



2016-17

# Application for Charter Renewal

For Charter Schools Authorized by the  
State University of New York Board of Trustees

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# RENEWAL PROCESS AND GENERAL TIMELINE

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	APPROXIMATE TIMELINE
Submission of the Application for Charter Renewal	<p>A charter school education corporation submits its Application for Charter Renewal to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (“Institute”).</p> <p>The deadline for receipt of all application materials is 5 p.m. on August 15<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Note: Accountability Plan Progress Reports are due September 15<sup>th</sup>.</p>	August 15 <sup>th</sup>
Notice and Opportunity for Comment	<p>Pursuant to the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), within 30 days of receipt of a renewal application, the Institute notifies the school district of location and public and private schools in the same geographic area about receipt of the application, when the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) may act on it, and the district’s obligation to hold a public hearing. The Institute also posts the notices on its website and invites and considers written comments from the public. The Institute forwards school district comments to the SUNY Trustees and, if the SUNY Trustees approve the application, to the New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”). In some cases, the Institute may ask the school to respond to such comments.</p> <p>Within 30 days of the above notice, the school district of location holds a hearing in, and solicits comments from, the “community potentially impacted by the charter school.” The failure of a school district to hold a hearing will not prevent the issuance of a renewal charter.</p>	August – October
Application Review	The Institute reviews the application as well as the existing data, and records in its files collected on the school over the life of the charter.	August – November
Application Revision (Request for Amendment Process)	<p>The Institute may ask for amendments to parts of the application, some of which may be required by statute, because the Institute incorporates parts of the application into the renewal charter if the SUNY Trustees grant renewal.</p> <p>The Institute may also request amendments prior to, or after, it submits the proposed renewal charter (which includes the application) to the New York State Education Department for review by the Board of Regents.</p>	August – April
Renewal Visit <sup>1</sup>	<p>The Institute generally conducts a site visit to the school, during which it observes instruction, conducts interviews and reviews documentary evidence including information relating to academic achievement, curriculum, pedagogy, internal assessment, board governance, and fiscal and legal compliance. The Institute may conduct an interview of the education corporation’s board of trustees during the visit or on a separate date.</p> <p>During or after the renewal visit, the Institute may require additional documentation and other evidence where necessary and appropriate. The Institute may also conduct follow-up visits where it deems necessary.</p>	September – December

<sup>1</sup> The Institute may conduct a renewal visit in the spring of the school year prior to the last year of the charter term.

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	APPROXIMATE TIMELINE
DRAFT Renewal Recommendation Report	<p>Based upon the totality of information and evidence collected over the course of the charter term—including the application for renewal, previous evaluation visits and the renewal visit, as well as other pertinent information—the Institute produces a draft report of its findings which contains a preliminary renewal recommendation.</p> <p>The Institute shares the draft report with the education corporation and invites factual corrections to ensure accuracy. Where appropriate, the Institute may require the education corporation to provide additional information and documentation.</p> <p>Where the Institute makes a preliminary recommendation of non-renewal, it provides the education corporation with an opportunity to provide written comments in opposition to the recommendation. In addition, the Institute offers an opportunity to have Institute staff appear at the school to listen to a presentation of evidence in opposition to the preliminary non-renewal recommendation.</p>	November – January
Final Renewal Recommendation Report	<p>Based on the evidence it has compiled and analyzed, including any evidence in opposition to a preliminary non-renewal recommendation, the Institute prepares its final recommendation report for the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee (the “Committee”).</p> <p>The Institute sends the final report to the Committee and the education corporation, and provides the Committee with any comments from the district of location.</p> <p>The education corporation must distribute the final Institute report to the school community.</p> <p>Where the Institute’s renewal report recommends non-renewal, the education corporation may petition the Committee for an opportunity to oppose the recommendation.</p> <p>If the Committee grants a petition, the education corporation may present documentary evidence as well as legal argument. The Committee determines the form, time, manner and place, and other specifics of the petition.</p>	January – March
Action of the Charter Schools Committee	<p>The Committee votes to renew or not renew a school. The Committee acts on behalf of the full SUNY Board of Trustees and the Committee’s action is final.</p> <p>Education corporations may not appeal the Committee’s decision.</p>	January – March

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	APPROXIMATE TIMELINE
Action of the Board of Regents	<p>The Institute sends a proposed renewal charter, which includes the renewal application, to the education corporation for signature and then forwards it to the Board of Regents for action (consisting of either approval or return to the SUNY Trustees for further consideration). The Board of Regents has 90 days to review the proposed renewal charter.</p> <p>If the Board of Regents takes no action on the proposed renewal charter, it will be approved by operation of law and the charter will be renewed.</p> <p>If the Board of Regents returns the proposed renewal charter, the Committee, on behalf of the SUNY Trustees, may either resubmit the proposed charter (with or without modification) or abandon the proposed charter. The education corporation must agree to any modification in writing.</p> <p>If the Committee resubmits the proposed renewal charter, the Board of Regents has 30 days in which to act. If the Board of Regents does not vote to approve the resubmitted renewal charter, the charter will be deemed approved and issued by operation of law on the 31<sup>st</sup> day.</p> <p>If the Institute recommends or the Committee votes to abandon the proposed renewal charter, the education corporation will be permitted to petition the Committee to overturn the recommendation or vote.</p>	Within 90 days of submission by the Institute

