



OFFICE of EDUCATION INNOVATION

Renewal Application Packet

for Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools

Fall 2017

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Introduction

A charter school authorized by the Mayor's Office of Indianapolis may begin the charter renewal application process in the summer prior to its seventh year of operation. Each school's charter expires 45 days after the last instructional day of the current charter. For each school seeking renewal, the Mayor will issue a decision during the school's seventh year of operation. If the charter is renewed, the current Charter Attachment B is updated using all current amendments and information from the Charter Renewal Application Section B to reflect the most up to date description of the school's model. The renewal charter becomes the official Charter Attachment C.

The charter renewal decision is based on an array of evidence collected over the charter term pertaining to the four Core Questions set forth in the *Performance Framework* for Mayor-sponsored charter schools:

1. *Is the educational program a success?*
2. *Is the organization in sound fiscal health?*
3. *Is the organization effective and well-run?*
4. *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

In addition, a fifth important area of focus for the renewal application and decision is the school's *strategies for sustaining success and continuing to improve* over the next charter term.

Renewal decisions are based on the *Performance Framework* in its entirety. The Mayor's Office does not use a formula for determining the number of areas in which an applicant meets or exceeds standard in order to make renewal decisions. Each decision is completely individual to that school.

The Mayor's Office requires charter schools to apply for renewal to fulfill two key purposes: (1) To present any important new or supplemental information pertaining to the above Core Questions, to enable a more comprehensive assessment of school performance; and (2) To articulate a school's strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

The renewal application is not meant to be a redundant exercise. The Mayor's Office will base its evaluation of each school's performance on the body of data amassed over the charter term. The extensive evidence already collected allows each school's renewal application to be substantially streamlined. Therefore, schools' renewal applications should be focused on only *new* or *supplemental* information, as well as a description of the school's long-term sustainability and plans for ongoing improvement.

The renewal application should be concise and complete, not requiring further explanation or clarification by the school. All necessary documentation should be included as attachments, which should be limited to information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, and/or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in the application.

This Renewal Application Packet provides general content guidance and submission instructions for each school's renewal application. The Mayor's Office advises schools to follow the content guidance carefully. Doing so will enable each school to assemble a well-focused application that will be most helpful to its case for renewal, while avoiding redundant material and unnecessary work for the school.

In addition to the general guidance contained in this packet, the Mayor's Office will meet with each school's leadership to discuss particular information that the school should prepare for its renewal application, tailored to the school's circumstances.

Content Overview

The primary content of each school's renewal application should provide clear and succinct narrative responses to the Core Questions outlined in this packet. The application is divided into two sections:

1. **Section A: Performance Review.** Parts of this section are *required* for some schools, and *optional* for others (explained below).
2. **Section B: Sustainability and Improvement.** This section is *required* for all schools.

Following is an overview of the expectations for each section.

Section A: Performance Review

Section A of the renewal application focuses on the four Core Questions and accompanying sub-indicators of the [Performance Framework](#) for Mayor-sponsored charter schools. In forming its charter renewal recommendations, the Mayor's Office will review each school's cumulative body of evidence in all areas of the Performance Framework.

Which schools must respond to Section A?

The Mayor's Office will provide each school with a formal *Renewal Report* that outlines the school's cumulative performance over its current charter term. Additionally, the Mayor's Office will issue each school a guidance letter indicating to which indicators on the Performance Framework the school is required to respond. Generally, schools will only be required to provide responses for indicators where the school failed to meet standard on the 2015-2016 accountability report and its most recent Core Question 4 evaluation in its current charter term (i.e., obtained a rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Approaching Standard").

In the responses, schools are instructed to include detailed information pertaining to each of the required indicators:

- A root cause analysis, explaining the underlying cause(s) of lagging performance
- Actions the school has already taken to address the deficiency (including any relevant data or evidence that performance on the indicator has improved since the 2015-16 school year)
- Detailed steps the school will (continue to) take in order to ensure attainment of the standard
- A timeline as to when the school expects to "Meet Standard" on the indicator

In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, school should *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework.

Which schools may respond to Section A?

Section A is *not required* for schools that were rated as "Meeting Standard" in *all* areas (including sub-questions) of the Performance Framework on the 2015-2016 accountability report and most recent Core Question 4 evaluation.

