

# District 49

Charter School Renewal Application



## **Introduction**

The mission of Falcon 49 School District's charter authorizing is to promote high quality and effective public charter school options that are autonomous and accountable for improved academic outcomes for a diverse student population. Through our policies, practices and procedures as a quality authorizer, the district will provide high standards for all schools, which will protect student and public interests.

To maintain a solid relationship with its charter schools, the district is committed to a fair and transparent process for charter school renewal. The renewal process is viewed as a series of discussions and data reviews to make wise decisions for students in the district.

The renewal application is a collection of documents provided by the charter school, which will be discussed with the district staff and the district Board of Education. The district will also supply documents to the Renewal Body of Evidence such as academic data analysis, financial statements, Unified Improvement Plans, School Performance Framework reports, Annual Performance Reports, and any Letters of Concern/Reprimand/Revocation that have been issued, etc.

According to C.R.S. 22-30.5-110, the governing body of a charter school shall submit a renewal application to the chartering local board of education by December 1, the year before the charter contract term expires. The local board will then rule by resolution on the renewal application by February 1 of the year the charter expires.

The law goes on to state that a renewal application shall contain:

- A.** 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; and
- B.** 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 will allow comparison of such costs to other schools or other comparable organizations in a format required by the state board of education.

The renewal application will be organized under three categories: academics, operations/finances, and governance. Charter schools meeting expectations on the School Performance Framework will undergo an abbreviated process unless there are concerns with operation/finance and governance issues.

The renewal application is due to the district by December 1 and will be, at most, 12 pages of narrative. Attachments may be submitted and are not included in the 12-page maximum length.

### **Instructions and Information for Completing the Application**

- Each section begins with a description of what should be included and suggested resources to assist in completing the application.
- Whenever possible, include specific data or examples of evidence in the narrative rather than general assertions or anecdotes. It is good to reference the school's key documents or data.
- The renewal application should be submitted electronically with separate files for the application and each attachment. All attachments should be labeled in the format "School Name\_Attachment Name." The attachment name should correspond to the list of requested documents.
- The completed application and attachments should be emailed to [verenice.gutierrez@d49.org](mailto:verenice.gutierrez@d49.org) by December 1st.

## Part One: Narrative DUE SEPTEMBER 1

Part One is designed for the charter school to have the opportunity to supply qualitative information on the systems and structures used by the school and also provide information that will be used in discussions with the district and the District's Charter School Review Visit. If a source document is more applicable than a narrative, provide the source document and specific location for the information.

### 1. Executive Summary

Provide a succinct narrative about your school. Include why it was formed, what has changed since the last renewal, any planned increases or decreases in enrollment in the next five years, any plans for facility renovation or relocation planned in the next five years, alignment or changes to the original vision and mission of the school, and anything else that is relevant for the reader to know before reviewing the renewal application.

### 2. Current Information About the School

School Name
School Mailing Address
School Physical Address
Year Opened
School Director/Principal
Chair, Board of Directors
Would you like to discuss a revision to the maximum enrollment figure and/or grade configuration listed in the current contract or that the school is currently serving? <sup>1</sup>

Table 1

Enrollment Projections						
By Grade	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2030/31	2031/32
Pre						
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

<sup>1</sup> Note that if a proposed significant expansion or addition of grade levels is planned during the next charter period, the school must provide additional information and documentation.

8						
9						
10						
11						
12						

### 3. Vision and Mission

- a. Contractual Vision and Mission Statements. The charter contract and original charter school application contain the school's vision and mission statements. Are these statements still accurate? If a revision is being proposed as a part of renewal, identify the proposed language and why the change is being requested.
- b. Key Design Elements. Provide an overview of the school's design and explain if there have been any modifications since the last renewal. Describe the school's instructional methods, school culture, and any key design elements that are unique to the school. Briefly describes the research basis for these components and why they were selected for the school's student population.

### 4. Education Program

- a. Curriculum. Explain how the curriculum is aligned, or is in the process of being aligned, to the Common Core standards. How does the school leader ensure what is being taught in the classroom aligns with the Common Core? Are any data points collected to monitor this?

### 5. School Culture

- a. Student Discipline. Describe any school-wide recognition for positive behavior and its effectiveness in managing discipline issues. Provide discipline data that is available for the previous renewal period. Attach the school's discipline matrix that shows the types of behavior and the related consequences.
- b. Culture. Explain key components of the school-wide culture, including recognition for student academic achievement, extracurricular activities, clubs, or student leadership groups (National Honor Society, Student Council, etc.).

