



## Transforming Public Education in The Nation's Capital





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All statements and conclusions, unless specifically attributed to another source, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the other organizations referenced in this report. For questions or comments, please contact Alex Doty of FSG at [alex.doty@fsg.org](mailto:alex.doty@fsg.org).

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## Commonly Used Abbreviations and Definitions

**BOE – District of Columbia Board of Education:** an elected body that formerly had oversight over DCPS and served as a second charter school authorizer, along with PCSB. Abolished in 2008 as part of the establishment of mayoral control, at which time all of the charter schools it had authorized were transferred to PCSB

**CMO – Charter Management Organization:** non-profit entities that operate multiple charter schools, often in multiple states

**Common Lottery:** a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating District of Columbia public charter and traditional public schools

**CREDO – Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University:** an education-focused program and policy analysis center

**DC-CAS – District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System:** Washington, DC's state-level assessment, used to measure the academic proficiency of the city's students in a standards-based way

**DCPS – District of Columbia Public Schools:** Washington, DC's system of traditional public schools

**EMO – Educational Management Organizations:** firms that provide educational services or that operate multiple schools, including charter schools

**Financial and Audit Review:** The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board's framework for measuring the financial performance and stability of charter schools in Washington, DC

**NACSA – National Association of Charter School Authorizers:** an organization that works to improve the practice of charter school authorizers

**OSSE – Office of the State Superintendent of Education:** the State Education Agency for the District of Columbia charged with raising the quality of education for all residents of Washington, DC

**PARCC - The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers:** a group of state-level education agencies, including the Washington, DC OSSE, developing assessments that are aligned with the Common Core to replace current state-level assessments; all public schools in Washington, DC will begin using the PARCC assessment during the 2014-15 school year

**PCSB – The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board:** the entity responsible for charter school authorization in Washington, DC

**PMF – Performance Management Framework:** PCSB's framework for measuring the academic performance of charter schools in Washington, DC

**QSR – Qualitative Site Reviews:** a tool used by PCSB to gather qualitative evidence on the extent to which a public charter school in Washington, DC is meeting the goals and student expectations as described in its charter agreement

**SBOE – State Board of Education:** an elected body established in 2008, has limited oversight of OSSE and certain other educational policies, such as graduation requirements

## Executive Summary

***The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) is one of the nation's leading charter school authorizers. PCSB oversees 60 Washington, DC charter schools across 109 campuses.***

Under PCSB's watch, DC's charter sector and schools have greatly improved student performance, school quality, and city-wide access to high quality seats in recent years. PCSB's transformative approach to charter school authorization is a model for others to follow.

Charter school authorizers are entities with three main tasks. They 1) approve schools, 2) oversee schools while in operation, and 3) revoke school charters if they fail to meet their performance goals. Because charter schools are autonomous, authorizers, if using best practice, do not dictate how they operate. Instead, they hold schools responsible for meeting the goals articulated within their charter agreements.

The impact of an effective charter school authorizer on student performance is illustrated by the strength and success of PCSB. As the District of Columbia's sole authorizer, PCSB oversees all public charter schools in Washington, DC. Through a multi-faceted approach, PCSB ensures that schools perform satisfactorily (across a wide variety of academic measures), are financially sustainable, and operate as public schools that are free and open to all students. PCSB has developed a model of authorization and oversight that has improved the quality of Washington, DC's charter school sector and led to DC public charter school students making significant learning gains. The performance of DC's charter school sector has

improved over each of the past several years, and DC charter schools significantly outperform the city's traditional public schools while enrolling similar or higher percentages of educationally disadvantaged students. According to one study, the average student enrolled in a Washington, DC charter school receives an educational benefit equivalent to 99 extra days of school per year compared to his or her peers attending the city's traditional public schools.<sup>1</sup>

PCSB's approach is derived from its mission, vision, and core values. It is dedicated to transforming public education in Washington, DC and to ensuring that every student is provided with a quality education. PCSB gives DC charter schools a high degree of autonomy in exchange for accountability for results, and encourages schools to exhibit fidelity by requiring schools to remain faithful to their status as public schools and responsibility to educate all students equitably.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *National Charter School Study 2013*. Stanford University: Stanford, CA.



PCSB has developed highly effective practices for regulating charter schools that span each stage of the “lifecycle” of a charter school. PCSB’s particularly innovative practices at different stages of the lifecycle of a charter school include:

**Application and Approval:** PCSB uses a **differentiated application** for operators of charter schools with a demonstrated track record of success, helping bring quality public charter schools to Washington, DC.

**Oversight and Evaluation:** PCSB uses a series of **multi-dimensional and complementary frameworks** that comprehensively and holistically measure and hold schools accountable for performance. These include the Performance Management Framework, or PMF, and the Financial and Audit Review.

**Response Based on School Performance:** PCSB closely monitors the performance of DC charter schools, and is committed to upholding its responsibility to close schools failing to meet their performance goals. Nearly one out of three charter schools ever opened in DC is now closed. PCSB encourages the use of **asset acquisitions** when closing schools, wherein the assets and students of underperforming schools are acquired by an organization or management

team with a demonstrated record of success in operating charter schools.

PCSB’s approach to charter school authorization and oversight has made Washington, DC home to one of the strongest charter school sectors in the nation. This case study:

- Illustrates PCSB’s approach to charter school authorization and oversight;
- Explains the philosophy behind PCSB’s approach;
- Highlights PCSB’s partners and community stakeholders; and
- Provides a model for authorizers to learn from (and entities interested in authorizing)

By adapting and implementing PCSB’s practices, other authorizers can strengthen their portfolios of charter schools and the charter sector as a whole. State governments looking to create an authorizing entity, or entities, can use this case study as a guide when crafting legislation and organizational policy.

## Introduction

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) is an independent body responsible for approving new charter schools and overseeing the 60 public charter schools across 109 campuses operating in Washington, DC (SY 2013-2014). As the city’s sole authorizer of charter schools, PCSB oversees every public charter school within the District of Columbia. PCSB is responsible for regulating Washington, DC’s charter school sector, but does not manage or have control of schools in the way that a central office of a traditional public school system does. Instead, PCSB allows charter schools to operate autonomously, while overseeing their performance.

More than 36,000 students in Washington, DC—44% of all public school students in the city—attend a public charter school. The demographics of students attending schools within PCSB’s portfolio are broadly similar to those of their counterparts in traditional public schools in Washington DC, which are run by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). PCSB’s student body is slightly more economically disadvantaged than that of DCPS. Washington, DC’s charter school sector is highly effective, and its charter schools outperform the city’s traditional public schools.<sup>2</sup> *Please see page 5 for additional detail on the performance of charter schools in Washington, DC*

PCSB is a national leader in the field of charter school authorization, and uses “best in class” systems (as described by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers

(NACSA)) to monitor, evaluate, and share information on the performance of the schools it oversees.<sup>3</sup> PCSB was chosen as the subject of this case study because of its nationwide reputation as an effective and successful authorizer.

Student Demographics	DC Public Charter Schools	DCPS
Total enrollment (2012-13)	35,019	45,835
Student ethnicity as a percentage of total student population		
Black	83%	69%
Hispanic	12%	13%
Other Ethnicity	2%	2%
White	3%	16%
Percentage of students in federally-recognized demographic groups		
Special Education	12%	14%
English Language Learners	8%	9%
Free/Reduced Lunch	72%	61%

*Washington, DC Public School Student Facts & Figures*

<sup>2</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *National Charter School Study 2013*. Stanford University: Stanford, CA.

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Charter School Authorizers. (2013). *NACSA Authorizer Evaluation Report: District of Columbia Public Charter School Board*.

This case study has three primary goals:

1. To illustrate the importance of effective charter school authorization and oversight in improving the performance of the charter sector.
2. To describe PCSB's policies and practices, with an emphasis on how PCSB approves, oversees and evaluates, and responds to different levels of performance among the public charter schools in its portfolio.
3. To highlight the innovative practices driving PCSB's effectiveness and share best practices that other charter school authorizers might adapt to meet their needs.

Charter schools are still a relatively new phenomenon, and there are few codified and proven practices in charter school authorization. This document helps fill this void; other authorizers can learn from PCSB's experience and adopt many of PCSB's practices with the goal of strengthening the charter sector.

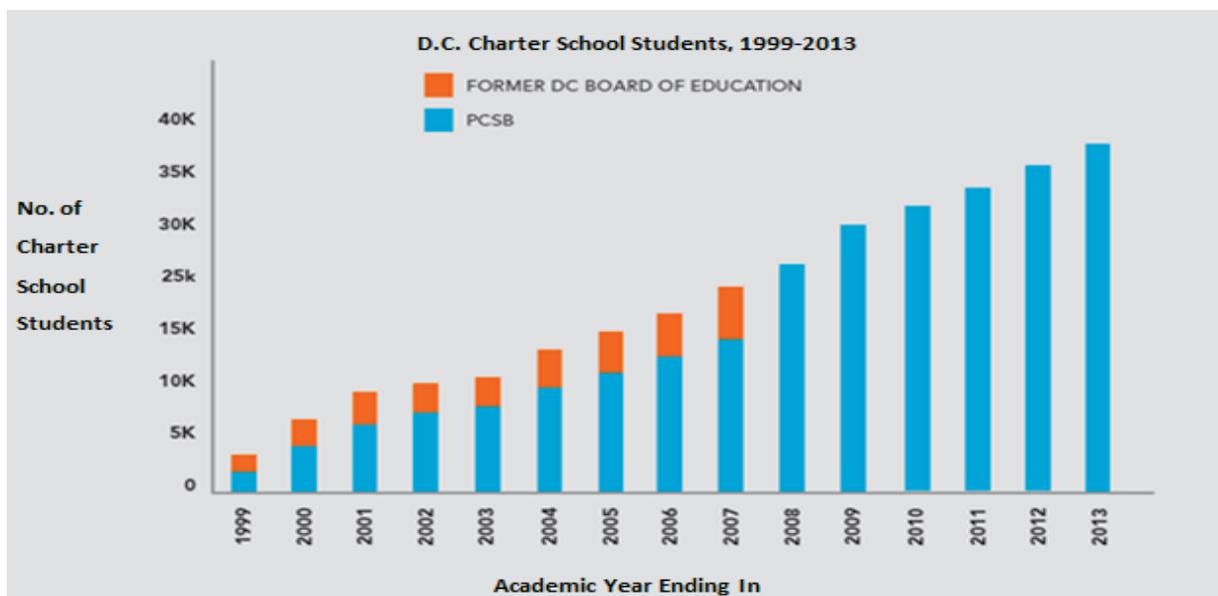
State governments looking to form charter school authorizers can learn from PCSB practices as well.

### ***PCSB's Budget and Governance***

PCSB is governed by a Board of seven members who are nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia. While PCSB remains independent from other Washington, DC governmental agencies, it regularly provides reporting to many of them, including the Deputy Mayor for Education, Council of the District of Columbia, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

Most of PCSB's funding comes from the schools it oversees. Until October 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, Washington, DC charter school law required each of the city's public charter schools to allocate 0.5% of the per-pupil funding they receive to PCSB. Effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, a proposed change in the law increased this allocation to 1.0%.

PCSB also receives government appropriations, government grants, and philanthropic support, which vary in amount from year to year. In total, PCSB's 2013 budget was roughly \$6.4 million, or about \$175 per DC charter school student.



*Washington, DC Charter School Student Population, 1999-2013*

### ***The History of Public Charter Schools in Washington, DC***

The first charter school legislation in Washington, DC was a statute passed by the United States Congress, the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995. An amendment to this law created PCSB in 1996.<sup>4</sup> PCSB became the second body, along with the District of Columbia Board of Education (BOE), that had the authority to open, monitor, and close public charter schools in Washington, DC. Enrollment in public charter schools in Washington, DC grew each year, from 160 students in 1996 to nearly 22,000 students in 2007. In 2007, the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act mandated the BOE transfer all authorizing responsibility to PCSB, making PCSB the sole authorizer of public charter schools in Washington, DC. As a result, PCSB absorbed the 26 public charter schools previously under the authority of the Board of Education.<sup>5</sup> Since then, the number of schools overseen by PCSB has continued to grow each year.

### ***The Impact of Authorization on Public Charter School Performance***

As of the 2012-13 school year, there were estimated to be more than 6,000 charter schools serving about 2.3 million students across the United States. The number of students enrolled in US charter schools grew by 80% from 2009 to 2013, and continues to increase rapidly.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bolger, Carly and Justin Testerman, *NACSA Authorizer Evaluation Report: District of Columbia Public Charter School Board* (National Association of Charter School Authorizers, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS), 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *National Charter School Study 2013*. Stanford University: Stanford, CA.

The national sector-wide results of charter schools are, in aggregate, fairly similar to those of traditional public schools. According to a study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University (CREDO), on average, a student in a charter school demonstrates the equivalent of eight more learning days in reading than his or her peers in traditional public schools, while he or she has no statistically significant difference in math learning gains.<sup>7</sup>

While the overall national performance of public charter schools is largely similar to that of traditional public schools, the variance of performance within charter schools is higher. When evaluated against the traditional public schools that their student populations would attend based on feeder patterns, CREDO found that 25% of charter schools posted significantly better results in reading and 29% in math, while 19% posted significantly worse results in reading and 31% did so in math.

Emerging research on the role of charter authorization confirms that authorizers play an important role in ensuring that public charter schools provide students with a quality education. The Brookings Institution notes “most practitioners and policymakers in the field believe that...authorizing bodies are a significant factor in determining the quality of public charter schools.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, CREDO concludes that “there is a great need for careful due diligence by authorizers during the approval process,” and “[selection of charter schools are] permitted to replicate matters enormously.” Though much of the research linking charter authorization with

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Dynarski, S., Hoxby, C., Loveless, T., Schneider, M., Whitehurst, G., & Witte, J., (2010). *Charter Schools: A Report on Rethinking the Federal Role in Education*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

student success is relatively recent, experts increasingly believe that effective charter authorization plays a large role in the quality of public charter schools, and thus in student success.<sup>9</sup>

Charter authorizers are responsible for deciding whether charter schools may open, providing ongoing oversight of charter schools, granting charter schools permission to expand, and deciding whether to close charter schools. Given these powers to oversee the charter school sector and the high variance in charter school performance, there exists an opportunity to substantially improve the charter school sector through effective authorization and oversight.

### ***The Importance of Effective School Approval Processes and Closing Underperforming Schools***

It is vital that authorizers approve only the charters of schools that are highly likely to be successful. Research shows that “initial signals of [charter school] performance are indicative of later performance.”<sup>10</sup> CREDO found that after five years, 80 percent of schools that started in the bottom performance quintile and 97 percent of schools that started in the highest quintile remained there.<sup>11</sup> Approving only schools that are ready to be high-performing from their inception is therefore a powerful way to increase the likelihood that new charter seats will be—and remain—high quality.

Charter school authorizers also play an important role in ensuring that the schools they approve are continually successful in educating students. Authorizers generally have the authority to close charter schools that fail to meet the goals they establish in their charter agreements or fail to comply with financial and legal requirements. By closing underperforming schools, charter authorizers can improve the charter school sector in their jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup> A CREDO report found that if any one of a number of strategic charter school closure efforts were made, the charter school sector would improve its performance significantly.<sup>13</sup> These changes could lead to charter school students gaining anywhere from 13 to 36 additional days of learning per year compared with students in traditional public schools.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *Charter School Growth and Replication*. Stanford University: Stanford, CA.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

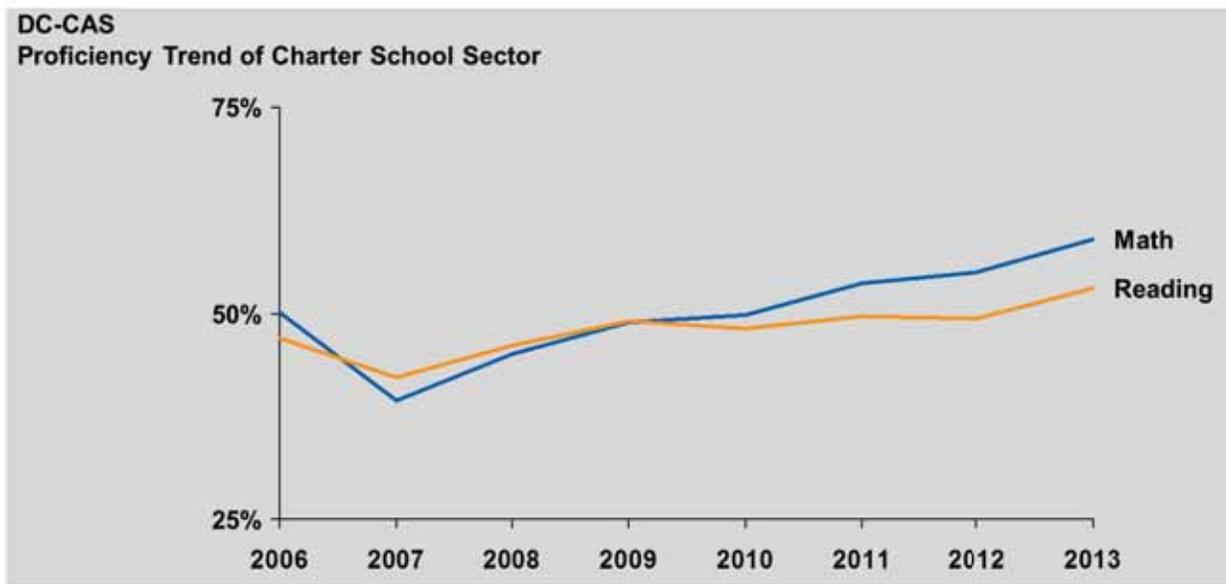
<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> The efforts examined by CREDO ranged from the closure of all charter schools with academic growth less than .04 standard deviations below the average to the closure of all charter schools with lower academic growth than traditional public schools.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



*Performance of Washington, DC charter schools on the DC-CAS examination, 2007-2013*

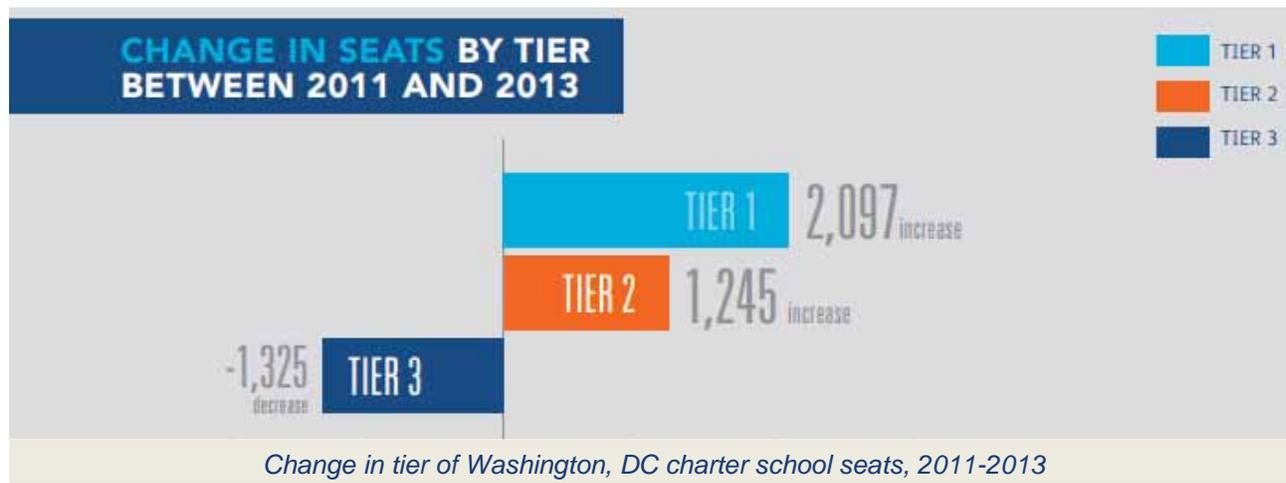
Charter school authorizers can also play a critical role in ensuring illegal or improper activities are minimized. Charter schools in some jurisdictions have been accused of poorly serving students with disabilities or English language learners, fiscal mismanagement, failing to admit disadvantaged students, practicing religion, and many other actions inconsistent with their roles and obligations as public schools. Effective authorizers ensure charter schools do not engage in these illegal or improper activities without unduly encroaching on school autonomy.