If, however, you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school's record with the Mayor's Office for any areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so by responding to the relevant questions within Section A.

Section B: Sustainability and Improvement

All schools are required to respond to the Critical Questions in Section B.

In this section, schools should describe how they will sustain success and continue to improve over the next charter term. Responses should demonstrate that the school is planning carefully and strategically for the future and has the capacity to achieve long-term success.

In addition to the general areas noted below and based on concerns in previous years, the Mayor's Office may identify particular matters for each school to address in this section.

1. *Sustaining Success*

Describe the school's plans and strategies for sustaining and continuing to build academic, organizational and operational success over the next charter term. Explain how the school will build and achieve long-term sustainability and success in:

- a. The governing board
- b. The leadership team
- c. The teaching staff
- d. Academic achievement
- e. Any other areas that the Mayor's Office has asked the school to discuss, or that the school wishes to discuss

In describing these strategies for sustaining success, specify implementation timelines or timeframes as well as responsible individuals or parties.

2. *Ongoing Improvement*

Describe how the school will continue to improve academically, organizationally and operationally over the next charter term. Identify particular weaknesses, challenges and areas for improvement, and detail the school's plans for addressing each of these needs.

Responses here should demonstrate that the school has reflected honestly and critically on areas and ways to improve. In describing these plans and strategies for ongoing improvement, specify implementation timelines or timeframes as well as responsible individuals or parties.

Renewal Process

Once a school submits its renewal application, the process of renewal decision-making will proceed as follows:

<p>Statement of Intent to Seek Renewal [Due by May 26, 2017]</p> <p>School submits <i>Statement of Intent to Seek Renewal</i>. The statement should be a letter on school letterhead signed by the chair of the school's board, indicating school's intent to seek renewal of its charter. The statement does not need to provide any specific details or plans.</p>
<p>Mayor's Office Provides Renewal Report to School [After receipt of Intent to Seek Renewal]</p> <p>Mayor's Office provides school with a report providing a summary of ratings over the life of the current charter, along with a narrative that describes school performance and trajectory.</p>
<p>Renewal Application Preparation Meeting [After finalizing Renewal Report]</p> <p>Mayor's Office meets with school leadership (designees of the board and administration) to provide a formal guidance letter, outlining particular information required for the school's renewal application.</p>
<p>School Submits Renewal Application [Due September 1, 2017]</p> <p>School submits renewal application to Mayor's Office, including <i>Section A: Response to Areas of Deficiency</i> and <i>Section B: Sustainability and Improvement</i>.</p>
<p>Renewal Application Review (September/October)</p> <p>Mayor's Office reviews renewal application, collecting any additional data and/or revisions needed. Interviews with school and board leadership might be scheduled during this time.</p>
<p>Post Notice of Public Hearing [Five (5) business days before the public hearing]</p> <p>School must post notice of the public hearing in the same manner they post notice of board meetings.</p>
<p>Public Hearing [Late October/Early November, 2017]</p> <p>Public hearing on the charter renewal application held by Charter Schools Board. Applicant for renewal makes short presentations; Board has opportunity to ask questions; public has opportunity to comment; Board will vote on a renewal recommendation for the Mayor.</p>
<p>Renewal Reports and Recommendation Provided to Mayor [Late October/ Early November, 2017]</p> <p>Mayor's Office presents final renewal report and recommendations to the Mayor</p>
<p>Mayor's Decision January 2018</p>

All decisions concerning renewal of a school's charter shall be made at the discretion of the Mayor in accordance with applicable law.¹ Renewal decisions will be issued by January of each school's seventh year of operation.

Non-Renewal

In the event of non-renewal, the Mayor's Office will follow a closure protocol to guide the closure process.

¹ See Charter School Agreement, Section 1.3.

