



IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

GUIDANCE: NEW SCHOOL LEADER ORIENTATION



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Welcome

Congratulations on your new leadership position at a public charter school! Thank you for your willingness to take on this challenging, but fulfilling role.

As you may be aware, public charter schools operate under a grant authority from an authorized chartering entity, or authorizer. Your school is authorized by the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC). The purpose of this document is to help familiarize you with the PCSC's role and provide you with some important information and resources that we hope will support you in your work.

The PCSC's office, located in Boise, has a full-time staff that stands ready to assist you. We invite you to contact us anytime with your questions or concerns.

Attachments

- Your School's Current Performance Certificate and Framework
- Your School's Most Recent Annual Performance Report
- The PCSC's Most Recent Annual Report

History & Structure

Idaho's original charter school legislation passed in 1998. At that time, only local school district boards could authorize public charter schools. In many cases, this model was effective, but in others, sufficient difficulty arose that the legislature identified a need for an alternative, independent authorizer. The Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was created in 2004 to fulfill this role. The PCSC currently authorizes the majority of Idaho's public charter schools.

The PCSC's seven members hail from all around the state. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor (3 members), Senate Pro Tempore (2 members), or Speaker of the House (2 members). They serve four-year terms, and officers are elected every two years in the spring.

The PCSC is staffed by the Office of the State Board of Education.

The Authorizer's Role

The PCSC's statutory role is one of oversight. We seek to fulfill this role with an attitude of service, and look forward to working with you toward a mutual goal of providing Idaho's students with many diverse, high-quality schools of choice.

The Public Charter School Commission's mission is to ensure PCSC-authorized public charter schools' compliance with Idaho statute, protecting student and public interests by balancing high standards of accountability with respect for the autonomy of public charter schools and implementing best authorizing practices to ensure the excellence of public charter school options available to Idaho families.

In accordance with Idaho statute, the PCSC sets expectations for performance and holds schools accountable for results. We support your school's autonomy by refraining from dictating your inputs or controlling your processes. Instead, we establish a consistent standard for performance outcomes while freeing you to manage your operations as needed, within the bounds of the law, to meet or exceed that standard.

The PCSC is responsible for prudent evaluation of new charter petitions, as well as the oversight of existing public charter schools' academic, operational, and financial statuses. The bulk of our focus is on academic outcomes, but schools' operational compliance and financial health are also important to ensure the protection of student and public interests.

We are happy to assist you with guidance or recommendations, but will always respect the decision-making authority of your school's board. We believe in the foundational concept that public charter schools exchange increased autonomy for increased accountability, and strive to uphold both sides of that equation.

Performance Certificates

Idaho statute provides an accountability structure for public charter schools and authorizers. At the heart of this structure is the performance certificate, which is a legal agreement detailing the roles and responsibilities of both parties. Incorporated into your performance certificate is a performance framework that includes the indicators, measures, and metrics that will be used to evaluate your performance outcomes.

Initial performance certificate terms for newly-authorized charter schools are for five years; thereafter, performance certificates may be renewed for additional five-year terms. During these terms, authorizers monitor the schools' academic, operational, and financial outcomes.

Annually throughout your certificate term, we will provide you with a written report comparing your actual performance outcomes to the standards set forth in your performance certificate. Such reports do not result in sanctions, but simply serve to inform you and the public of your school's status, and provide ample opportunity for schools to correct any deficiencies. They may also determine your eligibility for replication or expansion.

During the final year of your performance certificate term, your school will be evaluated for renewal. The renewal process is discussed in further detail in the Charter Renewal section below.

