

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 423: Charter School Renewal Guidance and Application

Part 423, Chapter 1: Charter School Renewal Guidance and Application

Source: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-28-9 and 33.



Charter School Renewal Guidance and Application Process

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Introduction

The Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (“MCSAB”) is tasked with approving, overseeing, and holding charter schools accountable for performance over time. One of its most important functions in fulfilling this mission is to conduct a charter school renewal process once schools reach the end of their approved charter contract term. The MCSAB will consider Performance Framework ratings, timely document submissions, site visit reports, annual performance reports, and other relevant information in its decisions. This document provides the renewal eligibility criteria, a timeline, and an application.

Charter School Renewal Timeline

According to Miss. Code Ann. §37-28-33 (1), a charter may be renewed for successive five-year terms of duration and the authorizer may grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvements to a charter school and may lessen the renewal term based on the performance, demonstrated capacities and particular circumstances of each charter school. The MCSAB will adhere to the following timeline for all renewal cycles.

Phase	References to § 37 -28- 33 & Description of Activity	Timeline
Letter to Charter Schools in Their Final Contract Year	The Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will notify each charter school eligible for renewal.	Before September 30
Release of Charter School Performance Report and Charter Renewal Application Guidance	The authorizer shall issue a charter school performance report and charter renewal application guidance to any charter school whose charter will expire the following year. The performance report must summarize the 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 which may jeopardize the charter school’s position in seeking renewal if not timely rectified.	Before September 30
Submission of Corrections to the Performance Report Online Portal Submission ¹	The charter school must respond and submit any corrections or clarifications for the performance report within ninety (90) days after receiving the report. MCSAB will consider the corrected information in the renewal decision-making process.	Within 90 days of receipt of the Performance Report
School Renewal Site Visit	The MCSAB and/or its external evaluators will perform a site visit and/or a desk audit.	Within 45 days of application submission

¹ Online portal notifications will provide instructions and details for submission.

Phase	References to § 37 -28- 33 & Description of Activity	Timeline
Submission of the Application for Charter Renewal Epicenter Submission ²	A school seeking renewal must complete and submit the renewal application by 3 PM Central time no later than January 31. Late applications will not be accepted.	No later than January 31
Completeness Check	MCSAB staff will conduct a completeness check and return application to schools if the application is incomplete. Staff will only verify that all sections have answers and are properly labeled. No substantive review will be done at this time.	Within 14 days of application submission
Application Review & DRAFT Renewal Recommendation Report Delivered to Schools	The Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board staff and/or external evaluators will review the renewal application, Annual Performance Framework Reports, and other relevant information collected by the Board throughout the charter contract term. The MCSAB staff and/or external evaluators will prepare a comprehensive report that recommends renewal, renewal with conditions, or non-renewal and closure. Find rubric used here .	Within 60 days of application submission
Response Epicenter Submission	All schools are allowed to prepare a response to the Draft Renewal Recommendation Report and submit documents they feel will support their position.	Within 14 days of receipt of the Draft Renewal Recommendation Report
Request for Public Testimony for Non-Renewed Schools	MS Annotated Code Section 37-28-33 requires revocation and nonrenewal processes that provide the governing board of a charter school with timely notification of the prospect of revocation or nonrenewal and of the reasons for such possible closure. A reasonable amount of time in which to prepare a response should be provided to the governing board. Additionally, the governing board should be provided with an opportunity to submit documents and give testimony challenging the rationale for closure and in support of the continuation of the school at an orderly proceeding held for that purpose. Governing boards should be allowed access to representation by counsel and to call witnesses on the school's behalf. The recordings of such proceedings is permitted and after a reasonable period for deliberation, require a final determination to be made and conveyed in writing to the governing board.	Within 30 days of Request
Final Board Vote on Recommendations	The Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will vote to accept or deny the renewal recommendation of staff and/or external evaluators. They will also vote to adopt the renewal recommendation report, as finalized, as the resolution of their reasoning that is required by law.	Within 90 days of application submission

² Online portal notifications will provide instructions and details for submission.

