



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Charter School Renewal Process

REVISED June 2025

Resources:

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)

Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS)

City of Milwaukee Charter Schools and UWM Office of Charter Schools

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The charter renewal process is an important opportunity for charter schools to demonstrate success and compliance with the current charter contract, and an opportunity to describe new initiatives that will generate the increased academic performance required during the next contract term.

The Wisconsin charter school program was created in 1993 to provide research-based, innovative educational opportunities for students under Wisconsin State Statute 118.40. A charter school is a public school that, in accordance with enabling state statute, is exempt from most provisions of Wisconsin Statutes, Chapters 115 through 121, except as otherwise explicitly provided by law, charter school contract, or Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Administrative Policy 9.12. In return for more autonomy from state and local control, charter schools are held accountable for achieving measurable student outcomes and other performance criteria outlined in the charter school contract.

MPS follows the principles and standards for contracting, performance evaluation, and compliance monitoring established by the *National Association of Charter School Authorizers*. The evaluation and monitoring of charter schools is based on specific performance standards and compliance criteria in three broad areas: *Academic Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance*. Charter school performance and compliance audits are conducted annually. Non-instrumentality charter schools must also submit annual financial audits to ensure fiscal accountability.

Charter school contracts are initially authorized for a period of up to five years. In the last year of the contract term, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors considers contract renewal based on whether the school has met the established academic, financial, and organizational standards. In accordance with Wisconsin State Statute 118.40(3b), the Board may renew a charter school contract for one or more terms, each not exceeding five school years. The Department of Contracted School Services is responsible for the ongoing oversight, performance evaluation, and compliance monitoring of charter schools. The Charter School Contract Review Team is established to review, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding renewal of a charter school contract.

CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Charter school renewal decisions are based on a thorough analysis of a comprehensive body of objective evidence. Information and data from the following components are used in the renewal decision-making process:

- Charter School Performance Standards
 - **Academic Performance Standards** – *Measures the academic performance of a school utilizing measures such as growth, proficiency, post-secondary readiness, and mission-specific goals.*
 - **Financial Performance Standards** – *Measures the financial health and viability of schools through near-term and long-term indicators and financial management indicators.*
 - **Organizational Performance Standards** – *Provides performance and compliance targets for the legal and contractual obligations that schools must meet, such as governance, staffing, and special education requirements.*

The overall rating for each performance standard, the rating for each section, and the renewal recommendation is completed via collaboration and consensus by the MPS Charter School Contract

Review Team. The Charter School Review Team takes careful consideration of the renewal based on the application, focus groups, data, audits, and classroom observations and comes to a consensus of the recommendation as outlined in the [Charter School Scorecard](#).

RENEWAL TERMS		
Performance Percentages	Renewal Recommendation Term Length	Supports
Charter School combined score of the Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance is above 80%.	Full Term Contract Renewal Five Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual charter school report • Monitor contractual compliance (academic, financial, and organizational) • Special education LEA • At least one instructional visit per year • Monthly leadership meetings • Invitation to participate in district professional development • Other district supports as required
Charter School combined score of the Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance is between 79% and 60%.	Short Term Contract Renewal Three Year	In addition to full term supports listed above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to use the District Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) template and participate in data retreats • Monthly one-on-one meetings with school leadership • At least three instructional visits per year • Team meeting support
Charter School combined score of the Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance is below 59%.	Non-Renewal	Closure plan is executed.

CHARTER SCHOOL SCORECARD

The academic performance measures growth, proficiency, and mission-specific goals. The overall rating for each standard is completed via collaboration and consensus by the MPS Charter School Review Team. The artifacts considered in the review include, but are not limited to, the Pupil Academic Achievement Report (PAAR), application, and site visit. The review considers the performance of the charter school over the term of the contract.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RATINGS	
4	EXCEEDS STANDARD Charter School consistently exceeds the district rates by 10 or more percent over the term of the contract.
3	MEETS STANDARD (baseline) Charter School consistently meets or exceeds the district rates by up to 9 percent over the term of the contract.
2	APPROACHES STANDARD Charter School is approaching, but has not fully met expectations for performance on a given measure. School demonstrates growth each year of the contract term.
1	BELOW STANDARD Charter School is consistently below the district rates by 1 to 9 percent and/or the school continues to show a decline in school performance each year of the contract term.
0	FALLS FAR BELOW STANDARD Charter School is consistently below the district rates by 10 or more percent and/or the school continues to show a decline in school performance each year of the contract term.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RATINGS	
1	MEETS STANDARD Charter School meets or exceeds the district rate.
0	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD Charter School is below the district rate.

The financial performance measures the financial health and viability of schools through near-term and long-term indicators and financial management indicators. This standard encompasses the application for renewal and documents gathered over the term of the contract. The organizational performance measures the contractual obligations that the school must meet. This standard also encompasses the application for renewal, site visit, focus groups, and documents gathered over the term of the contract.