### 6. Leadership

- a. Administration. Explain any administrative changes made since the last renewal. This would include both the lead administrator and any administrative staff changes. Are any changes

anticipated in the next renewal period? What systems are in place to ensure stability within the administrative structure?

- b. Director/Principal.** Provide the resume of the current Principal as an attachment. In the narrative, explain why this Principal was selected and describe how the Principal was selected. As an attachment, provide the Principal evaluation instrument used by the board and the board policy for Principal evaluation. Further, either describe the succession plan or the board's policy for how the next Principal would be selected should there be a vacancy in the position.

## **7. Teacher Quality**

- a. Instruction.** Describe any common instructional techniques used by the school. This could include the type of teaching method, differentiation, use of objectives, etc.
- b. Professional Development.** Explain any systems or structures in place to support teacher career advancement and provide any examples of teachers who have moved through the system.
- c. Highly Qualified Teachers.** Provide the percentage of teachers that are highly qualified and an explanation of how the school plans to achieve and maintain a rate of 100% of its teachers meeting the definition of highly qualified.

## **8. Management and Operations**

- a. Growth Plan.** If the school is in a growth pattern, note the reason for growth and a timeline for achieving total capacity. If the school is not in a growth pattern, note "Not Applicable."
- b. Business Operations.** Describe the business operations conducted at the school, including the job titles of individuals who serve in the various roles. Attach job descriptions for the key administrative positions.

If there is any other entity involved, such as a CPA, business services contractor, management company, or financial planner, include the resume or company description and a brief explanation of why that entity was selected and the general nature of the contract.

- c. Human Relations.** Explain which administrator handles HR functions for the school and his/her qualifications. A job description should be attached. How often are employees evaluated? Attach the employee handbook and any other relevant employee policies. Attach a sample employee agreement.

## **9. Finances**

- a. Audit.** Attach the school's most recent financial audit.
- b. Budget.** Describe how the budget is developed, who is involved, the board's role, the timeline, and any policies the board uses for budget development.
- c. Policies and Procedures.** Attach any financial policies adopted by the board and any administrative procedures used by the school. Explain how these policies and procedures are periodically reviewed and undergo revisions.

## **10. Governance**

- a. Governing Board.** Attach a completed board disclosure form for each board member unless these were already uploaded to the School Briefcase at the beginning of the school year. Identify the board members by officer position in the narrative. Further, explain how often the board meets, how they lead the school, how parents are involved, a description of board committees, and any other relevant information explaining governance at the charter school. Attach a current copy of the board's policies.
- b. Board Strategic Plan.** Attach the current board strategic plan unless it was uploaded to the School Briefcase at the beginning of the school year. In the narrative, explain how often the board regularly reviews the strategic plan, how it was originally developed, who is involved in updating the plan, and how the school's stakeholders receive information about the strategic plan.
- c. Board Dashboard.** Attach the board's dashboard unless it was already uploaded to the School Briefcase at the beginning of the school year. In the narrative, explain how the board uses the data included in the dashboard, why the performance metrics were selected, how often the board reviews the dashboard, how it uses it to impact decision-making, and who updates the data in the dashboard.

## **11. Management Company (if applicable)**

- a. Performance Agreement.** Attach the current performance agreement and in the narrative note if there will be any changes to the agreement in the future.
- b. Human Resources.** Describe the company's employment policies, including hiring, retention, and professional development. Also, describe any succession planning programs to train future leaders and any personnel involved in this process.

- C. Academic Performance.** Explain how the management company supports increased student achievement and holds itself to a high standard for academic excellence.
- D. Central Office Support.** Note how the company's central office supports the charter school, including functions it performs on behalf of the school and available resources. Explain how the management company supports the operational and financial success of the charter school.
- E. Decision Making.** Attach any decision-making matrix in use. Describe how the school leader is recruited, selected, and evaluated, making note of the role of the management company and the governing board. Explain how instructional decisions are made and by whom.

