

IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

GUIDANCE: CHARTER RENEWAL PROCESS AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



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Introduction

Idaho Code (I.C.) §33-5209B requires that all public charter schools in the state be periodically reviewed by their authorizer for the purpose of determining whether or not the charter should continue operations. Public charter schools are considered for renewal every five years.

The PCSC makes renewal decisions in accordance with Idaho law, basing its decision on each school's independent fiscal audits and the measures set forth in the performance framework. The PCSC also considers the school's demographic profile and other circumstances that might affect the school's ability to adhere to the specific terms and conditions.

We thank you for your thoughtful engagement in this rigorous but important process, and invite an atmosphere of honest communication and commitment to quality as we all work toward the goal of upholding Idaho's charter school movement and the students it serves.

Purpose

I.C. §33-5209B(3) requires charter authorizers to provide schools with charter renewal application guidance. This document serves as a guide to frequently asked questions related to the renewal process, and provides instructions for completing the renewal application.

Renewal Timeline - All Schools

Spring 2021 Orientation	PCSC staff will schedule a meeting with the primary administrator and a representative of the board to introduce the renewal process, provide written guidance, and discuss any concerns regarding school outcomes.
Spring/Fall 2021 Observations	<p>PCSC policy requires the following observations once during each operational term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board meeting observation; • A lottery observation; and • A site visit for the purpose of observing the school’s Key Design Elements as implemented (only necessary if the school is not accredited or the school is accredited, but is not currently in good standing). <p>Sample observation forms and descriptions are included in this document.</p>
By Nov. 15, 2021 Performance Report Including Renewal Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCSC staff will issue a performance report to all renewal-year schools by this date. The report will provide notice of any weaknesses or concerns that may jeopardize the school’s position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified. • Additionally, the PCSC staff’s recommendation for renewal, conditional renewal, or non-renewal will be issued with the annual report. Schools will need to acknowledge this recommendation by signing a document titled Acknowledgement of Recommendation. This document must be returned to the PCSC within thirty (30) days of receipt. • Schools may also respond to the performance report and submit any corrections or clarifications within thirty (30) days of receipt.

The timeline for the remainder of the process is determined by the type of recommendation received.

Timeline if Recommended for Renewal without Conditions

<p>By Nov. 15, 2021 Performance Report Including Renewal Recommendation</p>	<p>Schools in this category will be issued an Acknowledgement of Recommendation form with their performance report by November 15th, 2021. This form must be completed and returned to the PCSC within thirty (30) days of receipt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the school has met all the terms of its performance certificate and met standard on all the measures of the performance framework, the school is guaranteed to be renewed. Schools in this category do not need to submit an application. • If the school has not met all the terms of its performance certificate, but the recommendation is still a renewal without conditions, the school is still required to submit application.
<p>By Dec. 15, 2021 Renewal Application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal applications are due to the PCSC by close of business on December 15th, 2021. Instructions for the report are included in this document.
<p>Thirty Days Prior to Renewal Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final portfolio of meeting materials will be provided to Commissioners and to the school thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which renewal decisions will be made. The contents of this portfolio are described in this document.
<p>By March 15, 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCSC will hold a meeting to make final renewal determinations by March 15th, 2022. • Schools recommended for renewal without conditions may choose to make a presentation to the Commission at this time, but are not required to do so.