### ***PCSB's Results***

PCSB has generated impressive results. As measured by CREDO, students enrolled in Washington, DC charter schools receive, on average, an educational benefit equivalent to 99 extra days of school per year compared to their peers attending the city's traditional public

schools.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the aggregated results of the city's charter sector on the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS), Washington, DC's state examination used to measure state progress toward achieving the goals set forth by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, have improved over time. In 2008, less than 50% of students scored proficient or advanced in math and reading; in 2013, nearly 59% of students scored proficient or advanced in math and 53% of students scored proficient or advanced in reading.

<sup>15</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2013). *Charter School Growth and Replication*. Stanford University: Stanford, CA.



Washington DC's charter schools are also making progress against goals established by PCSB. Between 2011 and 2013, the number of seats in schools in PCSB's top tier (Tier 1) of charter school performance, as measured by the Performance Management Framework (PMF), a tool developed by PCSB to evaluate the academic performance of the schools it oversees, grew by more than 25%, while the number of seats in schools in PCSB's lowest tier of charter school performance (Tier 3) declined by more than 30%. PCSB also reports the schools it oversees are becoming increasingly financially sustainable. For example, from 2011 to 2012, the number of charter schools with reportable audit findings, which indicate a potentially serious issue with school finances, dropped by more than 50%. PCSB also reports an increase in fiscally high-performing schools, a decrease in fiscally low-performing schools, and a decrease in the number of schools closed based on over time.

Students and families are taking notice of the success of the city's charter sector and demand for charter schools remains high. During the 2013-14 school year, 44% of Washington, DC's public school students attended a public charter school, and there were more than 7,000 individual students on one or more District of

Columbia charter school waiting lists in April 2014. As many students are on multiple waiting lists, the waiting lists of all District of Columbia public charter schools included more than 18,000 names.

The strong charter sector in DC has contributed to a renaissance in public education in the nation's capital. After several years of public school enrollment declines, enrollment across the city (at charters and DCPS) began to climb during the 2009-10 school year, and has grown by more than 12,000 students since that time.<sup>16</sup> The competition from charter schools has contributed to dramatic improvements at DCPS, where two strong Chancelors have made that system one of the fastest improving large urban districts in the country. DC is now in the enviable position of seeing both its public charter schools and traditional public schools adding students and improving proficiency rates each year.

PCSB's effective authorization and oversight of charter schools in Washington, DC drives the success of the city's charter sector. Because PCSB has been highly successful, other authorizers and stakeholders in the charter school sector stand to learn from its practices and experiences.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education, "SY 2031-14 General Education Enrollment: Final Enrollment Audit," 2014.

### ***Common Critiques of Charter Schools and PCSB's Approach to Addressing Them***

Since their emergence, charter schools have attracted criticism. Three common critiques of charter schools are that they 1) “cream” top students, or select students that are academically strong while not accepting lower-achieving or disadvantaged ones; 2) they use disciplinary procedures to drive the lower-performing students they do enroll out of their schools; and, because students and families must opt-in to charter schools, 3) the students in charter schools come from a self-selecting group of families that are heavily invested in ensuring their children receive a high-quality education.

PCSB works to not only improve the performance of the charter sector, but also to address the criticisms—whether firmly grounded or not—levied against charter schools. PCSB encourages the schools it oversees to use the same enrollment process and timeline as the traditional public schools to make the enrollment process as easy as possible on all of the city's students and families. PCSB carefully reviews schools' marketing materials to remove any language that might discourage applicants. It also prohibits all elements of an application that could dissuade a student or family from applying, such as submitting essays, indicating if the child has a disability, or providing a student transcript (transcripts can be requested after a student is admitted). PCSB also employs “mystery shoppers” to contact public charter schools posing as a parent of a student with disabilities to ensure schools are not telling parents their child is not welcome at the school.

PCSB effectively communicates the process for enrolling in public charter schools to the community, making it easier for interested families to opt-in to charter schools.

Common Critiques of Charter Schools	PCSB's Method of Addressing Critiques
Selection of academically strong students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common lottery and aligned registration processes and timeline with traditional public schools (DCPS)</li> <li>• Rigorous oversight of application and lottery processes</li> <li>• “Mystery Shopper” program</li> </ul>
Use of discipline to drive low-performing students out of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish school-level discipline and expulsion data, by student subgroup</li> </ul>
Self selection of students and families invested in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common lottery and aligned registration processes and timeline with traditional public schools (DCPS)</li> <li>• Authorize numerous schools with a mission of serving educationally disadvantaged students</li> </ul>

#### *Critiques of charter schools and PCSB's approach to addressing them*

This communication helps ensure that DC's charter school sector is not comprised of a subset of students coming from families that are invested in ensuring their children receive a strong education. To further make charter schools accessible to all students and families, PCSB played an important role in the development of a city-wide common lottery, which includes public charter and traditional public schools, as a way of making it easier for all families to access and enroll in charter schools. Out of respect for school autonomy PCSB made participation in the common lottery voluntary, but virtually all schools participated.

PCSB also makes a dedicated effort to attract and authorize charter schools with a declared mission of serving the city's most disadvantaged students. For example, PCSB recently approved a charter school that focuses on educating foster children, and oversees several schools with a mission of serving significant numbers of students with disabilities. While PCSB generally does not provide technical assistance to schools because it believes that doing so violates school

autonomy, PCSB makes an explicit exception in the area of special education, which it does to ensure all schools are able to effectively serve students with disabilities.

Beginning in 2012, PCSB began addressing high levels of suspensions and expulsions by making public individual school-level discipline data. In an effort to reduce the use of these methods of discipline, PCSB also created forums for schools with low numbers of suspensions and expulsions to share and discuss their practices with schools using suspensions and expulsions more frequently. PCSB also began reviewing individual school discipline policies and discouraging the use of “zero tolerance” policies.

These efforts, taken together, have substantially limited DC charter schools’ ability to “cream” students and have resulted in a charter sector that is broadly viewed as serving similar populations to the city’s traditional public schools. PCSB demonstrates that charter school authorizers are able to regulate and improve the performance of the charter sector in their jurisdiction in multiple ways. They can buttress the academic performance of the sector through rigorous application processes and closing schools when necessary, and they can address practices for which charter schools have been criticized through transparency and active communication and community outreach. The gains that result from effective charter authorization may improve both the quality of the charter sector and the public perception of the sector.



## PCSB's Vision and Values

PCSB guides its work with a clear vision and strong values. PCSB's stated vision is "to lead the transformation of public education in Washington, DC, and serve as a national role model for charter school authorizing and accountability."<sup>17</sup> In implementing this vision, PCSB upholds three core values: **quality**, accountability with **autonomy**, and **fidelity**.

The first value, **quality**, is of paramount importance to PCSB. Scott Pearson, PCSB's Executive Director, explains: "developing a quality charter school sector is everything to us. This determines whether the life trajectories of Washington, DC's children will be improved by our schools."

**"Developing a quality charter school sector is everything to us. This determines where the life trajectories of Washington, DC's children will be improved by our schools."**

PCSB deploys a set of complementary strategies to improve the quality of the schools it oversees. It seeks to simultaneously decrease the number of low-quality seats and increase the number of high-quality seats in the Washington, DC charter sector, and by doing both improve the sector's overall quality more rapidly.

The mechanisms it uses to accomplish this include:

- **Closing underperforming schools**
- **Providing clear data and information that spurs all public charter schools to improve**
- **Opening high-quality, new public charter schools**
- **Encouraging and enabling high-quality public charter schools to educate more students by raising enrollment ceilings or opening new campuses**

PCSB does not seek to increase the number of public charter schools or seats in Washington, DC. Instead, it seeks to increase the number of *high-quality* charter seats in the city and improve the average quality of each charter seat in the city over time.

PCSB also believes in giving its schools a high degree of **autonomy**, and defending this autonomy against often well-meaning efforts by Washington, DC agencies or the City Council. One of the primary reasons charter schools exist is to find new solutions to problems in public education. In line with this purpose, they are often innovative by nature, and, as Naomi DeVeaux, PCSB's Deputy Director, explains: "authorizers must respect charter school autonomy or we're going to fall back to the same approaches to education that we have been using for decades." PCSB therefore grants its charter schools a high degree of autonomy and even protects its charter schools from intervention from other government entities or organizations. For example, PCSB's Communications Department has a Government Relations Liaison position that helps coordinate PCSB's support of charter schools against

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<sup>17</sup> PCSB, *About the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board*, 2014.

compliance with requests or regulations that may not be legally applicable to them.

PCSB believes this autonomy brings with it responsibilities. Because Washington, DC's charter schools are given a great deal of autonomy, they are held strictly accountable for their results. PCSB grants successful charter schools even more freedom and encourages them to grow or expand, while requiring that struggling schools either show improvement or close. This careful balance, between maintaining accountability and respecting autonomy, is one that PCSB works hard to uphold.

PCSB's commitment to autonomy is critical to its success, because by refraining from mandating how charter schools operate, PCSB enables them to focus their energies on delivering quality

education to their students rather than complying with policies and procedures.

Protecting school autonomy also allows PCSB to concentrate its own resources in areas where it is most effective, as it focuses its efforts on oversight and evaluation of charter schools in Washington, DC rather than the operations of the schools it oversees. Finally, PCSB's commitment to protecting school autonomy makes closing underperforming schools somewhat easier, as failing schools cannot claim that technical assistance, advice, or interference from PCSB contributed to their poor performance.

PCSB's third value, **fidelity**, describes equitable treatment of all students and prospective students by Washington, DC's charter schools.

Phase of School Lifecycle	Basic Practice	Innovative Practice
Application and Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigorous process for evaluating applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiated process for experienced operators</li> </ul>
Oversight and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tools for measuring and holding schools accountable for performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-dimensional, complementary, frameworks that comprehensively and holistically measure and hold schools accountable for performance</li> </ul>
Response Based on School Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiated response based on performance</li> <li>Commitment to closing underperforming schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of asset acquisitions when closing underperforming schools</li> </ul>

*PCSB's basic and innovative practices throughout a school's lifecycle*

PCSB takes seriously the responsibility of its schools to enroll and educate all students, regardless of their academic ability, status as a special education student or English language learner, ethnicity, or gender. By working to ensure the schools it oversees are providing a high-quality education to all of their students, PCSB creates an environment in which charter schools in Washington, DC are faithful to their status as public schools.

PCSB incorporates this vision and these values into all of its work and uses them to guide all of its interactions with the schools in its portfolio. In following its commitment to its vision and values, PCSB goes above and beyond its duties as a regulatory body responsible for overseeing Washington DC's charter sector; it develops highly innovative practices in service of advancing the charter school sector, both in Washington, DC and nationally.

PCSB uses both basic and highly innovative practices to manage its portfolio of charter schools at each of three key points in their lifecycle of a charter school, including the application and approval process, oversight and evaluation, and PCSB's response based on the school's performance. Much of PCSB's success is derived from its consistent, disciplined, and highly effective use of basic practices, which provide a strong foundation for effective charter authorization. While these basic practices are at the core of PCSB's approach, the organization's concurrent use of innovative practices makes it even more effective. Both PCSB's basic and innovative practices provide examples other authorizers may seek to replicate. PCSB's practices at key points in the lifecycle of a charter school are detailed in the chart below, and explained in detail in the next three sections of this document.

## Application and Approval Process

PCSB’s approach to ensuring the schools in its portfolio are high-quality begins with its application process. PCSB’s guiding principles for evaluating potential applicants create a healthy tension as PCSB believes that it should award charters to schools that are both 1) innovative and 2) demonstrate through research that they will be high-performing and able to be “Tier 1 (as measured by PCSB’s Performance Management Framework (PMF)) on Day 1” (please see page 22 for additional detail on the PMF). Early indications of a school’s academic performance are, generally speaking, accurate predictors of future performance. By only approving charter schools it has strong reason to believe will succeed, PCSB improves its overall portfolio of charter schools by adding schools that start—and are likely to remain—high-performing. By only opening schools that are likely to succeed, PCSB also avoids expending time and resources to oversee and potentially close under-performing schools.

While PCSB’s application process is quite rigorous, its staff members work to make the

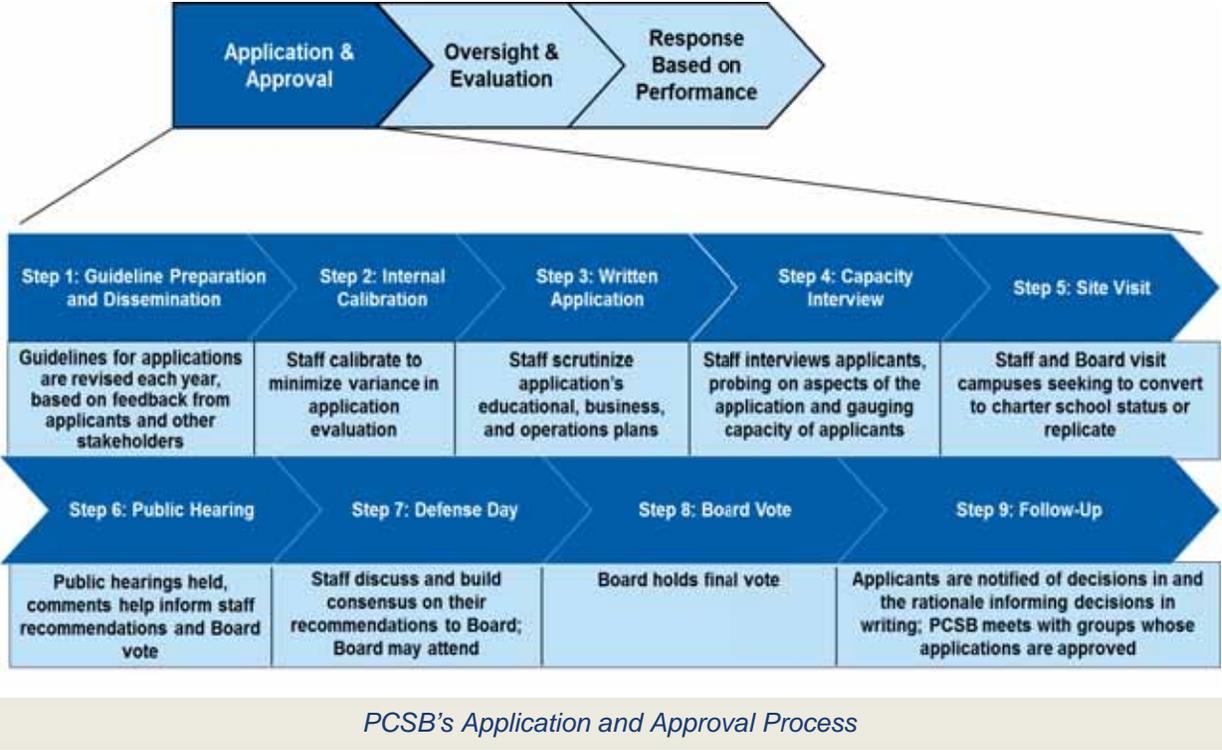
process as straightforward as possible by clearly explaining requirements, due dates, and other aspects of the application to potential applicants. Doing so ensures that high-potential applicants are not discouraged from applying by a complicated or unclear application process. PCSB uses two different application processes. The first is for “New Charter School Start Ups,” or organizations or individuals opening a charter school for the first time. The second is for “Experienced Operators,” defined as organizations that already operate charter schools. While there are differences in the ways each of these applications are evaluated, the general process they follow is similar. Please see page 16 for additional detail on the differences between these two applications.

PCSB does not establish a target for the rate at which it approves applications to open charter schools. Instead, it approves applications for schools that it believes will be successful, and does not approve applications for schools that it does not believe will be successful. Data on PCSB’s applications received and approval rates is included in the chart below.

Year	New Charter School Start Ups			Experienced Operators		
	Apps Received	Apps Approved	Approval Rate	Apps Received	Apps Approved	Approval Rate
2011-12	17	4	24%	N/A – process launched in 2012-13		
2012-13	11	4	36%	2	1	50%
2013-14	10	2	20%	3	2	67%
2014-15	8	3	38%	N/A – process not yet completed		

Applications received and approved by PCSB, 2011-12 to 2014-15

PCSB’s application and approval process has eight steps, which are depicted in the graphic below. After completing these eight steps and beginning operations, a school may need to amend its charter agreement while it is operating.



**Step 1: Guideline Preparation and Dissemination**

PCSB begins preparing for the application process by reviewing the guidelines for the previous year and revising for clarity and purpose. PCSB seeks feedback from recently approved applicant groups, charter support organizations that help applicants complete charter petitions, and reviewers. PCSB aims to release the guidelines for applying to start a charter school at least four months prior to when after petitions are due. In addition to publicizing the application timeline and all application materials through its website and presence on social media, PCSB conducts several opportunities for prospective applicants to learn about the charter petition process—both in person and through webinars. PCSB also makes

itself available to inquiries about the application process, helping prospective applicants understand how they apply to start charter schools in Washington, DC.

**Step 2: Internal Calibration**

Once the application guidelines are released, PCSB conducts a reviewer “norming session,” where more experienced evaluators of applications familiarize newer staff with the application evaluation rubric and all reviewers evaluate sample applications. These evaluations are then discussed, helping newer staff understand how veteran staff members would have evaluated the application and what drove those decisions. This process helps PCSB standardize its evaluation of applications and mitigate subjectivity in application evaluation. PCSB ensures that its reviewers of applications

include staff with background in all areas probed in the petition guidelines including: special education, finance, curriculum, instruction, educating English language learners, and legal compliance.

**Step 3: Written Application**

Whether an applicant is developing a new school or responding to the experienced operator guidelines that are used to replicate existing schools, the written application consists of three main sections: an educational plan, a business plan, and an operations plan. The first section of the educational plan requires applicants to share their school’s mission and educational philosophy. Applicants must also share their proposed academic and mission-specific goals and a framework for measuring the school’s progress against these goals. PCSB encourages, but does not require, schools to adopt goals aligned with the

Performance Management Framework (PMF) (please see page 22 for additional detail on the PMF). Applicants describe how their students will reach these goals through a detailed articulation of the proposed school’s curriculum, including a sections highlighting the school’s methods of instruction, the resources and instructional materials will be required, and how the curriculum will suit and be adapted and differentiated to meet the needs of English language learners, students with disabilities, and students significantly below or above grade level. If the school is approved, the goals in the school’s academic plan will become the goals the school is held accountable for achieving, and the school’s continued ability to operate will hinge upon its ability to achieve them.

New School and Conversion Applications		Experienced Operator Applications	
August 2, 2013	Release of application guidelines	June 28, 2013	Release of application guidelines
November 14, 2013	Public information session	July 18, 2013	Public information session
December 2, 2013	Deadline for submission of declaration of intent to apply	August 12, 2013	Deadline for submission of declaration of intent to apply
March 3, 2014	Deadline for application submission	September 9, 2013	Deadline for application submission
March 25-27, 2014	Applicant interviews	September 30-October 1, 2013	Capacity interviews
April 14-16, 2014	Public hearing	October 2013	Site visits
May 19, 2014	Board votes on application at public meeting	October 7, 2013	Public hearing
June 2014	Feedback provided to applicants	November 18, 2013	Board votes on application at public meeting
June 2014	Meetings to discuss conditions for full approval	June 2014	Feedback provided to applicants
June 2015	Final date to sign approved charter contract for schools opening in Fall 2015	June 2014	Meetings to discuss conditions for full approval
		June 2014	Final date to sign approved charter contract for schools opening in Fall 2014

Sample application and approval timetables from previous cycles

The second section of the written application is the business plan for the proposed school. In this section, applicants provide background on the school's founders as well as proof of either current or pending 501(c)3 status. Applicants submit detailed information about the proposed school's projected finances, including information about revenue streams and accounting and audit practices. Information about the school facility, such as required renovations and handicap accessibility, is also required. Finally, the applicant submits a recruitment plan describing how the school will meet its enrollment targets.

