



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

October 5, 2023

Ms. Jane Swan, Chief Executive Officer
Reach Cyber Charter School
750 East Park Drive
Suite 204
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Dear Ms. Swan,

Based on a thorough review of Reach Cyber Charter School's (Reach) renewal application and other documentation and a mutual agreement concerning enrollment parameters, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) is renewing Reach's charter, subject to the information contained in this letter and any areas for correction noted within the Decision to Renew Charter and Appendix A. The renewed charter shall be effective for a term of five years, beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2029.

The Department will continue to monitor and examine Reach's operations throughout this term to determine whether Reach is meeting the terms of its charter, the requirements of the Charter School Law, and other applicable state and federal mandates. By granting a renewed charter, the Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to notify Reach of any violation of the terms and conditions of its charter and to seek correction of such violation. In addition, the Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to take action against Reach in the form of charter revocation or nonrenewal for reasons including, but not limited to, those discussed in this letter or the attached Decision to Renew Charter and Appendix A.

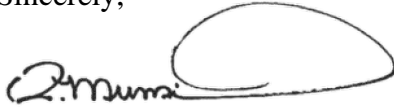
Please note that the Department will continue to monitor the progress of Reach's students by reviewing students' academic achievement, assessment participation rate, academic growth, and adjusted cohort graduation rates. Beginning Fall 2018, the academic performance of all public schools, including cyber charter schools, is evaluated based on standards for annual meaningful differentiation as identified by [Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan](#). Each year, the Department will calculate each public school's progress toward meeting or exceeding long-term goals.

The Department will require any cyber charter school that is designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI) to take specific corrective actions. Through regional improvement teams, the Department will provide technical assistance and support in developing, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based strategies aligned to each school's most pressing needs. Cyber charter schools designated for CSI or A-TSI will be required to partner with regional improvement teams for the duration of

their designation. Failure to exit CSI status may serve as a basis for revocation or nonrenewal of the cyber charter's charter.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Randy Seely, Division Chief, Division of Charter Schools by email at rseely@pa.gov or by telephone at (717) 705-0353.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Mumin", followed by a large, stylized loop that extends to the right.

Khalid N. Mumin, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Reach Cyber Charter School : Charter Renewal Effective:
Renewal Application : July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029

Decision to Renew Charter

Pursuant to the Charter School Law (CSL), 24 P.S. §§ 17-1701-A – 17-1751-A, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) has the authority and responsibility to renew or not renew the charter of a cyber charter school. 24 P.S. § 17-1741-A(a)(3). The Department may decide not to renew a charter based on the criteria set forth in section 1729-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1729-A. A cyber charter school must be in compliance with the material conditions, standards, and procedures contained in the written charter; meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4; meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management and audit requirements; be in compliance with the CSL and all other applicable law; provide all material components of each student’s education; and maintain the financial ability to provide services.

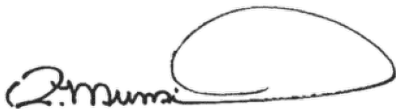
The Department granted a charter to Reach Cyber Charter School (Reach) for the term of July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2019. Reach submitted a renewal application to continue operating a cyber charter school and has continued to operate its cyber charter school by extension of the previous charter term until such time as the Department finalized a renewal decision.

Based on a comprehensive review of Reach’s operation during the charter term beginning July 1, 2016, including the information submitted with its renewal application; information gathered by the Department’s representatives; and other sources of data, the Department is renewing Reach’s charter to operate a cyber charter school, subject to this Decision to Renew Charter, the areas for correction noted within Appendix A, and the mutually agreed-upon enrollment parameter outlined herein and in the charter. The mutually agreed-upon enrollment parameter of 10,000 enrolled students may not be surpassed while Reach is designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).

The renewed charter shall be effective for a term of five (5) years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2029.

The Department reserves the right to continue to assess and review Reach’s operation and to take action to revoke Reach’s charter based on any information that was or could have been reviewed prior to this charter renewal or discovered during future or ongoing assessments or reviews. The Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to notify Reach of any violation and to take action against Reach, if necessary, including revocation or nonrenewal of the charter.

The Department is also providing written notice to Reach of areas of the operation of its cyber charter school that require attention and correction. This notice is provided to allow Reach the opportunity to address areas that may not be in compliance with applicable requirements. Failure to address areas identified by the Department may result in additional action by the Department, including revocation of the charter.



