



Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Pilot Charter Renewal Application

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Overview

Purpose of a Renewal Application and Process

Charter schools play a critical role in offering families quality school choice. In order to ensure that the choices are indeed quality, charter schools must be held accountable for performance by their sponsors. A strong charter renewal process is critical to protect charter school autonomy, student rights, and the public interest, and ensures that schools are held to high standards of academic, financial, and organizational performance. It provides schools an opportunity to present clear and compelling evidence demonstrating how they are serving their students and meeting contractual expectations, to determine whether the school has earned renewal based on its performance record. While a school's past and current record of performance will be the primary focus of Cleveland Metropolitan School District's (CMSD's) renewal decision, the renewal process also provides an opportunity for each school to outline its future plans, priorities, and potential modifications to its charter if renewed.

Performance Framework as the Basis for Renewal

CMSD uses a performance framework that sets out expectations for each charter school as the basis for its renewal decisions. Charter schools must meet the standards in that performance framework in order to have their charter renewed. The performance framework is included in the charter contract and includes academic, organizational, and financial standards. The renewal process examines a multitude of criteria to develop a comprehensive portrait of the school. The most important component is the academic performance of the school, but each school must also meet financial and organizational performance standards in order to earn renewal.

Alignment with State and National Standards

CMSD's renewal process is aligned with state and national standards for quality charter school sponsorship or authorizing. The process is designed to meet the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) "Exemplary" standards for Sponsor Quality Practices concerning the renewal process and renewal decision making, including:

- *The sponsor bases the renewal process and renewal decisions on thorough analysis of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the performance framework in the contract.*
- *The sponsor only grants renewal to schools that are fiscally and organizationally viable based on criteria in the school's performance framework with rigorous, specific goals and targets; achieve their contractual academic standards and targets; and are faithful to the terms of their contract.*
- *The sponsor provides each community school, in advance of the renewal decision, a cumulative performance report that summarizes the school's performance record over the contract term and states the sponsor's summative findings concerning the school's performance and its prospects for renewal.*
- *The sponsor has an application process and requires all schools seeking renewal to apply through a renewal application.*

- *The requirements for renewal are publicly available and include written guidance regarding the process, content and format for renewal applications, as well as criteria/standards used to evaluate the applicant and a timeline.*
- *The application provides the school an opportunity and reasonable time to respond to the cumulative report; correct the record, if needed; and present additional evidence regarding its performance.¹*

Likewise, CMSD’s renewal process is designed to meet national professional standards for the renewal process and renewal decision making set forth in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers’ (NACSA) Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, including:

- *A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive and reliable data to inform merit-based renewal decisions.*
- *A quality authorizer uses a formal renewal application and a fair and transparent process, provides schools and the public with a cumulative performance report, and makes renewal decisions based on merit and objective evidence of the school’s performance over the term of the charter contract in accordance with the Performance Framework set forth in the charter contract.²*

Overview of the Renewal Process

CMSD’s renewal process is a multi-stage review of each school’s performance, with the following stages:

Stage 1: Preliminary Renewal Performance Report. During the first stage of the renewal process, CMSD prepares a Preliminary Renewal Performance Report for each school eligible for renewal in the next school year. The Preliminary Renewal Performance Report constitutes CMSD’s record of the charter school’s academic, financial, and organizational performance in relation to the criteria for renewal and the school’s obligations as outlined in its charter contract. Schools will have an opportunity in their Renewal Application (Stage 2, below) to comment on the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report and to propose corrections or additional data to supplement the record. This preliminary report will not include a recommendation regarding renewal or non-renewal.

Stage 2: Charter Renewal Application. The second stage of the process requires the school to prepare and submit a Charter Renewal Application. The application is aligned with the performance expectations set forth in the charter contract, and provides schools an opportunity to augment or, if needed, correct their performance record as reflected in the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report. While a school’s past and current record of performance will be the primary focus of CMSD’s renewal decision, the Renewal Application also provides an opportunity to outline the school’s future plans, priorities, and potential modifications to its charter if renewed.

Stage 3: Site Visit, Additional Information Collection, and Renewal Application Analysis. In the third stage of the process, CMSD will gather any necessary additional information not already collected and will conduct a renewal site visit to each school applying for renewal, including meetings with key school personnel and governing authority members. CMSD will produce a Renewal Site Visit

¹ Ohio Department of Education Sponsor Quality Practices Rubric, pp. 32-37.