The final section of the written application is the operations plan, in which applicants provide detail on a number of logistical issues impacting the feasibility of the school. This section of the application requires information pertaining to the timetable for registering and enrolling students and on the school's staff and organizational structure. To complete the written application, the applicant provides a number of other documents, which include, but are not limited to, projected budgets, articles of incorporation, a conflict of interest form, and résumés of the school's proposed Board of Directors.

While the written application is quite lengthy and requires applicants to provide highly detailed information, it is designed to be user-friendly. It contains specific instructions on how to complete each item and also includes a complete table of contents, FAQ section, and appendix. PCSB also makes itself available for conversations with applicants to discuss the application and to answer questions.

#### ***Step 4: Capacity Interview***

Once an application is submitted and determined to be complete, PCSB begins its evaluation process. Each application is reviewed

by a unique evaluation team comprised largely of PCSB's own staff, but may be supplemented by outside experts selected because of their expertise in specific areas that align with a proposed school's educational approach or philosophy (e.g., use of blended learning). A member of PCSB's School Performance Department team serves as the facilitator of each evaluation team. The facilitator is responsible for building consensus among the reviewers, providing technical assistance to reviewers, and for ensuring that the application reviews are completed according to PCSB's timetable and in accordance with PCSB's standards. Each review team also has a team lead, who manages the application review process on a day-to-day basis, and two secondary reviewers, all of whom read the application in full and give a rating of "meets expectations," "partially meets expectations," or "does not meet expectations." PCSB's Executive Director, Deputy Director, Director of Operations and Finance, and Special Education Specialists each read every application. Once all of the reviews have been completed, they are compiled in preparation for a capacity interview. During this interview, in which PCSB's staff members speak with up to five founding members of the proposed school, PCSB asks questions about the application, specifically on items that were rated as "partially meets expectations." After the defense day, PCSB staff change any "partially meets expectations" ratings to either "meets expectations" or "does not meet expectations."

#### ***Step 5: Site Visit***

If an applicant already has one or more schools in operation, PCSB's staff and Board visit these schools. This may be an existing DC public school or private school that the applicant is seeking to convert to a charter school, or an

existing public charter school in another state that the applicant is seeking to replicate in Washington, DC. PCSB has three primary objectives for these site visits. First, it looks at the quality of the existing school to understand whether it is operating at the high level required to gain approval, and whether that success could be replicated in a charter school in Washington, DC. Second, PCSB ensures that what is written in the application about the existing school or schools reflects reality. Third, PCSB seeks answers to other specific questions that are raised during the application review process.

***Step 6: Public Hearing***

Each group applying to start a charter school is also granted a public hearing with PCSB's Board. At this hearing, the applying school gives a brief introduction, which is followed by Q&A with the Board. The public can then provide either written or verbal testimony that PCSB's staff incorporates into its review of the application. PCSB's General Counsel, Nicole Streeter, explains the importance of the public hearing: "we are stewards of public resources and exist to serve the public...it's important that we hear and consider the community's voice."

***Step 7: Defense Day***

The final decision to approve or deny applications is made by PCSB's Board. However, prior to each vote, PCSB's staff advises the Board on the strengths and weaknesses of each application. All staff involved in application reviews participate in a day-long meeting, known as "Defense Day," to prepare their advice to the Board. On Defense Day, PCSB's staff members voice their recommendations as to how the Board should vote on each application and answer numerous questions from other staff members to help

clarify the reasons informing their assessment of each application's strengths and weaknesses. PCSB's staff are encouraged to challenge each other, and to provide evidence from the applications, site visits, and capacity interviews in support of their opinions. Staff also question whether standards are being applied equally to all applicants. Defense Day discussions often surface conflicting values held by reviewers – for example, between a desire to screen out all but the most solid applications against an inclination to take a chance on a bold, innovative, and unproven proposal that has the potential to be highly successful. The goal is to produce a robust, defensible, evidence-based, and fair set of recommendations that reflect the shared values and collective expertise of PCSB's staff.

***Step 8: Board Vote***

After Defense Day, the Board takes the staff recommendations under consideration and makes its final decisions at a public meeting. At this meeting, the Board also provides the rationale informing its decisions and, if applicable, the conditions schools must meet prior to opening. The Board generally, but not always, follows the recommendations of PCSB's staff.

### ***Step 9: Follow Up***

#### *Feedback*

Once the application decisions have been made, PCSB notifies each applicant of its decision in writing. Approved applicants are sent their decision along with the conditions under which the school may open, and applicants that are not approved are given their decision along with a list of findings informing PCSB's decision. Some applicants that were not approved have acted on feedback provided by PCSB and successfully reapplied in subsequent years.

#### *Approval and Charter Authorization*

After PCSB's Board votes in favor of opening a new school, that school, with PCSB's help, addresses the conditions imposed by PCSB and finalizes its charter agreement. The charter agreement is the legal document that contains the school's mission, structure, and responsibilities. It also includes the charter school's goals, which the school must meet to have its charter renewed. Since a school's goals directly affect its ability to operate, schools and PCSB often discuss and negotiate them in great detail. At times, applicants will propose goals that are unrealistically high. Unrealistic goals are problematic because they can lead to schools that are successful by most standards closing as a result of failing to meet their own goals. At other times, schools will propose goals that are too modest. This is also troublesome, because it may enable the school to meet its goals and continue operating without providing a high-quality education. As it evaluates a school's proposed goals, PCSB draws upon its experience and compares the proposed goals with state standards to ensure they are rigorous, but realistic.

### ***Charter Amendments***

Once schools are fully operational, they may amend their charter agreements. Amendments to a school's charter agreement are required for major changes, such as a modification of the school's mission or goals, as well as for smaller changes, such as an increase in enrollment ceiling. Amendments are fairly common; nearly all of PCSB's schools have requested an amendment to their charter agreement at some point in their existence. The process is somewhat analogous to the initial charter approval process. Just as PCSB must be rigorous in approving a school to ensure that the school is able to effectively serve community of students, it must ensure that amendments to the school's charter will allow the school to continue to serve, or to better serve, its students. PCSB therefore looks closely at past performance and the feasibility of the request when negotiating charter amendments. For large-scale changes, such as a modification of the school's goals, PCSB will hold a public hearing that will help inform its decision.

PCSB uses charter amendments to help achieve its goal of increasing the number of high-quality charter seats in Washington, DC. Because a school must amend its charter to increase its enrollment ceiling, begin serving additional grades, or open an additional campus, the only way for a school to serve additional students is through a charter amendment. As a result, PCSB is able to use charter amendments as a mechanism to enable high-quality schools to serve additional students and prevent schools that are not of high quality from expanding their enrollment. PCSB's effective management of the charter amendment process enables it to selectively grow the number of seats in effective schools, improving the overall quality of its portfolio of schools.

*For a sample Washington, DC charter school amendment, please see Appendix A.*

**Innovation in charter school authorization: differentiated applications for experienced operators**

PCSB uses two separate processes for evaluating applications. The first is for “New Charter School Start Ups,” which are defined as organizations or individuals without three or more years of experience operating a charter school. The second is for “Experienced Operators,” organizations with a demonstrated record of success in operating one or more charter schools over three or more years. This two-track application process allows PCSB to use applications that are more relevant to each type of applicant. New Charter School Start Ups are evaluated by how well they can articulate a comprehensive educational, business and operational plan, while Experienced Operators are scrutinized on the success of their other schools and how appropriate their approach will be in the context of Washington, DC

The written application for Experienced Operators is similar to that used by the New School Start Ups. However, the educational plan for Experienced Operators places a greater emphasis on understanding and serving the specific demographics and community that will house the proposed school, as PCSB seeks to attract experienced operators that not only have a proven track record of success, but also have a plan for how to appropriately modify their model to best serve Washington, DC. In the business plan, Experienced Operators are required to provide detailed information about the track record of their other schools, including performance data, financial data, and qualitative information about the successes of their existing schools. When evaluating applications from Experienced Operators, PCSB also will solicit

input from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, which provides information on the applicant’s schools in other geographies. PCSB uses this information to ensure the applicant is accurately representing itself and its schools.

Development of PCSB’s Experienced Operator application track was motivated by PCSB’s goal of reducing complexity associated with the application process and to signal nationally that PCSB was interested in receiving applications from operators with demonstrated success in other geographies. This application track is designed to minimize the burden it places on operators of charter schools who are not based in DC by focusing less on their community connections and their future plans, instead focusing more on their track record of success. By developing a differentiated process for these organizations to apply to start a charter school in Washington, DC, PCSB attracts high-performing schools that have the potential to improve the city’s charter sector.

*For PCSB’s application guidelines, please see Appendix B.*

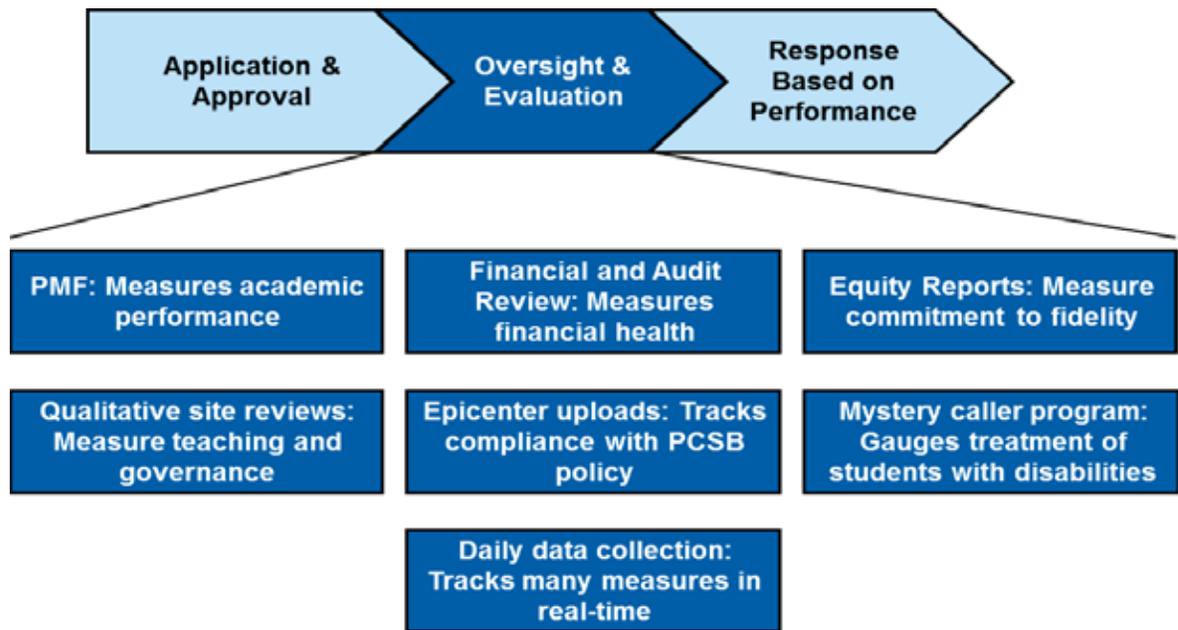
## Oversight and Evaluation

PCSB takes an active approach to monitoring its schools' academic and financial performance, as well as how well its schools comply with legal standards and PCSB requirements. PCSB uses seven tools to oversee schools:

1. **Performance Management Framework:** Measures academic performance
2. **Financial and Audit Review Framework:** Measures financial health
3. **Equity Reports:** Measure commitment to fidelity
4. **Qualitative site reviews:** Measures teaching and governance
5. **Epicenter document uploads:** Tracks compliance with PCSB policy
6. **Mystery caller program:** Gauges treatment of students with disabilities
7. **Daily data collection:** Tracks many measures in real-time

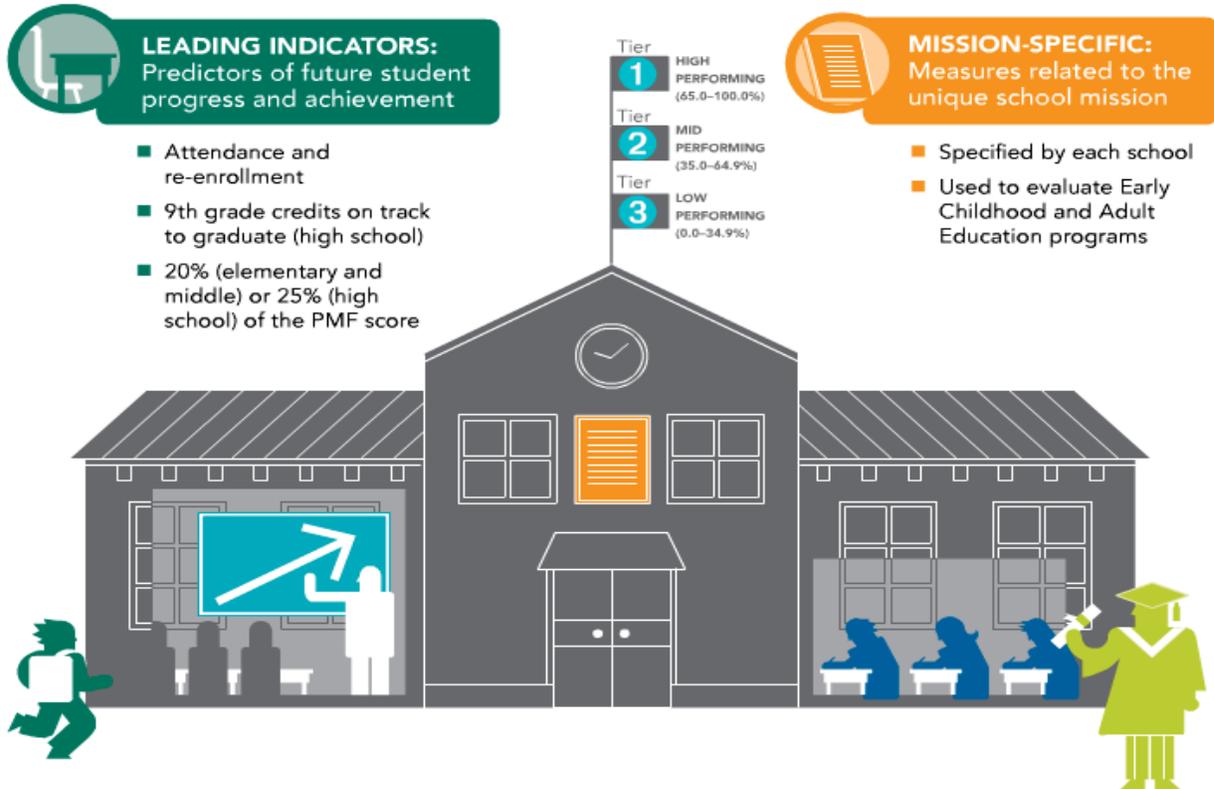
### 1. *The Performance Management Framework*

PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF) is the primary tool by which PCSB measures the academic performance of each charter school in Washington, DC. The PMF is used to evaluate each school in PCSB's portfolio every year, including years when schools are not up for charter review or renewal. As such, it provides a regular update on each school's academic progress. Although the specific measures that comprise the PMF vary for different school levels and school types, the same five domains of performance are used for all schools:



*PCSB's approach to oversight and evaluation*

The Performance Management Framework (PMF) measures public charter school performance on several indicators, which are explained below.



**STUDENT PROGRESS:**  
Test score improvement over time

- Growth on the DC-CAS Reading and Math assessments
- 40% (elementary and middle school) or 15% (high school) of the PMF score

**GATEWAY:** Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success or outcomes that are aligned to college and career readiness

- Proficient and advanced performance on DC-CAS 3rd grade reading (elementary school)
- Proficient and advanced performance on DC-CAS 8th grade math (middle school)
- Graduation rate, 11th grade PSAT performance, 12th grade SAT performance, and college acceptance rate (high school)
- 15% (elementary and middle school) or 30% (high school) of the PMF score

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:**  
Meeting or exceeding standards

- Proficient and advanced performance on the DC-CAS Reading and Mathematics assessments
- Performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests (high school)
- 30% of the PMF score

*Explanation of the PMF methodology*

1. **Student Progress:** an evaluation of individual students' academic improvement over time. Improvement over time is measured by growth in each student scores on the reading and math sections of the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS), the standardized examination given by OSSE to all District of Columbia public school students.<sup>18</sup> Student progress does not measure student proficiency, but instead, growth in student results over time.<sup>19</sup>
2. **Student Achievement:** an evaluation of academic performance in the year measured. Whereas student progress measures the growth of student results at Washington, DC charter schools over time, student achievement measures the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced at a specific point in time, and does not account for growth. For high schools, performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations is also factored into the score.
3. **Gateway Indicators:** an evaluation of academic performance in specific subjects that predict future academic success and/or college and career readiness. Metrics used to evaluate performance in this domain include DC-CAS results for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading for elementary schools, DC-CAS results for 8<sup>th</sup> grade math for middle schools, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT performance, 12<sup>th</sup> grade SAT performance, and college acceptance rate for high schools.
4. **Leading Indicators:** an evaluation of performance in specific predictors of future student progress and achievement. These criteria include attendance and re-enrollment rates in all schools as well as the percentage of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students completing sufficient credits to be on-track to graduate within 4 years in high schools.
5. **Mission-Specific Measures:** an evaluation of performance in criteria tailored specifically to each school to incorporate differences in the missions and methods of Washington, DC's charter schools. In the past, the evaluations of early childhood and adult education charter schools were based entirely on these measures.

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<sup>18</sup> Washington, DC is a member of the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Consortium. All public schools in the city, including charter schools, will switch to the PARCC assessment for the city's state-level assessment of reading and math in school year 2014-15.

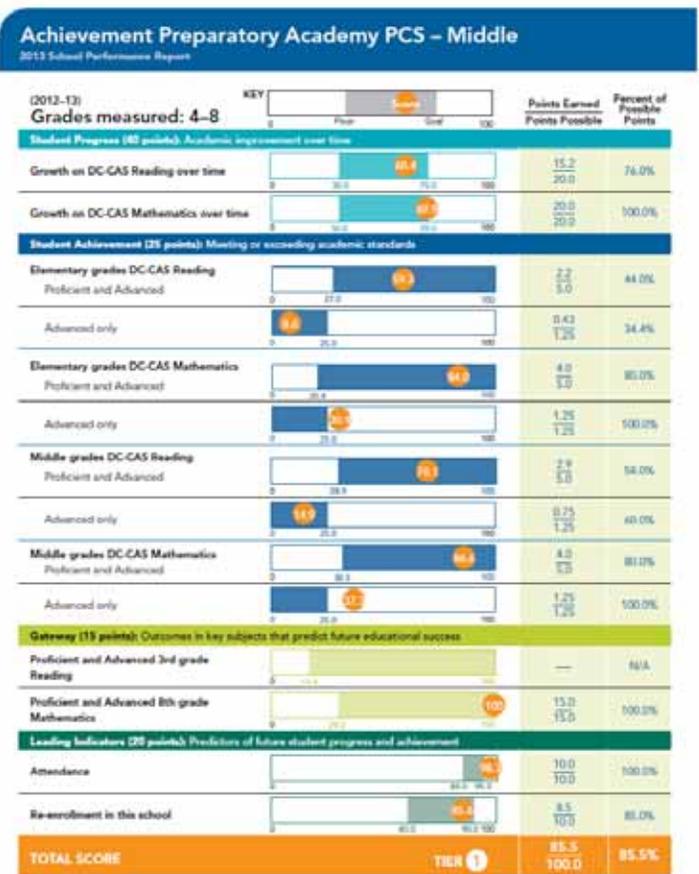
<sup>19</sup> Growth over time is measured using a technique called "median growth percentile," which is calculated through a two-step process. First, a student growth percentile is calculated for each student at the school by comparing that student's growth to his or her academic peers, or students starting from the same level of academic achievement. Then, the median of all the growth percentiles for students at the school is calculated. This number is the school's median growth percentile. This measure was selected because it allows for meaningful comparisons of growth of groups of students, even when the groups being measured represent different populations. For more information on student and median growth percentiles, please see "[A Primer on Student Growth Percentiles](#)," authored by Damian W. Betebenner from the The Center for Assessment.

