



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**  
**Department of Education**  
**Cyber Charter School**  
**2015 Renewal Application**

*Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street, 10th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333*

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# Cyber Charter School Renewal Application

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# 2015 Cyber Charter School Renewal Application

## Introduction and Instructions

Cyber charter schools that wish to renew their charter must apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (“Department”) for a new five (5) year charter. The Cyber Charter School Renewal Application (“Renewal Application”) has been developed to meet the requirements of the Charter School Law. Please note that the application to renew a cyber charter school must be received in the Department between **July 2 and October 1** of the final school year of a cyber charter school’s current charter.

The Renewal Application is designed to elicit information on four indicators of success:

- **Student Achievement:** Is the educational program a success?
- **School Operations and Management:** Is this a viable organization with proper governance, fiscal and accounting procedures as well as appropriate insurance coverages?
- **Overall School Design:** Is the school faithful to the terms of the charter agreement?
- **Plans for the Future:** If the charter is renewed, what are the plans for the next five years?

A successful Renewal Application shall be clearly articulated and based on clear and credible evidence and data. Data and measurable indicators shall be used whenever possible. A cyber charter school must not only include evidence that it has accomplished the goals set out in its current charter application, but it must also provide a compelling description of its plans for the future. Both strengths and weaknesses shall be described, and the Renewal Application shall explain clearly why the weaknesses do not outweigh the school’s strengths. Specific and concise plans to address weaknesses shall be included in the Renewal Application and clearly explained.

Renewal applicants shall be knowledgeable in the implementation of all federal and state requirements that are applicable to public cyber charter schools.

Cyber charter schools requesting renewal shall build on and use the information they have already reported in annual reports and other required filings with the Department in their Renewal Application. This information shall not simply be re-reported, restated, or recycled in the Application, but shall form the basis or starting point for a more detailed document. The applicant may reference where the information can be found in the cyber charter school’s annual report or other filings and reports and it will then be included with the Renewal Application. The cyber charter school’s annual reports will be used in the consideration of the cyber charter renewal. Additional information collected, as part of the annual site visits and reports by the Department team utilizing the Pennsylvania System of Cyber Charter Review (PASCCR), will be incorporated into the renewal process.

If a cyber charter school includes information in a cyber charter renewal application concerning the cyber charter school’s plans or proposals for changes to its operations, if appropriate, the cyber charter school will be provided written notice that a separate cyber charter amendment request must be submitted pursuant to the procedures outlined in the Cyber Charter School Requests for Cyber Charter Amendment Basic Education Circular.

**Summary of the Cyber Charter School Renewal Timeline:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
Between July 2 and October 1 of the final year of the charter.	The Renewal Application must be received at the Department during this time period to operate in the following school year.
Spring 2016	The Department conducts site visits
Spring 2016	The Department will issue a decision on the Applications

**Instructions:**

1. Prior to answering the questions throughout this Renewal Application, cyber charter staff, board members and directors shall review the following information:
  - a. **Student Achievement over the prior 3-5 years** – this shall include formative and summative assessments, measurements of academic growth, and interventions used to attain these gains
  - b. **Response to Complaints** – How many complaints did the cyber charter school receive from parents, staff and students? Review how these complaints were addressed and resolved.
  - c. **Current Charter and Annual Reviews** – Have any goals changed since the original or current charter agreement? Has integral staff changed? What, if any, issues were discussed at the time of each annual PASCCR and how were they addressed? How have the cyber charter school’s programs and operations been consistent with the terms of the current Charter?
2. Letter from CEO  
 This letter shall be addressed to the Charter School Office at the Department of Education and shall summarize and highlight the achievements of the cyber charter school and explain briefly the reasons for renewal (which shall include materials reviewed in Instruction #1), and any proposed changes the cyber charter school wishes in the Charter.
3. Answer the questions throughout this Renewal Application completely. Each section (i.e. Student Achievement, School Operations, School Design, and Plans for the Future) shall represent its own report and when answering the questions, please clearly indicate the section. Submit typewritten information on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper, 11 pt. font, Times New Roman. All pages shall be numbered and appendices clearly marked. Provide six (six) hardcopies of the Renewal Application with appendices, as well as three electronic versions (either CDs or thumb drives) to the Department.
4. Complete the **List of Required Attachments** on the next page and attach the Renewal Application materials.
5. Submit to:

PA Department of Education  
 Charter Schools Office  
 333 Market Street, 10th Floor  
 Harrisburg, PA 17126  
 Fax: (717) 787-9744  
 Email: [charterschools@pa.gov](mailto:charterschools@pa.gov)

<b>Required Attachments</b>			
<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Attached (Y/N)</b>	<b>If <i>Not</i> attached, Explain*</b>
Instructions	Summary letter from CEO		
Application Fact Sheet	Any Leases, Deeds or Real Estate Agreements not Previously Submitted to the Department		
Student Achievement	PSSA Report for Previous Years (chart provided)**		
Student Achievement	Random Sample of Lesson Plans		
Student Achievement	Copy of the School Calendar		
Student Achievement	Copy of the School Improvement Plan (if applicable)		
School Operations and Management	Teacher Turnover Chart (chart provided)		
School Operations and Management	Union Contracts with Professional Employees, if applicable		
School Operations and Management	Certification Level Chart (chart provided)		
School Operations and Management	Most Recent Financial Statements		
School Operations and Management	Annual Audits for Each Year of the Charter		
School Operations and Management	Investments Chart (chart provided)		
School Operations and Management	List of Board Members who have served since the last renewal, the dates they served and in what capacity		
School Operations and Management	Copies of Signed Ethics Forms (as required by the State Ethics Commission) for each Board Member currently serving		
School Operations and Management	Agenda for every board meeting held within the last school year		
School Operations and Management	Evaluations of the External Management Organization (EMO), if applicable		
Overall School Design	Examples of Communication, Outreach and Marketing to the Community and Parents		
Overall School Design	Agendas and Sign-in Sheets from Parent and/or Community Events		
Overall School Design	Surveys and Response Summaries Conducted by the School		
Overall School Design	Enrollment Chart (chart provided)		
Overall School Design	Policy for Attendance, Truancy and		

	Withdrawal		
Overall School Design	Attach copies of all forms used for Truancy Communications to parents, resident school district, etc.		
Overall School Design	School Safety Plan		
Overall School Design	Student Handbook		
Plans for the Future	Projected Enrollment Chart (chart provided)		
Plans for the Future	Measurable Outcomes and Goals Chart (chart provided)		
Plans for the Future	Enrollment Charts by Grade (chart provided) – <i>only if the school is requesting to increase the number of grades served.</i>		
	Signature Page		

\*If any of these documents have been submitted to the Department within the last four months, they are not required to be resubmitted. Instead indicate when and how they were submitted.

\*\*Charts for some specific information are included in the application. Copy and paste these charts into the response document, or recreate them for submission with the remainder of the Renewal Application.

# Application Fact Sheet

This Application Fact Sheet is intended for administrative processing of the Cyber Charter Renewal Application. The information furnished below must be an accurate representation of the complete Renewal Application.

Cyber Charter School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

(If more than one facility, the cyber charter school must identify the administrative office where all student records are maintained pursuant to section 1748-A (h).