Timeline if Recommended for Conditional Renewal

<p>By Nov15, 2021 Performance Report Including Renewal Recommendation</p> <p>Negotiation of Conditions</p>	<p>Schools will be issued an Acknowledgement of Recommendation form with their performance report by November 15th, 2021. This form must be signed and returned to the PCSC within thirty (30) days of receipt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the school accepts the recommendation(s) as presented, the school shall indicate so on the Acknowledgement of Recommendation form and move on to the next step. • If the school is willing to accept a conditional renewal, but does not agree with the specific conditions as presented, the school may request a meeting and enter into negotiations with PCSC staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a consensus is reached within thirty (30) days of issuance of the original recommendations, the Acknowledgement of Recommendation form will be updated and the school shall complete the form by accepting the updated conditions. ○ If the school and PCSC staff cannot come to a consensus within thirty (30) days of issuance of the original recommendations, the school may indicate so on the original Acknowledgement and Recommendation form and may request a formal administrative hearing. • If the school is not willing to accept a conditional renewal, regardless of the conditions, and chooses not to negotiate with PCSC staff, the school shall indicate so on the Acknowledgement of Recommendation form and may request a formal administrative hearing.
<p>By Dec 15, 2021 Renewal Application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools receiving a conditional renewal recommendation must submit a renewal application to the PCSC no later than close of business on December 15th, 2021. Instructions for the report are included in this document. • Schools may also choose to submit a response to the annual performance report, including the submission of any corrections or clarifications, within thirty (30) days of receiving the performance report.
<p>By Jan15, 2022 Notification of Hearing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools that have requested a formal administrative hearing will receive notification of the time and date of the scheduled hearing, along with any additional instructions or procedures. • Schools will be able to submit exhibits, give testimony, and present witnesses to speak on their behalf according to the hearing protocol. The deadline and format for materials will be outlined in the Notification of Hearing. • Schools that have not requested a formal administrative hearing will skip this step.
<p>Thirty Days Prior to Renewal Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final portfolio of meeting materials will be provided to Commissioners and to the school thirty (30) days prior to the hearing. The contents of this portfolio are described in this document.
<p>By March 15, 2022 Decisions Final</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCSC will make all renewal determinations by March 15th, 2022.

Timeline if Recommended for Non-Renewal

<p>By Nov 15, 2021 Performance Report Including Renewal Recommendation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will be issued an Acknowledgement of Recommendation form with their performance report by November 15th, 2021. All schools must complete, sign, and return the Acknowledgement of Recommendation form to the PCSC within thirty (30) days of receipt.
<p>By Dec 15, 2021 Renewal Application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the school accepts the non-renewal recommendation, the school may submit to the PCSC, by December 15th, 2021, a resolution executed by its Board of Directors stating the Board's intent to relinquish its charter. In such a case, closure protocol will begin by December 20th, 2021 and the school will cease operations by June 30th, 2022. No further steps in the renewal process are required. If the school does not accept the non-renewal recommendation, a formal administrative hearing will be scheduled and a renewal application must be submitted to the PCSC no later than close of business on December 15th, 2021. Instructions for the report are included in this document. Schools may also choose to submit a response to the annual performance, including the submission of any corrections or clarifications, within thirty (30) days of receiving the performance report.
<p>By Jan 15, 2022 Notification of Hearing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools that have requested a formal administrative hearing will receive notification of the time and date of the scheduled hearing, along with any additional instructions or procedures. All hearings shall take place before March 15th, 2022. Schools will be able to submit exhibits, give testimony, and present witnesses to speak on their behalf according to the hearing protocol. The deadline and format for materials will be outlined in the Notification of Hearing.
<p>Thirty Days Prior to Renewal Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final portfolio of meeting materials will be provided to Commissioners and to the school thirty (30) days prior to the hearing. The contents of this portfolio are described in this document.
<p>By March 15, 2022 Decisions Final</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PCSC will make all renewal determinations by March 15th, 2022.
<p>Appeal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the PCSC's decision is to non-renew the school's charter, the school may appeal that decision directly to the State Board of Education within thirty (30) days of receiving the PCSC's non-renewal determination.

Completing the Application

Any school recommended for conditional renewal or non-renewal must submit a renewal application to the PCSC no later than December 15th, 2021. The application consists of only a few items, and the length of the response is left to the discretion of the school.