² NACSA Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, <http://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/principles-and-standards>, at 20-21.

Summary Report, which will become part of the school's performance record. CMSD will then analyze the school's application and prepare a Renewal Recommendation for the CMSD board to consider.

Stage 4: Renewal Recommendations (with Final Performance Reports) Presented to CMSD Board, and Decisions Made in Public Meeting. Once all information has been collected, analyzed, and synthesized, CMSD will prepare the Final Performance Report for each school and present it with a Renewal Recommendation to the CMSD Board. Schools will receive their Final Performance Reports and Renewal Recommendations prior to their being made public. Each Renewal Recommendation will be accompanied by the Final Renewal Performance Report, any school comment or supplement to those findings, and an assessment of the school's Plans for the Next Charter Term. The Renewal Recommendation will reflect a professional judgment based primarily on the school's performance over the current charter term. CMSD's Office of Charter Schools will present each Renewal Recommendation to the CMSD board, and the CMSD board's decision to renew or not renew a charter will be made in a public meeting.

Stage 5: Renewal or Non-Renewal Next Steps. If the renewal is approved, the school will begin negotiating its next charter contract with CMSD, and the Renewal Application will serve as a blueprint for discussing adjustments to be made in the new charter. If the renewal is denied, CMSD will proceed with the process consistent with law and ODE standards for sponsors regarding charter school appeal and closure (R.C. 3314.07; ODE Sponsor Quality Practices Rubric, pp. 37-38).

Please note recent changes in Ohio law prohibit a charter school whose contract is terminated or non-renewed for failure to meet general accepted standards of fiscal management or for failure to meet student performance requirements from entering into a contract with any other sponsor (R.C. 3314.07 (B) (4)).

Timeline

Renewal Stage	Purpose	Date
Release of Renewal Application and Decision Criteria	Provide school leaders and the public with transparent expectations for renewal decision-making	March 1 of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Renewal Orientation Conducted with Governing Authority and School Leader of Each School Up for Renewal	Explain the elements of the renewal process, set expectations regarding requirements and timeline, and discuss school's prospects for renewal in light of the school's record of performance as contained in CMSD's annual reports	Late Spring of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Preliminary Renewal Performance Report Provided to Each School Up for Renewal	Establish a record based on the cumulative evidence of school performance in relation to expectations set by the Performance Framework and included in the charter contract, and communicate that record to each school up for renewal	Late Spring of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Renewal Application Due	Provide an opportunity for schools to formally request renewal; submit comments, factual corrections, or supplemental data for the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report; and present plans for a new charter term	Late August of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Site Visit, Additional Evidence Collection, Renewal Application Analysis	Collect additional evidence to form a comprehensive assessment of the school, produce a Renewal Site Visit Summary Report, finalize the Renewal Performance Report, and develop a Renewal Recommendation for each school	September – October of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Renewal Recommendation and Final Performance Report Presented to Each School Up for Renewal	Following analysis, CMSD staff will prepare the Final Renewal Performance Report and Renewal Recommendation for each school, and present to the school before making public	November of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Renewal Recommendations (with Final Performance Reports) Presented to CMSD Board	CMSD staff will present Renewal Recommendations (with Final Performance Reports) to CMSD Board in a public meeting	December of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Charter School Renewal Decisions	CMSD Board to make charter renewal decisions in a public meeting	By December 31 of Year Prior to Expiration of Charter
Renewal Decisions Communicated to Schools	Communicate renewal decisions in writing to each school up for renewal	January 1-15 of Charter Expiration Year ³

³ State law requires that sponsors notify the school by January 15 in writing if the recommendation is termination or non-renewal; and by law, schools may request an informal hearing before the board. Any such request must be received by the sponsor within 14 days of the school receiving notification of the decision. Then, within 14 days of the hearing, the sponsor must issue a written decision either affirming or reversing the decision to terminate or non-renew. (See R.C. 3314.07)

Contract Negotiations (or Closure or Separation if applicable)	Establish the terms for the next charter contract, for renewed schools; or closure or separation for schools not renewed	February - June 30 of Charter Expiration Year
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Instructions

Charter Renewal Applications must be submitted to CMSD in **both print and electronic form** by **[TIME]** on **[DATE]**. [INSERT SPECIFIC SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS]

