

Charter School Renewal Application 2009 - 2010



Office of Charter, Partnership and New Schools
The School District of Philadelphia
Education Center
440 N. Broad Street, Portal A, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Charter Operators,

Enclosed you will find a renewal application for your charter school. This application requests information about your school's academic performance, operations, and fiscal management. The information provided will give the evaluation team a broad overview of the work that you and your school have been accomplishing over the last five years. The application will serve as a valuable tool to us as we evaluate your school, but it can also serve as an important tool for you as well. The renewal process is an opportunity for you to reflect on what has been accomplished at your school over the last five years, to identify strengths and weakness, and to set goals for the future.

In addition to the information provided in the completed application, the renewal decision will also be based on

- Annual Reports
- Financial audits
- Student enrollment audits
- Site visits

I look forward to working with you during this process. If, at any time, you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or my office.

Sincerely,

Benjamin W. Rayer
Chief Charter, Partnership, and New Schools Officer
The School District of Philadelphia

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Overview of the Renewal Process

Renewal Timeline:

This timeframe meets statutory requirements and provides the Office of Charter Schools with adequate time to review and evaluate documents and to conduct site visits.

Target Timeline	Activity	Explanation
July 1- October 1, 2009	Notify Office of Charter Schools of intent to renew	Notification of intent to renew is statutory requirement.
August 1, 2009	Submission of Annual Report	Statutory requirement.
October 7, 2009	Renewal applications distributed	Office of Charter Schools convenes an information meeting for renewal applicants to familiarize CEO/Board President with process.
September 2009 - January 2010	Enrollment/Financial Audits	SDP Auditing Services conducts school enrollment and financial audits.
November 2009 - January 2010	Renewal Site Visits	Schedules will vary. The purpose is to document charter agreement activities.
December 18, 2009 *Note: to expedite renewal process, site visits may begin before official submission date if charter submits application early.	RENEWAL APPLICATION DUE	Electronic and hard copies due by 4:30 pm to Office of Charter Schools. Must include certified Board Resolution.
January 15, 2010	Any additional material requested is due to Office of Charter Schools	Office of Charter Schools may request materials other than those contained in the Annual Report and Renewal Application.
December 2009 - February 2010	Report Preparation for SRC	
March 10, 2010	SRC Planning Meeting	Expected Date of SRC discussion and public comments on charter renewals.
March 17, 2010 * Note: SRC may consider renewal decisions at earlier voting meetings if charter renewal reports are complete.	SRC Voting Meeting	Expected Date SRC would make decisions to renew or non-renew individual charters.

Statutory Criteria for Renewal:

Section 1728-A of the Charter School Law directs the local board of directors to “conduct a comprehensive review prior to granting a five (5) year renewal of the charter.”

Section 1729-A(a) of the Charter School Law states that a charter school may be non-renewed based on any of the following reasons:

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

These criteria are used to frame the comprehensive review conducted by the Office of Charter Schools. In this review, Office of Charter Schools will examine the materials listed below, related to each charter school’s performance and operation, as a method of evaluation for compliance to the Charter School Law:

- Charter original application and any subsequent SRC approved changes to the charter
- Annual Reports
- Results of standardized tests including PSSA, PVAAS and AYP status
- School Improvement Plans
- Financial audits and financial reports;
- Special Education Reports from the Bureau of Special Education
- Audit reports from the Office of the Auditor General, if applicable
- Audit reports from the School District of Philadelphia
- Site visits

Instructions for the Charter School Renewal Application

The charter school application will be evaluated on the quality of its responses to questions in the following four areas:

- ✓ **Student Achievement**: Is the educational program a success?
- ✓ **School Operations/Management**: Is the school a financially and operationally viable organization?
- ✓ **Fidelity to Charter**: Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?
- ✓ **Plans for the Future**: If the school’s charter is renewed, does the school have ambitious yet sound plans for the next charter term.

A successful charter school renewal response should be concise, based on clear, measurable evidence and data. It must not only include evidence of progress towards accomplishing the goals set out in the original application, but it must also provide a description of the charter school's plans for the future. Strengths, past challenges, and how the charter sought to address the challenges should be described. Specific and concise future plans to address the issues posed by continuing challenges should be discussed.