**TIER 1 SCHOOLS** (65.0–100.0% of possible points)

Tier 1 public charter schools (PCS) meet standards of high performance



	2012–13 Grade Levels	Overall Percentage
<b>WARD 1</b>		
César Chávez PCS for Public Policy – Chávez Prep	6–9	65.2%
DC Bilingual PCS	PK3–5	65.2%
<b>WARD 4</b>		
Capital City PCS – High School	9–12	66.4%
Center City PCS – Brightwood	PK4–8	73.5%
Center City PCS – Petworth	PK4–8	70.2%
Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS	PK3–5	80.5%
Paul PCS – Middle School	6–9	68.3%
Washington Latin PCS – Middle School	5–8	65.2%
Washington Latin PCS – Upper School	9–12	87.0%
<b>WARD 5</b>		
DC Prep PCS – Edgewood Middle	4–8	89.6%
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS	PK3–6	66.0%
Washington Mathematics Science Technology PCHS	9–12	65.1%
Washington Yu Ying PCS	PK4–5	78.3%
<b>WARD 6</b>		
Friendship PCS – Chamberlain Middle	4–8	67.0%
KIPP DC – WILL Academy PCS	4–8	80.7%
Two Rivers PCS	PK3–8	69.9%



Sample pages from the PMF

Within each domain, data on between one and four metrics is compiled and used to calculate the percentage of possible points a school earns in that domain. In most cases, schools earn the maximum number of points in a category if their results are at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of results from all DC charter schools, and no points in a category if their results are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of all results from DC charter schools. For example, a school in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile for attendance rate would be above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of all charter schools for

attendance, and so would earn all of the possible points for attendance.

The scores of each domain are then added to find a school’s overall score, which ranges from 0-100. These overall scores are used to assign schools to performance tiers, which span high-performing (Tier 1) mid-performing (Tier 2) and low-performing (Tier 3) schools.

Each tier is composed of schools with the following overall score:

- **Tier 1: 65-100**
- **Tier 2: 35-64.9**
- **Tier 3: 0-34.9**

This straightforward, easy-to-understand, system clearly and simply communicates whether schools are high, middle, or low-performing. This designation cuts through the complex methodology used to calculate a school's score, and provides an accessible assessment of a school's performance. PCSB makes public PMF results for all schools, allowing parents or other interested parties to go beyond the summary PMF score to better understand the nuances of each school's academic performance.

Washington, DC is unique in that it has both early childhood public charter schools and adult education charter schools. Because these schools do not offer a standardized state-wide assessment, PCSB has developed specialized PMFs for tracking the performance of these schools. The Early Childhood Performance Management Framework (EC PMF) is used for schools with grades spanning from three year-old pre-kindergarten through third grade, and is applied to schools that terminate at the conclusion of third grade or earlier. The EC PMF is more flexible than the PMF for elementary, middle, and high schools, and reflects the many models used by schools focusing on early childhood education and the broad array of assessments given. Domains that are examined using the EC PMF include math, literacy achievement, and optional social and emotional indicators.

The Adult Education Performance Management Framework (AE PMF) uses a series of metrics more appropriate for adult education programs

than those that are used by traditional PK-12 schools. The domains it measures are student progress, career and college readiness, mission-specific indicators of success, student achievement, and post-school outcomes, such as securing employment or matriculation to a college, university, or vocational program.

PCSB has also taken steps to change the way it evaluates alternative charter schools, or charter schools with populations that are substantially different from the student population of Washington, DC as a whole. Alternative schools serve PK-12 students, and a high percentage of their students must meet one or more criteria of "at-risk" students, (e.g., the student is currently under court supervision, the student is a high-needs special education student). Alternative schools must also have an explicitly-stated mission of serving at-risk or high-needs special education students. Because alternative schools have unique missions and challenging student populations, PCSB negotiates appropriate goals with each alternative charter school in Washington, DC, and assesses schools on their progress against these specific goals.

### ***Initial Resistance to the PMF and Approach to Soliciting Input from School Leaders***

The development of the PMF was a lengthy process, during which PCSB came to understand and embrace the importance of engaging schools when developing frameworks for evaluating their performance. The first version of the PMF PCSB presented to charter schools was not well-received. Schools had not been engaged as PCSB developed the framework, and objected to both the process through which the first version of the PMF was developed and to many of the specific metrics it used to gauge school performance. Dr. Clara Hess, PCSB's Director of Human Capital and Strategic Initiatives, explains: "schools weren't

afforded a chance to provide input as we developed the PMF, and many didn't fully understand what the framework sought to accomplish. As a result, we received a great deal of resistance as we began to launch it."

In response to schools objecting to the PMF, PCSB delayed the rollout of the PMF by a year and made substantial changes based on school input. Dr. Hess notes: "I went to schools and met with school leaders, not only to share our thinking, but also to hear their suggestions." PCSB also engaged school leaders through webinars, by sharing meeting notes, and by continually soliciting suggestions as to how the PMF could be improved. This engagement built school-level buy-in for the PMF, as school leaders were provided opportunities to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the framework. As a result, schools felt more invested in the PMF, and were more willing to have the PMF serve as the primary system by which their academic performance is evaluated. This engagement of school leaders made the PMF a more valid and a better measure of school performance.

As a result of the lessons PCSB learned when developing and implementing the PMF, it created task forces of school leaders that it engages when contemplating modifications to its oversight frameworks or the development of new frameworks. The input of these task forces helps ensure school leaders are in agreement with and committed to the frameworks.

*Please see Appendix C for sample PMF reports for elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as early childhood and adult education programs.*

## **2. The Financial and Audit Review Framework**

The District of Columbia School Reform Act mandates that PCSB revoke the charters of schools that are not compliant with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, have engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, or are no longer economically viable. In order to gauge whether any of the schools in its portfolio meet these conditions, PCSB, along with Bear Solutions LLC, OSSE, and the DC Office of the Chief Financial Officer, developed the Financial and Audit Review framework. The tool provides an internal "score" between 0 and 100, which measures a school's financial strength. The score is based on many inputs, including the school's annual surplus or deficit, whether its debt load is manageable, and whether it received a qualified auditor's opinion. Schools with low internal scores are targeted by PCSB's Finance department for interventions aimed at improving the school's financial strength.

In addition to the internal score, which is not released publicly, PCSB releases detailed information about school finances each year. This information includes:

- Each school's audited **financial statements**;
- Each school's **IRS Form 990**, which includes the top salaries paid to school employees; and
- Each school's annual **Financial and Audit Review report** with summary information, including:
  - A **financial snapshot** for each school, which includes summary-level information on school finances (e.g., annual revenue and expenses).
  - A **financial dashboard**, which measures the financial health of schools across four domains, noting where any of the measured metrics exceed thresholds indicative of a weak financial position. The four domains included in the financial dashboard are:
    - **Financial Performance:** evaluates the extent to which the school is generating an operating surplus or deficit
    - **Liquidity:** evaluates a school's cash flow and ability to meet its financial obligations in a timely fashion
    - **Debt Burden:** evaluates the amount of debt held by a school and the portion of the school's revenue used for debt service
    - **Sustainability:** evaluates the net asset position of a school
  - Summary information from the school's independent **annual financial audit**, including the auditor's opinion of the school's financial viability and the school's compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
  - **Trending measures**, which show key financial results and ratios over time
  - PCSB's **observations and recommendations**, which highlight related party transactions, unusual transactions, and expressions of concern

CHARTER AUDIT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CHARM™)  
Eagle Academy Public Charter School  
Annual Financial Report  
June 30, 2012

CHARTER AUDIT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CHARM™)  
Eagle Academy Public Charter School  
Annual Audit Summary  
June 30, 2012

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT			2012	2011	2012 vs 2011 Change	Indicator of Concern
<b>PROFILE</b>						
PCSB Established: 2002	FY2012	FY2011				
Enrollment	620	522				
DC Funding Allocation	10,110,072	8,304,802				
Federal Awards	1,793,742	1,293,449				
Unrestricted Cash, end of year	942,234	650,524				
<b>GAAP FINANCIALS</b>						
<b>Financial Position</b>						
Total Assets	10,110,896	8,062,507				
Current Assets	1,834,572	3,084,282				
Total Liabilities	6,822,248	732,988				
Current Liabilities	5,872,861	732,988				
Net Asset Position	3,486,945	-2,150,519				
<b>Financial Activities</b>						
Support and Revenues	12,526,033	9,933,679				
Expenses	11,992,207	9,274,267				
Surplus (Deficit)	1,135,826	659,412				
<b>NOTES TO FINANCIAL REPORT</b>						
<i>Typical Caution:</i> Definitions for these measures accompany the report. Additional measures relating to nonrelated revenues and funding allocations are compiled for information only and are available upon request. Contact PCSB at 202-638-2800 or report@pcsb.org.						
<i>PCSB Compliance Advisory:</i> These two measures will be considered during the FY2013 iteration of the CHARM™ Annual Financial Report.						
<i>The CHARM™ Score:</i> A composite indicator of financial health, the CHARM™ Score of audit and financial performance is currently being indicated by the DC Charter school community.						

FINANCIAL AUDIT	OPINION DATE	OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
AUDITOR: FY2012: Charlek & Goetschall, LLP FY2011: Martin & Wolf	12/20/12 12/21/11	<b>OBSERVATIONS ON THE FY2012 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related Party (Board President)</li> <li>• \$26,000 to Related Party for consulting services</li> <li>• \$479,387 w/s from 8867 financing under \$15,625,000 commitment of February 2012 for new facility</li> <li>• \$1,250,000 w/s from OIG financing of February 2012; quarterly P&amp;L due 2012</li> <li>• \$1,250,000 w/s from Building Hope financing of February 2012; monthly P&amp;L due 2012</li> <li>• \$1,643,691 rent expense. Campus leases expire August 2013 and August 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>SUMMARY OF FY2012 AUDIT RESULTS</b>		
Opinion on the Financial Statements (GAAP)	Unqualified	
Material Weaknesses in Internal Control over Financial Reporting (GAAP)	No	
Noncompliance Material to the Financial Statements (GAAP)	None	
Opinion on Major Federal Award Programs (AFR)	Unqualified	
Material Weaknesses in Internal Control over Major Federal Programs (AFR)	No	
Findings and Questioned Costs	None	
Unresolved Prior Year Audit Findings	None	
Going Concern Issue	No	
Debt Default Issue	No	
<b>PCS COMMENT (limited to 600 characters)</b>		<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE</b>
No feedback received from school. However, PCSB's position on the school's fiscal health is as follows: Based on audited results, PCSB deems the school to be compliant with GAAP standards, to be economically viable, and to have shown no patterns of fiscal mismanagement.		1. Review AFR audit guidelines with school officials and auditor. No detailed reporting of functional expenses (AFR117).

Sample Financial and Audit Review report

Since the publication of the first Financial and Audit Review reports, which provided information from the 2010 fiscal year, the reporting framework has undergone significant changes. Originally, the Financial and Audit Review report was lengthier than it is today. It measured a school's performance using nearly 30 ratios, many of which were redundant. In an effort to streamline the Financial and Audit Review report, PCSB created a task force of several school leaders who discussed potential changes to the framework and provided feedback on how the Financial and Audit Review could be simplified while still serving as a comprehensive assessment of a school's financial position. In addition to soliciting school input on how the framework could be streamlined, PCSB conducted an impact analysis, examining how several different changes to the framework would impact overall school scores. In conducting this assessment, PCSB paid particular attention to whether the results would be significantly different from the previous version of the Financial and Audit Review, and if so, the extent to which the new framework contained any systematic bias against different school types or schools serving different populations of students. Potential changes that were found to have any such bias were removed from consideration. PCSB's engagement of charter schools and its impact analyses resulted in the successful development and rollout of the new Financial and Audit Review report. *Please see Appendix D for a sample Financial and Audit Review report.*

### 3. District of Columbia Equity Report

Another tool used by PCSB to oversee the schools in its jurisdiction is the District of Columbia Equity Report. Each school's Equity Report measures the extent to which the school provides an equitable education to all its

students. Data included in Equity Reports is disaggregated and displayed for specific student subgroups, including those receiving free or reduced price lunch, students with limited English proficiency, students in special education, and students belonging to six different ethnic subgroups. These data are provided in the Equity Report in comparison to school-wide data to help users of the report identify situations where a school may not be treating all students equitably.

Equity reports contain information on the following categories:

- **Student demographics:** provides an overview of the school's student body, which serves as context and shows the extent to which a school is enrolling students from certain subgroups.
- **Attendance rate:** provides a school's attendance rate.
- **Discipline:** provides suspension rates by student subgroup.
- **Academic proficiency and growth:** compares school performance, as measured by DC-CAS results, of the school as a whole to that of certain student subgroups.
- **Student movement:** provides information on mid-year entry and withdrawals.

Unlike the PMF and Financial and Audit Review frameworks, the Equity Report is also used by and published for traditional public schools (DCPS) in Washington, DC. PCSB introduced the idea of creating the Equity Report to DCPS and OSSE, both of which were excited by the idea and contributed to developing the reporting framework. Publishing Equity Reports for all public schools in Washington, DC rather than for charter schools exclusively allows stakeholders to easily compare and contrast data for all public schools.

The development of the Equity Report was spurred by a desire to increase transparency about the equitable treatment of students. By making this information public, PCSB enables parents and other interested parties to gauge the extent to which schools are enrolling, retaining, and providing equitable treatment to students from different subgroups. It also makes this information available to the school leaders and boards of trustees that oversee each public charter school. This helps influence school behavior, as schools are aware that parents will review this information. PCSB is particularly dedicated to influencing school behavior through heightened transparency, rather than direct mandate, as doing so is aligned with its commitment to school autonomy.

Please see Appendix E for a Washington, DC Equity Report, and please see page 44 for more on PCSB's commitment to transparency and use of transparency to influence school behavior.

#### 4. Qualitative Site Reviews

In addition to the quantitative frameworks that PCSB uses to monitor the performance of its schools, PCSB also employs Qualitative Site Reviews (QSRs) to add context to its oversight and to observe the extent to which the school is meeting the goals in its charter agreement. The data collected during the QSR plays an important role when PCSB is evaluating the academic performance of schools and deciding whether to continue or renew charters, as it is used to complement the quantitative data

### ATTENDANCE

**In-Seat Attendance Rate (%)**  
 This School **89**  
 City Average \* 93

**How are attendance and absences calculated?**  
 In-seat attendance measures the average percent of students in the classroom on a given day. Education agencies in the District of Columbia calculate a number of different absence statistics. This in-seat attendance rate enables a close, but not perfect, comparison of daily attendance between DCPS and public charter schools.



### DISCIPLINE

**Defining discipline.** The suspension rates show the percent of students receiving an out-of-school suspension. Any student suspended out-of-school for at least one day is counted on the left, and any student receiving at least one long-term suspension (11+ days) is counted on the right. Subgroup results show the percent of students in that subgroup receiving a suspension.

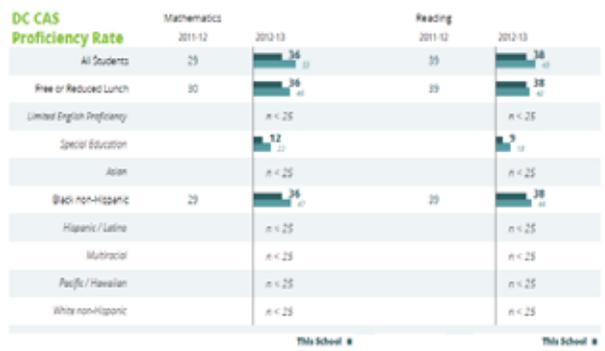
**Total Exclusions (#)**  
 This School **0**

**Expulsion Rate (%)**  
 This School **0.00**  
 City Average \* 0.03



### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Measuring achievement. The percent of students performing on- or above-grade-level according to the DC CAS.



### STUDENT GROWTH

Measuring growth. The percentage of students with similar prior achievement that the typical student outperforms on the DC CAS.



captured by the PMF. The QSR also provides schools with specific and actionable feedback on their performance, helping them identify areas in which they should seek to improve their practice. The QSR consists of three main components: an introductory meeting with the school's leadership to discuss the school's mission, vision, and goals; unannounced school visits; and an observation of one of the school's Board meetings.

The introductory QSR meeting with the school's leadership serves as an opportunity for PCSB to hear the school's leaders speak about the school's vision and goals, as well as an introduction to the remaining parts of the QSR. At this meeting, PCSB and the school agree on what evidence PCSB will look for that indicates whether the school is meeting its goals and agree upon a two-week window in which the unannounced site visits will occur. In addition, PCSB works with the school to schedule the Board meetings that will be observed.

PCSB then conducts its unannounced site visits. The primary goal of these site visits is for PCSB to observe classroom instruction and school climate, and PCSB strives to observe 75% of the school's teaching staff during the two-week window. Before conducting the site visits, PCSB's staff and consultants they hire to help conduct the classroom observations complete a two-day training session to familiarize themselves with the Danielson Group's Framework for Effective Teaching, which is used as a guide during classroom observations, and to calibrate their evaluations. They then observe the school's classrooms and rate classrooms, using the Framework for Effective Teaching as a guide. These evaluations are aggregated and used to assess the effectiveness of the school's teachers and the school's climate.

PCSB is further improving its site visits by putting all of its staff members and consultants conducting the visits through a training and certification course in the use of the Framework for Effective Teaching. The training course and certification are provided by Teachscape, a firm that works to improve instructional quality. This will further ensure that the visits are conducted by staff and consultants that are well-versed in observing school climate and classroom instruction, and will help PCSB further increase inter-rater reliability in observations and evaluations across its staff and consultants.

After the site visit, a member from PCSB's staff observes one of the school's Board meetings to ensure that the school is following the policies and procedures detailed in its charter agreement. During these observations, PCSB looks for assurance that the school's Board is effective and knowledgeable about school operations.

In addition, PCSB can elect to observe a meeting between the school's leadership and a parent (with parental consent), during which it will evaluate the way the school interacts with parents. PCSB usually does this for schools having a parent or family-related goal in their charter agreements. As with the observation of the Board meeting, PCSB does not use a specific rubric to evaluate these meetings, but instead relies on the professional judgement of its staff to gauge the school's effectiveness.

After the QSR is completed, PCSB meets with the school to debrief and verbally share some of the team's initial findings. PCSB then drafts a written evaluation that is kept for future review and is shared with the school. Schools are also given the opportunity to submit a formal response directly to PCSB's Deputy Director. Results of the QSR help inform charter review

and renewal decisions and are made public on PCSB website.

*Please see Appendix F for PCSB's Qualitative Site Review Protocol*

### **5. Epicenter Document Collection**

PCSB requires its schools to upload documentation related to compliance with health and safety standards, enrollment processes, accreditation, student privacy standards, governance, and competitive bidding for contracts onto its Epicenter platform, a cloud-based system designed to assist authorizers. PCSB's staff examines schools' policies and procedures each year to ensure that schools are compliant with PCSB's requirements and the law. As they review school policies and procedures, PCSB's staff will note areas of concern and alert schools to them. For example, a school with an insufficient number of Board members residing in the District of Columbia would be notified that they are out of compliance with the law and PCSB's policy and required to address the matter immediately.

