

§2411. Charter term and renewal

1. Initial charter term. The term for an initial charter may not commence before July 1, 2012. An initial charter must be granted for a term of 5 operating years. The charter term commences on the public charter school's first day of operation. An approved public charter school may delay its opening for one school year in order to plan and prepare for the school's opening. If the public charter school requires an opening delay of more than one school year, the public charter school must request an extension from its authorizer. The authorizer may grant or deny the extension depending on the particular public charter school's circumstances.

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

2. Charter renewal term. A charter may be renewed for successive terms of 5 years, although an authorizer may grant a renewal for a term not to exceed 15 years based on the performance, demonstrated capacities and particular circumstances of each public charter school. If a charter is renewed for more than 5 years, the authorizer shall still issue a public charter school performance report every 5 years as called for by subsection 3. An authorizer may grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvements to a public charter school.

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

3. Authorizer renewal responsibilities. No later than June 30th of a public charter school's 4th year of operation under each 5-year term of a charter contract, the authorizer shall issue a public charter school performance report. If the charter of the public charter school is expiring, the authorizer shall offer charter renewal application guidance to the school.

A. The performance report required in this subsection must summarize the public charter school's performance record to date, based on the data required by this chapter and the charter contract, and must provide notice of any weaknesses or concerns perceived by the authorizer concerning the school that may jeopardize its position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified. The school must be given the opportunity to respond to the performance report and submit any corrections or clarifications for the report. [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

B. The renewal application guidance required by this subsection must include or refer explicitly to the criteria and standards that will guide the authorizer's renewal decisions, which must be based on the performance framework under section 2409 set forth in the charter contract and consistent with this chapter. The renewal application guidance must, at a minimum, require and provide an opportunity for the public charter school to:

(1) Present additional evidence, beyond the data contained in the performance report, supporting its case for charter renewal;

(2) Describe improvements undertaken or planned for the school; and

(3) Detail the school's plans for the next charter term. [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

4. Renewal application. No later than September 30th of a public charter school's 5th year of operation under a term of a charter contract or September 30th of a public charter school's final authorized year of operation under a term of a charter contract, the governing board of a public charter school seeking renewal shall submit a renewal application to the authorizer pursuant to any renewal application guidance offered by the authorizer under subsection 3.

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

5. Renewal decision. An authorizer shall rule by resolution on a renewal application under this section no later than 45 days after the filing of the renewal application. In making charter renewal decisions, every authorizer shall:

A. Ground its decisions in evidence of the public charter school's performance over the term of the charter in accordance with the performance framework under section 2409 set forth in the charter contract; [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

B. Ensure that data used in making renewal decisions are available to the public charter school and the public; and [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

C. Provide a public report summarizing the evidence basis for each decision. [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

6. Charter revocation and nonrenewal. A decision by an authorizer to revoke or not to renew the charter of a public charter school must be made in accordance with this subsection.

A. A charter may be revoked at any time or not renewed if the authorizer determines that the public charter school failed to comply with the provisions of this chapter or:

(1) Committed a material violation of any of the terms, conditions, standards or procedures required under this chapter or the charter contract;

(2) Failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations set forth in the charter contract;

(3) Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or

(4) Violated any provision of law from which the school was not exempted. [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

B. If an authorizer revokes or does not renew a charter, the authorizer shall clearly state, in a resolution of its governing entity, the reasons for the revocation or nonrenewal. [PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

C. The authorizer shall include in the charter contract a description of the standards and processes under which the authorizer may pursue revocation of the charter contract. The processes must comply with section 2410, subsection 2 and provide an opportunity for the public charter school to be heard prior to a decision on revocation. [PL 2011, c. 570, §12 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 570, §12 (AMD).]

7. Notification to commissioner and the Legislature. Within 10 days of taking action to renew, not renew or revoke a charter under this section, the authorizer shall report to the commissioner and the Legislature the action taken and shall provide a copy of the report to the public charter school at the same time that the report is submitted to the commissioner and the Legislature. The report must include a copy of the governing entity of the authorizer's resolution setting forth the action taken and reasons for the decision.

[PL 2015, c. 54, §3 (AMD).]

8. School closure and dissolution. If a public charter school closes for any reason:

A. The authorizer shall oversee and work with the closing public charter school to ensure timely notification to parents, orderly transition of students and student records and proper disposition of school funds, property and assets in accordance with the requirements of this chapter; [PL 2015, c. 448, §7 (AMD).]

B. The assets of the public charter school must be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the public charter school and then to creditors of the public charter school. Any remaining funds must be paid to the Treasurer of State to the credit of the General Fund. If the assets of the public charter school are insufficient to pay all parties to whom the public charter school owes compensation, the prioritization of the distribution of assets may be determined by decree of a court of law; and [PL 2015, c. 448, §7 (AMD).]

C. Education records for students transitioning to new schools must be transferred as required in section 6001-B. Education records for a person who for any reason, including graduation, will not be attending a public school in the State after closure of the public charter school must be transferred to the last school administrative unit of residence on record at the public charter school for that student and must be maintained by that school administrative unit in the same manner as education records of other resident students. [PL 2015, c. 448, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 2015, c. 448, §7 (AMD).]

9. Charter transfers. A charter contract and its oversight may not be transferred from one authorizer to another before the expiration of the charter contract term except by mutual agreement of all parties.

[PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 570, §12 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 54, §3 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 448, §7 (AMD).

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