Format:

Please follow the directions below when completing the Application Renewal Form. As previously stated, please be concise but thorough.

- Submit completed application in a three ring binder.
- Responses must be typed, using a 12 point font size or greater on 8½ x 11 paper, single sided.
- Use Times New Roman or Arial fonts
- Include page numbers, use a header or footer with your school name and 2009-2010 Application Renewal on each page.
- Clearly label all attachments and exhibits.
- Submit completed applications **no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 18, 2009.**
- Email copy of completed application and any supporting documents to Carly Bolger in the Charter School Office at cjbolger@philasd.org.
- Submit one hard copy binder of the completed application to:

The Office of Charter, Partnership, and New Schools
440 North Broad Street
3rd Floor Portal A
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Confirmation of receipt of the Charter Renewal Application will be sent within 48 hours.

Questions about the application can be emailed to Carly Bolger at cjbolger@philasd.org.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL FORM 2009-2010**

Name of Charter School:

Address:

Telephone number:

FAX number:

Name of Chief Executive Officer/ Chief Academic Officer

Telephone number

Email address

Initial Opening Date

Current Grades for School

Grades Served 2008-2009

Enrollment 2008 - 2009

Projected Student Enrollment Based on Existing Charter Agreement (for the five years beginning September 2009) *

	2009 - 2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total Projected Enrollment					
Grades to be Offered					

Signature of the President, Board of Trustees

Date

Signature of the CEO/CAO

Date

* Enrollment and grades served may not be changed without official approval by the School Reform Commission (SRC). The requested changes must be detailed in an SRC resolution and receive an affirmative public vote by the SRC.

Section I: Student Achievement

Is the Educational Program a Success?

To determine if the charter school's program is a success, the School Reform Commission will examine evidence provided by the school as well as review school performance data from standardized tests. Performance data will be examined in relationship to charter stated performance goals and state performance measures.

1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly progress (AYP) as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act?

Please provide information about your AYP results for the following years:

	AYP Status	PSSA Advanced	PSSA Proficient	PSSA Basic	PSSA Below Basic
2008-2009					
2007-2008					
2006-2007					
2005-2006					
2004-2005					

- Discuss how these results correspond to the academic achievement goals that were identified in your signed charter agreement.
- If your school has identified sub groups, discuss the performance of each sub group and the strategies in place to support improved academic achievement.
- Discuss the overall achievement level of your school and the actions you have taken to improve academic achievement during the term of the charter.

1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate growth over time?

- Discuss the implications of your 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 PVAAS reading and math results. Provide any other evidence related to longitudinal growth of students at your school.
- Describe the strategies that are in place to see that special needs and at risk of failure students, as well as those not making reasonable progress, are meeting or are being given opportunities and reasonable accommodations to meet academic goals.
 - Provide evidence to demonstrate how the strategies are effective for those students in terms of improved academic performance.
- Discuss your promotion and retention data in relation to improving student academic performance.

Section I: Student Achievement (cont.)

1.3. Is the high school adequately preparing its graduates for post secondary success?
(For K – 12, 1 – 12, and high schools only)

- Please provide evidence of your school's SAT/ACT scores.
- Please provide evidence of your school's graduation rate.
- Please provide evidence of your school's dropout rate (those students entering 9th grade who remain at the school and graduate).
- If applicable, provide evidence of your college acceptance/post secondary acceptance rate.

1.4. Has the school met its own educational objectives?

- Provide evidence of how the school achieved stated academic goals, objectives during the term of the charter.
- What assessments are used to monitor student learning? How are assessments used to make programmatic decisions and/or modify instruction?

Section II: Operations/Management

Is the School a Financially and Operationally Viable Organization?

To determine if the school is a financially and operationally viable organization, the School Reform Commission will evaluate evidence provided by the school, review audits and review the school's Annual Report.