Phase	References to § 37 -28- 33 & Description of Activity	Timeline
Board Resolution Delivered to Schools	Within ten days after taking action to renew, not renew or revoke a charter, the MCSAB shall provide a report to the charter school, including a copy of the Board resolution.	Within 10 days of the Board's decision

RENEWAL DECISION-MAKING

For renewal decisions, the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will use the currently adopted Performance Frameworks together with reports based on the 2019 Performance Framework. The MCSAB will consider pre and post pandemic conditions, state and federal waivers, and the lack of student assessment data in making decisions to determine the schools' renewal recommendations, and, if renewed, the renewal term.

The Performance Frameworks include three domains: academic, financial, and organizational. The MCSAB will consider evidence from all three domains in making renewal decisions and will draw on the renewal application, the schools' performance over time, and other official data.

RENEWAL CRITERIA & TERM LENGTH

According to Miss. Code Ann. §37-28-33 (1), a charter **may** be renewed for successive five-year terms of duration and the authorizer **may** grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvements to a charter school and **may** lessen the renewal term based on the performance, demonstrated capacities, and particular circumstances of each charter school. During each renewal cycle, the MCSAB will base the term length on evidence of the school's performance over the term of the charter contract. The chart below shows how findings from the evaluation of the renewal application and other pertinent documents may result in a renewal recommendation for term length from MCSAB staff or external evaluators.

Academic Expectations	Financial Performance	Organizational Performance	Renewal Recommendation & Term Length for Consideration by the MCSAB
Meets or Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	School May be Renewed for up to a Five Year Term

Approaches or Fails to Meet Expectations	Approaches or Fails to Meet Expectations	Approaches or Fails to Meet Expectations	School May be Renewed for a Lesser Term and/or School May Receive a Conditional Renewal
Fails to Meet Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations	School May Receive a Non-Renewal Resulting in Closure

MCSAB will use professional judgment when applying the renewal criteria to ensure all schools are afforded an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their success over time.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Page Formatting

All narrative responses should use Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial and should have a font size of 12. Tables may have a font size of 10. Margins should be 1 inch in all directions. Single-spaced responses are acceptable, but information must be readable. All documents should use page numbers for reference and should have in the top, left-hand header the name of the section as specified below. Please adhere to the requested page limits in order for the application to be processed as efficiently as possible.

Submission Format

The renewal application will be accepted digitally through the online portal. Please do not submit paper copies of any document to the MCSAB as these will not be considered.

Schools must merge all of their application materials into a single, continuously numbered document prior to submission. The table below lists the section headers corresponding to each application section and page limits schools must use for the document.

Schools should change all incidents of “School Name” to their own name.

Section	Required Header Name	Page Limits
Executive Summary	Executive Summary_School Name	2
Application Checklist	Application Checklist_School Name	1
Record of Performance		
Effective Academic Program	Effective Academic Program_School Name Applicable Academic Framework Indicators should be addressed	25
	Additional Academic Evidence_School Name	15

Financial Success	Financial Success_School Name Performance Framework Indicators should be addressed	15
	Financial Policy Manual_School Name Financial Policy Manual may be submitted by reference through a hyperlink	10
	Additional Financial Evidence_School Name	10
Organizational Success	Organizational Success_School NameRe Performance Framework Indicators should be addressed	20
	Additional Organizational Evidence_School Name	15
Future Plans		
Mission, Vision, and Essential Terms	Essential Terms_School Name	5
Governance	Governance Plan_School Name	10
	Governance Documentation_School Name Bylaws and Conflict of Interest Policy Should be Included and may be Hyperlinked	25
Fiscal Plan	Fiscal Plan_School Name	10
	Budget_School Name	10
Facility Plan	Facility Plan_School Name	5
Proposed Grades and Enrollment	Grades and Enrollment Plan_School Name	5
	Enrollment Projection Table_School Name	1

Due Date

Per the Renewal Timeline on pages 3-5, the application is due in the online portal by 3 PM Central no later than January 31st of the year in which the renewal decision will be made. **Late applications will not be accepted.** Charter schools are **strongly** encouraged to submit their application early in order to receive an earlier decision, as it is in the best interest of families, children, and the charter school community.

