains of the Framework: Academic Success, Organizational Compliance and Viability, and Financial Health and Sustainability. The Framework provides the analytical criteria used to hold a Charter School accountable for performance and supports the determination of whether or not a Charter School should be recommended for renewal. Additionally, the Framework guides the CSO's ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and assessment work. Since 2016, each Philadelphia brick and mortar Charter School has received an annual evaluation of its performance against this Framework in the Annual Charter Evaluation (ACE). Information previously analyzed and reported out in the ACE informs the CSO's recommendation, and is included in the Renewal Recommendation Report (ACE-R).

FRAMEWORK DOMAINS AND ASSESSMENT APPROACH

I. ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Category	Source	Reference
Proficiency: Proficiency outcomes in relation to District and Similar Schools Group rates	PSSA/Keystone data in math/algebra I, ELA/literature and science/biology provided by PDE	PA Charter School Law, Chapter 5 PA Public School Code, Case Law, ESSA
Growth: Meeting or exceeding the statewide growth standard	Average Growth Index (AGI) scores provided by PDE	PA Charter School Law, Chapter 5 PA Public School Code, Case Law, ESSA



Attendance: Attendance rate over the charter term and percentile comparison to similar schools group	Attendance data provided in the data packet	PA Charter School Law, Chapter 5 PA Public School Code, Case Law, ESSA
Postsecondary Readiness (HS Only): Graduation rates, ACT/SAT scores, and first-fall matriculation rates in relation to District and similar schools group rates	Infinite campus student records, School Progress Report (SPR), National Student Clearinghouse	PA Charter School Law, Chapter 5 PA Public School Code, Case Law, ESSA

II. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLIANCE AND VIABILITY

Category	Sources	References
Mission and Educational Plan: Execution of the mission and material terms of educational program	Renewal Narrative, School Site Visit observations, Artifacts, Stakeholder Conversations	PA Charter School Law Section 1702 and 1717
Special Education: Legal and regulatory obligations to students with disabilities and equity in outcomes	Renewal Narrative, Child Find Notice, Document Review, BSE Reports	PA School Code Chapter 711
English Learners: Legal and regulatory obligations to English Learners and equity in outcomes	Renewal Narrative, LIEP Policy, Data Packets, Document Review	22 Pa. Code §4.26 PDE Educating English Learners and EL BEC
Enrollment: Establishment of compliant and equitable enrollment policies and practices	Renewal Narrative, Admissions Policy, Application and Enrollment Packet, Document Review	PA Charter School Law 1723-A Enrollment BEC Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq Equal Education Opportunity Act U.S.C. § 1703
Climate and Culture: Establishment of compliant and equitable discipline policies and practices	Renewal Narrative, Code of Conduct, Document Review	PA School Code Chapter 12 Chapter 711 Section 1330 Act 138 Charter Agreement
Personnel: Compliance with personnel requirements including certification and checks/clearances	Annual Reports, Document Review	PA Charter School Law 1724-A PDE Educating English Learners BEC 22 PA. Code § 711.4 22 PA. Code §4.26 24 P.S. § 11-1109 IDEA 34 CFR § 300.156



Health and Safety: Compliance with food, health, and safety requirements	Insurance Accords, Certificate of Occupancy, City Food Inspections, PDE and PDH reporting, Document Review	PA Public School Code Chapter 23 PA Public School Code 1949 Act 14 Article 14 Section 1402 PA School Code 15-1517 PA School Code 14-1401 City of Phila L&I City of Phila Food Protection Philadelphia Fire Code Philadelphia Administrative Code Title 4 Section A-703 Healthy Hungry-Free Kids Act PA Uniform Construction Code
Board Governance: Board of Trustees operation in accordance with applicable law and policy, including Sunshine Act, Ethics Act and bylaws	Renewal Narrative, Meeting Minutes, Bylaws, Statements of Financial Interest	PA Sunshine Act PA Public Official and Employee Ethics Act PA Charter School Law Charter Agreement
Timely Reporting: Submission of required documentation	Annual Reports, Audited Financial Statements	24 PA Code 218 & 971 Charter Agreement

III. FINANCIAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Category	Sources	References
Financial Health: Performance on short- and long-term financial health metrics throughout the charter term	Audited financial statements	PA Charter School Law
Fiscal Management: Adherence to generally accepted standards of fiscal management	Audited financial statements, general ledgers, management and lease agreements, payroll information, internal controls and financial policies, student information system records	PA Charter School Law, GAAP