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIMELINE \_\_\_\_\_ i

TABLE OF CONTENTS \_\_\_\_\_ iv

**INTRODUCTION \_\_\_\_\_ 1**

    SUNY as a Charter Authorizer-----1

    Renewal Overview-----3

    Renewal Outcomes-----4

    Required Findings-----5

    Renewal Recommendations -----5

    Incorporating by Reference -----7

    Formatting and Submitting the Application-----7

**APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ 12**

    Transmittal Form -----12

    Application Checklist-----12

    Executive Summary -----14

    Statistical Overview -----15

    Academic Success-----16

    Organizational Viability-----17

    Fiscal Soundness -----19

    Plans for the Future -----20

### SUNY AS A CHARTER AUTHORIZER

The Act designates the SUNY Trustees as one of two state-wide chartering entities, or “authorizers,” along with the Board of Regents, each having authority to grant charters for the purpose of organizing charter school education corporations to operate one or more independent and autonomous public charter schools. SUNY is the largest charter school authorizer in New York State and the largest university-based authorizer in the country.

The Institute’s work in this regard is designed to support the SUNY Trustees’ commitment to the guiding principles of the Act: to establish schools that operate in an academically, fiscally, and legally sound manner and provide outstanding educational opportunities for all students, especially those at risk of academic failure; and to oversee approved schools in a manner that respects their independence and autonomy while holding them accountable for student achievement results—including a commitment to close schools that have failed to live up to their promises.

Since its inception, the Institute has been recognized on numerous occasions for the quality of its authorizing practices. The CfBT Education Trust and the World Bank featured SUNY’s authorizing practices in an online toolkit promoting public and private partnerships to support quality education. The toolkit, which includes a case study detailing SUNY’s charter approval process, strategies for oversight, and criteria for schools to earn charter renewal, can be found at [cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2011/r-nurturing-a-thousand-flowers-2011.pdf](http://cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2011/r-nurturing-a-thousand-flowers-2011.pdf). The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (“NACSA”) awarded SUNY planning and implementation grants to support its work relating to the replication of high quality charter schools. NACSA also awarded SUNY the Award for Excellence in Improving Authorizer Practice, recognizing SUNY for having the “best application process” for creating new charter schools. This award was particularly notable given it was the first year that the Act required SUNY to transition to a request-for-proposals process.

Positive results in the classroom affirm recognition of SUNY’s authorizing work. Results from the 2014-15 New York State tests for all public schools showed 90% of SUNY authorized charter schools outperformed their district of location on the mathematics assessment and 73% outperformed their district on the English language arts (“ELA”) assessment. According to a review of the data from the January 2010 CREDO study, SUNY-authorized charter schools yield greater gains in student achievement than their New York City charter and district peer schools. Further, in the Institute’s regression analysis of each charter school compared to demographically similar

## INTRODUCTION

schools (comparable percentages of economically disadvantaged students) statewide, SUNY-authorized charter schools consistently perform better than projected to a meaningful degree in both ELA and mathematics.

In the 2016-17 school year, SUNY-authorized charter schools will serve approximately 74,300 students. As of July 1, SUNY will authorize **167** charter schools across New York State:

- 148 in and around New York City - Manhattan (26); Brooklyn (70); Bronx (36); Queens (13); Staten Island (1); Roosevelt (1); and Hempstead (1);
- 6 in the Capital District - Albany (5); Troy (1); and,
- 13 in Western/Central New York – Elmira (1); Ithaca (1); Rochester (6); Buffalo (5).

The SUNY Trustees support diversity and innovative program design in the charter schools they authorize. The SUNY Trustees set a high bar of expectations for student achievement, particularly for students most at risk of academic failure, but realize there is more than one way to meet that bar.

Among the portfolio of SUNY authorized charter schools are: schools with a particular focus on English language learners (“ELLs”); multiple schools using the Core Knowledge curriculum; a school implementing the Middle Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate Programme (“IBE”), planning to grow to offer the IBE degree; single-gender schools; several schools that offer intensive foreign language instruction; a school devoted to providing a high quality educational program to high needs students with autism; a school devoted to students who are or have been enrolled in the child welfare system, are homeless, or who have graduated from a failing middle school; a school infusing the principles of sustainability throughout the curriculum; and, many more.

## RENEWAL OVERVIEW

The charter renewal process is central to the autonomy-for-accountability bargain that serves as the foundation for the Act and for the high standards and expectations of the SUNY Trustees. As such, the SUNY Trustees do not automatically grant charter renewal; a school must demonstrate that it has earned the opportunity to serve students in an additional charter term. An Application for Charter Renewal is the means by which an education corporation makes its case for charter renewal and/or renewal of its authority to operate a school for an additional charter term. In order to make a compelling case for renewal, the education corporation must present clear and concise evidence of the school's attainment of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the "SUNY Renewal Benchmarks").<sup>2</sup>

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,<sup>3</sup> describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks detail the elements an effective school must have in place at the time of renewal.

Consistent with the *Policies for the Renewal of Not-for-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York* (the "SUNY Renewal Policies"),<sup>4</sup> the Institute conducts renewal reviews, including an on-site evaluation visit, near the end of each school's charter term. Unlike regular school evaluation visits, which focus mainly on the school's academic program and organizational capacity, renewal reviews address all of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks. All of the following forms the basis of the Institute's Renewal Recommendation to the SUNY Trustees:

- evidence collected during the renewal review process;
- student performance data throughout the Accountability Period and even from prior periods;
- information submitted by the school; and,

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<sup>2</sup> Version 5.0, May 2012, available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: [www.mes.org/correlates.html](http://www.mes.org/correlates.html); [www.scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie\\_fryer\\_revision\\_final.pdf](http://www.scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf); and, [gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf](http://gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf).