2.1. Does this school adhere to sound fiscal policies?

- Discuss the school's financial controls and procedures for management of financial resources including petty cash, check authorization, and grants management.
- Discuss how the school addressed any audit findings/reports in prior years.
- Discuss how the school budget supports investment in the priorities/mission/unique design as stated in the charter agreement.
- Submit annual audited financial statements for every year of the charter term including the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

2.3. Is the school governance sound?

- Provide names and terms of all current Board members.
- Discuss any leadership changes on the Board of Trustees.
- Discuss how formal complaints are received, answered and stored.
- Describe how the Board has implemented a fair process for teacher evaluation.
- How are parents and community members encouraged to partner with school and its staff to build a sound and stable learning environment?
- Please provide details on your school's volunteer recruitment policy as well as examples of parent/community involvement.
- Describe how the Board holds the principal/CEO accountable for supporting and evaluating teachers and ensuring student growth.
- How do you educate parents on the role of the Board and the process to bring as well as resolve concerns?
- Describe how Board meetings are held and how the Board ensures that it follows all laws related to managing the Board's activities.

Section II: Operations/Management (cont.)

2.4. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?

Using the following points as guidance, please describe how the school leadership works to ensure that every student achieves according to his or her greatest ability.

- Discuss any leadership changes in the administration.
- What steps does the administration take to interact with all members of the school community?
- Discuss teacher quality in the school. Include how your school meets teacher certification and NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher requirements.
- Describe how your school schedule allows adequate time for teachers to collaborate and share best practices with one another.
- How does the administration recognize and reward excellence at all levels of the school community?
- How are parents kept informed, on an ongoing basis, about decisions made by the administration?
- Describe how the school monitors teacher and staff implementation of a school's curriculum and its alignment to PA chapter 4 regulations.

Section III: Fidelity to Charter

Is the School Faithful to the Terms of its Charter?

3.1 Is the school meeting the unique organizational and management objectives stated in its charter contract?

- Discuss the school’s progress in meeting any unique mission, organizational or management objectives and goals established by the charter and any renewals of the charter. How is the school measuring progress towards achieving these goals/objectives?

3.2 Has the school established and implemented a fair student enrollment process?

- Describe the admissions and lottery system used by the school.
- What procedures are in place for wait-list students?
- What strategies are in place to ensure the school enrolls a diverse student population?
- What are the school’s procedures for: (1) withdrawals; (2) transfers: and (3) expulsions?

YEARS	Students Enrolled	Students Withdrawals	% Student Withdrawals	Student Expulsions	% Student Expulsions
Fall 2008 to Fall 2009					
Fall 2007 to Fall 2008					
Fall 2006 to Fall 2007					
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006					
Fall 2004 to Fall 2005					

3.3 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?

- Describe the systems in place to ensure that students with special needs are receiving the services required by their IEP.
- How does the school identify, diagnose and address the needs of these students?

3.4 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English Language Learners?

- Describe how the school is fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English Language Learners.

Section IV: Guiding Principles for the Future

If the School's Charter Is Renewed, What Are Its Plans for the Next Five Years?

To determine if the school's plans are adequate, the School Reform Commission will evaluate all evidence provided by the school and the reviews of the academic performance data, audits, Annual Reports and the site visit.

4.1 If applicable, detail any modifications to your current school design that will be implemented during the next five year renewal period?

4.2 Describe the strengths and challenges of your school. (Provide a minimum of 2 for both). How will this information be used to improve your plans for the future?

4.3 Develop a detailed 5 year accountability plan?

- Outline annual goals and measurable outcomes for student achievement and school progress. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.

4.4 How will stakeholder involvement be enhanced over the next five years?

4.5 Describe any facility improvement projects planned for the next five years. How will this serve to enhance the learning at your school?

4.6 If you intend to apply for any change in grades operated or number of students enrolled in your school, please detail those intentions below.

PLEASE NOTE THAT AN ADDENDUM TO THIS APPLICATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO ANY SCHOOL REQUESTING TO CHANGE GRADES OR ENROLLMENT. THIS ADDENDUM MUST BE COMPLETED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CHANGES TO ENROLLMENT OR GRADES.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 18, 2009