STATUTORY BASIS FOR NONRENEWAL

As specified in the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, at the end of the term of a charter, the local board of school directors may choose not to renew the charter based on any of the following:

- 1) One or more material violations of any of the standards or procedures contained in the charter;
- 2) Failure to meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Ch. 5 or subsequent regulations or failure to meet any performance standard set forth in the written charter;
- 3) Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements;
- 4) Violation of provisions of the Pennsylvania Charter School Law;
- 5) Violation of any provision of law from which the Charter School has not been exempted, including Federal laws and regulations governing children with disabilities; or
- 6) The Charter School has been convicted of fraud.

Through review of academic performance and financial data, Renewal Application materials documentation from throughout the charter term, and document review and site visit findings in the domains of Academic Success, Organizational Compliance and Viability, and Financial Health and Sustainability, the CSO will recommend a five-year renewal with or without conditions, a one-year renewal with or without conditions, or nonrenewal. Evidence of academic success is a primary consideration for a renewal recommendation.



KEY COMPONENTS OF THE RENEWAL PROCESS AND TIMELINE

KEY COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	DATE <i>Submission Location as applicable</i>
Release of Renewal Application	The CSO shares the Renewal Application guidelines and additional materials to support the renewal process.	Event	May 15, 2024 Epicenter
Renewal Kick-Off Meetings	At two identical meetings, the CSO reviews key aspects of the renewal process and answers preliminary questions.	Event	2:00PM, May 14, 2024 Zoom
			10:00AM, May 15, 2024 Zoom
Scheduling Survey	Schools submit renewal point(s) of contact and scheduling preferences for renewal planning.	Submission	May 31, 2024 Google Form
Renewal Letter of Intent	The school submits to the CSO a signed Letter of Intent (signed by the CEO and board chair) to renew its charter.	Submission	June 14, 2024 Epicenter
Preparation for Document Review Samples	Using a template provided by the CSO, schools provide a list of staff and EL students that will be utilized in document review.	Submission	June 28, 2024 Epicenter
Board Meeting Observations	The CSO attends Board meetings for observation.	Event	August 2024 to November 2024
Annual Charter Evaluation (ACE) and Renewal Epicenter Submissions	Schools submit documents and policies submitted annually to the CSO, which are used to produce Annual Charter Evaluations (ACE), and additional renewal-specific documents and policies (such as the PDE Food Service Reviews) for CSO review.	Submission	May to December 2024 Epicenter See Calendar of Collections for details
Renewal Application and Attachments	The school submits the Renewal Application Narrative, which may not exceed 30 pages. All pages should use one-inch margins, include page numbers, and have all text easily readable in font size no smaller than 11. Additionally, the school submits the following Renewal Application Attachments: • Attachment I: Organizational Chart for SY 2023-24 • Attachment II: School Overview Table (Excel Template in Epicenter) • Attachment III: Board Governance Roster (Excel Template in Epicenter)	Submission	July 19, 2024 Epicenter
Enrollment Audit and Financial Review	The Office of Auditing Services (OAS) conducts an enrollment audit. OAS requests supplemental financial documentation and conducts a desk audit to assess fiscal management performance of the school.	Event	July 2024 to February 2025 On-Site Review



