

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Charter Renewal Protocol

Charter Renewal

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the approval process and timeline to renew a charter?

At minimum, the process includes:

- Submission of charter renewal documents.
- WCCUSD Board holds a Public Hearing at a regularly scheduled board meeting **within 30 days*** of charter renewal document submission.
- WCCUSD staff performs a renewal site visit and charter school performance analysis.
- Staff drafts and submits report with recommendation to WCCUSD board.
- WCCUSD Board makes a Decision at a regularly scheduled board meeting **within 60 days*** of the initial submission.

**These dates may be extended by mutual agreement by up to 30 days.*

What information should petitioners include in the charter renewal?

At minimum, the charter renewal documentation should include:

- A cover letter signed by the governing board president or designee authorizing the submission of the charter renewal application.
- A performance report (please see the WCCUSD performance report guidelines, with particular focus on the *Evaluation Criteria for Charter Renewal*).
- Submission of an updated charter petition including inclusion of required content by all newly enacted laws and regulations pertaining to charter schools since the prior authorization. The renewal should also include an Executive Summary that outlines changes to the petition. The renewal should be in red-lined format-- showing clearly any changes.
- Supplemental materials should be submitted with the charter renewal application, as needed to demonstrate and present evidence for a reasonably comprehensive description of the required charter petition elements as specified in Education Code 47605. Education Code 47605(g) requires that the charter petition must also include information regarding the proposed operation of the school including the potential effects of the school, the specific location of the proposed facilities, the manner in which the administrative services are to be provided, and potential civil liability effects.
- SEVEN binders of paper copies with appropriate sequential page numbering, and a comprehensive table of contents are to be submitted to the WCCUSD staff. Also include one electronic copy submitted on a thumb drive. Please make all submissions in WORD format only, with the budget projections and cash flow information presented in EXCEL.

When should a Charter Renewal Application be submitted to the District?

Renewal requests may be submitted using the Charter petition dates and relevant MOUs as a guide. Please work collaboratively with the charter office to avoid scheduling challenges for the WCCUSD

school board. As the process can take up to 90 days, we encourage petitioners to begin preparations a year in advance, and keep in close contact with the district personnel concerning timelines and plans.

What happens after the school submits its Charter Renewal Request?

District staff will schedule a public hearing either within the required deadline of 30 days*. The public hearing will be at a regularly scheduled WCCUSD Board meeting, so the petitioners may wish to consult the Board calendar**. District staff will conduct a site visit and perform its analysis, producing a Staff Report and Recommendation that will be presented to the Board.

* May be extended by mutual agreement.

**See the WCCUSD website, and consider that staff must submit a précis for inclusion of any item under consideration at a board meeting. Précis must be drafted and submitted up to 3 weeks in advance of a Board meeting.

What is the purpose of the public hearing?

The hearing enables petitions and the public to speak regarding the charter school's renewal. Interested parties are provided the opportunity to speak to the board regarding either support or opposition for the renewal.

What is the process followed for the hearing?

The school will be given 10 minutes to make a presentation. Speaker cards need not be filled out for the 15 minute presentation, but if additional speakers wish to speak and are not part of the presenting team, they must fill out cards available at the meeting. Depending on the evenings' agenda and the number of those wishing to address the board, allotted time may vary from 3 to 2 minutes, so speakers should plan accordingly. ***If the presenting team intends to use a Powerpoint presentation, it must be submitted to staff via thumb drive or email in Google slide format at least two weeks prior to the board meeting, or you may not be allowed to use your materials. Work with the charter schools office for guidance on the deadline.***

How is the school evaluated?

The charter coordinator will use a protocol that is aligned with Education Code and best practices to review the Charter School during the site visit, petition review, and performance analysis. Staff may conduct a one day site visit intended to corroborate and augment the written renewal documents. During the visit staff may request that parents, school leaders, charter school board members, teaching staff and students made available for interviews or focus groups. Staff will also review documents and materials to support a thorough review.