Occasionally, concerns regarding a school's academic, operational, or financial status arise. If this occurs, we'll work with you to get the issue corrected with minimal consequences. The chart below summarizes possible PCSC responses to different types of concerns:

Academic	Operational	Financial
<p>No immediate consequences are imposed by PCSC in the event of academic deficiencies.</p> <p>Deficiencies (by comparison to terms of performance certificate) are noted in PCSC’s annual report to school.</p> <p>PCSC may issue courtesy letters, without sanctions, to schools in order to provide early notice of concerns and maximize opportunity to correct.</p> <p>Persistent or severe deficiencies are considered during the periodic renewal process.</p> <hr/> <p>Note: ESSA waiver requirements and sanctions apply to public charter schools as with any other public schools, but are handled by the State Department of Education (SDE) rather than the authorizer.</p>	<p>No immediate consequences are imposed by PCSC in the event of operational / compliance deficiencies.</p> <p>If PCSC identifies possible law violation, PCSC must notify the entity responsible for enforcing said law.</p> <p>Deficiencies (legal violations and operational weaknesses) are noted in PCSC’s annual report to school.</p> <p>PCSC may issue courtesy letters, without sanctions, to schools in order to provide early notice of concerns and maximize opportunity to correct.</p> <p>Persistent, numerous, or severe deficiencies are considered during the periodic renewal process.</p>	<p>No immediate consequences are imposed by PCSC in the event of fiscal deficiencies.</p> <p>If PCSC determines that school may not remain fiscally sound through remainder of certificate term, PCSC may notify SDE of this concern. SDE modifies payment schedule (not payment amount) to minimize taxpayer risk in case of mid-year closure.</p> <p>Deficiencies (according to near-term and sustainability measures) are noted in PCSC’s annual report to school.</p> <p>PCSC may issue courtesy letters, without sanctions, to schools in order to provide early notice of concerns and maximize opportunity to correct.</p> <p>Deficiencies that threaten the fiscal health of the school are considered during the periodic renewal process.</p>

Idaho's administrative rule requires public charter schools to notify their authorizers in known cases of non-compliance by the school. Please be assured that providing such notification is unlikely to result in sanctions. We'll do our best to help you resolve the situation quickly, and will note such resolution in your next annual report if appropriate.

The PCSC or its staff occasionally requests meetings with school leadership to discuss relevant issues. Such meetings are not intended to infringe upon your board's autonomy, but rather to exchange information, provide guidance, and help everyone work more effectively within their respective roles. Please feel free to request a meeting with our staff anytime we can be helpful to you.

Additionally, PCSC staff makes periodic site visits to schools, attends board meetings, and hosts training seminars. These events offer a friendly opportunity to put names with faces and answer questions. We especially value site visits as opportunities to develop our understanding of your school's mission, method, and student population.

Charter Renewal

Your charter and performance certificate describe the school you have committed to provide for your community. Your performance framework details academic, mission-specific, operational, and financial standards against which your outcomes are evaluated on an annual basis. These outcomes are provided to you by the PCSC in annual performance reports that serve as guideposts to help shape your strategic planning as you celebrate your strengths and seek to improve upon any shortcomings.

Every five years, your school is evaluated for renewal or non-renewal. During the renewal process, the PCSC carefully evaluates your school, including implementation of your stated mission and key design elements, as well as academic, mission-specific, operational, and financial outcomes relative to the standards established in the framework. We examine the trajectory of your school throughout the performance certificate term, noting changes over time as well as the larger context in which they have occurred.

The renewal process includes opportunities for you to address the outcomes described in your annual reports, provide contextual detail and additional evidence, and describe improvements undertaken by your school. For additional information, please feel free to explore the Renewal Application & Guidance available on our website.