Renewal application sections:

1. Cover Sheet (Required)
 - a. The school's legal name and physical address.
 - b. The school's LEA and building numbers.
 - c. The name, phone number, and email address for your primary school leader and board chair.
 - d. The school's mission statement.
 - e. The school's current enrollment numbers by grade level.

2. Narrative (Required) – In this section, please answer the following question: What improvements are planned for the school's next performance certificate term?

Please provide documentation for any planned improvements to your school. If there are outstanding concerns noted in the performance report, this is an appropriate place to explain your action plan and timeline for resolving those concerns. It is particularly important to focus on the measurable results you expect to achieve by specified points in time.

3. Outline of Additional Evidence (Optional).

Please provide an outline of any additional evidence you are submitting for consideration. Each item should be identified as Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2, and so forth. Please include a brief description of the content and purpose of each exhibit.

4. Additional Evidence (Optional).

Please include additional evidence you want the PCSC to consider when determining your renewal application in the order in which they are identified in the outline. Additional evidence may include academic data from a valid and reliable assessment your school uses (such as MAPS), year to date financial information, records of training, or more holistic improvement plans with specific benchmarks, etc.

All data must be redacted and ready for public presentation.

Once completed, submit the application to the PCSC via the secure server ShareFile. Please contact the PCSC staff if you have any questions or need assistance with accessing ShareFile.

Renewal Portfolio

The PCSC will be provided with a Renewal Portfolio for each school thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled meeting. The following documents will be included in the portfolio:

Required Documents

- Renewal year performance report, summarizing the school's performance record to date, based upon the terms of the performance certificate and the measures defined in the performance framework.
- Summaries of PCSC staff observations and site visits and any response the school submitted to these observation summaries.
- The school's most recent fiscal audit report.
- Renewal application submitted by the school (data must be appropriately redacted/masked).
- Response to the renewal year annual performance report if such was submitted by the school.
- Current Performance Certificate.
- Proposed Performance Certificate.
- Performance reports for each year of the school's current performance certificate term, including any response to the report submitted by the school.

If Applicable

- Conditional Certificate Status Report – this will be included if renewal conditions were applicable to the current performance certificate.
- Courtesy Letters – will be included if letters were issued during the current certificate term. Resolved issues will be noted as such.

Additional materials will be included in the portfolio at the discretion of the PCSC Director. The portfolio will be made available to Commissioners and to the school thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled hearing.

What are the criteria for the PCSC's renewal decision?

Renewal decisions are based on the following:

- Terms of the school's performance certificate.
- The school's academic, operational, and financial outcomes as measures by the performance framework.
- The school's most recent fiscal audit.

Additionally, the PCSC will also take into account the school's demographic profile and other circumstances that might affect the school's ability to adhere to the terms and conditions of the performance framework, as per PCSC policy.

Understanding Observations

[PCSC policy](#) outlines when and how site visits by the authorizer will be conducted. Please note that PCSC policy revision, adopted in August of 2020, removed the large-scale renewal site visit and replaced it with smaller, purpose-driven observations.

Most schools will experience 2-3 visits each performance certificate term. As per PCSC policy, additional visits may be made if the PCSC is investigating a concern or monitoring the school's progress on a documented issue. Of course, we are always happy to attend celebrations or visit informally at your invitation.

Board Observation Visits – Once during each performance certificate term, a PCSC staff member will observe a school board meeting. There is no reason to make any special arrangements, as we do not need to participate beyond greeting your board. You will be notified at least thirty (30) days in advance of the observation. The staff member will provide your school leader and board chair with a brief summary of our observations after the meeting. You may submit a written response to the summary. Both the summary and your response will be included in your Renewal Portfolio. An observation summary template is included in this document.

Lottery Observation Visits – Once during each performance certificate term, A PCSC staff member will observe your school's lottery as a member of the public. There is no reason to make special arrangements. You will be notified at least thirty (30) days in advance. The staff member will provide your school leader and board chair with a brief summary of our observations after the meeting. You may submit a written response to the summary. Both the summary and your response will be included in your Renewal Portfolio. An observation summary template is included in this document.