These steps are required to provide due diligence background necessary to make an informed recommendation to the Board. Based on the visit, and the submitted written information for the renewal petition, staff will make a recommendation. The Board will make the final decision.

When does the renewal site visit occur?

Depending on agreements between the District Coordinator and Charter Site Supervisor or Governing Board members, the visit may take place at any time.

Will the Public be allowed to speak at the Board Hearing the final decision meeting concerning the renewal?

Yes, the public are allowed to speak, and must fill out a speaker card available near the entrance to the auditorium. We recommend that school representatives attend including Site Director, Board and support staff.

What happens if a charter renewal is denied?

Charter School petitioners have two options:

1. If a school chooses not to pursue an appeal, it must cease operation on the last day of the charter term. The District will enact closure procedures at that time. These are often listed in MOUs.
2. A school may choose to appeal the decision, and may work with the County Board of Education.

Charter Renewal Protocol

The following is intended to support understanding of the legal requirements as set forth in the Education Codes that guide Charter School oversight.

Legislature's Intent

The legislature's intent regarding accountability for charter schools is to:

- "Improve pupil learning" (Education code 47601 (a)).
- "Hold the schools...accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems" Education Code 47601(f)).

Further, the Charter Schools Act (EC 47601) intends to:

- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- (e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- (g) Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

Critical Assumptions Regarding Charter School Renewal

1. Innovation, autonomy and public school choice are intended to provide the means to increase student performance.
 2. Renewal decisions should be based primarily on past performance, rather than future plans.
 3. Freedom from regulations and restrictions are offered in exchange for high accountability. The law suggests that charter schools should be held to a higher standard than traditional public schools, and that increased student achievement is paramount.
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The Prerequisite for Charter Renewal: AB1137

Education Code 47607(b) states that once a charter school has been operation for 4 years, it shall meet at least one of the following criteria prior to being reauthorized pursuant to paragraph 1 of subdivision (a).

The school must have:

1. Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the piro year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years.

Or

2. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years.

Or

3. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years.

Or

4. (A) The entity that granted the charter determines that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend. Also, the evaluation may take into account the performance of other schools in the district with similar demographics served in the charter school.

Renewal is evaluated based on a record of performance, a sound educational program, and the capacity for implementation. Accordingly, the Charter renewal petition will be assess against the past performance of the Charter School taking future plans into account.

Performance is Based on the Following

- **Is the academic program a success?**
- **Is the school organization effectively lead and managed?**
- **Is the school being operated prudently and meeting all regulatory requirements?**
- **Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter and MOU?**

Charter School Petition Renewal, Site Visit

Charter renewal visits shall be conducted by District personnel, and every attempt will be made to accommodate each school's schedule. We encourage you to share information with your staff and board members, and begin preparations early. District personnel will work directly with the school leader, who may contact us with questions.

In some cases, the District Charter Coordinator will invite others from District staff with appropriate expertise to accompany him or her—for example if questions arise concerning a specific program such as English Language Development, or Fiscal concerns. In other instances, the Coordinator may have a list of written questions from the members of the evaluation team. These will be shared and researched during the visit.

In most cases, the renewal visit will take place over the course of a single day, and charter school leaders can expedite the process by having all requested information available. It is preferable that longer documents be placed on a thumb drive that includes folders for each of the items listed below. The visit will include classroom observations, teacher interviews, and interviews with other stakeholders, such as board members, students, and school leaders.