### **6. Mystery Caller Program**

PCSB uses its "mystery caller" program to track school compliance with special education enrollment policies. This program is designed to ensure schools are using open enrollment when dealing with special education students, and therefore helps combat a common criticism of charter schools: that they do not welcome students with disabilities. Through the mystery caller program, schools are called by members of PCSB's staff posing as parents seeking to enroll their child in the school. The caller asks several questions pertaining to the enrollment process, including questions about enrolling a student with disabilities. If, over the course of two separate calls, a school's answers indicate that their treatment of students with disabilities is

not equitable, PCSB issues a public warning to the school at a Board meeting. This warning informs stakeholders, including parents of current and prospective students, that the school in question may not have an equitable approach to special education enrollment and education.

### **7. Daily Data Collection**

PCSB collects daily attendance, truancy, enrollment, suspension, and expulsion data from each public charter school in Washington, DC. Schools provide this data to PCSB via an online platform, and it is checked for accuracy through automated measures that identify outliers in data that are likely to represent errors in entry or communication rather than reality (e.g., a school-wide truancy rate of 90% for a given day). PCSB shares these outliers are shared with the school reporting the data, which will either verify the data's accuracy or follow-up with accurate data. PCSB also catalogs complaints it receives from parents on a school-by-school basis.

This data, including parent complaints, is analyzed each month to detect problems or potential problems at schools in real-time, before they progress for long enough to be captured in summative reports like the DC Equity Report. Any potential problems that PCSB identifies are shared with schools, and PCSB will ask for the school to explain what might be causing the issue. PCSB will then respond based on the severity of the problem or potential problem and according to the response it receives from the school.

The data collection requirements imposed by PCSB can be burdensome, and many schools employ a full-time staff member whose primary responsibility is to provide PCSB (and OSSE) with data. PCSB has attempted to compensate for this burden by reducing other forms of

oversight as it requires more data from schools. For example, QSRs are conducted only every five years at higher performing schools, and other practices, such as review of curriculum and lesson plans, have been eliminated.

### **Communication of Oversight Results**

As PCSB collects data about its schools' performance, it actively communicates the results to all interested parties. In addition to publishing the results of the PMF, QSR, Financial and Audit Review, and Equity Reports for all schools on its website, PCSB sends press releases with summaries of the results to media outlets and publishes hard copies of the results, which are distributed to public charter schools in Washington, DC and at education-focused events in the city. *Please see page 44 for further detail on how PCSB communicates the results of its oversight frameworks, and why it places particular emphasis on doing so.*

**Innovation in charter school authorization: multi-dimensional, complementary, frameworks that comprehensively and holistically measure and hold schools accountable for performance**

PCSB takes a comprehensive approach to ensuring each of the mechanisms it uses to oversee school performance is effective in isolation. For example, the PMF measures academic performance in a robust and nuanced way, providing a comprehensive and detailed assessment of each school's academic performance. Similarly, the Financial and Audit Review provides an accurate and comprehensive examination of each school's financial health and stability. These and other mechanisms PCSB uses to oversee schools are quite precise. They identify not only how a school is performing, but also highlight specific areas where schools have room for improvement, which helps schools use targeted

interventions to improve. Each of these oversight tools delivers an accurate assessment of a specific component of school performance.

While each of PCSB's oversight mechanisms is effective in isolation, they are especially effective because they are designed to complement one another. When examined in unison, PCSB's methods of overseeing school performance show how a school is performing in a holistic sense. The PMF and QSR evaluate academic performance using both quantitative and qualitative information, the Financial and Audit Review evaluates financial health and stability, the Equity Reports give a reflective assessment of a school's commitment to providing equitable education while the daily data uploads and Mystery Caller program provide a real-time assessment of a school's commitment to equity, and the documents collected through the Epicenter platform ensure that schools are complying with PCSB's policies. In aggregate, these frameworks provide a detailed and robust evaluation of school performance, allowing PCSB to perform summative and real-time evaluations of school success.

## Response Based on School Performance

A cornerstone of PCSB’s approach to charter school authorization is effectively and appropriately responding to the performance of each school it oversees. PCSB’s response to school performance spans three dimensions:

- 1. Academic performance**
- 2. Financial performance**
- 3. Compliance with legal standards and PCSB requirements**

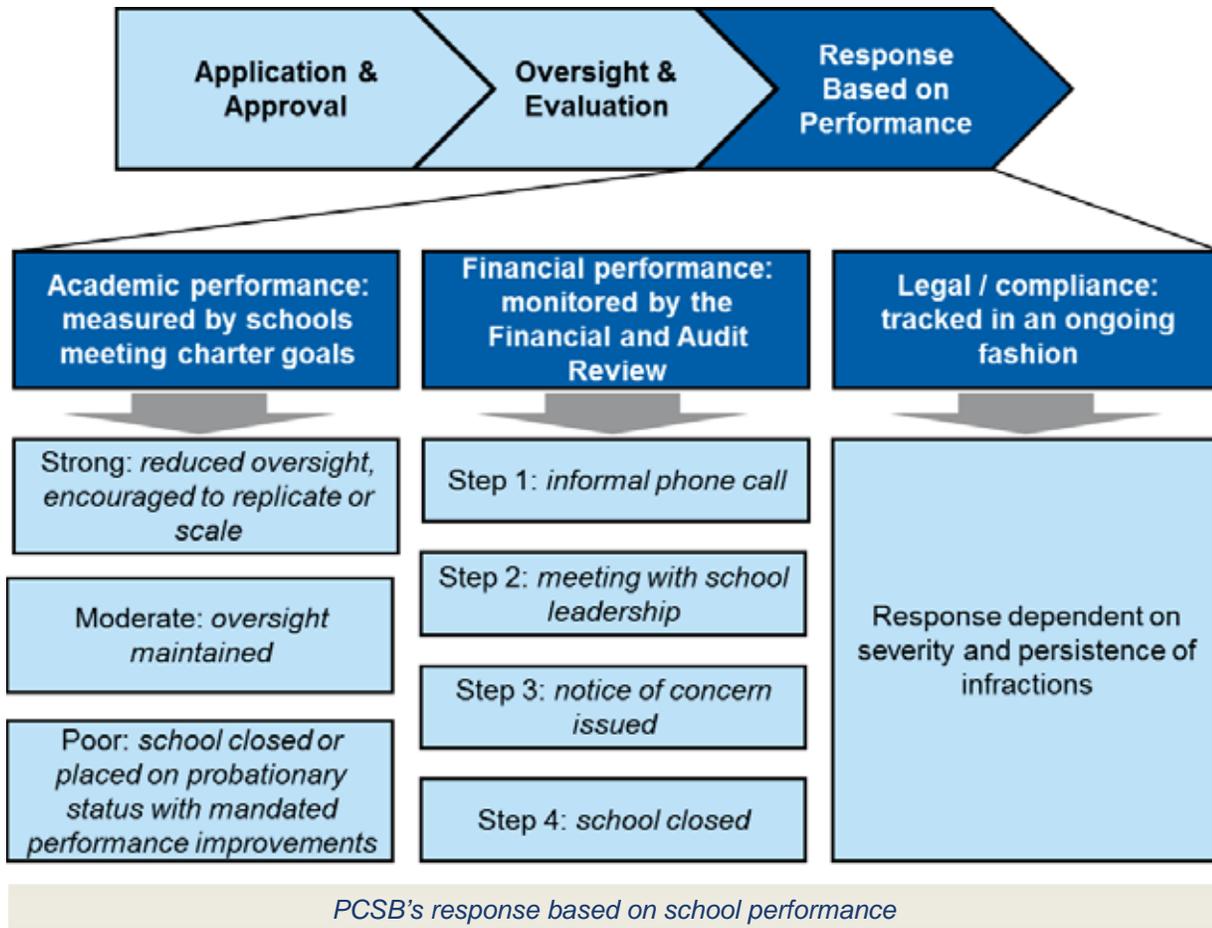
Across each of these three dimensions, PCSB uses a tiered system of responses to school performance. This system provides PCSB with a great deal of flexibility, as it enables the organization to tailor its responses based on the specific strengths and weaknesses of each school it oversees. If a school is performing well across each of these three dimensions, PCSB will encourage the school to expand. If a school is generally performing well, but is facing issues in one particular area, PCSB will notify the school of the issue and monitor the problem until it is resolved. If a school is facing serious and persistent performance issues, PCSB will revoke or not renew its charter, or put the school on a probationary status that requires specific performance improvement to avoid closure.

While PCSB would prefer that all DC charter schools succeed, its dedication to building a high-quality charter sector requires it to close underperforming schools. Closing underperforming schools benefits the charter sector in Washington, DC in two ways. First, each closure of an underperforming school reduces the number of low-quality charter school seats in the city. Second, each school closure

carried out by PCSB also demonstrates the authorizer’s commitment and willingness to close schools that fail to meet the goals in their charter agreements. This provides an incentive to charter schools in Washington, DC to maintain a high level of performance. PCSB’s responses to school performance are shown in the graphic below.

Year	School Closures
2012-13	5
2013-14	5
2014-15	2

*The number of schools or campuses closed by PCSB, as shown by their final year of operation*



**1. Responses to Academic Performance**

PCSB responds to schools' academic performance by reducing reporting requirements for academically high-performing schools and requiring the turnaround or closure of academically low-performing schools. The type of response PCSB takes depends largely on two separate factors: the performance of the school and the school's place in its charter renewal cycle. Each charter school in Washington, DC is subject to a high-stakes charter review at least once every five years and a charter renewal every fifteen years.

**Five- and Ten-Year Charter Reviews**

Washington, DC's law grants charter schools an unusually long charter term of 15 years. While this is not considered a national best practice, the deleterious effects of such a long charter term are mitigated by high-stakes reviews conducted by PCSB every five years. These reviews ask the same basic question as at the fifteen-year renewal: is the school meeting its charter goals? The principal legal difference is the consequence. PCSB has the right, but not the obligation, to close a school not meeting its goals during the five- and ten-year reviews. At fifteen years, however, PCSB cannot renew the charter of a school that is not meeting its goals.

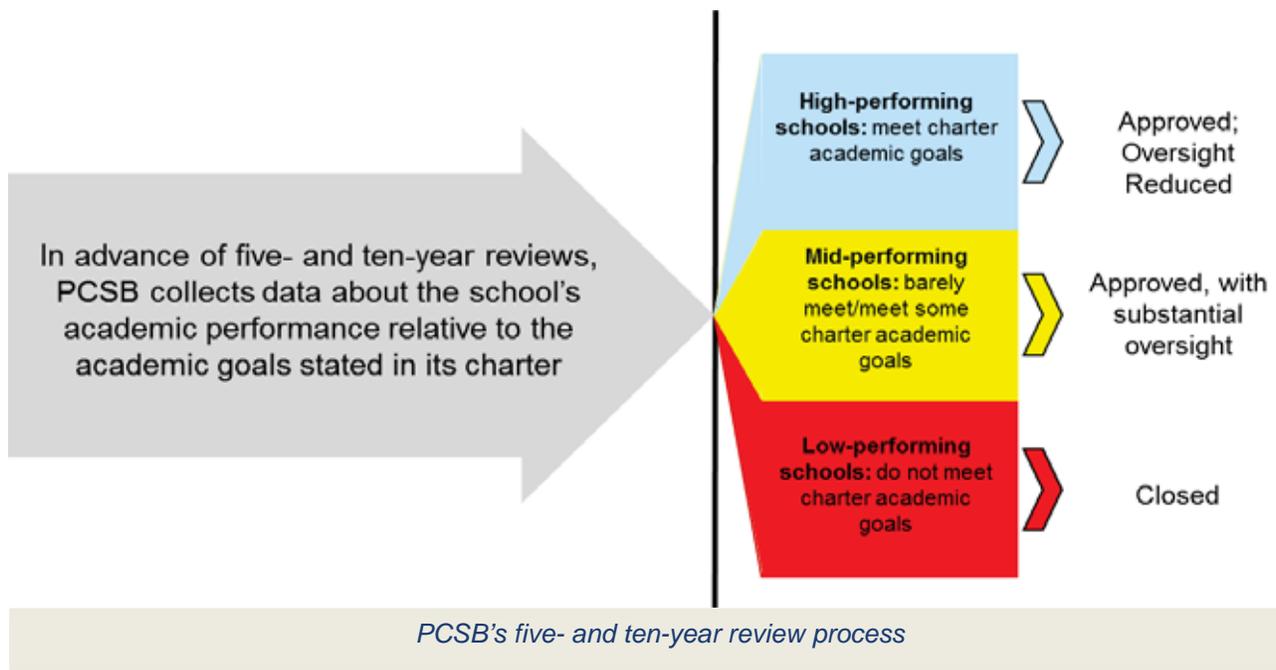
PCSB begins five- and ten-year reviews by examining the charter goals of the school under

review and working with the school to collect data demonstrating progress against those goals. PCSB corresponds with schools a full year prior to these reviews, sharing the goals articulated in the school’s charter with school leadership. Holding these conversations well in advance of the five-year review allows the school to either work more proactively toward achieving the goals in its charter or to amend its charter to more accurately reflect the goals it has been working toward.

Schools that are meeting the goals outlined in their charter and are rated Tier 1 on the PMF typically pass through the five- and-ten year review process swiftly. In addition, PCSB rewards such schools by not requiring them to undergo a QSR at any time other than during a five-year review or during the fifteen-year renewal. In some instances, PCSB will also suggest that Tier 1 schools meeting their academic goals consider expanding by raising their enrollment ceiling, adding additional grade levels, or opening new campuses.

The five- and-ten-year review process impacts mid-performing, or schools that have either come close to achieving their goals, achieved some but not all of their goals, or are showing significant academic progress but are still falling short of their goals, differently. PCSB provides these schools with detailed data on their performance. It also makes clear the benefits of strong academic performance, such as loosened oversight, as well as the consequences of lower performance, which could include school closure. In some cases new conditions are placed on the school as a condition of charter continuance, such as improving compliance with special education laws, improving the accuracy of data reporting, or strengthening the school’s balance sheet.

Oversight is not reduced for mid-performing schools the way it is for high-performing ones. These schools continue to provide PCSB with data as they had before, and depending on their performance across a variety of measures, they may be subject to a QSR in subsequent years.



The judgment of PCSB's staff and Board comes into play during five- and-ten year reviews for low-performing schools. PCSB's staff will almost certainly recommend that the Board move to revoke the charter of a school that has not met its goals and has also been a PMF Tier 3 school for several years. Schools that have only recently seen their performance decline and have an aggressive turnaround effort underway may be placed on an improvement plan as an alternative to closure. Schools with strong performance in some grade spans and weak performance in others may face the closure of some grade levels, but not others. For example, PCSB may revoke the charter for a school's middle grades, but permit the school to continue operating its elementary grades.

### ***Fifteen-year Charter Renewal***

Charter schools in Washington, DC must have their charters renewed every fifteen years. In some ways, the fifteen-year review is similar to five- and ten-year renewals: PCSB collects data on school performance, examines the extent to which the school has met its goals, and responds accordingly. The primary difference between charter renewals and reviews is that the law requires PCSB to close schools that have not met their charter goals at a fifteen-year renewal, whereas it has more discretion to weigh other factors (e.g., demonstrated improvement or potential for improvement) during a five- or ten-year review.

PCSB is just as rigorous and thorough with data collection informing fifteen-year renewals as it is for five- and ten-year reviews. In addition to data that demonstrates whether a school has met its academic goals, fifteen-year renewal decisions are informed by QSRs as well as information on a school's financial situation and compliance with legal standards. When a school is up for a fifteen-year charter renewal, PCSB's data team

drafts a report on the school, and for borderline cases or cases that are likely to result in school closure, PCSB's leadership and legal counsel reviews the renewal report. PCSB then informs the school of the staff's draft findings, allowing the school to comment on factual errors. Each school may also choose to have a public hearing at the time of renewal. Once all of this information is compiled, PCSB's staff sends a draft report, with a recommendation, to its Board. The Board then makes the final vote on the school's charter renewal.

### ***Interaction between the PMF and the Charter Review and Renewal Processes***

Because PCSB encourages, but does not require, schools to adopt charter goals that are based on the PMF, the review process is different for schools that have adopted goals based on the PMF and those that have not. For schools that have adopted academic goals based on the PMF, the data collection and renewal process is straightforward, since PCSB uses the PMF to evaluate every school in its portfolio every year and already has the data necessary to complete the review. For schools that have not adopted academic goals based on the PMF, the process is more complicated. PCSB's charter agreement specialists and the school's leadership discuss each of the school's goals and measure how well each of those goals has been met. PCSB will also conduct a Qualitative Site Review of every school up for a five- or ten-year renewal, which helps it better understand the school's educational delivery model and the extent to which it is meeting its goals.

PCSB can only close a school that is failing to meet the specific goals included in its charter agreement; it cannot close a school solely on the basis of its PMF score or tier. PCSB manages this tension by conducting a high-

stakes review (similar to a five- or ten-year review) for any school remaining in Tier 3 of the PMF for three consecutive years. When PCSB conducts such a review, it evaluates whether the school is failing to meet any of its goals. Since it has been PCSB's experience that most Tier 3 schools also tend not to be meeting one or more of their charter goals, PCSB will likely find that the school has not met its goals. If it indeed finds that the school has not met all of its goals, PCSB will move to revoke the school's charter. In this way, PCSB uses PMF results to investigate whether it should move to close a school outside of the five- or ten-year review or fifteen-year renewal processes.

**2. Responses to Financial Performance**

PCSB monitors the financial performance of its schools using the Financial and Audit Review report, which provides PCSB with a wealth of information on the financial health of the schools it oversees.

*Please see the Oversight and Evaluation section of this document for additional information on the Financial and Audit Review report.*

The Financial and Audit Review report serves as an early warning system for such problems, the most common of which are listed on the next column:

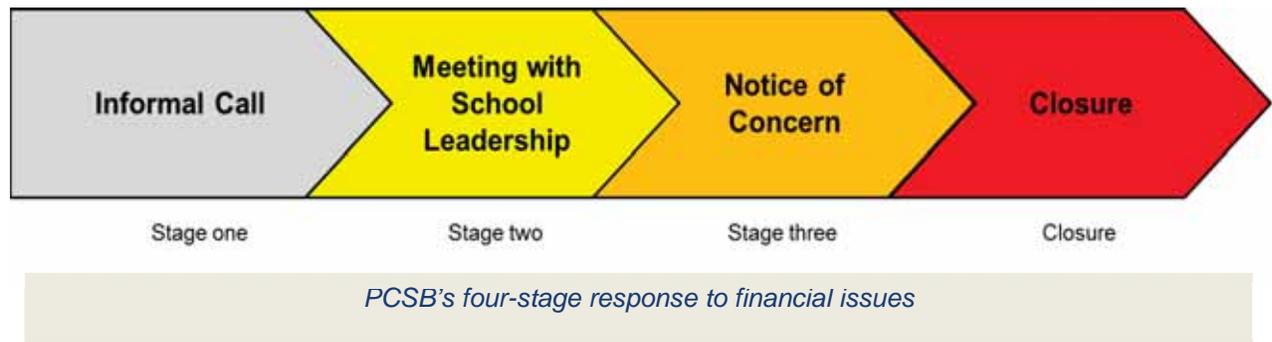
**Common Financial Problems Faced by Charter Schools**

- **Failure to submit financial data in a timely fashion**
- **Failure to maintain certain appropriate financial ratios (e.g. day's cash on hand)**
- **Noncompliance with GAAP and A-133 Federal Compliance**
- **Pattern of fiscal mismanagement**
- **Failure to remain economically viable**

PCSB responds to financial problems using a four-stage process. For relatively minor issues, such as a school's first failure to submit financial data, PCSB will begin at stage one. For major issues, such as a pattern of fiscal mismanagement or a serious liquidity problem that could lead to a school running out of working capital during the academic year, PCSB may skip all interim stages and move to close a school immediately.

