

NEW JERSEY CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION 2012

Revised August 2012

NJ Department of Education
Office of Charter Schools
P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500
Phone: (609) 292-5850
Fax: (609) 633-9825

I. INTRODUCTION

In July 2012, the Office of Charter Schools released the Performance Framework which outlines clear academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all New Jersey public charter schools will be evaluated. The Performance Framework was developed to ensure that each and every New Jersey 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 regardless of zip code. The evaluation of a school using the Performance Framework will be the primary tool in making the high-stakes decision to renew or not renew a charter school in New Jersey.

The renewal application has been revamped to align with the measures and targets within the Performance Framework. The decision to renew a charter for each subsequent five-year period will be based on a comprehensive review guided by the following three questions:

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

A successful application will provide a well-conceived plan for the next five years and a compelling rationale and clear evidence for renewing the school's charter. Successful applications will identify weaknesses and address discrepancies between current and anticipated outcomes.

Each school should draw on the data it has presented in the annual report in order to demonstrate continuous progress. The application for renewal of the charter gives each school the opportunity to provide evidence that the school's academic program is successful and the school is fiscally solvent. It 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.

After the submission of the renewal application, the Department of Education will conduct a site visit and structured interview with the board and its administration. Additionally, the charter school's stakeholders will be interviewed including teachers, parents, and students. These findings will augment the evaluation of student performance on the statewide assessment program, annual reports, monitoring visit results, and financial reports and contribute to making a decision about the renewal of the charter.

II. RENEWAL PROCESS

Application Submission: Four hard copies of the renewal application must be submitted to the Department of Education by each charter school in its fourth, ninth, or fourteenth year of operation by **4:15PM on Monday, October 15, 2012**. Each school must also submit an electronic version of the report in .pdf format on disk or flash drive. Additionally, the renewal application must also be submitted to the respective executive county superintendent of schools and the district board(s) of education or State district

superintendent(s) of the district of residence of the charter school by **4:15PM on Monday, October 15, 2012**. Please fax (609-633-9825) or email (njcharter@doe.state.nj.us) a receipt from the county and district acknowledging receipt of the renewal application to the Office of Charter Schools.

Application Review: The application for renewal will be reviewed and evaluated by the New Jersey Department of Education. All applications must be clear and fully complete in order to be evaluated.

On-Site Renewal Visit: The Department of Education review team will conduct an on-site review of the charter school and conduct a structured interview with members of the board of trustees, administration, teachers, students and parents, and other school representatives to review the accomplishments of the charter school.

Renewal Determination: The Commissioner will grant or deny the renewal of the charter by **February 28, 2013**.

III. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

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

Document Length: The document may not exceed 20 pages, not including the cover page, table of contents, charts and appendices.

Format: All pages should use standard one-inch margins, be paginated, with all text easily readable in font no smaller than type size 11 point.

Cover Page: Provide a cover page that includes the school's name and the date of the report. The bottom of the cover page should also note that the report was transmitted to the Commissioner of Education, respective executive county superintendent of schools, and the district board(s) of education or State district superintendent(s) of the district of residence of the charter school.

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. The appendices should not exceed 10 pages in total.

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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	
Current Enrollment	
Maximum Enrollment	
Current Waiting List	
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	
Name of SBA	
SBA Email and Phone Number	

b) Fill in the following chart with the school's demographics.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS	
# and % FRPL	
# and % Special Ed	
# and % LEP	
# and % White	
# and % African American	
# and % Hispanic	
# and % Asian	
# and % Other ethnic groups	

1.2 Educational Program Overview

- a) Describe the school’s educational philosophy and any unique and innovative features in the educational program.

II. Academic Framework

2.1 Is the academic program a success?

- a) For schools serving grades 3 through 8, fill in the following charts with the school’s overall state assessment results.

NOTE: If the number of students tested is below 10 in any of the following templates, please leave the applicable cells blank.

SCHOOLWIDE NJASK RESULTS (Grades 3 to 8)				
YEARS				
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY				
Total # of Students Tested				
% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)				
% Advanced Proficient				
MATHEMATICS				
Number of Students Tested				
% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)				
% Advanced Proficient				

SCHOOLWIDE SUBGROUP NJASK RESULTS (Grades 3 to 8)
LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)
African American						
Hispanic						
White						
Asian						
Special Ed						
LEP						
FRPL						

SCHOOLWIDE SUBGROUP NJASK RESULTS (Grades 3 to 8)
MATHEMATICS

	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)
African American						
Hispanic						
White						
Asian						
Special Ed						
LEP						
FRPL						

b) For schools serving grade 11, fill in the following chart with the school's overall state assessment results.

GRADE 11 HSPA RESULTS				
YEARS				
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY				
Total # of Students Tested				
% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)				
% Advanced Proficient				
MATHEMATICS				
Number of Students Tested				
% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)				
% Advanced Proficient				

SCHOOLWIDE SUBGROUP HSPA RESULTS (Grade 11)						
LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY						
	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)
African American						
Hispanic						
White						
Asian						
Special Ed						
LEP						
FRPL						

SCHOOLWIDE SUBGROUP HSPA RESULTS (Grades 11)						
MATHEMATICS						
	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)	# of Students Tested	% Pass (Proficient & Advanced)
African American						
Hispanic						
White						
Asian						
Special Ed						
LEP						
FRPL						

- c) Discuss the school’s academic achievement results over the last four years. How has the school performed with regards to absolute, comparative and growth measures over the last charter term? In the absence of expected achievement, identify proposed changes to the educational program 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 newly released Performance Framework: <http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.pdf>

2.2 Is the school preparing students for college and career? (For High Schools Only)

- a) Describe how the school evaluates and tracks whether students are ready for college and career. Examples may include ACT/SAT results, graduation rates and enrollment in post-secondary institutions.