KEY COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	DATE <i>Submission Location as applicable</i>
Document Review Webinar Series	Through a series of pre-recorded webinars, CSO provides consistent information prior to document submissions and reviews. Part I: Special Education and School-Wide MTSS Part II: Expulsion Records Part III: Enrollment Part IV: Student Health Part V: English Learners Part VI: Personnel	Event	July 15, 2024
Document Review Submissions	When Applicable, the CSO sends sample lists via Epicenter. Schools submit documents via Epicenter one week prior to the due date. The CSO reviews documents and provides schools with feedback and findings.	Submission	August– September 2024 Epicenter <i>(*details included in SY2024-25 Calendar of Collections)</i>
	Special Education files	Submission	August 9, 2024
	Lottery Results	Submission	August 14, 2024
	Waiting List	Submission	August 14, 2024
	School-Wide MTSS (screening, monitoring, tiered instruction)	Submission	August 16, 2024
	Expulsion files	Submission	August 16, 2024
	Student Health Records	Submission	August 23, 2024
	English Learner files	Submission	September 6, 2024
	Enrollment files	Submission	September 13, 2024
	Personnel files	Submission	September 20, 2024
School Site Visits	The CSO conducts site visits to learn about implementation of the Mission and Educational Plan through observations, artifact review, and stakeholder discussions (parents, students, staff, Board members).	Event	Winter '25 (Jan - Mar)
Material Amendment Request	Material amendment requests made during the renewal year should be submitted with required documentation by October 15 via e-mail. The CSO may request additional supporting documentation to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the charter amendment request.	Submission	October 15, 2024 Email
Document Review Close-out Letter	The CSO provides schools an overview of the outcomes from the document review.	Event	December 2024
ACE-R Preview Window	The CSO's renewal analysis and the draft Renewal Recommendation Report (ACE-R) is shared with the school. The school has an opportunity to provide factual or technical corrections to the report.	Event	Spring 2025 Epicenter
Final Renewal Reports (ACE-R) Published	Renewal recommendations are detailed in a publicly available report for each school.	Event	Spring 2025 CSO Website

KEY COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	DATE <i>Submission Location as applicable</i>
Charter Agreement	If the CSO recommends a five-year or one-year renewal with or without conditions, a charter agreement is prepared for the school's review and signature. If a nonrenewal recommendation is rendered, the CSO reaches out to the school directly with additional information and timeline expectations.	Event	Spring 2025
Board of Education Consideration	The Board of Education considers renewal recommendations at a public action meeting.	Event	Late Spring 2025

2024-2025 RENEWAL APPLICATION NARRATIVE

SECTION 1: ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1.1 Academic Outcomes

The Annual Charter Evaluation (ACE) should serve as the basis for the school's internal evaluation and reflection on academic performance. All ACEs produced during the charter term can be found on the CSO's website: <https://www.philasd.org/charterschools/directory/>

1.1.A. Identify any and all Academic Success standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies? Discuss any programmatic or instructional shifts implemented to improve student outcomes during the charter term.

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLIANCE AND VIABILITY

2.1 Mission and Educational Plan

Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, Charter Schools in the renewal process identified three mission elements that were evaluated through multiple data sources. At school site visits, the CSO observes the three identified mission elements through artifact review, school and classroom observations, and discussions with stakeholders such as parents, students, staff, and Board members. The CSO will utilize data collected on the three mission elements to render a rating for the *Mission and Educational Plan* category under the Organizational Compliance and Viability domain of the Framework.

The mission elements described in 2.1.A. should include components of the Charter School's programming that reflect its core philosophies, and can be composed of instructional or cultural elements occurring during the school day.

Sample mission elements could include, but are not limited to:

1. Content area(s) of focus (e.g. SEL, STEM, performing arts, social justice)
2. Instructional models (e.g. PBL, makerspaces)



3. Signature academic projects or programs (e.g. internships, service projects)
4. Schoolwide programming (e.g. celebrations, presentations of learning)
5. Staff development (e.g. professional development, staff engagement)
6. Stakeholder engagement (e.g. family engagement, community partnerships)

Mission elements should not be built around:

1. Legal requirements (e.g. curriculum implementation, provision of Special Education and English learner assessment and services)
2. Traditional instructional practices (e.g. small group instruction, push-in/pull-out support, 1:1 technology)
3. Behavior management practices (e.g. teacher redirection, PBIS system)

2.1.A. List and briefly describe three school-specific mission elements that are aligned to the mission stated in your charter agreement and highlight how the Charter School serves as a unique model of innovation. Charter Schools will engage in a more in-depth process prior to the scheduling of the Renewal Site Visit. For the Renewal Application, limit your response to identifying three school-specific mission elements and providing a brief description, no more than a paragraph, per element.

2.2 Special Education

2.2.A. Describe the school-wide supports and special education programs at the school. Provide evidence that the school is effective in providing the appropriate resources and services to students in need of additional support through tiered instruction and/or special education programs. In your response be sure to include:

- If students have had a reduction of services or been declassified during their tenure at the school.
- The ways in which students can be identified as needing additional support.
- How the school sets up a school-wide tracking intervention system.
- A detailed description of the school's multi-tiered support system (MTSS) that includes staffing responsibilities as well as an annual timeline of program implementation.
- The school's criteria for movement between tiers of instruction.
- The school's process for ensuring IEP Progress Monitoring and IEP Secondary Transition fidelity.