**Stage One**

PCSB staff will contact the school to raise awareness of the issue. PCSB informs the school there is a problem and allows the school to quickly remedy the situation without any formal proceedings. The first contact that PCSB will make is usually an informal phone call to the school's Financial Manager.





**Stage Two**

The second stage of PCSB's response to financial problems is reached if a school fails to address an issue that PCSB has discussed with the Financial Manager or if a more serious financial issue is identified. At this stage, PCSB arranges a meeting for its Finance department and Executive Director to speak with the school's Finance and/or Operations department. At this meeting, PCSB provides a detailed explanation of the problem or problems that the school is facing and asks that they remedy the situation.

**Stage Three**

The third stage of PCSB's response occurs if a school does not resolve an issue that has been discussed between PCSB and the school's Finance department. It may also occur if a school faces a serious financial problem, but not one serious enough to warrant immediate closure. At this stage, PCSB's Board will issue a Notice of Concern, which is delivered to the school's leader or leaders at a Board meeting. This measure ensures that the problem is clearly and publicly brought in front of the school's most senior leaders. Notices of Concern are included

in the public record, and can be used as evidence to establish that a school has demonstrated a pattern of fiscal mismanagement.

**Stage Four: Closure**

In cases where a school exhibits a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, fails to remain economically viable, or is not in compliance with GAAP, PCSB will begin proceedings to close the school. These issues threaten the future of the school and the education of its students, and PCSB therefore acts swiftly to revoke the charters of schools that face these problems, even when these schools are not up for a five- or ten-year charter review or a fifteen-year charter renewal.

At each stage of its response to financial issues, PCSB only informs schools of the issues they are facing. It does not suggest how a school might remedy its problems, as it is the school's responsibility to remedy the situation. PCSB, will, however, suggest that a school with financial difficulties speak with other charter schools in Washington, DC to learn from their experiences. It is especially likely to do so in instances where other schools have successfully overcome issues similar to those the school is currently facing.

### 3. Responses to Compliance with Legal Standards and PCSB Requirements

PCSB also responds to how well the schools it oversees comply with legal standards and PCSB's requirements. Though PCSB's charter schools are free from many of the regulations that govern the city's traditional public schools, they must still be in compliance with basic legal requirements. PCSB collects data on each school's compliance via data uploads on its Epicenter platform. These data are used for an annual compliance review, which takes place each fall. PCSB requires schools to submit information on basic compliance-related topics, such as health and safety standards, accreditation, and enrollment processes, and hopes to soon expand these requirements to include data on a school's adherence to student information and privacy laws, as well as certain civil rights laws. PCSB's General Counsel also reviews the articles of incorporation and the bylaws and other policies of each charter school to ensure that they are not in violation of the law.

*Please see Appendix G for a complete list of the information PCSB requires for its annual compliance reviews.*

In addition to conducting annual compliance reviews for each school it oversees, PCSB also tracks compliance with legal standards and its requirements through its daily collection of discipline, attendance, and other data (*please see page 31 for additional detail on the daily data PCSB collects from each charter school in Washington, DC*). This process helps PCSB detect potential legal and compliance issues in real-time.

This information allows PCSB to address legal and compliance issues when they arise. Though these issues vary in frequency and in severity, some of the most common infractions are:

#### Common Legal/Compliance Issues

- **Failure to submit legal/compliance data in a timely fashion**
- **Failure to maintain adequate health and safety standards**
- **Violation of student information and privacy law**
- **Unlawful articles of incorporation or bylaws**
- **Failure to obtain or maintain necessary accreditation**
- **Breach of governance policies**
- **Improper admission or enrollment policies**



PCSB responds to these issues on an ongoing basis. It has the authority to close a school at any time—independent of the five- and ten-year review or fifteen-year renewal timeframes—if the school has shown a material violation of an applicable law. While PCSB would not hesitate to move for closure if a school was unsafe or faced a serious legal issue, it takes many preliminary measures to ensure that minor issues are remedied without such drastic measures. First, for a minor infraction, PCSB's General Counsel contacts the school to notify them of the issue. If the issue remains unresolved, PCSB's General Counsel will bring the problem to PCSB's Executive Director, who will proceed to contact the school's leadership regarding the issue. If the issues still remained unresolved, PCSB's Board would meet with the school's Board to communicate the growing severity of the violation. At this point, PCSB might also begin a public discourse on the topic to communicate the situation to stakeholders and to solicit public comments on the matter. For issues that aren't serious enough to warrant immediate closure of a school, PCSB exhausts these methods of outreach prior to considering revocation of the school's charter.

**Innovation in charter school authorization: use of Asset Acquisitions when closing underperforming schools**

While closing underperforming schools is one a charter authorizer's most fundamental responsibilities, school closures create challenges. Two of the most difficult challenges arising from closing a charter school are the possibility that the school's students will not be afforded an opportunity to attend a school that is better academically than the one that closed, and the difficulties students and families face when they are displaced and no longer able to

attend school at the same physical location as before.

PCSB mitigates both of these effects by encouraging schools that are closing to enter into to an Asset Acquisition agreement with a high performing operator of charter schools. During these Asset Acquisitions, the assets and students of schools that would otherwise be closing instead are acquired by a new organization or management team with a demonstrated record of success in operating charter schools.

PCSB uses three criteria to determine whether to suggest or approve an Asset Acquisition. The first is that the school acquiring the assets must be a high quality school with demonstrated capacity to engage in a takeover. The second is that the school being taken over must be financially strong and must have a facility, reducing the financial burden placed on the acquiring school. Finally, the board of the school being closed needs to support the transaction, as research shows that school takeovers are more likely to succeed when the outgoing school leadership is supportive of the Asset Acquisition.

To date, PCSB has facilitated three Asset Acquisitions. As each of these Acquisitions took place during the past year, it is too early to gauge whether they have been successful. PCSB will monitor the results of these Asset Acquisitions carefully and adjust its practices accordingly.

## PCSB's Organization and Operations

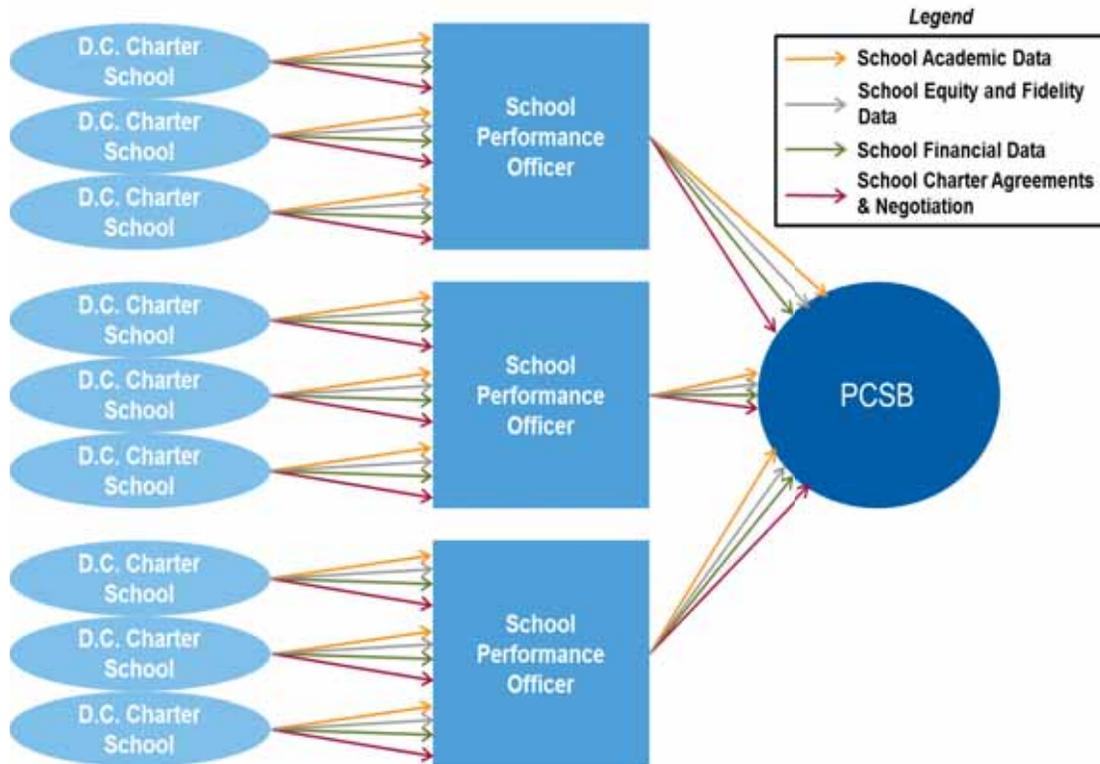
PCSB's interactions with schools throughout their lifecycle are made more effective by its organizational and operational practices. In particular, PCSB's effective models of school oversight, recruitment and development of staff, and communication and partnership with others in the Washington, DC community make it a stronger organization and a more effective authorizer.

### ***PCSB's Model of School Oversight***

PCSB's basic and innovative practices during each phase of a school's lifecycle are made

more effective by its model of school oversight, which has changed substantially over the past two years.

Prior to 2012, PCSB assigned each school a "school performance officer," responsible for monitoring all aspects of the performance of several schools within PCSB's portfolio except financial oversight (which went to PCSB's Finance and Operations team). While there were some benefits to this approach, it required members of PCSB's staff to work across many functional areas, limiting their ability to develop and maintain functional expertise. It also allowed



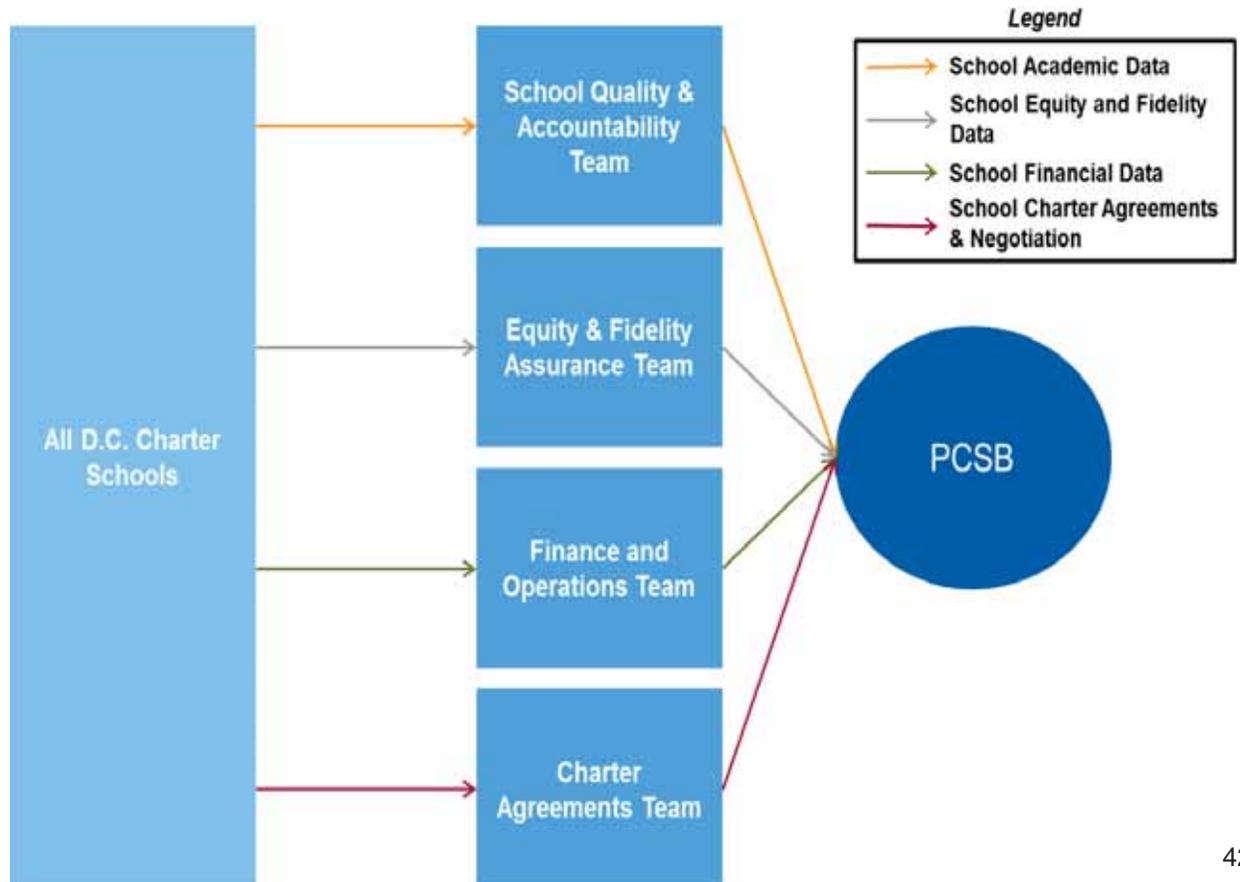
*PCSB information flow under school performance officer structure*

for real or perceived differences in treatment among schools resulting from different approaches taken by school performance officers. In an effort to more effectively build and benefit from staff members' functional expertise, PCSB adopted a new model of school oversight in 2012.

PCSB began organizing staff by functional area, making them responsible for certain functional responsibilities across all schools in its portfolio rather than for all or nearly all functional responsibilities for a small number of schools. PCSB now divides school oversight into four different departments: School Quality and Accountability, Equity and Fidelity Assurance, Charter Agreements, and Finance and Operations.

PCSB's new model of school oversight led to several improvements in its work. First, specialization allowed for deeper and more

quantitative analysis of all schools, as a greater degree of functional knowledge among staff enabled each department to create standardized and sophisticated measurement tools within its given specialty. Second, the standardization of measurement tools by department allowed PCSB to more easily monitor its growing portfolio of schools, as these tools enabled the organization to quickly identify schools that may be struggling in an automated and objective way. Third, it eliminated real and perceived variability in performance measurement that resulted from different schools having different school performance officers, as all schools began working with a large number of PCSB's staff, rather than with one performance officer. Fourth, the shift allowed for a more effective approach to staffing and human resources. PCSB's staff could now not only move vertically within a specialized department but also



horizontally across departments in order to build expertise in multiple areas, allowing for more clearly defined professional growth and development opportunities.

However, the shift from school performance officers to specialized departments also posed several challenges. It hindered PCSB's ability to understand contextual factors present at each school, as there was no longer a single staff member with deep knowledge of all aspects of any one particular school. It also caused confusion at schools, who no longer knew whom to contact at PCSB. PCSB addressed these concerns by working with schools to better account for their specific context by developing mission-specific charter goals and new frameworks for measuring the performance of alternative, early childhood, and adult education schools. PCSB also published an updated staff directory with clear guidance as to whom to contact for each particular concern.

*Please see Appendix H for PCSB's organizational chart.*

**Approach to Recruitment and Development of Staff**

PCSB's focus on human capital helps it make progress against its goal of strengthening Washington, DC's charter sector. As Dr. Clara Hess, notes: "we have 1.5 staff members focused on human resources for an organization with roughly 40 staff, whereas other government agencies might have 1 staff member doing this work for an organization of 100 or 200." This emphasis on human capital builds PCSB's ability to recruit, retain, and develop its staff.

One of the initiatives that PCSB's HR staff implemented was a new performance management system that included a 360-degree review system and performance-based pay. Once this framework was built, PCSB's

leadership encouraged heavy use of it. As Scott Pearson explains: "our review process is robust. I have spent up to 40 hours completing review forms for my six direct reports during one review cycle. This investment ensures our performance discussions are substantive and specific. It also models for the leadership team the importance of taking seriously the reviews they will themselves do for their staff."

PCSB also seeks creative ways to develop its staff without incurring expenses. Recently, the organization started an internship program where the task of interviewing and managing interns was given to staff members that did not have formal managerial experience. The program provided an opportunity for PCSB's staff to develop leadership and team management skills, while interns made substantial contributions to the organization.

PCSB's actions must be grounded in the laws that define its mandate and the scope within which it can take action. As a result, PCSB is careful to ensure that its staff is equipped with legal expertise. Two of PCSB's staff members are lawyers for the agency and a third has a legal background. This expertise ensures that PCSB understands the laws that are relevant to its work, and bases its decisions on these laws—which is particularly important when it closes schools. Sarah Medway, PCSB's Charter Agreement Specialist, describes the importance of PCSB's understanding and use of the law, saying: "our decisions to close schools that are failing to meet their charter goals must be grounded in the law and must hold up to scrutiny, as they may be challenged." By recruiting and developing a staff with a strong understanding of the law, PCSB can be confident of its legal footing when making difficult decisions.

***PCSB's Emphasis on Communication***

PCSB makes a concerted effort to communicate with stakeholders in the Washington, DC and national charter school communities, including parents and prospective parents, school leaders, DC government agencies, including DCPS, OSSE, and the DC Council, and national educational organizations, such as NACSA and other charter authorizers. While PCSB's communicates with different audiences to achieve different goals, all help to build awareness and understanding of the city's charter sector among parents and the Washington, DC community more broadly.

One of PCSB's communications goals is to share information on school performance with parents, prospective parents, and the community, so school performance influences the school choices of a greater number of families. To this end, PCSB widely disseminates the PMF and other information on school performance in different formats. In addition to posting these reports on its website, PCSB uses community listservs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Instagram to notify parents when these reports are available and to ensure that parents are able to find them. PCSB also developed an application for mobile devices, MyDCcharters, which enables users to easily access information on Washington, DC public charter schools.

In addition to these uses of technology to disseminate school results, PCSB also engages the community it serves through more traditional forms of communication. It prints and distributes 30,000 copies of the "Parent Guide to the PMF," which contains the PMF rating and tier of each public charter school. These documents are distributed at education-focused events PCSB helps to coordinate, such as the Washington, DC Education Festival, which it co-hosts with

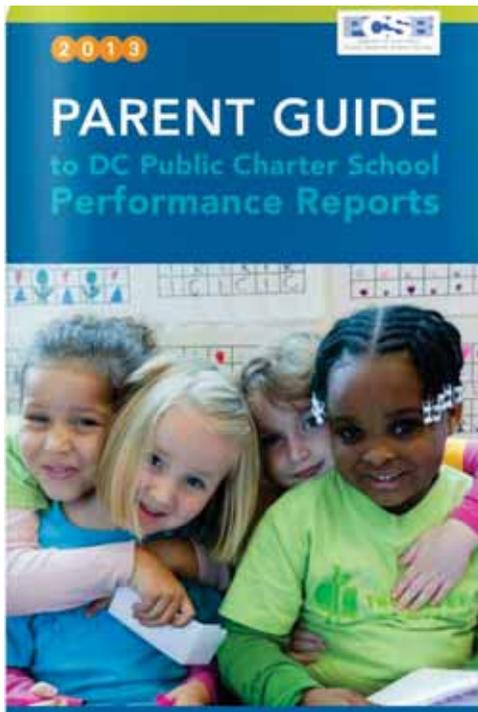
DCPS and OSSE, and through other community organizations and services, such as health clinics.

PCSB also issues press releases highlighting school performance and speaks with reporters from the *Washington Post* and other media outlets to help inform their coverage of Washington, DC's charter sector.

To ensure the City Council understands PCSB's work and the work of the city's public charter schools, it holds several sessions each year to brief DC Council staff on such matters as discipline, truancy, equity reports, and the PMF.

PCSB's emphasis on communicating school results is driven by its belief that transparently sharing information about school performance creates accountability for results. Parents use the information in the PMF and Equity Reports to decide where they would like to enroll their children. As such, these results can have a powerful impact on demand for a charter school.. Transparent communication of school performance also ensures each school's board members are able to access data on their school's performance, providing school leaders incentive to achieve strong results.