County \_\_\_\_\_ Intermediate Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Charter Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date Current Charter Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Employer Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_ AUN # \_\_\_\_\_

Vendor Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

CEO: First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Grades Served by Cyber Charter School	Current & Projected 5 year Student Enrollment:	Current & Projected 5 year Teaching Staff
Elementary _____	2015-16 _____	2015-16 _____
Middle _____	2016-17 _____	2016-17 _____
	2017-18 _____	2017-18 _____
Secondary _____	2018-19 _____	2018-19 _____
Circle Appropriate Grade(s) K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	Is increase due to addition of grade levels? Yes _____ No _____	Does the cyber charter school have an existing retirement system? Yes _____ No _____

# I. Student Achievement

## A. Progress toward Initial Goals and Objectives:

- Describe how the cyber charter school has met or made reasonable progress toward initially established goals defined in the current charter application. If goals were revised, discuss why and how the new goals provide a better fit with the overall mission of the cyber charter school. Provide a concise explanation and use data whenever possible.
- Provide any other relevant information about progress toward academic goals. If reference has been made to test scores or other testing outcomes, include the name of the test and the dates administered. Include a rationale for using that particular test.
- Has the cyber charter school made Adequate Yearly Progress (“AYP”) for each of the last five years? If not, discuss why and what steps are in place to remedy the situation. Reference information from the cyber charter school’s School Improvement Plan where applicable
- Describe the strategies that are in place to ensure that students with special needs, those at risk of failure and those not making reasonable progress are meeting – or are being given the opportunities and reasonable accommodations to meet – the academic goals. Provide clear evidence and use data to document how those strategies are proving effective for students in terms of improved academic performance.
- Using the chart on the following page, report the school’s PSSA scores for each of the preceding years. Report out for subgroups, including, at a minimum, students with IEPs, students who are limited English proficient (LEP), race/ethnicity and economically disadvantaged. Explain how the scores correspond to the goals identified in the current charter. Discuss how the scores correspond to AYP as established in the Pennsylvania Accountability System.

## B. Educational Programs

- Provide a detailed description of the curriculum offered and how it meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment). Also, provide a random sampling of lesson plans from different grade levels and academic disciplines.
- Describe the curriculum delivery method. Provide specific information pertaining to the hours of instruction, availability of teachers for direct assistance, method of instructional delivery, etc.
- Describe how students are evaluated and how that evaluation is used to improve student achievement and attain learning objectives.
- Describe teaching methods used to enhance student learning. Describe professional development provided by the cyber charter school and how the professional development has been used to enhance the delivery of instruction.

- Attach the school calendar for the current school year and for next school year.
- Attach a copy of the School Improvement Plan if one has been developed.

## PSSA Report for Previous Years

Grade:

Subject:

Subgroup		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	How did this affect AYP determination?
All Students	% Below Basic						Example: Students have consistently met the state proficiency requirements in this area.
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
IEP	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
LEP	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
Econ. Disadvantaged	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						
	% Below Basic						
	% Basic						
	% Proficient						
	% Advanced						

In the empty subgroup cells, insert any measurable subgroup (e.g. white, black, Hispanic, etc.). A subgroup is considered measurable when there are 20 or more students.

Copy this attachment and make copies for each tested grade level and for each subject in which they were tested.

**C. Future Goals and Objectives**

- What measurable outcomes will the cyber charter school achieve over the next five years?
  - Use the chart below to respond to academic goals listed and the empty rows to insert your own academic and non-academic goals. Be sure to include goals for any new grades being proposed.

<b>Goals for Future Planning</b>						
	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Local test data goals for all grades tested</b>						
<b>PSSA goals for all grades tested</b>						
<b>No Child Left Behind AYP goals</b>						

## II. School Operations and Management

### A. Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

- How are teachers and administrators evaluated? Describe the standards for teacher and staff performance.
- Discuss why that process was chosen and how it has evolved and been refined over the course of the charter.
- Provide evidence and discuss the quality of teaching at the cyber charter school. Include outcomes of teacher evaluations and teacher surveys in the discussion
- Discuss staff turnover and retention patterns. Drawing upon exit interviews and surveys, explain why teachers choose to return or not to return to the school.
- Use the following table to report professional staff turnover/retention data for each year of the past charter.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	This Year
Total number of professional staff					
Number of professional staff employed in September who returned from previous year					
Number of professional staff employed in June who were also employed by the school the previous September					

- Complete the table below for all professional staff members.