State Agency Roles

Please note that the State Department of Education, State Board of Education, and Public Charter School Commission are separate entities with different roles and reporting requirements. Here is a quick primer on the subject:

State Board of Education	State Department of Education	Public Charter School Commission
<p>Policy-making body for all public education in Idaho</p> <p>Responsible for general oversight of K-20 education</p> <p>Serves as the board of Idaho’s public universities</p> <p>Comprised of 8 Governor appointees plus the Superintendent of Public Instruction</p>	<p>Responsible for technical assistance to public schools</p> <p>Supports schools and investigates concerns in the areas of teacher certification, data management, federal programs, special education, school safety, & nutrition.</p> <p>Manages public school finance, including issuance of payments to schools</p> <p>Headed by elected Superintendent of Public Instruction</p>	<p>Evaluates petitions for new public charter schools</p> <p>Oversees academic, operational, and financial performance of portfolio schools to protect the interests of students and taxpayers</p> <p>Makes renewal or non-renewal decisions based on performance outcomes</p> <p>Defends charter board autonomy while providing resources to help petitioners and schools succeed</p> <p>Comprised of 7 commissioners: 3 Governor appointees, 2 Senate Pro Tempore appointees, and 2 Speaker of the House appointees</p>

As you can see, you’ll work most often with the State Department of Education and Public Charter School Commission. If you are uncertain who to contact in a particular situation, our staff is glad to help point you in the right direction.

Stakeholder Concerns

Our office occasionally receives calls from individuals who are concerned about a situation at an individual school. We typically respond to these calls by providing relevant, factual information and referring the caller back to the school. We then follow up by making contact with your school’s leadership, both to ensure your awareness of the matter and to hear your perspective.

The majority of such complaints are most appropriately dealt with at the school level, via your grievance policy. In some cases, it may be appropriate for us to investigate further or refer concerned individuals to the Professional Standards Commission.

If a situation arises at your school that you realize may lead to stakeholder or media calls to our office, please feel free to get in touch with us preemptively. Knowing your side of the story can help us respond to inquiries more effectively.

Performance Certificate Amendments

Schools sometimes wish to amend their performance certificates in the middle of a performance certificate term. Common amendments include:

- Enrollment cap increases or decreases
- Grade level expansions or reductions
- Significant educational program modifications

Amendments must be approved by the PCSC before final adoption by your board. If you are considering proposing a performance certificate amendment, please contact PCSC staff well in advance for guidance regarding the process. Depending on the nature of your proposal, you may need to plan to attend a PCSC meeting. Amendments affecting enrollment for the upcoming school year are best proposed before the first of January in order to ensure finalization prior to your spring enrollment lottery.

PCSC Meetings

As a general rule, the PCSC holds its regular meetings on the second Thursday of every other month, in February, April, June, August, October, and December. We also hold occasional special meetings. Agendas and meeting materials for regular meetings are always posted on our website at least a week in advance; special meeting materials may be posted closer to the meeting date. Our meetings are open to the public.

If an issue regarding your school (such as a proposed performance certificate amendment) is on the agenda, please remember that any materials you wish the PCSC to consider are due 30 days prior to the meeting date. For all PCSC policies regarding meeting materials submission, please visit our website.

Authorizer Fees

In accordance with Idaho law, all public charter schools pay annual fees to their authorizers. The amount of these fees depends upon a variety of factors, including the amount of state funds distributed to all public schools and Average Daily Attendance at your school and all public schools.

We will calculate your authorizer fee and provide you with an invoice each February. You may choose to direct up to 10% of the calculated fee to cover your membership fees to an organization or association that provides technical assistance, training, and advocacy for Idaho public charter schools. Fees must be paid by March 15.

PCSC Reporting Schedule

ALL SCHOOLS*		
Due Date	Description	Format
July 30 th	SDE Budget Worksheets	Copy of worksheets submitted to SDE or a copy of the budget as it appeared in the school's board packet (either version in PDF is sufficient)
	SDE Support Unit Calculation Worksheet	As used to develop the budget ("inputs" tab in PDF format is sufficient)
	Dashboard Update	PCSC Template
November 1 st	Fiscal Audit	PDF
February 1 st	2 nd Quarter Balance Sheet and Income Statement	Excel (with formulas intact)**
March 15 th	Authorizer Fee	Invoices issued in early February
Upon Revision	Revised Budget	Should the school's board vote to amend the schools budget for the current school year, the budget (as it appeared in the board packet) must be submitted to the PCSC.