## INTRODUCTION

- information in Institute files and obtained from previous visits.

The Committee makes all final charter renewal decisions.

## RENEWAL OUTCOMES

### *Initial Renewal*

The SUNY Renewal Policies define three potential outcomes for SUNY-authorized charter schools coming to renewal for the first time: Full-Term Renewal (five years); Short-Term Renewal (typically three years); or, Non-Renewal (closure). During the fifth year of a school's initial charter term, the Institute makes a renewal recommendation to the SUNY Trustees based on the extent to which the school has met, or come close to meeting, its Accountability Plan goals, has in place an effective educational program as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks and has met all other benchmarks related to governance, compliance and fiscal soundness.

### *Subsequent Renewal*

The SUNY Renewal Policies define two potential outcomes for SUNY authorized charter schools that have already been renewed at least one time: Full-Term Renewal (five years) or Non-Renewal (closure). The SUNY Renewal Policies specifically do not provide a Short-Term Renewal outcome for schools in subsequent charter terms. When making recommendations regarding subsequent charter renewals, the Institute relies most heavily on student achievement data and schools' performance against Accountability Plan goals as the standard all schools must meet or come close to meeting.

Any school facing charter renewal should weigh carefully whether it has the track record of success necessary to meet the criteria for renewal. Prior to submitting an application, an education corporation board should review the SUNY Renewal Policies, examine data analyses and other reports provided by school leadership, and review communications from the Institute regarding the school's performance against its Accountability Plan goals and measures. If upon consideration of these factors, the board finds that the school does not meet the requirements for renewal, the Institute strongly suggests that the board consider not submitting an application for charter renewal. Should the board decide against applying for renewal, the school would continue to operate for the final year of the charter term while the education corporation, with the assistance of the Institute, begins wind down procedures for the school to close at the end of the school year. For more information about this process, please contact the Institute's General Counsel.

# INTRODUCTION

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the school has met the SUNY Trustees' specific renewal criteria, the Institute must make the following findings required by the Act:

- the school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal, meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the charter school education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,
- given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.<sup>5</sup>

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it will put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch ("FRPL") program. The Institute may ask for further information and evidence regarding the school's current efforts regarding these students.

## RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Institute makes renewal recommendations based on a variety of evidence gathered and analyzed over the course of a charter term. This evidence includes a school's Application for Charter Renewal and record in meeting or posting positive trends toward meeting Accountability Plan goals. Additionally, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks guide the assessment of strength and effectiveness of the academic program that was in place during on-site evaluation visits conducted throughout the charter term.

The Institute uses the following four interconnected questions for framing its renewal reviews and to determine if a school has made an adequate case for renewal:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school an effective, viable organization?
3. Is the education corporation fiscally sound?

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<sup>5</sup> See New York Education Law § 2852(2).

## INTRODUCTION

4. If the SUNY Trustees renew the education corporation's authority to operate the school, are its plans for the school reasonable, feasible and achievable?

For additional information regarding the renewal criteria for SUNY authorized charter schools, please refer to the SUNY Renewal Policies.

**This Application for Charter Renewal is available on the Institute's website at:**  
[www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).

**The Institute will post all updates/modifications to this document online.**

### INCORPORATING BY REFERENCE

Rather than providing a full response to each request and reproducing information already in Institute files, an education corporation may submit some Responses and Exhibits required in the Application for Charter Renewal by referencing the Terms of Operation of the existing charter agreement<sup>6</sup> between SUNY and the same education corporation.

Education corporations must use the Renewal Application Checklist (the “Checklist”), discussed in a subsequent section of this document, to indicate the submission status of all required components. An Application for Charter Renewal is incomplete until the education corporation provides ALL required Responses and Exhibits, either by submitting new material or incorporating by reference. Note that education corporations **cannot** incorporate by reference all components of the Application for Charter Renewal. The Checklist indicates which components require submission of original material.

### FORMATTING AND SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

An education corporation must submit all required information as either a “Response” or an “Exhibit.” Responses generally comprise the school’s documentary evidence of success in the current charter term; while Exhibits generally provide information to be incorporated into a new charter agreement should the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal.

#### PAGE FORMATTING

Application Responses and Exhibits should be typed in a traditional typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial) at a font size of 11 points or larger. Margins, in all directions, should be at least an inch. While double spacing between lines of text is most preferred, spacing should be set at a minimum of 1.15. Application Responses and Exhibits should also include page numbers at the bottom of every page. If the Institute does not specify a page limit, please provide a response that is as thorough yet succinct as possible. Applications will not automatically be disqualified if Responses and Exhibits fail to adhere to the recommended page format. However, application materials that excessively disregard recommended formatting (e.g., illegible font size) and/or page

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<sup>6</sup> These appear under Exhibit A – Terms of Operation of the current charter agreement.

## INTRODUCTION

limits will only be considered at the Institute's discretion. In such instances, the Institute may request the applicant to revise and resubmit the application sections, further delaying the review process.

