

**DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL APPLICATION  
& RENEWAL APPLICATION GUIDANCE  
2014-2015**

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND RENEWAL APPLICATION GUIDANCE

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In September 2012, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) in conjunction with the State Board of Education released the Performance Framework which outlines clear academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all Delaware public charter schools will be evaluated. The Performance Framework was developed to ensure that each and every Delaware charter school is serving students with a high-quality public education. The Performance Framework focuses on outcome measures that align with the Department's major goal of providing a high quality education for all students. The evaluation of a school's performance as measured by the Performance Framework will be a major component in making the high-stakes decision to renew or not renew a charter school in Delaware.

In accordance with 14 *Del. C.* § 514A (c), no later than April 30, DDOE will issue a charter school renewal report and charter renewal application guidance to any charter school whose charter will expire the following year. The renewal report will summarize the charter school's performance record to date, based on the data required by 79 Del. Laws, c. 51 and the charter contract, and will provide notice of any weaknesses or concerns perceived by DDOE concerning the charter school that may jeopardize its position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified. The charter school will have 10 working days to respond to the renewal report and submit any corrections or clarifications for the report.

As stated in 14 *Del. C.* Ch. 5 §514A(g), in making charter renewal decisions every approving authority shall:

1. Ground its decisions in evidence of the school's performance over the term of the charter contract in accordance with the performance agreement set forth in the charter contract;
2. Ensure that data used in making renewal decisions are available to the school and the public; and
3. Provide a public report summarizing the evidence basis for each decision.

In addition to the renewal guidance provided in 14 *Del. C.* §514A(g), the following renewal guidance is stated in 14 DE Admin. C. 275.10:

- 10.1 Charters are granted for an initial period of 4 years of operation and are renewable every 5 years thereafter.
- 10.2 Renewals are only available to the current Charter Holder and may not be used to transfer a charter to a different legal entity.
- 10.3 Charters shall be renewed only if the school receives a satisfactory performance review. Performance reviews shall be conducted by the Department using the Performance Framework approved by the Department with the assent of the State Board.
- 10.4 The Department shall conduct annual performance reviews based on the Performance Framework. The Department shall provide the results of the Performance Review to the school.

The renewal application has been aligned with the measures and targets within the Performance Framework. The decision to renew a charter will be based on a comprehensive review, guided, in part, by the following three questions:

1. Is the academic program a success?
2. Is the school financially viable?
3. Is the school organizationally sound?

Applications will include an analysis of the school's performance review and provide additional evidence, beyond the data contained in the renewal report, supporting its case for charter renewal. The renewal application also gives a school the opportunity to examine its progress towards meeting its mission, goals and objectives, assess its strengths and needs, and plan its course for the future. The charter school may also describe improvements undertaken or planned for the school and detail the plans for the next charter term.

As stated in 14 DE Admin. C. 275, the [Performance Framework](#) is the rubric-based tool established by the Department with the assent of the State Board of Education, as amended from time to time, which includes multiple measures, and is used by the Department to assess compliance with the Performance Agreement in the areas of academic performance, economic viability, organizational responsibilities and accountability of the Charter School. The completed framework will be provided to the Charter School Accountability Committee, Secretary and State Board of Education to inform their decision making. Guidance documents for each of the three components of the Performance Framework may be found [here](#).

As noted above, current law (14 Del C. §514A(c)) requires that the renewal report be based, among other things, on the charter contract. However, the requirement that the Department of Education present a charter contract to an applicant upon approval of a charter school application was not in existence at the time the charters required to submit renewal applications in 2014 were approved. If a 2014-2015 charter renewal application is approved, a charter contract will be presented to the applicant for the renewal period. Similarly, the charter contract referred to in 14 Del C. §514A (g) is not applicable to the 2014-2015 charter renewal applications; the applicant's compliance with its performance agreement will be considered.

## II. RENEWAL PROCESS

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**Application Submission:** An original and ten (10) copies of a completed application must be received by the Department of Education's Charter School Office on **September 30** in order for the application to be considered. An electronic copy shall also be submitted at the same time either as an attachment to an e-mail message or by electronic portable storage. The electronic copy shall be identical in all respects to the original application. Incomplete applications, or applications received after the deadline, will not be considered.