FINANCIAL STATUS ON ANNUAL REPORT: GOOD STANDING, REMEDIAL, OR CRITICAL		
Schools achieving "good standing," "remedial," or "critical" status on the financial section of their most recent annual report must provide the following additional reports. Schools achieving "Honor" status are exempt from these reports.		
Due Date	Description	Format
November 1 st	1 st Quarter Balance Sheet and Income Statement	Excel (with formulas intact)**
May 1 st	3 rd Quarter Balance Sheet and Income Statement	Excel (with formulas intact)**

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS		
Due Date	Description	Applies To
August 1 st	Mission-Specific Measure Results - relevant results data and supporting documentation for the previous school year. Please contact the PCSC Senior Program Manager for details.	Schools with mission specific goals included in their Performance Certificate.
July 15 th	Auxiliary Data - relevant results data and supporting documentation. Please contact the PCSC Senior Program Manager for details.	Schools currently in their renewal school year. Optional Report.
December 15 th	Renewal Applications - See Renewal Guidance Document available online	Schools currently in their renewal school year.

*Other Reports as Requested: the PCSC or its staff may request additional reports on an as-needed basis in order to understand and monitor the school's financial, operational, and academic status.

Charter School Website Guidance

Website compliance is verified at various times throughout the school year. Currently, required items include:

Item	Description	Notable Dates	Relevant Statute
Expenditures	in a downloadable data-based format, including the details identified in 33-357(2)(b)	Updated monthly 33-357(3)(a)	I.C. 33-357
Annual Report	School's annual report, issued by its authorizer.	Issued mid-January	I.C. 33-5209C(2)
Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)	The document must meet the requirements set forth in 33-320(1-6)	Reviewed and updated no later than October 1	I.C. 33-320(3)

While not expressly required in all circumstances, the following items are commonly posted on a school's website.

Item	Description	Notes	Relevant Statute
Employee Job Postings	Governing boards are encouraged to establish fair hiring practices that include length of time for postings.	Open positions should be posted for public application for 60 days (15 days if position is for the current school year). This is required only in situations in which an employee candidate is also a relative of a board member, but as these situations may not always be anticipated, some boards choose to incorporate these timelines into their fair hiring practices.	I.C. 33-5204(6)(c)(i)
Meeting Minutes	Meeting minutes do not need to be fully transcribed or audio recorded. However, they must include all members present, motions, results of all votes, and any necessary information regarding executive sessions, if applicable.	Minutes must be available to the public within a reasonable time after the meeting. It is not required that meeting minutes be posted on the school's website, only that they are available. However, many schools choose to post them online as a matter of transparency.	I.C. 74-205
School Policy	A formal collection of school policies organized by category and number, and/or a summary of such policies in a handbook or manual.	Policies of public entities are required to be adopted in a public forum and are available to the public. It is common practice to post policies most relevant to families online (such as enrollment or dress code) while other policies remain available to the public upon request (such as employee policies).	I.C. 74-201

Other Website Considerations:

- Board and Staff Contact Information
- Access to "Request for Admissions" Form
- Key Design Elements (from the school's Performance Certificate)
- Communication System Sign-Up Visitor and Volunteer information (i.e. check in and background check requirements)

GUIDANCE: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS



History of Annual Performance Reports

Idaho's charter school law was created in 1998. The intent of the legislation was (among other things) to improve student learning, expand learning experiences for students, provide parents with more educational choices, and hold charter schools accountable for meeting measurable educational standards. Public charter schools exchange increased autonomy for increased accountability. Independent charter school boards are authorized to use taxpayer dollars to operate schools of choice. However, if these schools fail to meet expectations, they can be closed.

Authorized chartering entities, or “authorizers,” are responsible for overseeing public charter schools' academic, operational, and financial statuses. The PCSC is Idaho's largest authorizer, with 41 schools in its portfolio as of summer 2018.