Note: In order to guide your answer, you may use the post-secondary readiness section of the newly released Performance Framework: <http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.pdf>

2.3 Is the school meeting its mission?

- a) State the mission of the school as it appears in your charter application.
 b) How does your school measure and track mission accomplishment? In the prescribed chart format below, provide at least 2 to 3 goals that have been used to measure and track mission accomplishment over multiple years in the last charter term.

NOTE: These goals **do not** have to come from your original charter application. You may use state assessment data as evidence of success. Items filled in are for demonstration purposes only.

Mission-Specific Goal	<i>Ex: As a college-preparatory academy, our goal is to prepare students for the rigor of college-level coursework.</i>
Measure/Metric	<i>Ex: Percentage of students passing AP tests annually</i>
Target	<i>Ex: Increase percentage of students passing AP tests by 10% annually</i>
Actual Outcome	<p><i>Ex: in 09-11, 50 students took at least 1 AP exam and 30 passed.</i></p> <p><i>In 10-11, 54 students took at least 1 AP exam, and 40 passed, a 14% increase. GOAL HAS BEEN MET.</i></p> <p><i>Ex: in 11-12, 46 students took at least 1 AP exam, and 30 passed, a 9% decrease. GOAL HAS NOT BEEN MET.</i></p>

NOTE: Mission-specific goals should be focused on outcomes rather than process measures. Provide information and evidence that is both valid and verifiable.

c) Provide an explanation as to whether or not your school has met its mission-specific goals and a plan/timeline as to how the school will progress towards (or maintain) goal attainment.

III. Organizational Framework

3.1 Does the school use data to inform, guide and improve instruction and other school practices?

a) Provide evidence and specific examples of how your school uses data to inform, guide and improve instruction and other school practices.

3.2 Are the school’s admissions and enrollment practices fair and equitable?

a) Describe your school’s admissions and enrollment practices and the actions your school has taken to ensure compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-7 and 18A:36A-8.

Note: This question has already been answered in this year’s annual report. If you want to expand on the answer from the annual report or if your answer has changed, please respond. If you do not wish to add to the annual report response, please write **“See annual report”** as a response.

b) Explain the school’s recruiting and advertising policies and how the school ensures that it is advertising in the widest and most inclusive manner possible.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

School Enrollment Trends									
	2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		
	Maximum Enrollment	Final Enrollment Count	Current Waitlist						
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									
Total									

- b) Provide information regarding the school’s attrition rate over the last 4 years. Using data starting with the number of students enrolled in September, what number and percentage of students transferred out of the school by the end of the school year? How does the school both monitor and 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 at the beginning of the school year.)

3.5 Does the school's learning environment align with its mission and program and does the school foster a culture of high expectations?

- a) Explain how high expectations are communicated to both students and teachers and how the school's policies foster a positive school culture that allows for the fulfillment of the schools mission/educational goals. Evidence may include levels of disciplinary referrals, class attendance, and participation in school events and activities.

3.6 Is the school complying with governance requirements?

- a) Provide a current organizational chart which includes the board of trustees and all employees.
- b) Provide information regarding how the Board of Trustees effectively evaluates the school administration. What policies and procedures are in place to evaluate the school leader on an annual basis?

4. Fiscal Viability

4.1 Is the school fiscally solvent?

- a) Present the following information regarding your school's fiscal viability **over the last five years**. Please use audited financial information for the years 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 (if available). *Financial ratios for the year ended 2011-2012 may not be available, as audits are not due until December 5, 2012.*
 - **Current Ratio (working Capital Ratio):** Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities
 - **Unrestricted Days Cash:** Unrestricted Cash divided by (Total Expenses /365)
 - **Enrollment Variance:** Actual Enrollment divided by Enrollment Projection in Board-Approved Budget
 - Is the school in **default** of loan covenant(s) and/or delinquent with debt service payments? (Y/N) **Please explain.**
 - **Total Margin:** Net Income divided by Total Revenue
 - **Debt to Asset Ratio:** Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets
 - **Cash Flow:** Provide evidence that your school's cash flow is positive each of the last 3 years of operation.
 - **Debt Service Coverage Ratio:** (Net Income + Depreciation + Interest Expense) / (Principal and Interest Payments)

Note: For your reference, please see the financial section of the newly released Performance Framework: <http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.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 a budget summary, narrative, and cash flow for fiscal year 2013- 2014, in the prescribed format attached to this application in excel format. Do not include any reliance on outside fundraising unless the school can document that funding has been secured.

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.

Projected Enrollment Chart

GRADE LEVEL	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Pre-K					
K					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
TOTAL					

NOTE: If planning to expand enrollment, please provide two enrollment charts. One chart should indicate the enrollment expansion and another charter should not include an expansion. Please note that any expansion of enrollment will have to be approved by the Commissioner in the renewal process.

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 results and student performance outcomes.

Note: In order to guide your answer, please review the measures and targets in the recently released Performance Framework: <http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.pdf>

- b) In the format below, provide any additional mission-specific goals that you will be tracking over the next five years.

Mission-Specific Goal	<i>Ex: As a college-preparatory academy, our goal is to prepare students for the rigor of college-level coursework.</i>
Measure/Metric	<i>Ex: Percentage of students passing AP tests annually</i>
Target	<i>Ex: Increase percentage of students passing AP tests by 10% annually</i>

NOTE: Mission-specific goals should be focused on 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 a facility for the five years of the next charter. The plan should include an adequate and detailed financial arrangement and timeline for the facility.
- d) Describe any significant changes the school expects to make in the following areas over the next charter term:
 - o Amendments to your school's charter/charter agreement
 - o Governance and/or Education Service Provider (ESP) structure