Khalid N. Mumin, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

Date Mailed: October 5, 2023

APPENDIX A

Pursuant to section 1742-A of the Charter School Law (CSL), 24 P.S. § 17-1742-A, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) has conducted an assessment and review of Reach Cyber Charter School (Reach). Based on this assessment and review, the Department has identified areas of operation which Reach must further examine and address.

Reach must be prepared to provide information and documentary evidence to the Department during any future Department review of the cyber charter school's operations that demonstrates that the cyber charter school operates in compliance with all applicable requirements. Additionally, as described below, Reach must be prepared to provide the Department with information and documentary evidence as to how it addressed or is working to address each of the areas identified below:

- Academic Proficiency
- Academic Growth

Reach must improve its assessment and accountability program.

A cyber charter school must meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4, including state student assessment requirements in Chapter 4. 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.51-4.52. The Department expects all schools, including cyber charter schools, to improve academically from the prior year, as demonstrated by various indicators, individually, collectively, or in any combination.

The Department examined various indicators related to Reach's academic performance over its charter term, including, but not limited to, academic achievement and academic growth. For the past several years, students in all grade levels and all subjects have significantly underperformed on the PSSA and Keystone Exams, specifically when compared with traditional public schools.

In 2020-2021, Reach's combined ESSA Indicator for ELA proficiency was 51.9% and in 2021-22, its combined ESSA Indicator for ELA proficiency was 40.7%, significantly behind the average of traditional public schools (57.5% and 58.2%, respectively). More concerning is Reach's combined ESSA Indicator for Math proficiency, which in 2020-21 was 28.0%, and dropped to 10.96% in 2021-22. This again lagged substantially behind the traditional public schools (39.3% in 2021-22). Reach's combined ESSA Indicator for Science in 2020-21 was 57.3% and in 2021-22 dropped to 39.8%, still lagging the average of traditional public schools (67.0% and 60.4%, respectively). All three of these areas (ELA, Math, and Science) show a substantial decline in the 2021-22 school year.

The difference in academic performance between Reach and traditional public schools is even more pronounced when looking at Keystone data. In the most recent available data (2021-22), Reach's Biology score showed 19.1% proficient and advanced, compared to the traditional public school score of 44.7%. On the Algebra Keystone, the difference was even more pronounced, at 24.1% for Reach compared to 67.6% for traditional public schools. In fact, for the last four test cycles, Reach's Keystone Algebra data has lagged behind not only traditional public

schools, but also the average of all cyber charters and all brick and mortar charters. The Keystone Literature data was slightly better, 50.9% compared to 66.9%.

Additionally, Reach's three-year average growth rate, as reported in the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVASS), showed significant evidence that students did not meet the academic growth standard in several areas. Specifically, Reach did not meet growth standards when computing PSSA Math across all grades in 2022 (Well Below target scores), and the PSSA ELA growth across all grades was also Well Below target scores. It should be noted, however, that Reach's Science 8 PVAAS growth in 2021 and 2022 was Above target scores. Keystone growth rate did not fare much better, showing well below growth in Keystone Algebra and Keystone Biology. However, Keystone Literature growth has met or exceeded growth expectations for each of the last three test cycles.

Beginning Fall 2018, the academic performance of all cyber charter schools has been evaluated based on standards for annual meaningful differentiation as identified by Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan. Each year, the Department will calculate for each public school, including Reach, its progress toward meeting or exceeding long-term goals. In addition, a cyber charter school that is identified for CSI or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI) will be required to take specific corrective actions. Designation as a CSI school may serve as a basis for revocation or nonrenewal of the cyber charter's charter.

Therefore, notwithstanding that the Department has renewed Reach's charter, the Department may require corrective action and/or use designation as a CSI school or failure to exit CSI status as a basis for nonrenewal or revocation of Reach's charter. As Reach is designated as a CSI school, Reach must be prepared to provide to the Department the following:

- A comprehensive needs analysis that identifies the root causes of inconsistent student achievement results;
- A comprehensive data analysis that examines PSSA, Keystone, and PASA data;
- An explanation of remedial programs that Reach will use to ensure progress from year-to-year;
- A written plan of action for increasing its academic performance and academic growth;
- A fully executed school improvement plan to increase Reach's academic proficiency so as to exit the CSI designation status;
- Participation in quarterly review meetings—attended by Reach's leadership, the assigned Intermediate Unit school improvement facilitator, and staff from the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—to ensure alignment in activities between Reach's school improvement plan and any deficiencies noted in this renewal.