Application for Charter Renewal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FORM: This form will allow the MCSAB to briefly summarize your application. Please use the [Executive Summary template](#) for this section.

WHAT TO SUBMIT: Please title the Executive Summary as **Executive Summary_School Name** in the header. The Executive Summary should not exceed 2 pages.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

FORM: This form will ensure that a charter school submits all required information and will allow the MCSAB to quickly assess the completeness of the application. Please use the [Application Checklist template](#) for this section.

WHAT TO SUBMIT: Please title the Application Checklist as **Application Checklist_School Name** in the header. The checklist should not exceed 1 page.

RECORD OF PERFORMANCE

In making each charter renewal decision, the MCSAB considers a charter school's performance according to Miss. Code Ann. 37-28-33 and grounds its decision based on evidence of the school's performance over the term of the charter contract and in accordance with the performance framework set forth in the charter contract.

Effective Academic Program

Required submission

The MCSAB academic performance framework is a multi-measure framework that provides information about whether the charter school's education program results in high student outcomes. The academic performance framework indicators, measures, metrics, and cut scores are designed to (1) align to but not be limited to the measures defined by the Mississippi Charter School Law, (2) include outcome measures covering the full span of grade levels offered by a school, (3) include measures where publicly available data are available and easy to use in calculations, and (4) use comparisons to the geographic district, where available, to provide information about relative performance. The academic performance framework is comprised of seven indicators: 1. State Accountability 2. Academic Proficiency 3. Academic Growth 4. Academic Gap 5. Academic Readiness 6. Postsecondary Readiness 7. School-Specific [OPTIONAL]

In the narrative response, schools should describe by addressing applicable indicators on the Academic Framework how they have provided an effective and successful academic program for all students.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Schools should submit a narrative making their case for

renewal. Please respond to the questions below relevant to your school.

1. Please summarize the school’s history of academic performance over the charter term. Include information about the school’s challenges and its accomplishments. Provide evidence.
2. For Academic Performance Framework indicator or sub-indicator ratings of “approaches” or “fails to meet expectations”, please describe what factors the school believes explains the performance and what improvements were undertaken throughout the charter term.
3. For schools applying under a conditional renewal, please describe actions taken to meet the terms and conditions. Include evidence to support your response.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The school is invited to submit any additional evidence related to its academic performance that it believes will help it make its case for renewal.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *Required:* Please title the Effective Academic Program narrative as **Effective Academic Program_School Name** in the header. Please limit this subsection to 25 pages.
- *If Submitting Additional Information:* Please title any additional evidence as **Additional Academic Evidence_School Name** in the header and limit this subsection to 15 pages.

Financial Success

Required submission

The MCSAB financial performance framework indicators, measures, metrics, and cut scores are based on alignment with the Mississippi Charter School Law and informed by national best practices established in the National Association of Charter School Authorizer’s (NACSA) Core Performance Framework and Guidance which was created from a review of model authorizer practices, charter school lender guidance, professional judgment, and practices used by other nonprofit and governmental entities.

The financial performance framework includes the following indicators and measures: 1. Short-term Financial Health (Current Year) a. Current Ratio b. Unrestricted Days Cash c. Current-year Enrollment Variance d. Debt (or lease) Default 2. Long-term Financial Health (Multiple Years) a. Debt-to-Asset Ratio b. Total Margin c. Cash Flow 3. Financial Management and Oversight a. MCSAB and MDE Financial Reporting and Compliance Requirements b. Annual Financial Audit/Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) Requirements

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Please provide an overview of the school’s financial history, including challenges and accomplishments.