### SUBMITTING MATERIALS TO THE INSTITUTE

Education corporations must submit all materials as digital files by August 15, 2016. Please do not submit a paper copy of the full application. The Institute must receive Transmittal Forms and Assurances statements with either digital signatures or hard copies of the forms with original signatures, postmarked by the application deadline. Education corporations may submit applications in one of two ways:

**Option 1:** Duplicate copies of digital files saved on separate thumb drives may be mailed or hand-delivered by August 15, 2016 to the Institute's Albany address:

SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
41 State St., Suite 700  
Albany, NY 12207.

**Option 2:** Digital files may be uploaded to the Institute's Dropbox account. Board chairs and school leaders will receive a link to the schools' Dropbox folders and must submit all materials as digital files to the Institute by August 15, 2016.

Regardless of which option used to submit an application, the inclusion of one or more files that the Institute determines are inaccessible (i.e., Institute staff are unable to open or read the file(s)) may result in the finding that the application is incomplete. Upon review of electronic submissions and at its discretion, the Institute may request a paper copy to clarify formatting and other issues.

### ELECTRONIC FORMATTING

Submit digital files as follows:

- The Dropbox folder will have two separate folders, titled "Responses" and "Exhibits."
- Save all Responses and Exhibits in their respective folders, titled and formatted as described in the table below. **Please be sure that MS Word® files contain no tracked changes.**

## INTRODUCTION

- Acceptable electronic formats for the saved files are MS Word®, MS Excel® or Adobe Acrobat® only as indicated below. Scanned files in Adobe Acrobat® format should be OCR'd (Optical Character Recognition) and Optimized to reduce the file size. Do not submit files in any file type except as directed in the table below.

# INTRODUCTION

## ELECTRONIC FILE CONVENTIONS

Response	Required File Name	File Type
A	Transmittal Form _ School Name	MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat®
B	App Checklist _ School Name	MS Excel®
C(1)	Executive Summary _ School Name	MS Word®
C(2)	Overview _ School Name	MS Excel®
D(1)a	APPR _ School Name	MS Word®
D(1)b	Annual Reports _ School Name	MS Word®
D(2)a	Satisfaction _ School Name	MS Word®
D(2)b	Contact Info _ School Name	MS Excel®
D(2)c(1-12)	Handbook _ School Name Policy Name _ School Name	MS Word®
D(2)d	Assurances _ School Name	MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat®
D(3)a	Fiscal Policies _ School Name	MS Word®
D(3)b	Miscellaneous Fin _ School Name	MS Word®
D(4)a	Educational Program _ School Name	MS Word®
D(4)b	Governance Structure _ School Name	MS Word®
D(4)c	Fiscal Plan _ School Name	MS Word®
D(4)d	Facility Plan _ School Name	MS Word®
E	Supplemental Info _ School Name	MS Word®
Exhibit	Required File Name	File Type
A	Mission _ School Name	MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat®
B	KDE _ School Name	MS Word®
C	Enrollment _ School Name	MS Word® or MS Excel®
D	Calendar and Schedule _ School Name	MS Word
E	Staffing Plan _ School Name	MS Word® or MS Excel®
F	Accountability Plan _ School Name	MS Word®
G	Enrollment and Retention Plan _ School Name	MS Word®
H	By-Laws _ School Name	MS Word®

# INTRODUCTION

Exhibit	Required File Name	File Type
I	Code of Ethics _ School Name	MS Word®
J	Management Contract _ School Name	MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat®
K	Budget Projection _ School Name	MS Excel®

## Resources

The Institute’s “Renewal” webpage includes links to multiple documents related to the renewal process. Additional information is available at:

[www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).



## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

### TRANSMITTAL FORM

ALL schools must submit a signed Transmittal Form with the Application for Charter Renewal.

The Institute accepts digital and handwritten signatures. If a handwritten signature is used, applicants should include a scanned copy of the signed form with the application, and ensure the Institute receives the paper copy of the transmittal form, bearing the original signature, by the application deadline. The Transmittal Form is available on the Institute's website at:

[www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).

#### What to Submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Transmittal Form as an Adobe Acrobat® file named: **Transmittal Form \_School Name**

### RENEWAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Complete the Checklist found here: [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).

Carefully complete each column per the instructions below.

#### Column A

- For each relevant Response or Exhibit, indicate whether the submission incorporates a full response to the request or if it references an already-existing document. Note that education corporations may only incorporate materials that the SUNY Trustees have already approved.
- Education corporations that do not incorporate a Response or Exhibit by reference should select "No," attach the appropriate document to the application, and move to the next item on the Checklist.

The remaining columns should only be completed if the answer in Column A was "Yes."

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

### Column B

- If the incorporated information applies to all schools in the education corporation (effectively revising the terms of operation of the existing schools), select “All Schools.”
- If the response applies only to the renewal school and not to other schools in the education corporation, select “Renewal School.”
- If there is only one school in the education corporation, select “N/A.”

### Column C

For each relevant Response or Exhibit, indicate if the referenced document will be revised (“Yes”) or will not be revised (“No”). See below for details:

- Incorporating by reference with no revisions indicates that the approach described in the referenced document was either (a) part of the SUNY charter application for another charter school in the education corporation and will now be put in place at the renewal school, or was (b) already in place at the renewal school and will continue. The education corporation should not submit new documents in these cases.
- Incorporating by reference with revisions suggests that the renewal school would use a substantially similar approach as described in the incorporated document, but would apply some small changes. For example, the renewal school may incorporate the education corporation’s existing special education program, except to add a setting that is not part of the current terms of operation. In these cases, include only a description of the proposed revision.