Key Design Elements – If your school is *not* accredited by Cognia, or if your school is accredited, but not currently in good standing, a site visit will be arranged to help the PCSC gain a better understanding of how your key design elements are being implemented. This site visit will include 2-3 members of the PCSC staff and will be scheduled for approximately two (2) hours. The site visit will minimally include a tour and a discussion with school leadership and a representative of your board. If such a visit is necessary, you will be notified in the spring and the visit will be scheduled in the fall. As each school's key design elements are different, a PCSC Program Manager will work with you to plan a visit that will best help us see your key design elements in action. The staff member will provide your school leader and board chair with a brief summary of our observations after the meeting. You may submit a written response to the summary. Both the summary and your response will be included in your Renewal Portfolio. An observation summary template is included in this document.

Sample Observation Forms

PCSC Board Meeting Observation Summary

An observation of charter school board meetings is required by [Section VI of PCSC policies](#), and will take place once each performance certificate term. We recognize that not all aspects of good governance may be addressed in a single meeting and that this observation is only a snapshot.

Below you will find the summary of the PCSC’s board meeting observation of your school. The purpose of this observation is to ensure compliance with [Idaho’s Open Meeting Law](#) and to help inform annual evaluations regarding the board stewardship measures of the Performance Framework. Please see the PCSC’s [Performance Framework](#) for details regarding the governance structure and governance oversight measures.

If you have any questions/comments/concerns regarding the summary below, please feel free to reach out to the PCSC staff. You may provide a response to this report within thirty (30) days of receipt. Both the report and your response will be included in your school’s renewal portfolio.

Observation Date:

Observer: Program Manager

School Board Director’s Name	Office (if applicable)	Present/Remote/Absent
School Leadership	Title	Present/Remote/Absent

Observation Category	Status	Date
Open Meeting Law	Concern or No Concern	
Public Participation	Concern or No Concern	
Operational Efficacy	Concern or No Concern	
Academic Achievement	Concern or No Concern	
Financial Health	Concern or No Concern	

Additional Notes (As Applicable)

PCSC Lottery Observation Summary

An observation of each school’s lottery process is required by [Section VI of PCSC policies](#), and will place once each performance certificate term.

Below you will find the summary of the PCSC lottery observation of your school. The purpose of this observation is to ensure compliance with Idaho’s equitable selection process outlined in [IDAPA 08.02.04.203](#). Please see the PCSC’s [Equitable Selection and Enrollment Process Guidance](#) document for more information. If you have any questions/comments/concerns regarding the summary below, please feel free to reach out to the PCSC staff. You may provide a response to this report within thirty (30) days of receipt. Both the report and your response will be included in your school’s renewal portfolio.

Observation Date:

Observation Location:

Observer: Program Manager

School Personnel Present	Office (if applicable)
Neutral Third Party Conducting Draw	Title

Observation Category	Status	Date
Enrollment Deadline Notification	Concern or No Concern	
Enrollment Form	Concern or No Concern	
Lottery Process	Concern or No Concern	

Additional Notes (As Applicable)

PCSC Key Design Elements Observation Summary

An observation of key design elements is required by [Section VI of PCSC policies](#), and will place once each performance certificate term. If your school is accredited, accreditation reports will fulfill this requirement and no observation is necessary.

Below you will find a summary of the PCSC's Key Design Element observation of your school. Key design elements included in your Performance Certificate must be implemented and maintained throughout your operational term. If you have any questions/comments/concerns regarding the summary below, please feel free to reach out to the PCSC staff. You may provide a response to this report within thirty (30) days of receipt. Both the report and your response will be included in your school's renewal portfolio.

Observation Date:

PCSC Staff Present:

School Representatives:

Key Design Elements (as listed in the school's performance certificate):

Describe the evidence observed that key design elements are implemented and maintained:

Additional Notes (As Applicable)