Format for Submissions

- The renewal application narrative should not exceed 25 (twenty-five) pages single-spaced, excluding attachments.
- Attachments should not exceed 25 (twenty-five) pages, total.
- The application must include the renewal application form and must be signed by both the school leader/principal and the board chair.
- The application should include a table of contents.
- The application should have standard one-inch margins, be clearly paginated, and use at least 11-point font.
- Printed application pages should be double-sided.
- Any attachment should provide information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence that CMSD has already collected and reported to the school on the its performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies for the next charter term that would be material to the charter contract for the renewal term. Applicants should reference attachments clearly in the application.
- The application should not include any photographs, pictures, or news clips unless they are being submitted as evidence of performance for renewal.
- The electronic and print versions of the application should be identical in content, including all attachments.

Renewal Application Transmittal Form

School Name	
Name of Board Chair	
Mailing Address and Phone Number of Board Chair	
Email of Board Chair	
Name and Title of School Leader	
Mailing Address and Phone Number of School Leader	
Email of School Leader	
School's Initial Opening Date	
First year of school's first sponsorship agreement with CMSD	
Current grades enrolled	
Grade levels to be served at full enrollment, as approved by CMSD	
Maximum projected enrollment at full growth, as approved by CMSD	

Signature of School Principal/Leader:

Date:

Signature of Board Chair:

Date:

Renewal Questions

I. Executive Summary

Provide the enrollment and demographic information for the current school year (Table A). Then provide a brief (one to two page) description of the school, including an overview of the mission and vision, educational program, community and local connections, and leadership and governance.

CURRENT YEAR ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Total Enrollment	
# of Students Enrolled	
# of Students on Waiting List	
Gender	
# Male	
# Female	
Ethnicity/Race	
# White	
# Black	
# Hispanic	
# Asian	
# Other	
Special Populations	
# Students with Disabilities	
# English Language Learners	
# Homeless Students	
# Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch	

II. Rationale for CMSD Sponsorship

Ohio has a number of charter school sponsors from which schools can choose. Briefly explain why you are interested in remaining with CMSD as a sponsor (maximum one half-page).

III. Looking Back: The Record of Performance

Section III provides schools an opportunity to supplement or augment the performance record and should be considered the focus of your renewal application. Responses to Section III will be the primary basis for CMSD's decision for renewal or non-renewal. Schools should use the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report as a guide for their responses and submit only evidence of performance related to the Performance Framework that is not already included in the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report and/or that CMSD may not have. Responses should reference the specific criteria and benchmarks in the Performance Framework to which the information applies.

Responses may include, but are not limited to, information about interim assessments or progress reports; evidence of performance on school- or mission-specific goals; and improvements undertaken at the school along with evidence of progress for any areas in which the school has not previously met or is not currently meeting the performance standard.

Responses should not include anecdotal information or evidence that is not relevant to the school's academic, financial, and organizational performance and the school's performance expectations as defined by CMSD's Performance Framework and the school's charter contract.

Renewal Recommendations will be based on all evidence of school performance in the record, including but not limited to the school's responses in this section.

A. Academic Performance

CMSD will assess your school performance based on the Academic Performance Framework (see Appendix A of this application) and will provide preliminary analysis of the school's academic performance over the term of the charter in the school's Preliminary Renewal Performance Report. In addition, we ask you to complete the Existing School Data Workbook (see Appendix B of this application, and also online [here](#)). If the school is affiliated with a charter management organization (CMO), include information from all schools in the CMO. Please reference all relevant materials, including the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report and the Academic Performance Framework, when answering these questions:

1. Using the results contained in the Performance Framework, explain whether or not the school has met its performance expectations.
2. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in CMSD records. Submissions may include supplements related to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

B. Financial Performance

CMSD has been assessing your school's financial performance monthly and annually in accordance with the Financial Performance Framework (included in Appendix A of this application). CMSD

provides preliminary analysis of the school's financial performance over the term of the charter in the school's Preliminary Renewal Performance Report. Reference both the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report and the Financial Performance Framework when addressing these questions:

1. Provide an assurance that the school is current in meeting its liabilities, including but not limited to payroll taxes, debt service payments, and employee benefits.
2. Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in CMSD records. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, updated financial records and other updates relevant to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