FINANCIAL and ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE RATINGS	
1	MEETS STANDARD Charter School meets all the provisions of the standard.
0	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD Charter School fails to comply with the provisions of the standard.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION PROCESS AND APPROXIMATE TIMELINE

Component	Timeline (Approximate)	Description
Charter School Leader Orientation	June	Charter schools in the last year of the contract term are invited to attend an information session regarding the charter school renewal process.
Letter of Intent	August	Charter schools submit a letter of intent to engage in the charter renewal process.
Charter School Renewal Application with Supporting Evidence	September	Charter schools seeking contract renewal submit an application for renewal using the template. The application should address all the elements identified, and supporting evidence should be included.
School Site Visit by MPS Charter School Contract Review Team	September - November	A full-day school site visit will be scheduled for each charter school seeking contract renewal.
Recommendations to and Action by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors	November - February	Recommendations are submitted to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors' Committee on Student Achievement and School Innovation (SASI) for consideration at its meeting by February. There is an opportunity for public comment at the School Board's SASI Committee meeting. The Committee's recommendation is submitted to the full Board for final action.

CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL LEADERS ORIENTATION

Attend the Charter School Renewal Leaders Orientation on **June 11, 2025**. This meeting will be held virtually, and the School Leader will be provided with all the necessary information on the Contract Renewal Process for the 2025-26 school year.

CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL LETTER OF INTENT

Indicate your school's intent to engage in the charter renewal process. If your school chooses to engage in the process, submit the letter of intent to Lisa Haar at haarlx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us by **August 1, 2025**. On school letterhead, include the following information:

- Date
- Intent to renew with rationale
- Renewal contact person
- School Leader signature
- School Governing Body Chair signature

If your school chooses not to engage in the process, provide a statement regarding reason(s) for non-renewal on school letterhead, which includes the School Governing Body agenda and list of participants involved in the decision-making process. Return all items along with this letter of intent to Lisa Haar at haarlx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us by **August 1, 2025**.

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

In the fall of the last year of the contract term, charter schools submit an application for contract renewal. In this application, charter school provides a clear, concise, and compelling rationale for contract renewal. It should demonstrate thorough evidence that the school has increased student achievement or has shown improvement, and that it is financially and organizationally sound. The application should describe the school's strengths and successes and outline plans for continued success in the future in the template provided and as outlined below.

Submit the completed application no later than **September 5, 2025** to Lisa Haar at haarlx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us.

[BLANK CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION TEMPLATE](#)

SECTION I: Charter School Snapshot (Appendix I)

Section I provides information around the school mission, vision, term dates, enrollment and demographic data, and state report card information. Provided by Contracted School Services.

SECTION II: Executive Summary

Charter School provides a brief summary of the school, including an overview of the mission and vision, and how the school has been faithful to implementing its educational program. Highlight the major successes, challenges, and best practices that have been implemented during the contract term.

SECTION III: Response to Current Charter School Performance

Charter School provides factual, non-anecdotal evidence to clarify, supplement, or support the performance over the current charter term as summarized in the Pupil Academic Achievement Report, Financial Snapshot, and organizational performance metrics.

Responses may include, but are not limited to, information about interim assessments or progress reports, evidence of performance on school-specific goals, and evidence of progress in any areas where the school has not previously met or is not currently meeting the performance standard. Evidence-based improvement strategies related to the school improvement plan should be discussed in this section of the application. Describe how the school has implemented the strategies, the supports provided, and outcomes related to students and adult practice.

Schools should not use the Renewal Application to tell a story about why the school should be renewed that is not related to its record of performance, or to provide anecdotal or subjective information that is not relevant to the school's performance expectations as defined by the contract.

Renewal Recommendations will be based on all evidence of school performance in the application, including, but not limited to, the school's responses in this section.

1. Academic Performance (Appendix II)

- a. **Pupil Academic Achievement Report (PAAR)**
- b. **Supplemental Academic Information:** Provide evidence to support school improvement planning, evidence-based improvement strategies, and goals to support continued growth. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in the PAAR but is important to the school's academic achievement and pertinent to the performance standards of the contract.

2. Financial Performance (Appendix III)

- a. **Financial Snapshot - [SCHOOL NAME Financial Snapshot](#)**
- b. **Supplemental Financial Information:** Provide any financial performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in the financial audit or financial snapshot but is important to the financial health of the school and pertinent to the Financial Performance Standards of the contract.
- c. **Financial Oversight:** Describe how the school and its governing board effectively establish and approve annual budgets, monitor budget implementation, and ensure the ongoing financial health and success of the school.