In 2013, the legislature amended statute to provide additional clarity about how authorizers should oversee schools. Their work was informed by a diverse group of Idaho charter school stakeholders, as well as by the [model charter law](#) developed by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Idaho statute now requires authorizers to develop a performance certificate and performance framework.

Together, these two documents:

- Clarify the administrative relationship between the authorizer and the charter school, including the rights and duties of each party, and
- Establish academic and operational performance expectations by which the charter school will be judged.

Public charter schools are subject to periodic renewal. A school whose charter is renewed has permission to continue operations for another five years. A school whose charter is non-renewed must close its doors. Authorizers base their renewal or non-renewal decisions on schools' outcomes relative to the specific criteria contained in the performance certificate and framework.

Beginning in spring 2013, the PCSC invited its stakeholders to participate in a collaborative process of drafting the new certificate and framework. Many school representatives provided valuable input on a series of drafts leading up to the final documents that were adopted in August 2013.

The PCSC thanks the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, whose [Core Performance Framework and Guidance](#) informed the drafting of the PCSC's performance framework, as well as the publication you're reading now.

Because each school is held accountable to the quality measures contained in its performance certificate and framework, it is important for the PCSC to keep schools informed of their statuses. Annual reports are issued to all PCSC portfolio schools by March of each year. Schools in their renewal year will receive their reports by November 15, ensuring adequate time for them to respond before a renewal decision is made.

Purpose of Annual Performance Reports

Annual reports serve several, important functions. They:

- Provide transparent, data-driven information about charter school quality
- Ensure that charter school boards have access to clear expectations
- Ensure that charter school boards are provided maximum opportunity to correct any deficiencies prior to their renewal year
- Inform mid-term decision-making, such as the evaluation of charter amendment proposals
- Inform renewal decision-making

Content of Annual Performance Reports

Each annual report contains a brief overview of the school, including its mission, history, demographics, and leadership. The overview is followed by the school’s performance framework, including outcomes for the most recently completed school year.

The framework is comprised of four sections: Academic, Mission-Specific (if applicable), Operational, and Financial.

Each section contains a number of measures intended to evaluate the school’s performance against specific criteria. The performance measures contained in the certificate and framework typically do not change during the certificate term. This makes it possible to evaluate trends, as well as a school’s current status. Below is a quick review of terminology:

Term	Definition	Example
Indicator	A general category of performance	Student achievement
Measure	A general means of evaluating an aspect of an indicator	Student proficiency on a standardized test
Metric	A means of evaluating a measure	The percentage of students that achieve proficiency on the standardized reading test
Target	A goal that signifies whether a particular measure has been met	70% proficiency on the standardized reading test
Rating	A label given to categorize a particular level of performance	“Exceeds Standard,” or “Does Not Meet Standard”

Each section of the framework is broken down into indicators, measures, metrics, targets, and ratings. The following pages explain how.

Academic Indicators

The Academic section of the framework is designed to demonstrate how well students are learning in the major subject areas of English language arts and mathematics. For high schools, it also evaluates students' readiness for post-secondary education.

Do all portfolio schools have the same academic expectations?

Most PCSC portfolio schools are evaluated using the same set of Academic measures. Alternative charter schools are evaluated using a framework in which a few measures are modified to make them more relevant.

How was the level of expectation determined?

Idaho statute provides that the performance targets must, at a minimum, require that each school meet applicable federal, state and authorized chartering entity goals for student achievement.

What is measured by the Academic section?

The Academic section contains 9 measures divided into the following indicators:

- **Student Academic Proficiency Comparisons** - These 4 measures evaluate a school on its students' academic achievement as compared to the state proficiency rates and local district proficiency rates.
- **Student Academic Growth** - These 4 measures evaluate a school on its students' academic growth in two, different ways. Some of the measures consider what percentage of students are learning at a rate that will allow them to achieve proficiency within 3 years or by 10th grade. Other measures compare students' growth rate to that of other students with similar academic performance histories.
- **College and Career Readiness** - This measure looks at high school graduation rates as compared to state benchmarks.

