



Charter Renewal Process FAQs

What is a charter renewal?

Every DC charter school executes a charter agreement with a term of 15 years. If a school wants to continue operating beyond these 15 years, it is required by the School Reform Act (SRA) to submit an application to the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) to renew its charter for another 15-year term. In turn, DC PCSB is required by the SRA to renew a school’s charter, unless it makes a finding that the school:

- Has committed a material violation of applicable laws (including special education laws) or the terms, conditions, standards, or procedures of its charter;
- Failed to meet its goals and student academic achievement expectations;
- Did not adhere to generally accepted accounting principles;
- Engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or
- Is not economically viable.

What does DC PCSB assess to decide whether to renew a school’s charter?

The SRA requires DC PCSB to assess a school in the three areas detailed in the table below. A school should speak to its performance in these areas in its renewal application.

Areas Assessed during Charter Renewal	Documents DC PCSB will review to assess each area
Whether the school has met the goals and student academic achievement expectations detailed in its charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school’s PMF report (to the extent it corresponds with the school’s goals) - Other supporting data and evidence (as requested by DC PCSB) regarding certain goals and expectations that cannot be captured using publicly available data
The school’s legal compliance , including compliance with special education laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual compliance reports produced by DC PCSB - Special Education compliance reports produced by OSSE - Any other pertinent documents, such as law suits, grievances, and noncompliance findings from local agencies
The school’s fiscal management, adherence to generally accepted accounting principles , and economic viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual audits - Any other pertinent financial documents

When must a school submit its renewal application?

The SRA allows a school to submit a renewal application to DC PCSB between 365 and 120 days before its charter expires. **DC PCSB requests that schools submit renewal applications in the fall of their 15th year in operation to allow adequate time for the charter renewal process and so that families can participate in school lotteries in the spring if a school’s charter is not renewed.**

What is the renewal process?

The steps of the renewal process are detailed in the table below.

Action Item	Description	Date
Pre-Renewal Meeting	DC PCSB meets with schools preparing for renewal to discuss the process	Spring of the school's 14th year in operation
Qualitative Site Review (QSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DC PCSB visits every school campus to observe the school's instructional program - DC PCSB publishes a QSR report of its findings and issues it to the school - QSR report findings can be referenced by DC PCSB as evidence that the school has met its goals and expectations 	Any time during two years before the school's charter expires
Submission of renewal application	Schools will submit applications and supporting documentation electronically to Epicenter.	DC PCSB requests schools to submit it in the fall of their 15th year in operation
DC PCSB informs the school of its right to an informal renewal hearing	The SRA affords schools the right to request an informal, public renewal hearing before the DC PCSB Board.	DC PCSB must send this notice not later than 15 days after receipt of a school's renewal application.
DC PCSB provides a preliminary charter renewal report to the school	This report includes an assessment of the school's academic performance, legal compliance, and fiscal management, and a recommendation to the DC PCSB Board regarding whether it should renew the school's charter.	Contemporaneous with the notice of right to a renewal hearing
School elects whether to request a hearing	Schools can submit their request for a hearing via email.	The school must request a hearing within 15 days of receiving notice of its right to a hearing from DC PCSB
DC PCSB Board conducts the informal renewal hearing (if requested)	School leaders and board members may present any information they wish to the DC PCSB Board and should be prepared to answer questions the DC PCSB Board may have regarding their school's performance and proposed renewal.	DC PCSB Board must hold the informal hearing no later than 30 days after the school requests it.
DC PCSB Board votes whether to renew the school's charter	If possible, the DC PCSB Board will vote on the school's renewal during a regularly scheduled board meeting.	<p>If the school does not request a hearing, the vote must occur no later than 30 days after DC PCSB informed the school of its right to such a hearing.</p> <p>If the school requests a hearing, the vote must occur no later than 30 days after the date of the hearing.</p>

What are Potential Renewal Outcomes?

The DC PCSB Board may vote to:

1. Renew the school's charter for another fifteen-year term;
2. Renew the school's charter but (in the event that the performance of one or more of a school's campuses is negatively affecting the performance of the Local Education Agency) under the condition that one or more of the school's campuses that do not meet the standard for renewal be closed; or
3. Not renew the school's charter. Per the SRA, schools have the right to appeal a nonrenewal decision to "an appropriate court of the District of Columbia."

What happens after a school's charter is renewed?

DC PCSB will work with the school to update its charter agreement for the next fifteen years, including updates to its goals and academic achievement expectations. Renewed charter agreements must be executed by the time the school's initial charter agreement expires to ensure the school receives its first quarterly payments on time.

How can a school prepare for a charter renewal now?

1. Ensure that the school's charter is up-to-date, particularly its goals and expectations.
2. Begin analyzing its performance in meeting its goals and expectations and drafting the charter renewal application.
3. Ensure that the school has cured any points of legal noncompliance identified by DC PCSB or OSSE.

Can a school amend its charter, particularly its goals and expectations, prior to charter renewal?

A school may submit a petition to amend its charter. The DC PCSB Board will generally not approve amendments to a school's goals and expectations unless they are submitted more than two years before the school's charter expires.

Can I discuss the renewal process with DC PCSB staff?

DC PCSB encourages schools to plan for the renewal process well in advance, and DC PCSB staff is available to discuss the renewal process in general, or as it applies to your school.

DC PCSB staff contact for charter renewals:

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