3. Organizational Performance

- a. **Supplemental Organizational Information:** Provide any organizational performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information that may not be captured in the annual performance and compliance audits but is important to the school's organizational viability and pertinent to the Organizational Performance Standards of the contract.
- b. **Additional Information:** Please also address the following areas, which will allow the Charter Review Team to fully assess the school's organization and the context of its operations:
 - i. Illustrate how the school has a well-functioning organizational structure. Include pertinent information about parental involvement, staffing, health and safety, school enrollment, discipline guidelines, and school facilities. Describe how the community partnerships have impacted students.
 - ii. Provide evidence that parents and students are satisfied with the school.
 - iii. Demonstrate that the school has an active and effective school governance structure. Provide examples and explain.

SECTION IV: Looking Forward - Plans for the Next Charter Term

Section IV asks the school to discuss plans for the next charter term. Schools should provide basic data and also use this section to outline a deliberate plan for sustaining success, improving where needed, and ensuring the ongoing viability of the organization.

Schools should also describe and discuss any anticipated changes to the charter contract. Changes may include proposed material changes to the original educational or organizational plans (e.g., changing the school mission, bylaws, curriculum, school calendar, etc.), as well as significant structural changes (e.g., proposing to increase total student enrollment or add new grade levels). Schools are strongly encouraged to identify any modifications they would like to make over the next charter term.

1. Academic Performance

- a. **Educational Program:** Describe any changes to the school's educational program for the term of the next charter school contract (up to five years).
 - b. **Projected Enrollment:** Complete the projected enrollment and grade level document for the term of the next charter school contract. (Appendix IV)
 - c. **School Improvement Planning:** Outline the school's goals and measurable objectives for the term of the next charter school contract, and describe how the school intends to meet these goals.
- 2. Financial Performance**
- a. **Financial Plans:** Explain the school's financial plans and forecast. Provide any long-range facility plans or fundraising efforts that support the charter school mission.
- 3. Organizational Performance**
- a. **Parent and Community Involvement:** Illustrate plans for strengthening parental and community involvement in the school's educational mission.
 - b. **School Governance:** Describe any changes to the school's governance structure.

SCHOOL LEADER SITE VISIT AND CHECKLIST

In preparation for the Charter School Site Visit, schools must prepare to respond to the work that was accomplished during the term of the current contract. A school should be able to provide artifacts and other information needed to demonstrate sound academic, financial, and organizational performance.

Approximately 4 weeks before the visit

- Identify School governing board members, parents, teachers, students, and community members who will participate in focus groups.
- Inform the school community about the site visit's purpose and the day's logistics.

Approximately 2 weeks before the visit

- Identify a secure, private space that can serve as a meeting room for the Charter School Review Team throughout the day.
- Provide the Department of Contracted School Services with the logistics for parking and room for the day of the visit.
- Provide the Department of Contracted School Services with the staff schedules.
- Confirm the focus group members and those who will be participating in the school team for any needed question-and-answer sessions.
- Collect lesson plans, student work samples, family/student/staff survey, professional development (PD) plan and calendar, charter school board meeting minutes, and other artifacts that will assist the Charter Review Team. Upload these documents into the school's Google Folder for the Contract Renewal or available on the day of the site visit.

Approximately 1 week before the visit

- Speak with the Department of Contracted School Services to confirm the site visit logistics. Please ask questions about the site visit at this time.

The day before the site visit

- Have copies prepared of any materials that you would like for the Review Team to have (school map, schedule, etc.)

- Determine which stakeholders should attend the Charter School Review Team's report out at the conclusion of the site visit and invite them to attend.

During the site visit

- Greet the Charter School Review Team at the door
- Ensure that the Charter School Review Team's meeting room remains private, and all requested documents are provided and clearly labeled.
- Be available to assist the Charter School Review Team with any additional information that might be needed.
- Have guest WiFi information available for Charter School Review Team members.

CHARTER SCHOOL SITE VISIT AGENDA (SAMPLE)

Contracted School Services will work with the school representative to create an agenda that works for the school community and includes the required activities listed below. For schools with multiple campuses, the agenda will be adjusted to accommodate.

TIME (tentative)	ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Arrival, introductions, logistics, overview	School Team and Charter School Review Team
9:00 am - 9:45 am	Classroom Observation and break	Charter School Review Team
9:45 am - 10:15 am	Student Focus Group(s)	Students and Charter School Review Team
10:15 am - 10:45 am	Parent Focus Group	Parents and Charter School Review Team
10:45 am - 11:15 am	School Governance Board Focus Group	Board Members and Charter School Review Team
11:15 am - 11:45 am	Teacher / Staff Focus Group	Teachers / Staff and Charter School Review Team
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Working Lunch and Document Review with Scoring	Charter School Review Team
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm	School Team available for questions and answers, if needed	School Team and Charter School Review Team
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Review Team Report Out and Exit Discussion	School Team and Charter School Review Team