2.2.B. Identify any and all Special Education standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies? Discuss any programmatic or instructional shifts implemented to improve student outcomes for this student population during the charter term.

2.3 English Learners

2.3.A. Identify any and all English Learners standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies? Discuss any programmatic or instructional shifts implemented to improve student outcomes for this student population during the charter term.

2.3.B. Describe how student progress after exiting from the Language Instructional Educational Program is monitored, including staff roles, frequency, and types of data/documents reviewed. Indicate what if any supports and services are provided to students in the post-exit phase.

2.4 Enrollment



2.4.A. Describe the school's student body. What driving factors influence its characteristics? How do families learn about the school?

2.4.B. Identify any and all Enrollment standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies?

2.5 Climate and Culture

2.5.A. Describe the school's approach to climate and culture. What are the school's behavioral expectations for students? How do teachers and staff redirect and support students who are not meeting behavioral expectations?

2.5.B. Describe if and how student discipline data is tracked. How does the school ensure compliance with student discipline related to students with disabilities? What triggers exist for identifying disproportionate consequences?

2.5.C. Identify any and all Student Discipline standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies?

2.5.D. Describe how, if at all, equity and racial justice influence the school's discipline policy and practices. Please provide as much detail as possible, including data points that reflect the approach.

2.6 Personnel

2.6.A. Have there been any changes over the charter term in organizational structure or leadership personnel? If so, please identify and indicate reasons for turnover.

2.6.B. Identify any and all Personnel standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies?

2.6.C. Describe the climate and culture of the school for staff. Describe how, if at all, the school has made efforts to create an anti-racist climate and culture for staff.

Attachment I: *In Epicenter, submit the organizational chart for the 2024-25 school year demonstrating the current leadership structure at the school including, if applicable, staff or leaders from the charter management organization.*

Attachment II: *In Epicenter, submit the completed School Overview Table. An Excel worksheet is provided in Epicenter as a resource.*

2.7 Health and Safety

2.7.A. Identify any and all Health and Safety standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. What factors or context may have led to the school not meeting the standard? What has the school done to address the deficiencies?



2.7.B. What is the school's approach to ensuring compliance with 28 Pa. Code § 23.1 and 23.2?

2.7.C. For students who do not have access to regular healthcare screenings outside of school, what procedures does your school have in place to complete screenings?

2.7.D. Does the school have a waiver for health services? If so, what are the waivers, and what evidence can the school provide that the waiver has been approved by the PA Department of Health?

2.8 Board Governance

2.8.A. How does the Board accomplish the following responsibilities: setting goals for the school, assessing progress toward goals, evaluating school leadership, and evaluating partner or business management organizations, as applicable?

2.8.B. Identify any and all Governance standards in which the school was rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term. Describe all updates made to the Board's policies and practices to ensure compliance moving forward.

2.8.C. List the training and professional development the school's Board members received during the charter term. Identify the date and time, topic, attendees, and training provider.

Attachment III: *In Epicenter, submit the completed Board Governance Roster, listing details of Board membership during the charter term. An Excel worksheet is provided in Epicenter as a resource.*

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Financial Health

3.1.A. If any of the school's Financial Health standards were rated Does Not Meet Standard during the charter term, describe all updates made to policies and practices to ensure compliance moving forward.

3.2 Fiscal Management

3.2.A. If any deficiencies or findings were noted in any of the annual independent audits, please note such deficiencies or findings and describe how they were corrected in a timely manner.

3.2.B. Describe how the school specifically implements its internal controls policy, addressing **all** of the following and including responsible parties for each: budget preparation and planning, bank accounts, purchase requests, authorized check signers, competitive bidding, credit/debit cards, and petty cash.

SECTION 4: APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER

4.1.A. In review of your original charter and/or past charter agreements, have there been any significant changes within the charter term to the mission, educational plan, grades served, current location, or the charter management organization? Please specifically review the school design and measures of accountability to



share any fundamental changes that have been made. If there have not been any changes, please write
“There have been no significant changes made to the charter during this term.”

4.1.B. If applicable, list the conditions in your charter agreement. Discuss the school’s progress related to the conditions and evidence demonstrating adherence to them.