Submission Instructions

Charter renewal applications must be submitted to the Mayor's Office in **both print and electronic form**. Submit the application, including all attachments and certifications, on a single USB drive. In addition, provide five (5) printed, bound, double-sided copies of the application (including all attachments and certifications) to:

Indianapolis Mayor's Office
Attn: Ahmed Young, Director of Charter Schools
200 E. Washington Street, Suite 2501
Indianapolis IN 46204

Format

- The renewal application narrative should not exceed 50 pages, excluding the School Overview, Executive Summary and/or attachments.
 - The application should include a completed School Overview (provided in this packet) and an Executive Summary not to exceed two pages each.
 - Attachments should not exceed 25 pages.
 - The application must include the Assurances Statement included in this packet. The statement must be signed by the Chair of the school's Board.
 - The application should have standard one-inch margins, be clearly paginated, and use no smaller than an 11-point font. Printed application pages must be double-sided. Each printed copy of the application must be either spiral bound or contained within a 3-ring binder.
 - Tables, graphs, and other data in the application must be clearly presented, clearly explained, and directly relevant to the text.
 - Any attachment should provide information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in Section B of the application. In addition, any attachment should be clearly referenced in the application and directly relevant to that part of the text.
 - The application should not include any photographs, pictures or news clips unless directly relevant to the text.
 - The electronic and print versions of the application should be identical in content, including all attachments and certifications. For the electronic version, consolidate all sections **into one single document** prior to submission.
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Charter Renewal Application Checklist

The renewal application should contain the following elements in the order shown:

- ✓ **School Overview**
(see page 10)
 - ✓ **Executive Summary**
(not included in application materials)
 - ✓ **Narrative Responses for Section A: Performance Review**
(if applicable – see guidance)
 1. *Is the educational program a success?*
 2. *Is the organization in sound fiscal health?*
 3. *Is the organization effective and well-run?*
 4. *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*
 - ✓ **Narrative Responses for Section B: Sustainability and Improvement**
(not included in application materials)
 - ✓ **Educational Service Provider questionnaire**
 - ✓ **Assurances Statement**
 - ✓ **Attachments**
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Core Questions

Not all schools are required to respond to the Core Questions in Section A. Review the Renewal Report and guidance letter to determine whether your school must – or may wish to – respond. Schools should respond directly in the Renewal Report for this section.

Section A: Performance Review

To determine whether each school is meeting standard in each Core Question and meriting charter renewal, the Mayor’s Office will review the school’s performance in each of the below areas set forth in the Performance Framework, applying the criteria detailed in the Framework rubrics:

1. *Is the educational program a success?*

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success? (Elementary and Middle School)
1.1. Is the school’s academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana’s accountability system?
1.2. Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth Model?
1.3. Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?
1.4. Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?
1.5. Is the school’s attendance rate strong?
1.6. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?
1.7. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success? (High School)
1.1. Is the school’s academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana’s accountability system?
1.2. *Indicator 1.2 does not apply to high school grades
1.3. Is the school preparing students to graduate from high school on time, and preparing those students who have not graduated on time to graduate within 5 years, as measured by Indiana’s cohort graduation rate?
1.4. Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?
1.5. Is the school’s attendance rate strong?
1.6. Is the school preparing students for college and careers?
1.7. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

2. Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

Core Question 2: Is the organization in sound fiscal health?
Financial Evaluation from 2011-12
2.1 Is the school in sound fiscal health?
Financial Evaluation from 2012-present
2.1. Short Term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?
2.2. Long Term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?
2.3. Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?

3. Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?
3.1. Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?
3.2. Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?
3.3. Is the school's board active and knowledgeable, and does it abide by appropriate policies, systems, and processes in its oversight?
3.4. Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?
3.5. Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?
3.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific non-academic goals?

4. Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?
4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?
4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?
4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?
4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?
4.9. IS the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?
4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?

Any school that did not meet standard (i.e., obtained a rating of “Does Not Meet Standard” or “Approaching Standard”) in any of the above-outlined areas in their 2015-2016 accountability report by the Mayor’s Office are *required* to respond to their progress in these particular areas.

Schools that were rated as “Meeting Standard” (i.e., obtained a rating of “Meets Standard” or “Exceeds Standard”) in all the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework in their 2015-16 accountability report and are comfortable being evaluated by the relevant data on record with the Mayor’s Office, are not required to respond to this content section.

Attachments

Required Attachments

- Assurances Statement [form provided below]
- Five-year budget [optional template is [linked here](#); otherwise, schools may use their own]

Optional Attachments *(not to exceed 25 pages)*

Schools may attach additional information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in Section B. Any attachment should be clearly referenced in the application and directly relevant to that part of the text.