**Application Review:** All applications must be fully complete in order to be evaluated. The application for renewal will be reviewed and evaluated by the approving authority as outlined in 14 Del. C. Chapter 5 and applicable provisions of Regulation 275. The review process will include a meeting with the applicant and the Accountability Committee to discuss the components of the application and its alignment with the renewal criteria. The process will also include at least one published report by the accountability committee on their recommendation and a public hearing to assist in the decision.

**Renewal Determination:** The Secretary of Education will present his decision on charter renewal within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the renewal application.

**III. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT**

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The prescribed content and format for the renewal application are specified below.

**Document Length:** The application may not exceed 15 pages, not including the cover page, table of contents, appendices, or Performance Agreement.

**Format:** All pages must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 12-point font, single-spaced (Helvetica or Arial font and left justification), and include consecutive page numbers in the footer. Charts may use single spacing and a type size of 10-point font.

**Cover Page:** Provide a cover page that includes the school’s name and the date of the application.

**Table of Contents:** Provide a clearly labeled Table of Contents naming all major sections and appendices with corresponding page numbers.

**Appendices:** All supplementary documents should be identified appropriately and properly labeled as appendices at the end of the application.

**Additional content:** Provide your proposed [Performance Agreement](#) for the new charter term and your Annual Report as attachments. The proposed Performance Agreement must be approved by the school’s Board of Trustees, pending charter renewal, prior to submission to the Department of Education.

**IV. CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

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Please provide clear, complete, and accurate information in response to each question.

**I. Overview**

**1.1 Provide the following information requested.**

- a) Fill in the following chart with the school’s basic information:

BASIC INFORMATION	
Name of School	
Year School Opened	
Grade Level(s) in 2012-2013 and additional grade levels approved to be served in the next charter cycle	
Current Enrollment	
Approved Enrollment	
Current Waiting List by Grade	
School Address(es)	
District(s) / Region of Residence	
Website Address	
Name of School Leader	
School Leader Email and Phone Number	
Name of Board President	
Board President Email and Phone Number	

- b) Fill in the following chart with the school's demographics at the time of submission (all information must be verifiable through state reporting tools):

CURRENT YEAR ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Total Enrollment	
# of Students on Waiting List	
<b>Gender</b>	
# Male	

# Female	
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	
# White	
# Black	
# Hispanic	
# Asian	
# Other	
# Multiracial	
<b>Special Populations</b>	
# Students with disabilities	
# English Language Learners	
# Low-Income	

## **I. Academic Framework**

### **2.1 Is the academic program a success?**

- a) Discuss the school's academic achievement results over the last three or four years. How has the school performed with regard to student growth and proficiency measures over the last charter term? In the absence of expected achievement, identify proposed changes to instructional practices that your school will implement to improve the school's academic performance and student outcomes.

**Note:** In order to guide your answer, you may use portions of the academic section of the Performance Framework:<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/schools/charterschools/files/CharterPerfFramework.pdf>

### **2.2 Is the school meeting its mission?**

- a) State the mission of the school as it appears in your charter application. How does your school measure and track mission accomplishment?

## **II. Organizational Framework**

### **3.1 Is the school organizationally sound?**

- a) Discuss the school's organizational performance over the last three or four years. How has the school performed with regard to organizational measures over the last charter term? In the absence of expected achievement, identify proposed changes to organizational practices that your school will implement to improve the school's organizational outcomes.

**Note:** In order to guide your answer, you may use portions of the academic section of the Performance Framework: <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/schools/charterschools/files/CharterPerfFramework.pdf>

### **3.2 Is the school implementing the essential terms of the charter's education program as defined in the current charter, and complying with applicable state and federal requirements?**

- a) Provide specific examples of how your educational program is in compliance with instructional days/minutes requirements, the use of state assessments, Delaware content standards requirements, and providing an education and accommodations for at-risk students.

**Note:** Evidence of curriculum alignment to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards should be included in the appendices. For schools that are members of the Science Coalition, no additional evidence regarding Next Generation Science Standards is required.

### **3.2 Is the school protecting the rights of students with disabilities and English language learners?**

- a) Describe the process by which students with special needs are identified and evidence that the school is effective in providing the right resources and services for students with disabilities.
- b) Describe the process by which students with English language learners are identified and evidence that the school is effective in providing the right resources and services for these students.