Staff #	Name of Employee (List in alpha. Order)	All areas of Certification Type of Certificate	Grades Teaching or Serving	All Areas of Assignment Subject Areas Teaching or Services Provided	# of Hours Worked in Assignment	% of Time in Certified Position	% of Time in Areas Not Certified

- If not currently meeting the requirement that 75% of its professional staff hold appropriate certification, how will the school meet this requirement? Discuss how the cyber charter school meets the requirements for “Highly Qualified” teachers.
- Submit documentation and discuss evidence that teachers and other staff have the training and resources they need to perform effectively. Describe the professional development that is in place to support teachers so that more students are meeting the standards. Describe why this professional

development was selected and how it relates to the overall cyber charter school mission and student outcomes.

- Does the cyber charter school have any union contracts with professional employees? If so, please attach.

**B. Financial Solvency**

- How frequently are the school budget and financial records reviewed by the Board of Trustees?
- Who is responsible to review contracts, invoices and receivables, and who is responsible to sign checks? Has there been an independent audit performed each year of the charter? For each audit, if not previously submitted to the Department, attach with the Renewal Application.
- Discuss the school’s financial controls and procedures for the management of financial resources.
- Attach a copy of the most recent financial statement.
- How many bank accounts exist for the cyber charter school? Provide bank locations, type of accounts and account numbers.
- If applicable, discuss and provide documentation regarding how any findings from any auditor general’s report were addressed and resolved.
- Explain how the cyber charter school commits resources in ways that ensure it achieves its mission.
- What is the fund reserve balance as of the date of renewal application submission?
- Cut and paste (or recreate) the table below into your report in order to show how the charter has made investments over the last five years in staff and professional development, books, technology, and other supplies and in ways that are consistent with the cyber charter school’s priorities as stated in the current charter agreement.

<b>Investment Area:</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>This year</b>
Professional Development					
Books					
Technology					
Other (specify)					

- Provide any other information or data that describes how resources have been used and/or leveraged to further the school’s mission and support the school’s unique design.
- Will the school’s facilities meet the needs of the school for the next five years? Provide addresses of all facilities, the ownership of each facility and the purpose for which each facility is used. Will the cyber charter school’s administrative offices remain in the current facility? If not, describe where the cyber charter school’s administrative office will be located and why the new location has been selected (if applicable)? Include valid certificates of occupancy for all new sites, if applicable.

### C. School Governance

- Provide a list of board members who have served and the dates each has served since the cyber charter school's inception. Discuss leadership changes on the board and in the school administration, and explain why those changes were effected.
- If the cyber charter school utilizes an external management organization, describe how that relationship has functioned over the course of the charter and provide any changes to the management agreement that were not previously provided to the Department.
  - Describe and discuss how the board has held the external management organization accountable for measurable results.
  - Include as appendices and discuss evaluations of the management organization conducted by the board and any relevant reports from the management organization to the board.
- Provide clear explanations and evidence of how the cyber charter school has complied with requirements and regulations in each of the following areas. Address any complaints and corrections made regarding compliance in each area.
  - Special Education Students
  - English Language Learners
  - Administration of the PSSA
  - Health and Safety Requirements
- Describe how the Sunshine Notices are provided for all public meetings and how parents are involved in board meetings.

## III. Overall School Design

### A. Communications to Parents and Community

- How is the school accountable to parents and the community? Provide examples of communications, outreach, marketing of the cyber charter school, etc.
- Provide evidence that the Board of Trustees has been responsive and effective as a governing entity. Discuss how formal complaints have been investigated and resolved. Provide specific examples of governance issues and how they have been resolved.
- Describe the composition of the cyber charter school's governance structure, specifying how it includes parents and the community. Be specific about how the board is accessible and accountable to parents. Include dates, times and agendas of important parent meetings or events and include copies of sign-in sheets for the session.
- Describe the relationship of the cyber charter School with the surrounding community. Describe any complaints that have been received and how they have been investigated and resolved.
- Describe the mechanisms in place to measure stakeholder satisfaction and solicit input. Include copies of surveys and questions and include a summary of responses.