### Column D

- Provide the name, title, filename, etc. of materials that you are incorporating. If you are referencing a subsection of a document, identify the section as specifically as possible. For example, if the education corporation were to choose to incorporate by reference the special education services of a school approved by the SUNY Trustees under the January 2011 RFP, the corresponding information to be supplied should read, “Attachment 13(a) – Students with Disabilities,” which is the part of the Terms of Operation of the Charter Agreement dated June 15, 2011 that explains the special education services for the school. If the reference is to another education corporation’s charter or to the Terms of Operation of a specific school within an education corporation, please indicate that clearly.

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

- If the Institute approved a material revision to the education corporation's charter, the renewal application should include the date(s) of the original charter and of the material revision, as applicable. For example, "January 15, 2011 Charter Agreement, Exhibit A, Response 12 as amended by the charter revision of March 2013."
- Applications do not need to note non-material revisions, but a best practice would be to draft those changes into the response and indicate that it would be applicable to the entire charter school education corporation.

### Column E

Indicate the year that SUNY approved the relevant section of the charter. Typically, this would be the date that the SUNY Trustees approved the renewal school's original charter, a renewal charter for the current renewal school or another school in the same education corporation, a merger or a material revision.

### What to Submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Application Checklist as a MS Excel® file named: **App Checklist \_ School Name**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please note the following in preparing the Executive Summary:

- As the Application for Charter Renewal looks both backward and forward, the Executive Summary should articulate how and to what extent the vision, design and implementation of the school's current charter have proven effective in improving student achievement, and what changes, if any, the education corporation envisions if the SUNY Trustees renew the charter.
- The Institute puts more weight on a discussion of the processes that the education corporation took to remedy specific leadership, organizational or programmatic deficiencies, rather than simply promoting a claim of current school effectiveness. Such a discussion shows the resilience and depth of the organization and its ability to address future challenges. The description would further benefit from an explicit link between the organizational issues and

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

student performance before the education corporation undertook corrective action and the resulting change in performance.

- While the focus of the Executive Summary must be the school's record of improving student learning and achievement, this section should cover all aspects of the education corporation's operation, e.g., governance, financial stability, plans for the next charter term.
- The Executive Summary must not exceed 10 pages in length.

### What to Submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Executive Summary as a MS Word® file named: **Executive Summary \_ School Name**

## STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

ALL schools must submit a Statistical Overview with the Application for Charter Renewal. The statistical overview, available at [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/) requires schools to provide information regarding:

- Enrollment: including students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students;
- Retention: including number of students eligible to return from the previous academic year and the number of those students who returned;
- Attendance and discipline data; and,
- Number of faculty/staff.

### What to Submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Statistical Overview as a MS Excel® file named: **Overview \_ School Name**

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS

*The Act requires that schools demonstrate the ability to improve student learning and achievement.*

- Accountability Plan. The school's application must include the most recent annual Accountability Plan Progress Report (2015-2016) indicating its progress in achieving the academic goals (and each of the specific measures) in its Accountability Plan.
  - This response must be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Accountability Plan Progress Report must discuss the extent to which the school has met all required academic measures as well as any additional academic goals and measures included in its Accountability Plan. The presentation must broadly address the school's progress toward meeting each goal, specifically linking measure attainment to each of the goals and to the educational program over the course of the Accountability Period.
- Annual Reports. The Act requires that each annual report in the current charter term be part of a renewal application. The Institute has these reports on file so an education corporation need not re-submit annual reports previously filed.

### **What to Submit:**

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Accountability Plan Progress Report as a MS Word® file named: **APPR\_School Name**

## ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

*In accordance with the Act, a school must demonstrate that it is an effective and viable organization. The Act specifically stipulates that indications of parent satisfaction must be included in an application for charter renewal.*

- **Parent Satisfaction.** Provide parent and student survey results or other verifiable data that attest to parent satisfaction with the school's academic program. The school must demonstrate that it administered the surveys and interpreted results using generally accepted evaluation methods (including method of administration, time of year and adequate response rate). The Institute requires the submission of additional information regarding demand and persistence prior to the renewal visit.
- **Contact Information.** Provide a flash drive with the parent names and addresses of all students enrolled in the school by grade to enable the Institute to communicate directly with families regarding the renewal process if necessary.
- **School Policies and Procedures.** Complete Parent and/or Student Handbook (from the most recent academic year) or similarly comprehensive document.

If the Parent and/or Student Handbook does not contain all of the policies listed below (e.g., policies listed in f through k), attach the Handbook as one response and each remaining policy as a separate response.

- a) Admissions/Enrollment Policy;
- b) Student Discipline Policy (including Special Education Discipline Policy, if separate);
- c) Dress Code (if any);
- d) Student Retention/Promotion Policy;
- e) Complaint Policy (which should clearly articulate how to file a formal complaint alleging a violation of law or the charter, and provide appropriate appeals information);
- f) Health Services Policy including Medication Policy (even if those match district policies);

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

- g) Personnel policies and/or employee manual;
  - h) Collective Bargaining Agreement(s), if applicable;
  - i) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) policies, annual notices and sample waiver form, if applicable (see the Confidentiality of Student Records guidance at [www.newyorkcharters.org/category/operational-resources/compliance/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/category/operational-resources/compliance/) for more information);
  - j) Policies and procedures for implementing Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to serve students with disabilities not covered by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
  - k) Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) Notice ((which should, at a minimum, identify the records access officer and the records access appeals officer (and appropriate contact information for each), FOIL “regulations,” information subject matter list, and the FOIL list of officers and employees (which should identify all personnel, including the board, along with their public office addresses and any public salaries)). (See the FOIL guidance at [www.newyorkcharters.org/category/operational-resources/compliance/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/category/operational-resources/compliance/) for more information.)
- **Assurances.** All Applications for Charter Renewal must include a list of specific Assurances signed by the school leader and education corporation board chair.