1. Describe how the school has achieved a sustainable financial model.

2. For any financial indicator or sub-indicator on which the school did not receive full credit over its term of operation, explain the circumstances leading to lower performance and provide detail for actions in place to improve performance in the future.
3. If the school is under any financial corrective action plans, including as imposed by the Mississippi Department of Education, please explain the reason, the status of the plan's implementation, the required corrective actions, and the date the work will be complete.
4. If the school has any outstanding Notices of Concern or Breach related to its financials, please explain the reason, the status of the Board's imposed corrective actions, and the date the work will be complete.
5. *For schools that have received a Financial Performance Indicator rating of "Fails to Meet Expectations" for any overall or sub-indicator over the term of the contract,* please explain in detail the specific circumstances and corrective actions the Board should consider in making its renewal decision.
6. For schools applying under a conditional renewal, please describe actions taken to meet the terms and conditions. Include evidence to support your response.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The school must submit its Financial Policy Manual and may do so by reference through a hyperlink. Schools may also submit additional evidence related to its financial performance that it believes will help it make its case for renewal.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *Required:* Please title the Financial Success response as **Financial Success_School Name** in the header. Please limit this response to 10 pages.
- *Required:* Please title the school's financial policies and procedures manual as **Financial Policy Manual_School Name** in the header. If submitting the manual in its entirety rather than by reference through a hyperlink, please limit the response to 10 pages.
- *Optional:* Please title any additional evidence as **Additional Financial Evidence_School Name** in the header. Please limit this attachment to 10 pages.

Organizational Success

Required submission

The MCSAB organizational performance framework indicators, measures, metrics, and cut scores reflect only the minimum requirements in the Mississippi Charter School Law and the MCSAB charter school contract. Informed by national best practices as established in the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's (NACSA) Core

Performance Framework and Guidance,¹ the framework streamlines reporting requirements where applicable to reduce administrative burdens on schools and authorizer staff. The organizational performance framework consists of six indicators: 1. Educational Program Requirements 2. Enrollment and Admissions 3. Discipline 4. Special Populations 5. School Environment 6. Governance and Reporting

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Please respond to the following:

1. Please describe and provide evidence that the school has fulfilled its vision, mission, and Essential Terms as listed in its charter contract. Please provide a distinct heading for each component of the prompt.
2. Please address any performance indicators or sub-indicators where the school failed to meet expectations.
3. If the school has any outstanding Notices of Concern or Breach related to its organizational performance, please explain the reason, the status of the Board's imposed corrective actions, and the date the work will be complete.
4. If the school is under any corrective action plans imposed by the Mississippi Department of Education for any federal program, including special education, please explain the reason, the status of the plan's implementation, the required corrective actions, and the date the work will be complete.
5. *For schools whose Organizational Performance Indicator rating was "Fails to Meet Expectations" for any overall or sub-indicator over the term of the contract, please explain in detail the specific circumstances and corrective actions the Board should consider in making its renewal decision.*
6. For schools applying under a conditional renewal, please describe actions taken to meet the terms and conditions. Include evidence to support your response.
7. For schools who utilize an education service provider and/or a charter management organization, please describe the relationship and link in a copy of each contract.

ATTACHMENT: The school is invited to submit any additional evidence related to its organizational performance that it believes will help it make its case for renewal. Please combine documents into one attachment.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *Required:* Please title the Organizational Success response as **Organizational Success_School Name** in the header. Please limit this response to 20 pages.
- *If Submitting Additional Information:* Please title any additional evidence as **Additional Organizational Evidence_School Name** in the header and limit this subsection to 15 pages.

FUTURE PLANS

Miss. Ann. Code §37-28-33 3(c) allows for each charter school to detail its plans for the next charter term.

Vision, Mission, and Essential Terms

If the school wishes to make no changes to its vision, mission, and/or Essential Terms, please write “**Not Applicable**” in the submitted document.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: If the school seeks any changes to its vision, mission, and/or Essential Terms as they are listed in its current contract, please respond to the following:

1. Please describe any proposed changes to the school’s vision, mission, and/or Essential Terms. If applicable, please provide a distinct heading for each component of the prompt.
2. For each changed element, please describe the school’s rationale for the change, including any evidence to support the school’s ability to provide a high-quality learning environment if the change is accepted.

WHAT TO SUBMIT: Title the proposed changes as **Vision, Mission And/or Essential Terms_School Name** in the header. Do not exceed 5 pages.