C. Organizational Performance

CMSD will assess your school's performance on the Organizational Performance Framework (included in Appendix A of this application). CMSD provides preliminary analysis of the school's organizational performance over the term of the charter in the school's Preliminary Renewal Performance Report. Reference both the Preliminary Renewal Performance Report and the Organizational Performance Framework when addressing these questions:

1. Describe how the governing board monitors academic, organizational, and financial performance of the school. Provide evidence of its practices such as board meeting minutes and/or decisions.
2. Please submit a self-evaluation survey from each member of the governing authority (Appendix C of this application).
3. Provide any other organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in CMSD records and is not addressed in the above responses. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliant or other updates relevant to the Renewal Performance Report. Please reference the specific Performance Framework measures to which the information applies, as appropriate.

D. School Culture

1. Provide evidence that your school implements its discipline policies with fidelity. Discuss your school's discipline data and how this data is used, including any consideration of discipline disproportionality.
2. Provide evidence of strategies to involve parents in the school, including the School Accountability Committee.

IV. Looking Forward: Plans for the Next Charter Term

Section IV provides the school an opportunity to discuss plans for the next charter term. Schools should identify any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model, and financial outlook and must identify any proposed changes that would require modification of a material provision in the school's charter contract or that are likely to impact the school's academic

or organizational success or its financial sustainability. As a general rule, the school should identify any changes that are relevant or significant with respect to the performance outcomes that the school has agreed to meet or are otherwise relevant to the school's renewal and continued authorization and operation as a public charter school. CMSD may request additional information to sufficiently assess the impact and planning for such changes. Even if proposed changes would occur several years into the next charter term, CMSD strongly encourages applicants to outline them here.

NOTE: CMSD will make its renewal decisions based on the school's track record of performance, and not on promises of future performance or improvement. Responses to the questions in Section IV will not be the basis for CMSD's decision for renewal or non-renewal unless a significant, anticipated change or material modification is proposed which, if not approved, would endanger the future success and sustainability of the school. Any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model, and financial planning and any proposed material modifications to the school's current charter contract must be proposed below and are subject to approval by CMSD consistent with CMSD policy and state law. Failure to provide requested or otherwise relevant information or failure to propose a material modification that is likely to impact the school's academic or organizational success or its financial sustainability shall be grounds for non-renewal and termination of the school's charter. If the school has any questions about whether particular information or a proposed change should be included, please contact CMSD's Office of Charter Schools prior to submission of this application. If the school's application for renewal is approved, the plans presented in this response will serve as a blueprint for relevant sections of the charter contract for the new term. If the school is proposing a material modification that, if not approved, would *not* endanger the sustainability of the school, please note and explain this in the response.

A. Education Plan

1. Describe any significant changes proposed for the school's education plan, including but not limited to the school's mission, the characteristics of the students the school is expected to attract, the ages and grades of students, the focus of the curriculum, learning opportunities, and any blended learning models.

B. Financial Plan

1. Provide a five-year projected budget for the next charter term. The budget narrative should make clear the assumptions on which the school bases its key revenue and expenditure projections. In addition, the budget and narrative should describe any anticipated changes to the school's financial position and clearly articulate the financial impact of any proposed modifications on other aspects of the school's education program and operations (e.g., new curriculum or instructional materials, modified staffing structure, decreased or increased enrollment, etc.).

C. Organizational Plan

1. Describe any anticipated changes to the governance of the school, including but not limited to board composition, committee structure, and/or amendments to bylaws.
2. Describe any anticipated changes to the school leadership or staffing model and any proposed changes to the management of the school, including any changes to the school's relationship with a third-party education service provider, if one exists. If a) the school does not currently contract with a CMO but intends to do so during the next charter term, b) the

school currently contracts with a CMO but does not intend to continue to do so during the next term, or c) the school intends to make material modifications to its existing management agreement, the school must contact CMSD's Office of Charter Schools for additional information prior to the submission of this application.

3. Describe the current status of the school facility and discuss any anticipated changes in facilities needs or location. *Ensure that the budget narrative in section B explains how the school's facilities plans are reflected in the budget.*

Appendices

- A. CMSD Charter School Performance Framework
- B. Existing School Data Workbook
- C. Self-Evaluation Survey for Governing Authority Members [under development]