Where does the PCSC get its Academic data?

Most of the measures in the Academic section are evaluated using standardized test results. In order to maximize consistency of results while minimizing schools' reporting burden, all data for completion of the Academic section is gathered through the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE).

Mission-Specific Indicators

The Mission-Specific section of the framework is designed to offer meaningful recognition of school successes that aren't reflected in standardized test results. Mission-Specific measures may be academic or non-academic in nature, but they must be data-driven and objective.

Mission-Specific goals are optional. They can be useful for a school that doesn't feel the standard Academic indicators capture their successes.

Do all portfolio schools have the same mission-specific expectations?

No. Each school's mission-specific measures are unique.

How was the level of expectation determined?

Each school's mission-specific indicators, measures, metrics, and targets were negotiated one-on-one with the PCSC.

What is measured by the mission-specific section?

Mission-specific measures vary widely from school to school. Below are some examples of the mission-specific indicators selected by PCSC-portfolio schools:

- Second language acquisition
- University application acceptance
- Character development
- Course completion
- Early reading skills
- Science and technology skills

Where does the PCSC get its mission-specific data? Because most mission-specific measures rely on data that is not reported to the SDE, schools are responsible for collecting data and reporting results directly to the PCSC on an annual basis.

Operational Indicators

The Operational section of the framework is designed to assess whether schools are effectively managed and compliant with legal requirements.

Do all portfolio schools have the same operational expectations?

Yes. How was the level of expectation determined? The operational measures were drafted with input from NACSA's Core Performance Framework Guidance and modified as necessary to reflect Idaho's requirements. During the collaborative process of developing the PCSC's framework, care was taken to ensure that schools would not be excessively penalized for occasional instances of non-compliance, so long as they took corrective action in a timely manner.

What is measured by the Operational section?

The Operational section contains 16 measures divided into the following indicators:

- **Educational Program** - These 4 measures evaluate whether a school is implementing its educational program with fidelity and complying with requirements applicable to all Idaho public schools.
- **Financial Management and Oversight** - These 3 measures evaluate whether a school is meeting Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, financial reporting requirements, and meeting their enrollment projections.
- **Governance and Reporting** - These 6 measures evaluate whether a school's board is operating in accordance with the law and complying with state, federal, and

authorizer reporting requirements, including transparency and background check requirements.

- **School Environment** - These 2 measures evaluate additional aspects of schools' compliance with laws regarding facilities and transportation.
- **Additional Obligations** - This final measure addresses any areas of potential, material non-compliance that is not covered by the other indicators.

Where does the PCSC get its operational data?

Throughout the year, the PCSC keeps notes and documentation regarding schools' compliance and operations. Outside sources such as independent fiscal audits and State Department of Education records also inform evaluation of this section.

Financial Indicators

The Financial section of the framework is designed to assess schools' short- and long-term financial stability.

Do all portfolio schools have the same financial expectations?

Most PCSC portfolio schools share an identical set of financial expectations. However, a few schools have management contracts that include deficit protection clauses. These schools are exempt from certain measures.

How was the level of expectation determined?

The financial measures were drafted with input from NACSA's Core Performance Framework Guidance and agreed upon by stakeholders during the collaborative process of developing the PCSC's framework. Generally speaking, the rating categories reflect industry standards.

What is measured by the Financial section?

The Financial section contains 8 measures divided into the following indicators:

- **Near-Term Measures** - These measures evaluate a school's financial position and viability for the upcoming year (that is, the fiscal year during which the annual report is issued). Low scores indicate likelihood of immediate financial hardship.
- **Sustainability Measures** - These measures evaluate a school's position over time. Low scores indicate high risk of financial hardship in future years.

Additional detail about the financial measures is provided on the next page. Where does the PCSC get its financial data? Most data used to score the financial section is collected from schools' annual, independent fiscal audits. Relevant enrollment data is gathered from Unit Calculation Worksheets and ISEE reports submitted to the SDE.