The Institute accepts digital and handwritten signatures. If handwritten signatures are used, applicants should include a scanned copy of the signed form with the application, and ensure the Institute receives the paper copy, bearing original signatures, by the application deadline. The Assurances form is available on the Institute’s website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).

### What to submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Parent Satisfaction Survey as an Adobe Acrobat® file named: **Satisfaction \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of Contact Information as a MS Excel® file named: **Contact Info \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Handbook and School Policies and Procedures as a MS Word® file named: **Handbook \_School Name; Policy Name \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Assurances as a MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat® file named: **Assurances \_School Name**

## FISCAL SOUNDNESS

*The Act requires an education corporation to demonstrate its ability to operate the school in a fiscally sound manner in a subsequent charter term.*

Please provide the following:

- Fiscal policies and procedures manual, including all recent updates; and,
- Additional miscellaneous financial documents related to budgeting and long-range planning; internal controls; financial reporting; and financial condition. Include any NYS Comptroller or NYC Comptroller Audit Reports during the charter term and information on active audits taking place.

### What to submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Fiscal Policies and Procedures as a MS Word® file named: **Fiscal Policies \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of Miscellaneous Financial Documents as a MS Word® file named: **Additional Fin \_School Name**. Audit reports may be included as Adobe Acrobat® files.



## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Unlike other sections of the application, this one focuses on the education corporation's future plans rather than the outcomes achieved during the current charter term. In addition to a number of narrative *Responses*, the application requires submission of a series of *Renewal Charter Exhibits* ("Exhibits") that the Institute will incorporate into a new charter agreement should the SUNY Trustees approve the application. Generally, the main difference in substance between the narrative Responses and the Exhibits is that exhibits outline the "what" that the school will do if renewed; the narrative responses, on the other hand, provide the "why" and the "how." Put together, these documents allow the Institute to determine if the education corporation's and school's plans for the next charter term are "reasonable, feasible and achievable."

Requirements for both types of submissions are set forth below.

An important note: The Institute analyzes the school's accomplishments during the existing charter term as relates to the Qualitative Education Benchmarks and the school's performance on Accountability Plan goals in making renewal recommendations. While the Institute asks applicants to identify future plans, no school will receive a positive recommendation based only on those plans. Without demonstrating success via the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks and the Accountability Plan goals in the current charter term, no school's future plans alone are sufficient to earn renewal.

### **Responses**

The nature and content of each response is likely to differ greatly depending on the degree of difference between the school's current operations and its plans for the next charter term. Schools choosing not to change any elements of their current program or structure need only incorporate a response by reference and indicate such on the Application Checklist; whereas, schools choosing to make some changes must identify them and schools making material changes must provide extensive documentation and detail. Examples of significant changes include, but are not limited to, offering new grades, expanding enrollment, moving locations, shifting the focus of the educational program, switching from a management company structure to self-management and adding a school level, e.g., adding a middle or high school.

- Proposed Educational Program. Provide an overview of the planned educational program. For those schools seeking to make significant changes in one or more aspects of the educational program, the narrative response must detail each of these changes, not only stating the school's

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

planned change, but how and why as well. It is likely that in explaining why it is seeking a change in the next charter term, the school's experiences in the present charter term will inform its response. It is also highly likely that the narrative response will heavily cross-reference the relevant Renewal Charter Exhibits including, perhaps, those that are not directly related to the educational program.

- **Governance Structure.** The education corporation must provide details on what plans, if any, it has to ensure the sustainability of its success, (e.g., creating a recruitment committee on the education corporation's board of trustees; providing a transition and training plan for the new board members). The education corporate should include in the renewal application a biographical sketch for each board member (not to exceed 200 words).

For education corporations making material changes to their governance structure, the narrative response must focus on the reasons behind those changes, referencing where necessary any appropriate events and outcomes from the present charter term that are driving these proposed changes. The response must also indicate with clarity how and why those governance changes will allow for the kind of oversight that will result in satisfactory student achievement results.

Some education corporations filed their initial or renewal charter application "in conjunction with" an existing 501(c)(3) organization, yet that entity was not managing the school. Rather, and most often, it was assisting the school in other ways. Where an education corporation did in fact partner with such an organization, it must discuss the status of the relationship including whether it will continue in the next charter term and, if so, under what terms and parameters. Likewise, the education corporation must indicate if the relationship is dissolving or will be dissolved. This type of partnership is not equivalent to a partnership with an Educational Service Provider ("ESP")/Charter Management Organization ("CMO"). As such, the information required with regard to ESP/CMO partnerships as set forth below is not required here.

Consistent with other narrative responses, where an education corporation is making a significant school change, for example, adding a middle school, the narrative response should discuss the governance challenges inherent in that transition.