Assurances Statement

This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant for renewal and submitted with the Renewal Application. An application will be considered incomplete if it is not accompanied by the Assurances Form signed by an authorized individual.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for charter renewal for _____ (name of school) to be located at _____ (location of school) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further I understand that, if awarded a renewal, the school:

1. will not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments for attendance at the charter school, or for participation in its programs, except for a preschool program or a latch key program. IC 20-5.5-8-2
 2. will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case, each timely applicant will be given equal chance of admission. IC 20-5.5-5-4
 3. will provide the number of students enrolled in the charter school, the name of each student and the school corporation in which each student resides to the Indiana Department of Education by the date established thereby. IC 20-5.5-7-3
 4. will submit an annual report to the Indiana Department of Education in the form required thereby. IC 20-5.5-9-1
 5. will submit attendance records, student performance data, financial information, any information necessary to comply with state and federal government requirements, and any other information specified in the charter to the Mayor's Office. IC 20-5.5-9-5
 6. will participate in the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund in accordance with IC 21-6.1 and the Public Employees Retirement Fund in accordance with IC 5-10.3. IC 20-5.5-6-7, and/or another comparable and appropriate pension or retirement fund approved by the Mayor's Office.
 7. will maintain separate accountings of all funds received and disbursed by the school. IC 20-5.5-7-1
 8. will ensure 90% of individuals who teach hold a license to teach in a public school in Indiana under I.C. 20-6.13 or are in the process of obtaining a license to teach in a public school in Indiana under the transition to teaching program set forth in IC 20-6.1-3.11. IC 20-24-6-5
 9. will permit certified employees at the charter school the opportunity to organize and bargain collectively under I.C. 20-7.5. IC 20-5.5-6-3
 10. will operate with the organizer serving in the capacity of fiscal agent for the charter school and in compliance with generally accepted government accounting principles.
 11. will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
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12. will indemnify and hold harmless the City of Indianapolis (including without limitation, the Mayor's Office), the State of Indiana, all school corporations providing funds to the charter school, and their officers, directors, agents and employees, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or damage in any way relating to the charter school or its operation.
13. will follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination on the basis of the following: disability, race, color, gender, national origin, religion and ancestry. IC 20-5.5-2-2
14. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it.
15. will be non-religious in its programs, admissions policies, governance, employment practices and all other operations, and its curriculum will be completely secular.
16. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students who are limited English proficient (LEP), including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, that are applicable to it.
17. will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.

Authorized Representative's Signature

Date

Educational Service Provider (ESP) Questionnaire

Please note this questionnaire is to be filled out by any applicant contracting with an Educational Management Organization (EMO), Charter Management Organization (CMO), or any other educational service provider.

Portfolio:

- List all of the schools in the network, the number of years they have been in operation, and the number of students served by those schools.
- Provide names and contact information for all other authorizers that oversee schools within the network.
- Describe the ESP's growth plan. Explain how the organization will maintain fiscal responsibility and provide quality services during the period of growth.

Academic Performance:

Provide the following academic information for each school managed by the organization.

- Adequate Yearly Progress determinations (including subgroup determinations);
- Pass rates or equivalent for the state's mandated assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics;
- Performance of students on statewide assessments compared to students in nearby traditional public schools;
- Graduation rates for every year the school has had graduates;
- Post-graduation degree attainment, if available.

Leadership:

- Please explain the leadership structure of the organization, and include an organizational chart.
- Has there been any turnover in leadership within the organization?
- Provide a list of the board of directors of the ESP and their length of service.
- Explain any turnover on the board that was not due to term limits.
- How often does the ESP assess itself and gauge the satisfaction of its clients?

Services:

- What services does the ESP provide?
 - Include as an attachment a copy of the proposed management agreement. The agreement should include, but not be limited to:
 - Specific standards the school's board will use to hold the ESP accountable;
 - Consequences for not meeting those standards;
 - Terms for contract termination; and
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- Differentiation of what is owned by the school and what is owned by the management organization.

Finances:

Provide the following financial information for the management organization.

- The most recent federal tax return;
 - The ESP's annual budget;
 - Projected five-year budget;
 - Detailed list of all debts the ESP has;
 - The last three years of complete financial audits;
 - Fees paid to the ESP by schools, and the services received for that fee; and
 - Names of schools with which contracts have been terminated.
-