

Renewal Guidance: Renewal of a Public Charter School

Maine Charter School Commission

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Introduction

This document provides guidance for submitting an application for renewal of a public school charter (Application) to the Maine Charter School Commission. The following sections include an overview of the charter renewal process and detailed requirements for preparing and submitting the Application to the Maine Charter School Commission. Please review all of the information contained in this document before you begin the school's Application.

The school's Application presents evidence of the school's performance during the current charter period. The application process also allows the school to examine its practices and decisions over the current charter term, offer explanations for any performance or operational issues, identify actions taken to correct past problems, and provide information regarding the school's plans for improvement in the future. By presenting full and accurate information along with a context for the information, the school will have the opportunity to make its best case for charter renewal.

The Maine Charter School Commission has collected extensive data on each charter school's performance over the charter term, including, but not limited to, the following: a school's annual reports, financial audits, test results, site visit reports, and demographic data. Rather than a restatement of information and data that the Maine Charter School Commission already possesses, the Application should contain additional affirmative evidence of the school's successes, and should address areas of concern outlined in the Performance Report issued to the school from the Maine Charter School Commission.

Overview of the Charter Renewal Process

According to *§2411 Charter Term and Renewal* a charter may be renewed for successive terms of 5 years, although an authorizer may grant a renewal for a term not to exceed 15 years based on the performance, demonstrated capacities and particular circumstances of each public charter school. An authorizer may grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvements to a public charter school.

No later than June 30th of a public charter school's 4th year of operation under each 5-year term of a charter contract, the authorizer shall issue a public charter school performance report. If the charter of the public charter school is expiring, the authorizer shall offer charter renewal application guidance to the school. The performance report required in this subsection must summarize the public charter school's performance record to date, based on the data required by this chapter and the charter contract, and must provide notice of any weaknesses or concerns perceived by the authorizer concerning the school that may jeopardize its position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified. The school must be given the opportunity to respond to the performance report and submit any corrections or clarifications for the report. The renewal application guidance required must include or refer explicitly to the criteria and standards that will guide the authorizer's renewal decisions, which must be based on the performance framework under §2409. The renewal application guidance must, at a minimum, require and provide an opportunity for the public charter school to:

- (1) Present additional evidence, beyond the data contained in the performance report, supporting its case for charter renewal;
- (2) Describe improvements undertaken or planned for the school' and
- (3) Detail the school's plans for the next charter term.

Charter Renewal Process	
Submission of Self-Assessment	The school submits a self-assessment to the Maine Charter School Commission in March
Performance Report	In June, the Maine Charter School Commission submits a Performance Report summarizing the school's performance record to data, and provides notice of any weaknesses or concerns perceived by the Maine Charter School Commission concerning the school that may jeopardize its position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified. The school will be given the opportunity to respond to this report and submit any corrections or clarifications as part of its Application.
Submission of Application for Renewal	The school submits the completed Application to the Maine Charter School Commission no later than September 30 of the school's fifth year. The completed Application must follow the content and format guidelines set forth in the following pages and must be complete upon submission.
Application Review	The Maine Charter School Commission reviews the completed Application.
Renewal Visit	The Maine Charter School Commission will conduct a school visit. The renewal inspection team prepares a renewal inspection report summarizing the team's findings.
Public Interview	The Maine Charter School Commission will hold a Public Hearing. Other interested parties, including community members, students, and teachers are given the opportunity to provide comments to the Maine Charter School Commission regarding renewal of the school's charter.
Findings of Fact	The Findings of Fact, which is prepared by the Maine Charter School Commission, is a summary of the findings drawn from the schools Application, Self-Assessment, the Renewal Visit, and the Public Hearing.
Renewal Decision	The Maine Charter School Commission will vote on the renewal of the school's charter contract at its business meeting in November.
Application for Substantive Changes to Current Program	If the School would like to make substantive changes to its program, including, but not limited to, grade span served, program delivery, or target population the MCSC will require additional data analysis and research-based evidence after the initial charter is renewed.