If an ESP or CMO manages the school or the education corporation is associated with a group of education corporations that share services or have common governance, describe any expansion of the ESP/CMO and/or other group either in or out of New York State during the next charter term including: the names and locations of new or planned schools, how the CMO or ESP and/or other

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

group has adjusted its operations to address expansion, and how such expansion has and/or is projected to impact the school. The education corporation may provide its own or its CMO's or ESP's most recent Business Plan if it covers the term of the proposed renewal charter term.

- **Fiscal Plan.** Describe the education corporation's fiscal plan for the term of the proposed renewal charter term specifically identifying future enrollment, staffing and facility plans and assumptions, and discuss how those plans are financially reasonable and feasible. If the education corporation operates more than one school, please provide additional information about the school(s) up for renewal in separate budgets. This information must be consistent with the Budget Projection for the term of the renewal charter (template available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/)), which must serve as the cornerstone of the education corporation's fiscal plan. Please ensure that the budget covers the entire term of the next charter and includes a description of all revenue and expenditure assumptions.
- **Facility Plan.** Clearly describe how the school's facility plans will meet the needs of the educational program for the proposed charter term including any commitments partner organizations or host districts have made to support the school.

### What to submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Proposed Educational Program as a MS Word® file named: **Educational Program \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Governance Structure as a MS Word® file named: **Governance Structure \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Fiscal Plan as a MS Word® file named: **Fiscal Plan \_School Name**

### Renewal Charter Exhibits

- **Mission Statement.** Provide the mission statement for the next charter term.
- **Key Design Elements.** The Key Design Elements are a distillation of the core components of the school's educational and organizational plans for the term of the renewal charter.

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

The elements are those that collectively constitute the essential design features of the school and that define what the school would be in the next charter term. The Key Design Elements describe what the school will do if the SUNY Trustees approve its application for renewal and formally become part of the renewal charter. Please include any summer school programs in the Key Design Elements.

- **Proposed Enrollment.** Provide the proposed enrollment in chart form using Tab 2 of the Five-Year Budget Outlook Template (at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/)). Provide the grades the school proposes serving in each year of the next charter term, the number of students expected to be in each grade, the age-range of students that it will serve and the maximum number of students per year.

Please be sure that the chart reflects any anticipated attrition over the charter term. The enrollment chart must only cover the number of years for which the school is seeking renewal. If the school will serve Kindergarten during its renewal term, please indicate the date by which a child must reach age five in order to be eligible to attend the school (e.g., December 1). Pre-K programs are considered a program and enrollment of pre-K is not considered a chartered grade for enrollment purposes and should not be included in the proposed enrollment chart. Include any information on pre-K programs operated by the school but do not add the pre-K enrollment into the K-12 enrollment numbers. Copy the enrollment chart from Tab 2 of the Five-Year Budget Projection to submit as the proposed enrollment chart.

- **Master School Calendar.** Provide an overall school calendar that clearly indicates the number of days of instruction for the first year of the new charter. Where the calendar is different for different grades (for example, the school plans to have its middle school academy provide a longer school year than the elementary academy), the calendar should so indicate. Alternatively, the school can submit separate calendars for each set of grades (elementary, middle, etc.). When summing the number of days of instruction, please assign each instructional day a value of 0.5 or 1.0 as follows:
  - For grades K-6, half days (i.e., days assigned a value of 0.5) are days in which the total instructional time sums to at least 2.5 hours but is less than 5 hours. Full days (i.e., days assigned a value of 1.0) are days in which students receive at least 5 hours of instruction.
  - For grades 7-12, half days (i.e., days assigned a value of 0.5) are days in which the total instructional time sums to at least 2.5 hours but is less than 5.5 hours. Full

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

days (i.e., days assigned a value of 1.0) are days in which students receive at least 5.5 hours of instruction.

- **School Schedule.** Provide a daily school schedule that clearly details the total hours of instruction the school will provide and in what subjects. Where different grades have different schedules, provide all such schedules. If the school includes any high school grades, it must submit a schedule that permits the Institute to determine if the school will provide the number of instructional units each year as required by the New York Education Commissioner's Regulations to award a terminal degree.
- **Staffing Plan.** The staffing plan must include an annotated organizational chart, a narrative, and a copy of the Staffing Chart (available on Tab 3 of the Five-Year Budget Outlook at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal-visit-guide-forms/>). The annotated organizational chart should depict who will carry out the key educational and supporting administrative functions during the next charter term. The accompanying narrative must describe the key educational staff positions for each year of the proposed charter. The Staffing Chart template will automatically fill in the Five-Year Budget Projection and calculate personnel costs based on average salaries for each category. To ensure accuracy of budget projections, confirm that all staff reflected in the organizational chart are included in Tab 3 of the budget template. Copy the staffing plan from Tab 3 of the Five-Year Budget Projection to submit with the proposed staffing plan.
- **Accountability Plan.** The education corporation must develop a draft Accountability Plan for the proposed charter term, including any measures that may apply to grade levels included in proposed program expansions. Note that the plan must be consistent with the most current edition of the Guidelines for the Creation of an Accountability Plan, available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/Accountability-Plan-Guidelines-2013.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/Accountability-Plan-Guidelines-2013.pdf). The Institute will return for amendment plans that are inconsistent with these Guidelines. The prospective plan must be consistent with any new grade levels proposed by the school, such as high school accountability measures for middle schools proposing to add such grades.
- **Plan for Meeting Enrollment and Retention Targets.**<sup>7</sup> The education corporation must include

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<sup>7</sup> According to Education Law § 2851(4), all schools submitting renewal applications after January 1, 2011 must include in the application the efforts it will put in place to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for the sub-populations as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees and based on the enrollment and retention figures of the selected populations attending

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

a plan for the school to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program.