### **3.3 Is the school monitoring and minimizing attrition rates and maintaining enrollment stability?**

- a) Fill in the following chart with the appropriate enrollment information over the last 4 years (3 years if this is the school's first renewal):

School Enrollment Trends									
	2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014		
	Approved Enrollment	Sept 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Sept 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Sept 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Sept 30 Enrollment Count	Current Waitlist for the 2014-2015 school year
K									
Grade 1									
Grade 2									
Grade 3									
Grade 4									
Grade 5									
Grade 6									
Grade 7									
Grade 8									
Grade 9									
Grade 10									
Grade 11									
Grade 12									
<b>Total</b>									



- b) Provide information regarding the school's attrition rate over the last 4 years (3 years if this is the school's first renewal). Using data starting with the number of students enrolled September 30, what number and percentage of students transferred out of the school by the end of the school year?
- c) How does the school both monitor and plan to minimize attrition rates? (*Attrition rate is calculated by the number of students leaving the school during the school year over number of students enrolled in the school on September 30.*) Provide a summary of why students left your school.

### **3.4 Is the school complying with governance and reporting requirements?**

- a) Provide a current organizational chart, which includes the Board of Trustees.

### **3.5 Is the school complying with closure requirements?**

- a) Describe the school's plan for procedures it will follow in the event of the closure or dissolution of the school, including a plan to set aside sufficient funds to cover the salaries owed to those employees who are paid over a 12-month period.

## **4. Financial Framework**

### **4.1 Is the school financially viable?**

- a) Provide an analysis of the results of your Financial Performance Reports over the last three years (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13). Where applicable, provide explanations for areas where standards were not met, including your plans and strategies for improving the individual measures and overall ratings.

**Note:** For your reference, please see the financial section of the Performance Framework:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/schools/charterschools/files/CharterPerfFramework.pdf>

- b) Provide a summary of findings from independent audits and, where applicable, how the school developed and implemented a corrective action plan in response to audit findings. (If necessary, evidence may be attached as clearly labeled documents in the Appendix.)
- c) As an appendix, provide the following documents:
  - Final Fiscal Year 2014 Revenue & Expenditure Budget Report in the prescribed DDOE format
  - Approved preliminary Fiscal Year 2015 Budget
  - Fiscal Year 2014 Audited Financial Statements (if final report is not available, draft version is acceptable)

- Projected revenue and budget worksheets and narrative through 2018-2019 in the prescribed DDOE projection format. (*Note: Do not include any reliance on outside fundraising unless the school can document that funding has been secured. Any fundraising plans submitted should include information related to past fundraising efforts and demonstrate clear success in meeting established goals.*)

## **5. Five-Year Planning**

### **5.1 Projected Enrollment**

- a) Provide a five-year enrollment chart by grade level, in the prescribed format below. Ensure that the chart allows for the natural progression of students from year-to-year.

<b>Projected Enrollment</b>					
	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
K					
Grade 1					
Grade 2					
Grade 3					
Grade 4					
Grade 5					
Grade 6					
Grade 7					
Grade 8					
Grade 9					
Grade 10					
Grade 11					
Grade 12					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

## 5.2 What are the school's plans for the next five years of the charter?

- a) Describe what changes and improvements the school will undertake in the next five years based on the school's examination of student performance outcomes.
- b) Provide goals and performance outcomes, including assessment tools and measures to be used. Provide a rationale for the identified goals and assessment measures. Provide any mission-specific goals that you will include in your Performance Agreement. *(Please note: mission-specific goals are optional and must be approved by the Charter School Office. Mission-specific goals should be focused on academic performance outcomes rather than process measures. Provide information and evidence that is both valid and verifiable.)*
- c) Provide detailed information on the school's plan for any changes or improvements to its facility for the five years of the next charter renewal term. The plan should include an adequate and detailed financial arrangement and timeline for the proposed facility improvements.
- d) Provide information regarding how the Board of Trustees effectively evaluates the school administration.
- e) What policies and procedures are in place to evaluate the school leader on an annual basis?
- f) Identify the school's plan to ensure the effectiveness of its Board of Trustees, including governance training and new member induction.
- g) Describe the school's process for succession planning including identification, development and retention of school leaders.