

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

- 1.0 The District prioritizes charter applicants whose proposed program:
  - 1.1 Is intended to improve achievement and educational outcomes of students with identified disabilities or other specialized learning needs;
  - 1.2 Is intended to serve a diverse student population, including students who may be considered at-risk of educational failure; and
  - 1.3 Is intended to provide educational option(s) not otherwise currently available at a sufficient level to meet district programming needs.
- 2.0 **Authorizing.**
  - 2.1 The District has been granted exclusive chartering authority by the state board of education.
  - 2.2 The District strives to provide quality charter school authorizing based on principles rooted in recommendations from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers. Those principles include:
    - 2.2.1 Maintaining high expectations for student achievement and overall school performance
    - 2.2.2 Protecting student and public interests
    - 2.2.3 Recognizing charter school autonomy
  - 2.3 The District supports charter school success through collaboration and performance monitoring across multiple areas, including:
    - 2.3.1 Academic growth and achievement.
    - 2.3.2 Financial accountability and transparency.
    - 2.3.3 Organizational performance, including effective governance practices and opportunities for meaningful parent involvement.
    - 2.3.4 Safe and positive school climate and culture for both students and staff.
    - 2.3.5 Equal access and educational opportunities for all students, including those with special learning needs.
  - 2.4 Enrollment in a district authorized charter school is open to any child who resides within the district who meets the criteria agreed upon in the charter school's contract with the district.
- 3.0 **New Charter Applications.** New charter applicants must demonstrate that a majority of the proposed school's students will reside in District boundaries or in contiguous school district boundaries to have the application be considered.
  - 3.1 **New Charter School Application Timelines:**
    - 3.1.1 For applications beginning in 2025, a charter applicant must file its application with the District during the period beginning February 1 and ending April 1, eighteen (18) months before the charter school is set to open. If any of these dates fall on a weekend, a legal holiday, or a day school is not in session, the date is extended to the next school day. The District and the applicant may jointly waive this deadline.

- 3.1.2 When the application is deemed to be complete, the Superintendent shall appoint an accountability committee facilitated by the Director of Charter Partnerships or other appointed administrative designee. The accountability committee shall include, at minimum, one person with demonstrated knowledge of charter schools, regardless of whether that person resides within the school district, one parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in a charter school in the school district, and at least one member of the District Accountability Committee (DAC). District charter schools will be invited to appoint a designee to participate on the committee. The District may also contract with outside reviewers with charter school expertise to provide feedback and advice regarding the application.
- 3.1.3 Within 15 days of the date of the Superintendent's receipt of the application, the Director of Charter Partnerships shall advise the Superintendent as to whether all components required by law and Policy have been addressed. If the application is deemed incomplete, the Director of Charter Partnerships or designee will document the missing components in a written notice to the applicant within the 15 day period. Applicants will then be permitted 15 days from the date of receipt of the incomplete application notification to provide the missing information. Alternatively, the applicant may elect to withdraw the application or submit a complete application in a future year.
- 3.1.4 After the District accepts the complete application, the Board shall schedule at least two (2) meetings to allow for public input to obtain information to assist in its consideration of the application. The first meeting will be a presentation by the applicant to the Board. The second will include question and answer opportunities from the Board to the applicant. The applicant may also be required to participate in capacity interviews with members of the District's staff and the charter application review committee.
- 3.1.5 The Board shall act on the application by resolution at a board meeting no later than June 30, or such date as may be mutually agreed upon by the District and the applicant. Through Board Resolution, the Board may approve or deny the application, or may otherwise approve the application pending satisfaction of identified expectations to be addressed during the contract negotiation process. If the application is approved with specific expectations, the Board Resolution shall state the Board's reasons for imposing such expectations. The applicant must satisfy the identified expectations before the Board may approve the contract with the school. An applicant's failure or refusal to satisfy the Board's expectations may result in the Board's denial of the application.
- 3.1.6 All negotiations between the Board and an approved District charter school on the District charter contract shall be concluded by, and all terms agreed upon, no later than 90 days after the Board resolution approving the application or September 30, whichever date is later. Such timeline may be modified by agreement of both parties, or by approval of a waiver by the State Board of Education.
- 3.1.7 A newly approved charter school will open in the fall semester of the school year following the date of the charter approval, unless another starting time is agreed upon by the District and the applicant.

3.2 **New Charter Application Format.** Applications for the formation of charter schools shall be submitted using the most recently approved version of the Colorado Standard application for New Charter Schools. New charter applications will be reviewed in consideration of standards identified in the most recently approved Colorado New Charter School Application Rubric. These documents can be found on the Charter School page of the District's website.