Using transparency to create incentives for strong school performance is particularly powerful because it can create behavioral change by schools without a direct mandate from PCSB. As such, widely publicizing the PMF and Equity Reports can improve school performance in a way that preserves school autonomy.



*The Parent Guide to the PMF, 2013*

PCSB's focus on communication helps it address criticisms of public charter schools. Among these is the contention that charter schools manage their enrollment by using suspensions, expulsions, and other means to encourage or force lower-performing students to leave their school. By publishing information on discipline, including expulsions, mid-year withdrawals, and year-over-year retention rates within the Equity Report for each school, PCSB enables interested stakeholders to examine whether a school may indeed be engaged in such practices, and enables schools to quickly dispel such criticisms, if they are untrue.

PCSB also communicates on a national audience, primarily with organizations focused on charter authorization, including NACSA, and other charter authorizers. By speaking with these organizations and sharing its experiences and practices, PCSB helps to advance the charter sector on a national scale. This form of communication helps PCSB achieve part of its

vision, to “serve as a national role model for charter school authorizing and accountability.” For more on PCSB's vision, please see page 11.

### **Partnership with Local and National Stakeholders**

PCSB actively seeks and successfully builds partnerships with other key organizations in Washington, DC. Among PCSB's key partners are DCPS, OSSE, and other governmental organizations in Washington, DC focused on education. These partnerships help all of these organizations, including PCSB, more effectively serve the community by aligning practices, streamlining processes, and working together to improve public education in the city.

PCSB's partnership with other Washington, DC educational and/or governmental agencies has led to a number of practices and events that help advance public education in the city. Notable examples of practices resulting from PCSB's partnerships with these agencies include:

- **The Washington, DC Education Festival, resulting from partnership with DCPS, OSSE, and the DC Council:** a 1-day event that disseminates information on different options in public education throughout the city. It is open to the public, but is primarily targeted toward current and prospective students and parents. Representatives from these agencies share information on registration, school performance, and other topics of interest. Representatives from individual schools set up booths to provide information on their schools and answer questions from students and parents.
- **The city-wide common application and lottery, resulting from partnership with DCPS and Deputy Mayor for Education** a merging of

applications for charter and traditional public schools in Washington, DC. The common application makes applying to schools easier for students and families, as they do not need to complete multiple applications to be considered for multiple schools. This increases access to all of the city's public schools.

- **The Washington, DC Equity Report, resulting from partnership with DCPS, OSSE, and the Deputy Mayor for Education:** *Please see page 28 for additional detail on the Equity Report*

In addition to partnering with governmental organizations, PCSB seeks and builds partnerships with many other education-focused organizations. Partnerships and discussions with these organizations help PCSB stay abreast of issues and trends that impact education in Washington, DC. Each of PCSB's partners also helps in more specialized ways that align with its areas of expertise. These organizations and some of the ways their partnership benefits PCSB include:

- **Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS) DC:** Assists PCSB with understanding the viewpoint of charter schools in Washington, DC, and serves as a thought partner when PCSB is developing responses to regulation that could impact it or the schools it oversees.

- **New Schools Venture Fund:** Serves as a thought partner to PCSB on a multitude of issues in Washington, DC, including equitable education. New Schools Venture Fund provided funding to help develop the Washington, DC Equity Report, assisting PCSB, OSSE, and DCPS in developing the framework.
- **The CityBridge Foundation:** Helps PCSB recruit high-quality charter operators (i.e., Rocketship Education) to begin operations in Washington, DC. In addition to participating "pitch" meetings to recruit high-quality operators, CityBridge also assists these organizations with securing philanthropic support and developing Boards of Directors comprised of Washington, DC residents, making it easier for them to begin operations in the city.

**The Washington, DC Association of Public Chartered Schools:** Serves as a member of taskforces PCSB develops to solicit input on changes to policies or practices that would have a substantial impact on schools. Communicates potential changes to schools and shares feedback from schools with PCSB.

## PCSB's Future

PCSB regularly and consistently seeks to improve its practice. Naomi DeVeaux, PCSB's Deputy Director, articulates PCSB's approach, "Our work is never really 'done.' We're always looking for ways to improve our oversight of schools or internal practices."

Many of the changes PCSB is considering are modifications to the frameworks it uses to monitor school performance. For example, PCSB will continue to modify the PMF and improve its usefulness as a tool for measuring a school's academic progress. One change that is under consideration involves changing the way scores are reported for charter schools spanning more than one school type (elementary, middle, high, early childhood, adult education, alternative). Currently, these schools are assigned a PMF score for each school type at the same campus. Going forward, PCSB is considering changes to the PMF that would combine the school's different scores, which would result in one school-wide score rather than individual scores for different school types. This change would be completed to make the PMF results more intuitive and easier to understand. PCSB is also considering changes to the PMF that would more closely align it with the Common Core and the PARCC assessment, which all public schools in Washington, DC will adopt for the 2014-15 school year in the place of the DC-CAS.

Potential changes to the Financial and Audit Review include providing information on a school's compliance with PCSB's requirements related to the competitive bidding of contracts awarded by the school and further modifications to the measures included in the report. Although

Equity Reports have only been published for one year, PCSB, OSSE, and DCPS are already considering improvements to the reporting framework. For example, future versions of the Equity Reports may report information on graduation rates and segment students by gender.

PCSB is also considering changes to the way it solicits applications for specific school types (i.e., early childhood, elementary, middle, high, or adult education schools) in certain areas of the city that lack these types of schools. To date, PCSB has approved high-quality applications regardless of the school type and proposed location (in fact, the proposed location is often unknown at the time of application, when candidates are still searching for available facilities). It is developing a process to identify which areas of the city need specific types of schools, to solicit applications meeting these needs, and to weigh the need and geography of each proposed school as it determines whether to approve an application. This change will enable PCSB to influence the distribution of charter schools throughout the city, which it will use to help create a more equitable distribution of school options in all of the city's Wards and neighborhoods. This will minimize the extent to which students in certain areas of the city must travel to attend charter schools, and will help build awareness and understanding of the city's charter sector in a greater number of neighborhoods.

## Recommendations

While many different actors can contribute to the development of a high-quality charter school sector, authorizers have tremendous power – and responsibility – to improve the quality of charter schools and seats in their area of jurisdiction. By pursuing the actions below, charter school authorizers can improve the quality of the charter school sector.

### **Carefully select which applications to start new schools are approved**

Only open schools that demonstrate the capacity to operate at a high level from their inception, as schools generally do not exhibit substantial improvement over time. Closely scrutinize the academic, business, and financial plan of the applicant and allow the public to give input as an aspect of the application process. Keep in mind that it is far less disruptive to not open a school with a marginal chance of success in the first place than to close schools that are failing to meet their goals, which displaces students and requires families to complete another enrollment process. If you are unsure about an application, do not approve it – instead, provide feedback to the applicant and ask them to reapply in subsequent years.

### **Create or adopt clear accountability and oversight frameworks with buy-in from charter schools**

Invest time and resources into creating comprehensive and clear accountability frameworks to measure schools' performance across different dimensions, including academic performance, financial sustainability, and commitment to equity. Ensure that the frameworks are precise, comprehensive, and objective, and that they provide standardized

ways to compare schools to one another. If you lack the resources to develop proprietary frameworks, adapt best practice frameworks developed by other authorizers to suit your context – doing so can be a cost effective way of establishing accountability frameworks. Finally, work with charter schools to develop or solicit feedback on your frameworks prior to implementing them, as doing so helps build buy-in from schools.

### **Commit to protecting school autonomy**

Understand that your role as a charter authorizer is very different than that of a central office at a system of traditional public schools. Take special care to ensure that you remain deeply committed to and actively protect school freedom to develop processes, procedures, and curricula. Doing so enables schools to develop innovative and context-specific practices and procedures. It also enables you to focus your efforts and avoids potential difficulty closing an underperforming school that has acted on guidance you have provided that may have contributed to its performance.

### **Close schools failing to meet their charter goals, and consider encouraging Asset Acquisitions to mitigate the negative effects of school closure**

Do not shy away from closing schools that are underperforming and have not shown adequate progress toward their goals. Doing so will ensure that all remaining charter schools will work to boost their performance by making real the fact that if they do not perform, they must close. This will improve the extent to which the schools in your portfolio take their charter goals and your accountability frameworks seriously and

rigorously work to improve their performance. Also be prepared to close schools for non-academic reasons, including financial or legal issues. Be open to testing methods that can mitigate the problems associated with closure, such as having high-performing charter schools enter into Asset Acquisitions.

**Communicate information on school performance to parents, prospective parents, and the community at large**

Share information the academic performance, financial stability, and demonstrated commitment to equity of each school in your portfolio. Proactively disseminate this information using social media, by issuing press releases, and by speaking with reporters that cover education in your jurisdiction. Present the data in a summarized, high-level format, that enables parents to quickly and accurately understand its implications, as well as a detailed format that allows those that are interested to understand specific aspects of a school's performance (e.g., performance in a certain grade level or subject). Sharing information about school performance will create additional incentive for schools to succeed, as they know that parents and families will be able to examine their results and seek to attend successful schools.

**Invest in building organizational capacity**

Invest in finding and developing a highly effective staff. Small investments in staff and in professional development yield large returns in later productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. Develop robust and repeatable processes for finding and acquiring new talent and providing performance reviews to staff members that include meaningful and actionable feedback on their performance. Consider bringing in a general counsel or other staff members with legal expertise, helping ensure that your actions are solidly grounded in the law. If your staff is too small to warrant a general counsel, find and retain a lawyer or law firm with a deep understanding of the charter school sector and rely on them when you require legal expertise.

**Reach out to other authorizers for guidance**

Most successful authorizers are willing to share their practices, and believe doing so is a part of their responsibility as public stewards. Do not hesitate to seek advice from effective authorizers, and share your practices with others that want to learn from you.

## Conclusion

Early research on charter school authorization by both the Brookings Institute and CREDO has shown that charter school authorizers have great influence on the quality of the charter sector. Effective authorizers leverage their power to authorize, monitor, and close charter schools, ensuring that only high-performing charter schools are opened and allowed to remain in operation.

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board provides an example of a successful model of charter school authorization. PCSB's rigorous application process, comprehensive oversight frameworks, willingness to close schools, commitment to school autonomy, effective communication with a broad array of stakeholders, and highly effective human capital strategy have helped PCSB realize the first part of its mission: "leading the transformation of public education in Washington, DC."

PCSB's effectiveness shows the important role that authorizers can play in improving student outcomes.

The lessons and practices included in this case study provide the beginnings of a road map for other authorizers to improve the quality of the charter sector.

In an educational environment where proven methods are scarce and where, in aggregate, charter schools do not outperform traditional public schools, PCSB's story provides actionable learnings to both improve student achievement in charter schools and to further the dialogue on improving American education. While many students across the US receive a high-quality public education, millions attend low-quality schools and millions more drop out of school each year. While the growing body of research connecting charter school authorization to student outcomes suggests the *potential* of effective charter school authorization, the wide range in quality of public schools throughout the nation highlights the *need* for it.



## List of Interviewees

### District of Columbia Public Charter School Board

- Emily Bloomfield, Board Member
- Tomeika Bowden, Associate, Communications
- Naomi DeVeaux, Deputy Director
- Dr. Clara Hess, Director, Human Capital and Strategic Initiatives
- Lin Johnson III, Director, Finance and Operations
- Rashida Kennedy, Manager, Equity and Fidelity Team
- Erin Kupferberg, Manager, School Quality and Accountability
- Theola Labbé-DeBose, Director, Communications
- Mikayla Lytton, Manager, Strategy and Analysis
- John “Skip” McKoy, Board Chair
- Sarah Medway, Specialist, Charter Agreement
- Monique Miller, Manager, New School Development
- Scott Pearson, Executive Director
- Don Soifer, Board Member
- Nicole Streeter, General Counsel
- Rashida Tyler, Senior Manager, School Quality and Accountability
- Dr. Darren Woodruff, Vice Board Chair

### DC Charter School Leaders

- Ralph Boyd, Board Chair, Center City Public Charter Schools
- Martha Cutts, Executive Director, Washington Latin School
- Ann Gosier, Board Chair, Two Rivers Public Charter School
- Allison Kokkoros, Managing Director, Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School
- Julie Meyer, Executive Director, Next Step Public Charter School
- Phil Mitchell, Chief of Staff, Excel Academy
- Jessica Stutter, Board Member, Center City Public Charter Schools
- Sterling Ward, Board Chair, Paul Public Charter School
- Russ Williams, President and CEO, Center City Public Charter Schools

### Charter School Experts

- Robert Cane, Executive Director, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
- Dr. Ramona Edelin, Executive Director, DC Association of Public Charter Schools
- Katie Piehl, Director of Authorizer Development, National Association of Charter School Authorizers

### Document Reviewers

- William Haft, Vice President, Authorizer Development, National Association of Charter School Authorizers
- Robin Lake, Director, Center for Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington
- Margo Roen, New Schools Director, Tennessee Achievement School District

## About the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation

Inspired by their passion for children and by a shared desire to improve the lives of children living in urban poverty, Michael and Susan Dell established their Austin, Texas-based foundation in 1999. In its early years, the foundation's work focused on improving education and children's health in Central Texas. But within a few short years, our reach expanded, first nationally and then globally. To date, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation has committed more than \$700 million to assist nonprofit organizations working in major urban communities in the United States, South Africa and India. We focus on opportunities with the greatest potential to directly and measurably transform the lifelong outcomes of impoverished urban children around the globe.

## About the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) was created in 1996 by an amendment to the DC School Reform Act of 1995. The Board's mission is to provide quality public school options for District of Columbia students, families, and communities through a comprehensive application review process; effective oversight; meaningful support; and active engagement of its stakeholders. Its vision is to lead the transformation of public education in DC and serve as a national role model for charter school authorizing and accountability.

As the sole authorizer of charter schools in the District of Columbia, PCSB regularly evaluates Washington's public charter schools for academic results, compliance with applicable local and federal laws and fiscal management, and holds them accountable for results. PCSB can close charter schools that fail to meet the goals established in the charter agreement between PCSB and the school. PCSB is located at 3333 14<sup>th</sup> St, NW, Washington, DC 20010. Learn more at [www.dcpsb.org](http://www.dcpsb.org).

## About FSG

FSG is a mission-driven consulting firm supporting leaders in creating large-scale, lasting social change. Through customized consulting services, innovative thought leadership, and support for learning communities, we help foundations, businesses, nonprofits, and governments around the world accelerate progress by reimagining social change.

FSG's Education & Youth Practice works with an array of stakeholders and across issues in education to address the range of issues affecting children and youth – particularly those that are furthest from opportunity.

Visit us at [www.fsg.org](http://www.fsg.org)

## Appendix

**Appendix A:** Template for Amendments to Charter School Agreements

**Appendix B:** District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Application Guidelines

**Appendix C:** Sample District of Columbia Public Charter School Performance Reports

**Appendix D:** Sample Financial and Audit Review Report

**Appendix E:** Sample Equity Report

**Appendix F:** Qualitative Site Review Protocol for District of Columbia Charter Schools

**Appendix G:** District of Columbia Charter School Compliance Review Report

**Appendix H:** 2014 District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Organization Chart

**AMENDMENT TO CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT BETWEEN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD AND THE **NAME** PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

The **Name Public Charter School**, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation (the “**School Corporation**”) and the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (“**PCSB**”) entered into a contract, dated **[Insert Month ##, Year]**, (the “**Charter Agreement**”) wherein the School Corporation agreed, among other things, to operate a public charter school (the “**School**”) in the District of Columbia in accordance with the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995, as amended (the “**Act**”) and the Charter Agreement.

This Amendment to the Charter School Agreement (the “**Amendment**”) is effective as of **[Insert Month ##, Year]** and is entered into by and between **PCSB** and the **School Corporation**) (individually, each may be referred to as the “**Party**,” and collectively, the “**Parties**”).

In consideration of the mutual covenants, representations, warranties, provisions, and agreements contained herein, the Parties agree as follows.

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT**

- 1.1 The School Corporation and the Board agree to amend the Charter Agreement as follows:
  - A. The **[Name of Section]** on **[Insert page number(s)]** is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:
  - B. **Substance of Amendment**

**SECTION 2. CHARTER AGREEMENT**

- 2.1 **Reservation of Rights.** The Parties reserve their rights under the Charter Agreement. The execution of this Amendment shall not, except as expressly provided in this Amendment, operate as a waiver of any right, power or remedy of any party under the Charter Agreement, or constitute a waiver of any other provision of the Charter Agreement.
- 2.2 **Continuing Effectiveness.** Except as expressly provided in this Amendment, all of the terms and conditions of the Charter Agreement remain in full effect.

**SECTION 3. OTHER PROVISIONS**

- 3.1 **Representations and Warranties.** The Parties represent and warrant that this Amendment has been duly authorized and executed, and this constitutes their legal, valid, and binding obligations.
- 3.2 **Counterparts and Electronic Signature.** This Amendment may be signed by the Parties in separate counterparts, each of which when so executed and delivered shall be deemed an original, but all such counterparts together shall constitute but one and the same instrument; signature pages may be detached from multiple separate counterparts and attached to a single

counterpart so that all signature pages are physically attached to the same document. Electronic signatures by either of the parties shall have the same effect as original signatures.

- 3.3 Severability.** In case any provision in or obligation under this Second Amendment shall be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions or obligations in this Amendment or in the Charter Agreement shall not in any way be affected or impaired thereby.
- 3.4 Assignment.** This Amendment shall not be assignable by either Party; except that if PCSB shall no longer have authority to charter public schools in the District of Columbia, PCSB may assign this Agreement to any entity authorized to charter or monitor public charter schools in the District of Columbia.
- 3.5 No Third Party Beneficiary.** Nothing in this Amendment expressed or implied shall be construed to give any Person other than the Parties any legal or equitable rights under this Agreement. "Person" shall mean and include natural persons, corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability associations, companies, trusts, banks, trust companies, land trusts, business trusts, or other organizations, whether or not legal entities, governments, and agencies, or other administrative or regulatory bodies thereof.
- 3.6 Waiver.** No waiver of any breach of this Amendment or the Charter Agreement shall be held as a waiver of any other subsequent breach.
- 3.7 Construction.** This Amendment shall be construed fairly as to both Parties and not in favor of or against either Party, regardless of which Party drafted the underlying document.
- 3.8 Dispute Resolution.** Neither PCSB nor the School Corporation shall exercise any legal remedy with respect to any dispute arising under this Second Amendment or the Charter Agreement without, first, providing written notice to the other Party hereto describing the nature of the dispute, and, thereafter, having representatives of PCSB and the School Corporation meet to attempt in good faith to resolve the dispute. Nothing contained herein, however, shall restrict PCSB's ability to revoke, not renew, or terminate the Charter Agreement pursuant to the Act.
- 3.9 Notices.** Any notice or other communication required or permitted shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been given when sent by email, provided that a copy is also mailed by certified or registered mail, with postage prepaid and return receipt requested; delivered by hand, with written confirmation of receipt; or received by the addressee, if sent by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service with receipt requested or, alternatively, certified or registered mail with postage prepaid and return receipt requested. In each case, the appropriate addresses, until notice of a change of address is delivered, shall be as follows:

If to PCSB:

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board  
3333 14<sup>th</sup> St., NW; Suite 210  
Washington, D.C. 20010



**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the Parties have caused this Amendment to be duly executed and delivered by their respective authorized officer:

**[INSERT SCHOOL NAME] PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Name: John H. "Skip" McKoy  
Title: PCSB Board Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

**Appendix A:** Template for Amendments to Charter School Agreements

**Appendix B:** District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Application Guidelines

**Appendix C:** Sample District of Columbia Public Charter School Performance Reports

**Appendix D:** Sample Financial and Audit Review Report

**Appendix E:** Sample Equity Report

**Appendix F:** Qualitative Site Review Protocol for District of Columbia Charter Schools

**Appendix G:** District of Columbia Charter School Compliance Review Report

**Appendix H:** 2014 District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Organization Chart



# **2013-2014 APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR NEW CHARTER SCHOOL START UPS**

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**Application to Establish a Public Charter School  
In the District of Columbia**

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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**

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Suite 210

Washington, DC 20010

(202) 328-2660

[www.dcpsb.org](http://www.dcpsb.org)



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

**PCSB Mission**

The Board's mission is to provide quality public school options for D.C. students, families and communities through:

- A comprehensive application review process;
- Effective oversight;
- Meaningful support; and
- Active engagement of its stakeholders.