**B. Student Enrollment**

- Is the enrollment stable and/or near capacity? What is the average “churn rate” for the last five years?<sup>1</sup>
- Describe the system for maintaining accurate student enrollment and withdrawal information as required under Section 1748-A, Enrollment and Notification.
- Describe the marketing techniques used to advertise this cyber charter school opportunity and how the cyber charter school has made resources available equitably across the state.
- Using the following table, provide the history of student enrollment for each year and discuss trends in student turnover and retention data.

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>This Year</b>
Total Student Enrollment at the end of the school year					
Number of students enrolled in June who were also enrolled in September of the previous year					
Number of students, excluding graduates, who were enrolled at the end of last year	N/A				
Number of students, excluding graduates, who were enrolled at the beginning of the school year who were also enrolled at the close of the previous school year	N/A				

- Provide waiting list data for each year, detailing how many students were on the waiting list at the beginning of the year, how many were extended opportunities to enroll and how many enrolled during the year.
- If the school has been under- or over-enrolled, provide an explanation.
- Drawing upon exit interviews and other sources, explain why students choose to return or not to return to the school.

**C. Policies and Procedures**

**a. Technology and Support**

- How is technology used to provide curriculum?
- Describe the teaching methods that are used to deliver instruction and to assess academic performance. How is the cyber charter school improving student learning through the effective use of technology?
- How is the “school day” defined and how is the student’s attendance for the day monitored?

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<sup>1</sup> Churn Rate is the Number of Enrollments divided by the Number of Withdrawals (# of Enrollments/# of Withdrawals).

- How does the cyber charter school verify the authenticity of a student’s work and how are exams proctored?
- Describe the system for maintaining school records and disseminating information as required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- How is technical support provided to students and parents (i.e. during what times of the day, how is it provided, etc.)?
- Describe the hardware, software and Internet connections, and technical support provided.
- If “spyware” is used on student computers describe the type of spyware used and explain the purpose of the use.
- Does the cyber charter school have a written policy on cyber bullying and how is the policy made known to parents and students?

b. Truancy Policies

- Describe the cyber charter school’s Policy on Truancy. What constitutes truancy (number of days not attending, number of days inactive?) When are parents contacted? How is contact made (phone call, email, home visit, etc.)? Attach copies of all forms used.
- Explain in detail the process and procedures the cyber charter school uses to notify a student’s school district of residence of a student’s truancy. How often has the cyber charter school provided such notification to resident school districts in the previous school year? Attach copies of all forms used.
- Provide a copy of the cyber charter school’s policies and procedures regarding attendance, truancy and withdrawal.

c. Extracurricular Activities

- Does the cyber charter school maintain any agreements with local school districts regarding participation of cyber charter school students in extracurricular activities? If so, please explain the agreement(s)?
- Does the cyber charter school host any social events for enrolled students? If so, explain. Are they available to all students?

d. School Safety

- Please attach a copy of your School Safety Plan.
- Describe the cyber charter school’s student assistance programs (SAP). Include in the discussion information about agreements with county agencies to provide mental health and drug abuse counseling, when necessary.
- Describe the cyber charter school’s expectations for student behavior and discipline. Explain how the cyber charter school’s discipline policy complies with Chapter 12 of the Pennsylvania Education Regulations, Title 22, particularly with respect to due process for students.
- Provide a copy of the Student Handbook and/or other materials that are used to detail behavior and consequences for students.

- Discuss the cyber charter school's suspension/expulsion history. Describe the interventions/processes put into place to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions to affect this progress. If there are concerns regarding suspensions/expulsions, describe the steps/adjustments being made to address these concerns.

# Cyber Charter School Charter Renewal Application

## Signature Page

We, the undersigned, have reviewed and approve the submission of this Cyber Charter School Renewal Application to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Board of Trustees

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, Board of Trustees

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date