The Financial section of the framework is often the most difficult for people to understand. For many, the terminology is unfamiliar. Ratings alone can be misleading, because low ratings on a small number of measures raises only the possibility of a problem. Sometimes, there is a simple explanation that alleviates concern. Be sure to read the Notes section beneath each measure within your school's framework to gain important, contextual information.

The PCSC, school representatives, and stakeholders may wish to seek additional information if the annual report raises questions. Please contact the PCSC Staff for guidance and additional resources.

Interpretation of Annual Performance Reports

Understanding the results in your school’s annual report is simple, though the formulas used to arrive at those results can be rather complex. By looking at different sections of the framework, you can get a general sense of your school’s status, or you can dig into the details.

On each measure, a school will fall into one of four rating categories: Exceeds Standard, Meets Standard, Does Not Meet Standard, or Falls Far Below Standard. Within each rating category, schools earn more points for better results and vice versa. This system is designed to reflect the nuances of a school’s performance and reduce oversimplification.

General results are best viewed on the Scorecard within the framework. Each section (Academic, Mission-Specific, Operational, and Financial) includes a color-coded column for easy review.

Here’s an example from the Scorecard of a fictitious school:

Academic	Measure
Proficiency	1a
	1b
	2a
	2b
Growth	3a
	3b
	4a
	4b
Post-Secondary Readiness	5a

Don’t worry! The next page will explain how to find more detail about each measure. For now, try using the color-coding to quickly assess this school’s strengths and weaknesses.

Blue indicates that the school “Exceeds Standard” on the relevant measure.

Green indicates a “Meets Standard” rating.

Yellow indicates a “Does Not Meet Standard” rating.

Red indicates that the school “Falls Far Below Standard” on the relevant measure.

In this example, we see that the school’s proficiency results are below standard in all subjects, especially ELA proficiency as compared to the state (measure 1b). However, we also see high ratings on all growth measures, indicating that the school is doing an excellent job of moving a challenging group of students toward proficiency.

For more detailed information about a particular measure, simply flip to the Academic section of the framework. For example, suppose you want more information about measure 3b, on which our imaginary school “Meets Standard.”

In the Academic section of the framework, Measure 3b looks like this:

Measure 3b	Are students making adequate academic growth to achieve English Language Arts proficiency within 3 years or by 10th grade?	Result	Points Possible	Points Earned
Criterion-Referenced Growth				
ELA	<p>Exceeds Standard: At least 85% of students are making adequate academic growth in ELA.</p> <p>Meets Standard: Between 70% and 84% of students are making adequate academic growth in ELA.</p> <p>Does Not Meet Standard: Between 50% and 69% of students are making adequate academic growth in ELA.</p> <p>Falls Far Below Standard: Fewer than 50% of students are making adequate academic growth in ELA.</p>	78	76-100 51-75 26-50 0-25	0 65 0 0 <hr/> 65
Notes				

Now we can see what the measure is intended to assess, how each rating category is defined, and exactly where this school fell within the “Meets Standard” category. The number of points the school earned on this measure is determined by where in the “Meets Standard” range the school fell.

In the Result column above, we see that 78% of students made adequate growth in English Language Arts. The formula contained within the framework used this number to calculate a point value of 65 (out of 100 possible) for this measure. This value appears in the Points Earned column.

If only 70% of the school’s students had made adequate growth, the school would still have met the standard, but it would have received fewer points.

An “Exceeds Standard” rating will earn a school up to 100% of the total possible points.

A “Meets Standard” rating will earn a school a majority of the total possible points for that measure, but the school will not be eligible for the maximum points possible.

A “Does Not Meet Standard” rating will usually offer a modest percentage of the total possible points in order to recognize the success that has occurred, even while acknowledging that there remains room for improvement.

A “Falls Far Below Standard” rating will sometimes offer a small percentage of the total possible points. On many measures, however, this rating reflects that the school has fallen below a “floor,” or base level of expectation, resulting in 0 points earned.