For meeting **enrollment targets**, indicate the recruitment strategies the school will employ to attract students including, but not limited to:

- where in the school district (or CSD in New York City) the school believes it will be able to locate students with disabilities, ELLs and students who are eligible to participate in the federal FRPL program;
- with respect to each category of students, specifically describe how the school will target an identified population in the school's outreach efforts;
- outreach to parents in the community for whom English is not their primary language, including language(s);
- outreach to parents with disabilities;
- outreach to parents of students who would qualify for the FRPL program;
- any at-risk admissions factors or set-asides (sometimes collectively referred to as "admissions priorities") the school intends to offer that would increase the likelihood of enrolling targeted students;
- personnel responsible for overseeing the school's marketing and outreach efforts and the means by which such personnel will record and/or preserve their recruitment activities; and,
- methods for evaluating the efficacy of the school's recruitment and enrollment efforts in each category during the charter term.

For meeting **retention targets**, indicate retention strategies or specific programmatic elements at the school that will assist in retaining the three target populations including, but not limited

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public schools within the school district in which the charter school is located, or in New York City, the Community School District. Repeated failure to meet such targets is grounds for charter revocation per Education Law § 2855(1)(e).

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

to:

- the school's general strategy for retaining students;
  - the specific programmatic elements at the school that will provide services to, and will assist in, retaining the three target populations; and,
  - personnel responsible for monitoring and overseeing the school's retention efforts, the performance of students in the three populations and the means by which such personnel will record and/or preserve their retention activities.
- Education Corporation By-Laws. Include the education corporation's by-laws as a Renewal Charter Exhibit.
  - Code of Ethics/Conflicts of Interest. Include the education corporation Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest policies for the next charter term. The education may have one policy that fulfills the statutory requirements of both a code of ethics and conflicts of interest policy. For more information please refer to the Institute's Guide to Board Governance at [www.newyorkcharters.org/guide-to-board-governance/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/guide-to-board-governance/). If there are no changes to the Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest policies, please state that fact.

The Code of Ethics must conform to the applicable provisions of the New York General Municipal Law that have applied to charter schools since 2010 and the 2014 changes to the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law, which require certain conflicts of interest provisions. Applicants may not incorporate by reference a Code of Ethics that does not fully reflect the applicable General Municipal and Not-For-Profit Corporation Law provisions; rather, they must submit a full, up to date Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics must include a comprehensive and formal conflict of interest policy with specific procedures for implementing the policy and assuring compliance therewith in accordance with the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. The Code of Ethics and conflict of interest policy must be written to apply not only to trustees, but also to officers and employees of the school in conformity with the General Municipal Law, and may be submitted as one document.

- Negotiated (but not executed) ESP/CMO Contract. If an education corporation plans to contract with ESP or CMO at any time during the next charter term, please include the fully negotiated (but not executed) management contract for the Institute's review and approval, together with evidence that the education corporation board of trustees has approved its execution subject to the SUNY Trustees' approval. The contract needs to include the fee rate

## APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

and scope of services to be provided. If the contract has yet to be negotiated, please provide an explanation in the narrative portion of the school's response along with a timetable for that process to be completed. Such timetable must in all instances allow sufficient time for the Institute to review the completed contract prior to the time that the Institute must make its recommendation on the renewal application. Please note that it is the Institute's belief that a school that is organizationally effective and viable should have fully completed negotiations on this important document by the time its application for renewal is due.

If the education corporation has the authority to operate multiple schools, the management contract covers all such schools and the Institute has already approved the management contract, then the education corporation need only provide the amended terms to cover the term of the proposed charter term for the school seeking renewal at this time.

- **Budget Projection.** Submit a proposed budget for the proposed next charter term supporting the fiscal plan in the required format. Be sure to start with the tabs for enrollment and staffing which will prepopulate the budget projections.

The Renewal Five Year Budget Projection template is available on the Institute's website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/).

### What to submit:

- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Mission Statement as a MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat® file named: **Mission \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Key Design Elements as a MS Word® file named: **KDE \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Proposed Enrollment as a MS Word® or MS Excel® file named: **Enrollment \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the school Calendar and Schedule as a MS Word® file named: **Calendar and Schedule \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Staffing Plan as a MS Word® or MS Excel® file named: **Staffing Plan \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Accountability Plan as a MS Word® file named: **Accountability Plan \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Plan for Meeting Enrollment and Retention Targets as a MS Word® file named: **Enrollment and Retention Plan \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Education Corporation By-Laws as a MS Word® file named: **By-Laws \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Code of Ethics as a MS Word® file named: **Code of Ethics \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the ESP/CMO Contract as a MS Word® or Adobe Acrobat® file named: **Management Contract \_School Name**
- Submit the completed electronic copy of the Budget Projection as a MS Excel® file named: **Budget Projection \_School Name**



# APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

## **Supplemental Information (Optional)**

The Institute will accept information not specifically required in the Application for Charter Renewal if the education corporation believes this supplemental information is essential for making its case for renewal. The collective length of this section must not exceed 25 pages.

### **What to submit:**

- Submit the completed electronic copy of any Supplemental Information as a MS Word® file named: **Supplemental Info \_School Name**