3.2.1 Twelve (12) printed bound copies, single-sided on white paper, not stapled, and an electronic copy of the complete application in the up-to-date version of Microsoft Word;

3.2.2 A table of contents;

3.2.3 Item headings and page numbers; and

3.2.4 The application should be organized to align with the sequence identified in the application template. Answers to application questions should avoid references to other sections of the application as a substitute for answering questions directly in the sequence in which they appear.

#### 4.0 **Applications for Charter Renewal.**

4.1 **Timeline.** A renewal application from an existing charter school chartered by the District shall be submitted by 4:00 p.m. December 1, or by 4:00 p.m. the first business day following December 1, of the school year during which the charter contract will expire. The Board of Education shall rule by resolution on the renewal application no later than February 1 of the school year during which the charter contract will expire, unless otherwise mutually agreed by the applicant and the District.

#### 4.2 **Charter Application Format.**

4.2.1 Twelve (12) printed bound copies, single-sided on white paper, not stapled, and an electronic copy of the complete application in the up-to-date version of Microsoft Word;

4.2.2 Responses to each item identified in this policy, in order;

4.2.3 A table of contents;

4.2.4 Item headings and page numbers; and

4.2.5 Specific, comprehensive responses to all required items which avoid references to other sections of the application.

4.3 **Charter Renewal application Process.** In conducting its review of the renewal application the Board may request feedback from internal staff, community members, DAC members and/or from outside reviewers with charter school expertise. The Board may also require the applicant to conduct a presentation in support of the renewal application at a Board meeting or scheduled public information meeting. At least 15 days prior to the date on which the Board will consider whether to revoke or renew a charter, District staff shall provide to the Board and the charter school a written recommendation, including the reasons supporting the recommendation, concerning whether to revoke or renew the charter.

4.4 **Renewal Application Content.** Applications for renewal must include the following information:

4.4.1 A report on the progress of the charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, pupil performance standards, content standards, targets for the measures used to

determine the levels of attainment of the performance indicators, and other terms of the charter contract and the results achieved by the charter school's students on the assessments administered through the Colorado student assessment program;

- 4.4.2 A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public and that will allow comparison of such costs to other schools, in a format required by the state board of education;
  - 4.4.3 The Annual Performance Report as provided to the Board of Education for monitoring report purposes for each year since the last charter renewal;
  - 4.4.4 A summary of significant changes proposed or enacted during the contract period, including but not limited to changes in mission, bylaws, policies, leadership structure, and waivers from District Policy and/or statute the school will request.
  - 4.4.5 Any additional materials submitted by the charter school believed to support the application or additional materials as requested by the Superintendent.
- 4.5 **Expedited Renewal.** Based upon a charter school receiving Improvement and/or Performance Status on each School Performance Framework (as issued by the Colorado Department of Education), demonstrating academic achievement, compliance with its contract, maintaining financial stability and operational sophistication, a charter school currently authorized by the District may be invited to participate in an expedited renewal process. Schools will be invited by August 1 of the school year during which the charter contract will expire. The District and the charter school may then commence negotiations on a renewal contract, which will be submitted to the Board for approval along with the charter school's request for renewal, on or before December 1.
- 4.6 **Charter Renewal Contract Negotiations.**
- 4.6.1 Through Board Resolution, the Board may approve or deny the renewal application, or may otherwise approve the renewal application pending satisfaction of identified expectations to be addressed during the contract negotiation process. If the renewal application is approved with specific expectations, the Board Resolution shall state the Board's reasons for imposing such expectations. The applicant must satisfy the identified expectations before the Board may approve the contract with the school. A renewal applicant's failure or refusal to satisfy the Board's expectations may result in the Board's denial of the renewal application.
  - 4.6.2 All contract negotiations between the Board and an approved renewal applicant shall be concluded by, and all terms agreed upon, no later than 90 days after the Board resolution approving the application. Such timeline may only be modified by agreement of both parties.
- 5.0 **Charter School Closure.** In the event that the Board takes action to revoke or non-renew a charter school's contract, the District shall implement the most recent version of the Colorado Charter School Sample Closure Framework, including, but not limited to:
- 5.1 A plan to provide educational services in accordance with the charter contract until the end of the current school year, or the agreed upon date when instruction will cease.
  - 5.2 A plan to support parents in the transition of students to schools that meet their educational needs.

- 5.3 A plan to address the charter school’s financial, legal and reporting obligations during the period that the school is concluding operations.
- 6.0 All forms for charter school applications and renewals can be found on the Charter School page of the District’s website.

LEGAL REFERENCE:

- C.R.S. 13-80-103.9
- C.R.S. 19-2-402 (3)(c)
- C.R.S. 22-2-119
- C.R.S. 22-30.5-101 et seq.
- C.R.S. 22-32-120 (5)
- C.R.S. 22-32-124
- 1 CCR 301-88