If not provided in your renewal documents, please prepare and submit prior to the visit each of the following:

- **Staff Directory.** The directory should include teachers' room numbers, plus grades and subject taught. The directory should also list non-instructional staff, including persons in the school who may not be employees, such as special education contractors or cafeteria and security personnel employed by the school.
- **Teacher Roster and Certification.** If not previously submitted, include each current teacher's certification, teaching area and experience.
- **Organizational Chart.** Please provide a chart that includes *all* staff members and illustrates the school's current reporting structure. It need not name individual staff members, but should reflect all positions in the school, plus indicate relationships with any management company or charter management organization.
- **Teacher Schedules.** Provide schedules that clearly indicate where each teacher will be and what subject and grade s/he will teach during each scheduled period on the day(s) of the visit. Please also indicate non-instructional time, e.g., prep or planning periods, team meetings, lunch, etc. Again, in order to facilitate scheduling, please clarify class names and locations. If a teacher's schedule contains class names for internal purposes such as "Harvard" or "801B," please provide an explanatory key. District personnel will use this information to schedule teacher interviews with every effort to avoid conflicts with classroom instruction.
- **Assessment List and Calendar.** Provide a list of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments by grade level administered during the year; also provide the current annual calendar of when they are administered.
- **Professional Development Calendar.** Provide a calendar of professional development opportunities planned for the staff.

- **Board Materials.**
 - List of Board members with contact information, committee assignments, officer positions held and/or a list of non-trustee officers
 - Board Policy manual or compilation
 - Board orientation material or “board book”
 - Open Meetings Law policy
 - Minutes from entire current charter term (including committee meeting minutes)
 - Agendas and/or meeting packets
 - Notice documents (Public notice and notice to Board members)

- **School Policies.**
 - Current Admissions/Enrollment Policy
 - Student Discipline (including the Special Education Discipline Policy, if Different)
 - Dress Code Policy
 - Complete Parent and/or Student Handbook from current academic year
 - Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policies, annual notices, and sample waiver form (if applicable)
 - Freedom of Information Law Policy (which should, at a minimum, identify the Records Access Officer, Records Access Appeals Officer, and provide appropriate contact information for each), Subject Matter List, and List of Officers and Employees (which should identify all personnel, including the board, along with their public office address and salary)

- **Complaint Policy.**
 - Should clearly articulate how to file a formal complaint alleging a violation of law or the charter and provide appropriate appeals information)

- **Personnel.**
 - Personnel policies and/or employee manual
 - List of all staff employed by the school (including non-academic staff) and current certification status. The list should include any maiden names that may be used on certification or fingerprint records
 - Collective Bargaining Agreement(s), if applicable

- **Students**
 - Health services policies, including medication policy
 - Student retention/promotion policy
 - Student roster indicating special education status (including placement/services), ELL status (including standing – e.g., beginner, advance, etc.), and FRPL status
 - Current copy of student waitlist, if applicable
 - Outreach efforts, with attention to all demographics

- **Fiscal**
 - Copy of audit (if not previously submitted)
 - Three year projections, with back-up assumptions
 - Three year cash flow projections

Logistics

The renewal site visit team appreciates the following accommodations:

- **Meeting and Work Space.** Please provide a table and private space to compile information and interview participants from the school community.
- **Coordination.** We ask that you designate someone, such as the school leader, to serve as liaison for the visit. That person should be available for the duration of the visit to help troubleshoot, and provide guidance or further information insuring an expeditious visit.

Please submit the following Self Reflection report prior to the visit.

Reflective Report (To be answered by the school leader and team)

1. How effective is your school overall? (Select 1-5, please)				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are its strengths? What are the main priorities for improvement?				

2. How well do students achieve?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? In which subjects and grades do students do best, and why? In which subjects and grades is improvement needed, and what action is being taken? Is there evidence of differences in attainment according to gender, ethnic background, Special Education status or other grouping? If so, what actions are being taken?				

3. How effective is the quality of instruction, including teaching, learning and curriculum?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? Which are the strongest features of teaching and learning, and why? What aspects of teaching and learning most need improvement, and what actions are being taken?				

4. How effective is the assessment of student learning?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are the strongest features of assessment? What formative and summative assessments are in use? What aspects need improvement and what action is being taken?				

5. How effective are strategies and processes to ensure your school enrolls a diverse student population, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, or foster youth?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are the strongest aspects of your efforts in this respect? What aspects need improvement, and what action is being taken?				