## **Documents to Submit with Part One**

*Note that if these documents have already been submitted to School Briefcase this school year, they do not need to be attached to this renewal application.*

- ☐ School discipline matrix
- ☐ Principal/Director resume
- ☐ Principal/Director evaluation instrument
- ☐ Organizational chart
- ☐ Job descriptions for key administrative personnel
- ☐ Employee handbook
- ☐ Employee agreement
- ☐ Last financial audit
- ☐ Current board policies, including financial policies
- ☐ Board disclosure form for each board member
- ☐ Board strategic plan
- ☐ Board Dashboard
- ☐ Graduation requirements (high schools only)
- ☐ School discipline policy
- ☐ Parent/student handbook
- ☐ 3-year budget
- ☐ ESP/charter school performance agreement, if applicable
- ☐ ESP/charter school decision-making matrix, if applicable
- ☐ ESP evaluation protocol and instrument, if applicable



## **Part Two: Data      DUE DECEMBER 1**

Insert Annual Performance Report Summary

Optional: Insert any additional data the school determines is useful to consider.

### **Data Reflection**

1. Based on the school's academic results for 2023-24, what are the school's three academic priorities for the upcoming school year? (These could be the same or similar to the UIP priorities.)
2. What are the school's three main strategies to address these priorities?
3. Discuss any progress toward closing the achievement gap and what strategies will be implemented to close these gaps further.
4. Based on other data from 2023-24, what are the school's top three non-academic priorities?
5. What are the three main strategies being implemented to achieve these non-academic priorities?
6. What are the school's targets for state testing and SPF performance next year?
7. Does the school's governing board use a dashboard? If so, please attach it and reflect its use (frequency, the meaning of discussions, impact on decision-making, how metrics were selected, etc.).
8. Optional: Please add any other items for which data is relevant and impacts decision-making.

## Charter School Renewal Process

The Charter School Act (C.R.S. 22-30.5-110) outlines specific requirements for the contents of a renewal application, the latest date for submission, and the date by which a district must act on the renewal application.

- By December 1<sup>st</sup> of the year before the year in which the charter expires, the charter school must submit a renewal application.
- The chartering local board of education shall rule by resolution on the renewal application by February 1, the year the charter expires.
- The renewal application must consist of the following:
  - A report on the progress of the charter
  - A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school.

The district has implemented a charter school renewal process that aligns with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA's) best practices. The process includes a renewal application using the district's Request for Proposals and submitted by December 1, a "capacity interview" of school leaders and charter school governing board members, a response to written questions posed after review of the renewal application and a District Site Review (DSR) conducted by charter school experts. In addition, the DAAC subcommittee for charter schools and district staff reviews the charter renewal application.

A DSR is a two-day site visit by three or four charter school experts that evaluate the charter school based on the ten standards of charter school quality. There are 127 indicators under these standards. The charter school receives a ranking of 1, 2, or 3, with 3 being proficient. The final reports include 1) an executive summary of the evaluation and 2) a scored rubric with clarifying comments. The reports are usually available to the district about one week after the visit. After review by the district, the reports are provided to the charter school leader.

## Timeline

**August:** Representatives from the district attend the charter school's board meeting and present the renewal Application. A DSR is scheduled.

**September 1:** PART 1 of the renewal application is due to the district.

**October 1:** A DSR is completed, and the report is submitted to the district.

**December 1:** Charter school submits a renewal application to the district. Drafts are provided to district staff and DAAC charter school subcommittee members for review.

**Mid-December:** Charter school leaders (governing board and key administrators) meet with district staff to discuss the renewal application and respond to questions. Charter school leaders will be given written questions to respond to in writing by early January.

**Mid-December:** DAAC charter school subcommittee members meet to begin their evaluation process; evaluations are due by Dec. 20. Renewal applications are provided to district staff for evaluation; evaluations are due by Dec. 20.

**Early January:** District staff compiles the renewal information into an executive summary for the Board of Education. The BOE meeting cover sheet and the renewal executive summary contain a recommendation from the district staff on the renewal application.

**January BOE meeting:** The Board of Education conducts a hearing on the proposed charter school renewal and rules by resolution. Applicants are encouraged to attend the board meeting and will be introduced by district staff presenting the agenda item to the BOE. Charter school leaders do not make a presentation.

**February 1:** Statutory deadline for the BOE to decide on the charter school renewal application.

*Note: The BOE may extend its decision if there is approval from the charter school to waive the statutory Feb. 1 deadline.*

## **Waivers**

Requests for a waiver from state law or rule and district policies must not be submitted with the renewal application. However, they are required as a part of the contract negotiation process, which by law must be completed within 75 days of the BOE's vote on the renewal application. The district has guidelines and samples for requesting these waivers.

## **Charter Contracts**

The district uses the state's model contract language, updated with recent laws. The district can provide examples from other charter contracts that have recently been negotiated. Remember to always use legal counsel for contracting issues.