Note

Within each rating category, schools earn more points for better results and vice versa. This system is designed to reflect the nuances of a school’s performance and reduce oversimplification. If a school were to “meet standard” on every measure, it would be guaranteed a score high enough to ensure renewal of its performance certificate for another term.

Accountability Designations

For purposes of high-stakes decision-making, the framework’s heaviest emphasis is on the school’s Accountability Designation. This designation is calculated using points earned in

the Academic section. The Accountability Designation is found on the Scorecard. Here's an example from our fictitious school:

Accountability Designation	Description	Academic	
		Range	% Points Earned
Honor	Schools achieving at this level in all categories are eligible for special recognition and will be recommended for renewal. Replication and expansion proposals are likely to succeed.	75%-100% of points possible	
Good Standing	Schools achieving at this level in the Academic measures will be recommended for renewal; however, conditional renewal may be recommended if Operational and/or Financial outcomes are poor. Replication and expansion proposals will be considered.	55%-74% of points possible	69.04%
Remediation	Schools achieving at this level in the Academic measures may be recommended for non-renewal or conditional renewal, particularly if Operational and/or financial outcomes are also poor. Replication and expansion proposals are unlikely to succeed.	31%-54% of points possible	
Critical	Schools achieving at this level in the Academic measures face a strong likelihood of non-renewal, particularly if Operational and/or Financial outcomes are also poor. Replication and expansion proposals should not be considered.	0%-30% of points possible	

This school earned 69.04% of the total points possible for all Academic measures. Therefore, this school is to be congratulated on a Good Standing designation.

The descriptions under each Accountability Designation (Honor, Good Standing, Remediation, and Critical) indicate how such designations will affect schools that fall into each category.

Impact of Annual Performance Reports

Annual reports inform major decisions about whether or not schools will be allowed to continue operations. They also ensure that such decisions don't come as a surprise to the school.

In most years, a school's annual report does not result in sanctions or closure. Instead, it serves to advise the school's board of its performance, including any potential areas of concern. This gives the board extensive opportunity for correction before any negative consequences occur.

The PCSC may follow up on concerns raised by an annual report, seeking communication and documentation to better understand the school's status. Additionally, the PCSC uses annual report results to inform decision making about proposed charter amendments.

Annual reports do become “high stakes” in a school’s renewal year. In Idaho, new charter schools are first considered for renewal in their fifth year of operation. Subsequent renewal evaluations also take place every five years.

In the spring of a school’s renewal year, the PCSC will evaluate the school’s performance outcomes and take one of three actions:

- Renew the charter, giving the school authorization to continue operations for another five-year term;
- Non-renew the charter, causing the school to close at the end of the current school year; or
- Conditionally renew the charter, giving the school authorization to continue operations if it meets specific conditions and deadlines for necessary improvement.

Annual reports play a significant role in renewal decision-making. They provide objective data about a school’s performance, both in the most recent school year and over the entire certificate term.

By law, authorizers must renew schools that meet all the standards in their performance certificates at the time of renewal consideration. When schools meet some (but not all) of these standards, the renewal decision is subject to authorizer discretion. The PCSC considers context and trend data, and schools are invited to provide additional clarification, documentation, and testimony before a decision is made.

Finally, the results of all annual reports are compiled into an annual PCSC portfolio report. Published each spring, this document can help stakeholders place their schools’ outcomes in context by comparing them to the spectrum of PCSC-portfolio schools.

All interested parties, from parents to administrators to school board members to legislators, are invited to review the PCSC’s annual reports. Your interest in Idaho’s public charter schools is appreciated.

Resources

Additional resources can be found on the PCSC website. The PCSC Staff is always happy to answer your questions. Feel free to call or email any time.

Organizations

Public Charter School Commission
State Department of Education
Idaho Charter School Network
Idaho School Board Association

<https://chartercommission.idaho.gov/>
<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/>
<http://idahocsn.org/>
<https://www.idsba.org/>