6. How effective is the leadership and management of the school?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? How does your school monitor teacher and staff implementation of the school's chosen curriculum, including alignment with the Common Core State Standards? What steps are taken if the staff is not effectively implementing the curriculum? How are teachers supported in improvement and growth? In what ways do the leadership and management of the academic performance need improvement? In what ways are leadership and management excelling?				

7. How well does the charter school collaborate with parents to encourage active participation the their child's education?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are the strongest features, and why? What most needs attention, and what action is being taken?				

8. How effective are the methods and strategies by which your school assures that students with disabilities are provided a fee, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment and that English Language Learners are supported?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are the strongest elements of your program? What most needs attention, and what action is being taken?				

9. How effective is the governing board of the school?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? Please describe the process for selecting your governing board members. List all current board members, board committees and provide a current resume for each individual as an attachment to this report. Describe the governing board's primary roles and responsibilities. How effectively does the governing board work with the school leader(s)?				

10. How effective is the school at ensuring fiscal soundness and legal compliance?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What are the strongest features, and why? What most needs attention, and what action is being taken?				

11. How effectively is the school managed fiscally?				
Excellent: 5	4	3	2	Unsatisfactory: 1
Please rely on and share data to answer: How do you know? What aspects of the school's fiscal operations work best? In what ways can the school's fiscal systems or operations be improved, and what action is being taken?				

Name of school:			Name of School Leader:		
Financial Information			Year	2016-17	
Total Operational Budget			Per Student Revenue		
Total Expenditure			Expenditure Per Student		
Balance brought forward from previous year			Projected balance carried forward to next year		
Special Populations	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2015-16	2016-17
Percentage of students receiving <i>free/reduced lunch</i>					
Percentage of ELL students					
Number of students with special educational needs					
Pupil mobility in the school in prior year				Number of students	
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission					
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving (excluding expulsions)					
Attendance for current and prior year				% Attendance	
School data					
Background of students 2015-16	Number of students/Percent of Students		Discipline - prior school year (15-16)	Suspension # of incidents	Expulsion # of incidents
African-American	/		African-American		
Asian/Pacific Islander	/		Asian/Pacific Islander		
Hispanic	/		Hispanic		
White	/		White		
Mixed/ No Response	/		Mixed/ No Response		

West Contra Costa Unified School District11.19

ELL	/		ELL		
SPED	/		SPED		
Gender (male/female)	/		Gender (male/female)	/	/
Homeless Students	/		Homeless Students		

Graduation Information	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16
Graduation Rate					
Retention Rate (% of graduates enrolled since grade 9)					
<i>Post Graduation Plans</i>					
% attending 4-year college					
% attending 2-year college					
% attending vocational/technical training					
% joined military					
% working exclusively					

Teacher Recruitment/Retention					
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16
Total # of Teachers					
% New Hires					
% Retained from Prior Year					
Total number of vacant teaching posts currently (FTE)					

AYP	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16
AYP Met?					
% AMOS Met					
% Proficient-AMOS: African-American					
% Proficient-AMOS: Asian/PI					
% Proficient-AMOS: Hispanic					
% Proficient-AMOS: Mixed/No response					
% Proficient-AMOS: White					
% Proficient-AMOS: Socioeconomically Disadvantaged					
ELL					

Students with disabilities					
<i>CST/ CAASPP</i>	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-16
ELA					
Proficient/Advanced or Standard Exceeded/ met					
Basic/Proficient/ Or Standard Nearly Met					
Below Basic/Far Below Basic Or Standard Not Met					
MATH					
Proficient/Advanced or Standard Exceeded/ met					
Basic/Proficient/ Or Standard Nearly Met					
Below Basic/Far Below Basic Or Standard Not Met					

SCIENCE					
Proficient/Advanced or Standard Exceeded/ met					
Basic/Proficient/ Or Standard Nearly Met					
Below Basic/Far Below Basic Or Standard Not Met					