Governance

If the school wishes to make no changes to its governance structure, please write “**Not Applicable**” in the submitted document.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: As charter schools grow, they sometimes find it necessary to change their governance structure to ensure continued success. If the school has plans to change its governance structure, please provide the following:

- the school’s justification for needing a new governance structure,
- the actual governance structure proposed, and
- the school’s explanation as to how the new governance structure will support student achievement at the school.

The response should provide details explaining changes to the by-laws or articles of incorporation, if any. If the proposed changes require starting or spinning-off a new organization or merging with another organization, the response should clearly explain the new organization as started or merged as well as the organization being merged with the charter school.

NOTE: All schools must submit Bylaws and Conflict of Interest Policy, both of which may be hyperlinked.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *If submitting changes to the Governance Plan:* Title the Governance Plan as

Governance Plan_School Name in the header. Please limit this subsection to 10 pages.

- *If Submitting Additional Information:* Title any necessary supporting documentation as **Governance Documentation_School Name** in the header. Please limit this subsection to 25 pages.

Fiscal Plan

Required submission

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Please describe the following and provide a distinct heading for each component of the prompt.

1. School's fiscal plan over the next charter term
2. Expected fiscal needs
3. Proposed fiscal goals
4. Plans for fundraising
5. Explain how this fiscal plan will support the educational program of the school and
6. Explain why this plan is feasible at this stage of the school's development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The school is required to prepare a proposed five-year budget using the [Budget template](#).

SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR USING THE BUDGET TEMPLATE ~

Please use the Excel workbook to submit a five-year budget. The tab titled "5-YR Summary" will automatically populate from the annual summaries on the other tabs. Please do not add tabs, as this will increase your page count. Items listed in your budget should match your budget narrative. Please ensure that the tabs will print in a readable format. Should you have problems with this workbook, please contact the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *Required:* Title the Fiscal Plan as **Fiscal Plan_School Name** in the header. Do not exceed 10 pages.
- *Required:* Please title the proposed five-year budget as **Budget_School Name** in the header. Do not add additional tabs to the workbook; do not exceed 10 pages.

Facility Plan

Required submission

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Please describe the following and provide a distinct heading for each component of the prompt.

1. If the school has no plans to change its facility, please submit a document stating so and explain how the current facility is adequate for the school's educational program and enrollment.

2. If the school plans to move to a new facility, renovate, or expand, respond to the following:
 - a. New Facility: include relevant details such as number of classrooms, square footage, multipurpose room, gym, etc.
 - b. Renovate: include relevant details such as number of classrooms, square footage, multipurpose room, gym, etc.
 - c. Expand: include relevant details such as number of classrooms, square footage, multipurpose room, gym, etc.
3. Explain how the facility plan will enable the school to fulfill its educational program.

WHAT TO SUBMIT: Title the Facility Plan as **Facility Plan_School Name** in the header.

Limit this section to 5 pages.

Proposed Grades and Enrollment

If the school will not change its grades or enrollment, please write “**Not Applicable**” in the submitted document.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: If applicable, please respond to the following:

1. If the school intends to add or subtract grades - or otherwise alter its school model, current enrollment and/or grade levels served, please describe the school’s proposed academic plan. **Note: The MCSAB will consider proposed changes to grade levels served; however, substantive changes to the school model may require a completed application through the Call for Quality Schools annual cycle.**
2. Explain how the school will continue to provide an effective education aligned to its mission and essential terms.

*Please note that this is a description of future plans. A separate process will be required for adding/subtracting grades, changing enrollment, and changing school model. See MCSAB’s contract amendment and expansion processes.

ATTACHMENT: Please complete the [Grades and Enrollment template](#) with the school’s proposed grades and enrollment.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- *Required:* Please title the Grades and Enrollment Plan as **Grades and Enrollment Plan_School Name** in the header. Please limit this document to 5 pages.
- *Required:* Title the Grades and Enrollment template as **Enrollment Projection Table_School Name** in the header. This subsection should not exceed 1 page.