**PCSB Vision**

The Board's vision is to lead the transformation of public education in D.C. and serve as a national role model for charter school authorization and accountability.

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## District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Members

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### **John H. “Skip” McKoy, Chair**

John H. “Skip” McKoy is director of programmatic initiatives at Fight for Children, where he oversees the organization’s strategic focus on improving health and educational outcomes for D.C. children ages 3 and 4, working closely with local community, business, education and government leaders. His background is in urban planning and community development. Earlier, he held executive positions at the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, D.C. Agenda, Lockheed Martin and in D.C. government. He is the chair of the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council and an adviser to the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute and the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness.

### **Darren Woodruff, Ph.D., Vice Chair**

Darren Woodruff is a principal research analyst at the American Institutes for Research, where he works on issues related to improving schools, supporting at-risk youth and eliminating disproportionality in special education. Before joining AIR, he evaluated schools implementing the Comer School Development Program. He has also served as a teacher and counselor at the elementary, high school and college levels. He received his Ph.D. in educational psychology from Howard University. He has written and presented on culturally responsive instructional practices, co-written a chapter in the Harvard book “Racial Inequity in Special Education” and co-written “Using School Leadership Teams to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners.”

### **Barbara Nophlin, Member**

Barbara Nophlin is an education consultant and has held senior leadership positions in DC public and public charter schools. She was the second Head of School for Paul Public Charter School, the city’s only conversion charter school (formerly Paul JHS, a DCPS school.) She was the director of policy, research and analysis in the former State Education Office. She has also worked as a principal, assistant principal, early childhood coordinator, and instructional support specialist

### **Emily Bloomfield, Member**

Emily Bloomfield works as a consultant and is leading a start-up initiative to address the educational needs of preteens and teens in foster care. She also serves on the board of the D.C. College Success Foundation. Most recently, she was a senior policy adviser at Stand for Children. Her previous education experience includes serving as an elected member and president of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education. She has worked as a product manager for Citysearch, a senior associate in marketing and strategic planning at the Los Angeles Times and a senior economist at LMC International.

### **Sara Mead, Member**

Sara Mead is a principal at Bellwether Education Partners, where she focuses on thought leadership and strategic advising. Her work on federal education policy, charter schools, preschool and gender in education has been featured in numerous media outlets, including The Washington Post, The New York Times and USA Today, and she has appeared on CBS, ABC and National Public Radio. Before joining Bellwether, she directed the New America Foundation’s Early Education Initiative. She has also worked for Education Sector, the Progressive Policy Institute and the U.S. Department of Education.

**Don Soifer, Member**

Don Soifer is a co-founder and executive vice president of the Lexington Institute, an Arlington, Va.-based nonpartisan think tank where he directs domestic policy research programs on education, energy and other topics. His education policy work, including research on higher education finance, special education and the achievement gap for English language learners, has been published in numerous media outlets, including the Washington Post, New York Times, USA Today and New York Daily News. He has testified before Congress on his research and makes radio and television appearances on Fox News, Fox Business and Wisconsin Public Radio. He serves on several advisory and governing boards for government and nonprofit organizations.

**Herb Tillery, Member**

Herb Tillery is co-chair of Raise DC and Executive Director of College Success Foundation - District of Columbia, a nonprofit that provides college scholarships and mentoring to low-income, underserved students. He was raised in Washington, D.C. and graduated from DCPS's Theodore Roosevelt High School. He served in the U.S. Army and retired at the rank of Colonel. Previously, he held senior executive leadership positions at the Department of Defense, DC Public Schools, and George Washington University. He previously served as DC Deputy Mayor for Operations

## Letter from the Board Chair

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June 2013

Dear Prospective Applicant:

Thank you for interest in applying to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board to open a new charter school. These guidelines give a thorough overview of our rigorous application process, which is designed to approve the schools that have the most chance at success. Our board is committed to ensuring that the families in the District of Columbia have access to high-quality school options for our students and families.

We are committed to transforming public education in Washington, D.C., and look forward to reading your application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John H. McKoy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

John H. "Skip" McKoy

Chairman

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board

## General Overview of the Application Review Process

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To ensure a thorough review of applications, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (“PCSB” or “Board”) has established the following application review process:

- A complete review of the written application;
- A capacity interview with up to five founding group members;
- A site visit of existing program and/or school(s); and
- A public hearing.

Based on the information gathered through this process, the Board votes at a public meeting for one of three possible outcomes for each application:

- Denial: No further consideration of the application.
- Approval with Conditions: Approved to open a new charter school only when certain conditions are addressed, such as securing a school facility (then full approval would be granted).
- Full Approval: All standards for approval were met during the application cycle, and negotiations on the terms of the charter agreement can begin immediately.

### Conversion Applications

Applications for the conversion of a public, private, or independent school to a public charter school are due on the same date as applications for new charter schools: **March 3, 2014**. **Also, conversion applicants must include the required endorsement signatures from parents, adult students, and teachers with the application otherwise the Board will consider the application incomplete and it will not be reviewed.**

## Application Review Process Timeline to Open a School in Fall 2015

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New School and Conversion Applications	
August 2, 2013	Release of Application Guidelines
November 14, 2013	Public Information Session
December 2, 2013	Submission of Declaration of Intent
March 3, 2014	Application Submission Deadline Parental conversion endorsement signatures due for students enrolled in Spring 2014
March 25 - 27, 2014	Applicant Interviews
April 14 - 16, 2014	Public Hearing
May 19, 2014	Board Decisions Announced Publicly
June 2014	Feedback Sessions with Charter Applicants
June 2014	Meetings to Discuss Conditions for Full Approval
June 2015	Final Date to Sign Approved Charter Contract for Schools Opening in Fall 2015

## Defined Terms (as used in these guidelines)

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**Board Member Agreement** is a signed document that outlines the specific responsibilities of each member of the school's Board of Trustees, including a conflict of interest policy drafted by the applicant. Each school should use its own agreement template, which will be signed by each Board Member.

**Charter Management Organization** is a non-profit organization that operates or manages multiple charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. It has a track record of success as evidenced by a minimum of three years of high proficiency levels on state accountability assessments or other externally validated student performance outcomes.

**District-wide Assessments**, also known as **State Assessments**, are a variety of assessment tools administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to students enrolled in District of Columbia public schools and public charter schools.

**Education Management Organization** is a nonprofit or for-profit organization that contracts with schools or school districts to provide school management services, including school administration and educational programming. It has a track record of success as evidenced by a minimum of three years of high proficiency levels on state accountability assessments or other externally validated student performance outcomes.

**Eligible Applicant** is a founding group of individuals that is a private, public, or quasi-public entity or an institution of higher education that seeks to establish a public charter school in the District of Columbia.

**English Language Learner** is a student enrolled in school whose native language is other than English and whose difficulties in speaking, reading or understanding English may hinder achievement in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.

**Charter Goals** is a student enrolled in school whose native language is other than English and whose difficulties in speaking, reading or understanding English may hinder achievement in classrooms where the language of instruction is English. **Academic Achievement Expectations** are student academic aims measured by assessments.

**Non-Resident Student** refers to an individual under the age of 18 who is enrolled in a District of Columbia public school or a public charter school and does not have a parent residing in the District of Columbia or an individual who is age 18 or older and is enrolled in a District of Columbia public school or public charter school and does not reside in the District of Columbia.

**Parent** refers to a person who has custody of a child and who is a biological parent or stepparent of the child, has adopted the child or has been appointed as a guardian for the child by a court of competent jurisdiction.

**Performance Indicators** define the level of proficiency expected from students. They answer the questions: "How good is good enough?" "What is the expected level of growth from one year to another?" "What is the expected performance level desired at the end of the school year, grade level or program?"

**Performance Management Framework (PMF)** is the PCSB's accountability tool that measures school academic performance. As of this printing, two frameworks–Elementary/Middle School PMF and High School PMF–are in use and three frameworks–Early Childhood, Adult and Alternative Accountability–are being developed and piloted.

**Petition** means a written application.

**Replicate** means to open one or more charter campuses that are similar to existing charter school(s) that are managed by the same Experienced Operator.

**Student Achievement Expectations** can either be the PCSB's Performance Management Framework or a list of academic achievement expectation for all students in a grade span measured by growth or proficiency on state assessments or the equivalent.

**Student Learning Standards** define what students are expected to know and be able to do. They define what is taught in each subject area and at each instructional level and what is likely to be tested to assess student achievement.

**Students with Disabilities** refers to students with disabilities as provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(a)(1)) or students with disabilities as provided in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 706(8)).

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. What is a charter school?

A charter school is a publicly funded school in the District of Columbia established pursuant to the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 (SRA) and not a part of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). A public charter school exercises exclusive control over its expenditures, administration, personnel and instructional methods—and is, in most cases, exempt from DCPS rules and regulations.

### 2. How is a charter school funded?

Each charter school receives a per pupil allocation based on a student's grade level, special education needs, and other factors. Funding is provided by the District government directly to schools on a quarterly basis, beginning with a July 15th payment – in accordance with the July 1- June 30 fiscal year. More information, including a copy of the current year's funding formula can be found at <http://www.dcpcsb.org/Data-Center/School-Finance-and-Facilities.aspx>.

### 3. Who has authority to grant charters in Washington, D.C.?

The PCSB is the sole chartering authority in Washington, DC. The Board was created pursuant to the SRA, and its members are appointed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, with the advice and consent of the Council of the District of Columbia.

### 4. Who is eligible to establish a public charter school?

Any Eligible Applicant.

### 5. Can an existing school propose to become a charter school?

Yes. An Eligible Applicant may submit a Petition proposing (1) conversion of an existing District of Columbia public school into a public charter school; (2) conversion of an existing private or independent school into a public charter school; or (3) establishment of a new public charter school. Conversion schools have additional requirements with which to comply, that may be found at Section 38-1802.01 of the D.C. Municipal Code.

### 6. What are the application requirements?

Eligible Applicants must complete and submit all information outlined in the Contents of Application section of these Guidelines by 5 p.m. on March 3, 2014. This includes four bound copies, along with one unbound copy with **original** signatures, two electronic PDF versions (to be submitted via email to [applications@dcpcsb.org](mailto:applications@dcpcsb.org)). One electronic PDF version should contain all sections of the application, including the budget spreadsheets and appendices in a single PDF file. **The second electronic PDF version will be posted to [www.dcpcsb.org](http://www.dcpcsb.org) upon submission and also made available to the public upon request. It should be similar to the first version except that it should not contain any personal information of founding group members, including but not limited to street address, phone number, email address and Social Security number.**

To complete the application, Eligible Applicants must submit a **\$150.00 processing fee by certified check or money order made payable to the DC Public Charter School Board.**

**7. When is the application deadline?**

The application for New Charter Schools must be received at DC PCSB by **5 p.m. Eastern Time March 3, 2014.**

**8. Can more than one application be submitted during a calendar year?**

No. An Eligible Applicant may not file more than one Petition to establish a public charter school during a calendar year.

## Application Guidelines – Getting Started

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### Invitation to Apply

The Public Charter School Board invites interested individuals and groups to submit an application to establish a public charter school in the District of Columbia. Pursuant to the SRA § 38-1802.04, a public charter school shall provide a program of education, which shall include one or more of the following:

- A. Pre-kindergarten (3- and/or 4-year-olds);
- B. Any grade or grades from kindergarten through grade 12;
- C. Residential education;
- D. Adult, community, continuing and career and technical education programs.

Applications will be received for (1) conversion of an existing District of Columbia public school into a public charter school; (2) conversion of an existing private or independent school into a public charter school; or (3) establishment of a new public charter school.

Any person or entity that expects to submit an application during this application review cycle is strongly encouraged to complete and submit a “Declaration of Intent to Apply Form” included in Appendix A by **December 2, 2013**.

### Nonprofit Status

A public charter school must be organized under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act to be granted full approval; however, conditional approval may be granted in cases where the process has begun but not been completed by the application submission date.

### Limitations on Filing an Application

An Eligible Applicant may not file more than one Petition to establish a public charter school during a calendar year.

### Instructions for Submitting Applications

Eligible Applicants must complete and submit all information outlined in the Contents of Application section of these Guidelines by 5 p.m. on March 3, 2014. This includes four bound copies, along with one unbound copy with **original** signatures, two electronic PDF versions (to be submitted via email to applications@dcpcsb.org) One electronic PDF version should contain all sections of the application, including the budget spreadsheets and appendices in a single PDF file. **The second electronic PDF version will be posted to [www.dcpcsb.org](http://www.dcpcsb.org) upon submission and also made available to the public upon request. It should be similar to the first version except that it should not contain any personal information of founding group members, including but not limited to street address, phone number, email address and Social Security number .**

To complete the application, Eligible Applicants must submit a **\$150 processing fee by certified check or money order made payable to the DC Public Charter School Board.**

PCSB offices are located at:

3333 14th Street, NW, Suite 210  
Washington, D.C. 20010  
Tel 202-328-2660  
[applications@dcpcsb.org](mailto:applications@dcpcsb.org)

## 2014 Application Guidelines – Contents of Application

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The format provided in these guidelines allows Eligible Applicants to fully describe their plans for a proposed public charter school in three areas - an Educational Plan, a Business Plan, and an Operations Plan. Following this format ensures an objective review of proposals to establish public charter schools in the District of Columbia. Therefore, applications submitted by Eligible Applicants must meet the following guidelines:

- Include a Table of Contents that lists page numbers for each section of the application. Number each page of the educational, business, and operations plan. **Follow the same format and order as the Sample Table of Contents provided on page 14.**
- Include labeled tabs to separate each of the sections outlined in the Table of Contents and any appendices.
- For the bound copies, submit the application in a professionally bound format (pronged report cover; three-ring binder - no larger than 2½"; tape, coil, comb, or velo binding). No applications bound by staples, paper or binder clips or submitted in folders or portfolios will be accepted.
- Limit the overall length of the application to 150 pages. Note that the following documents are *required* and *will not* count toward the overall 150 page limit:
  - o Applicant Information Sheet
  - o Assurances Form
  - o Articles of Incorporation
  - o By-laws
  - o Code of Ethics
  - o Conflict of Interest Form
  - o Résumés, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications of Founding Members **[please submit two versions of these materials: one with full information listed in the resume; the second version with all personal information redacted, as outlined on pp. 9 and 11]**
  - o Management Agreement and Related Documents (if applicable)
  - o Letter of Intent for Facility (if applicable)
  - o Conversion Endorsement Certification (if applicable)
  - o Demographic Analysis Form
  - o Charter School Board of Trustees Job Description
  - o Charter School Board Member Agreement
  - o Budget Narrative

- o Pre-Opening/Planning Year Budget
- o Public Charter School Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet
- o Public Charter School Five-Year Estimated Budget Worksheet
- o Monthly Cash Flow Projection
- o Capital Budget
- o Discipline Policy
- o In addition to the requirements outlined in the Educational Plan, if the applicant group proposes to add grade levels after the first five years of operation, the following curricular materials for those grade levels should be included in Section J.
  - Student Learning Standards
  - Assessments
  - Completed Curriculum (for full approval) or Timeline for Curriculum Development (for approval with conditions)
  - Completed Scope and Sequence for Earning a High School Diploma (high schools only)

Parts A, B, and C – the Education Plan, the Business Plan, and the Operations Plan, respectively - of the narrative section of the application should be limited to a discussion of each of the criteria presented in the guidelines. Additional information that may support the information presented in the narrative and help the Board to better assess the proposed public charter school should be included in the appendices. Examples of additional information that may be included in the appendices include curriculum samples; student learning standards; letters of support; program descriptions; architectural drawings/floor plans of potential school sites; parent, student or faculty handbooks; samples of student work; and organizational charts.

## Sample Table of Contents

Applicant Information Sheet

Executive Summary

Proposed Plans

A. Educational Plan

1. Mission and Purpose of Proposed Public Charter School
2. Goals and Student Academic Achievement Expectations
3. Charter School Curriculum
4. Student Performance
5. Support for Learning

B. Business Plan

1. Planning and Establishment
2. Governance and Management
3. Finance
4. Facilities
5. Recruiting and Marketing

C. Operations Plan

1. Student Policies and Procedures
2. Human Resource Information
3. Arrangements for Meeting District and Federal Requirements
4. Implementation of the Charter

Forms and Required Documents

D. Certifications (Assurances Form)

E. Budget

F. Résumés, Board Member Agreements and Statements of Interest and Qualifications

G. Conflict of Interest

H. Demographic Analysis

I. Required Documents<sup>1</sup>

J. Full Curriculum (for full approval), Curriculum Sample (for Conditional Approval), Scope and Sequence for Earning a HS Diploma, if applicable

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<sup>1</sup> Items in Sections I and J do not count toward the 150 page limit.

# Applicant Information Sheet

## New Charter School

### Request for Approval

This application is a request to establish and operate a Public Charter School as provided in the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995, as amended.

Name of Proposed Charter School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Entity Applying for Charter Status in D.C.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Authorized to Negotiate: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Must be member of local founding group and not serving as a consultant or affiliated with an educational service provider.)*

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed Year One Budget: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Start-up Information

Year	Starting Age/Grade	Highest Age/Grade	Total Number of Students/ Enrollment Ceiling
One			
Two			
Capacity			

Proposed Location of School (address or area of city): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Educational Service Provider (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

### Type of Application (Check One)

Conversion of Existing Public School     Conversion of Existing Private School     New School

If conversion, name the school being converted: \_\_\_\_\_

If conversion, do you wish to retain the existing school site?  Yes     No

**LEA Status:** Will the school elect to be treated as a Local Education Agency (LEA) for purposes of Part B of the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?     Yes     No

## Executive Summary

In no more than two pages, provide a descriptive narrative summary of the key features of the application.

### A. Educational Plan

1. **Mission and Purpose of the Proposed Public Charter School** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (1), (2), (3)]

a. **Mission and Philosophy:**

- Write a one-sentence statement of the mission of the proposed public charter school. Include how you will ensure that all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners, will benefit from the proposed mission and philosophy.
- Briefly describe the proposed school's philosophy for educating students. Include how you will ensure that all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners, will benefit from the proposed mission and philosophy.
- Briefly describe the proposed school's philosophy for educating students.
- Provide an overview of the organization's growth plan for educating students in D.C. Include an enrollment matrix by grade from year one to when the school is at full capacity, and detail, by level of services, projected enrollment of students who have limited or no English language proficiency and students with disabilities. (Note: This discussion should connect to the discussion in Section B.2.b)

b. **Educational Needs of the Target Student Population:**

- Describe the educational needs of the population the proposed school is seeking to serve in the District of Columbia, and include a demographic analysis of the proposed student body.
- Based on the Demographic Analysis Form included in Appendix A, describe the impact of the proposed school on the existing community and neighborhood schools and provide a rationale for the chosen location.

c. **Educational Focus**

- What is the educational focus of the proposed school?

2. **Goals and Student Academic Achievement Expectations** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (1), 38.1802.02 (1)(3)(5)]

When evaluating a school's performance, the law requires PCSB to look at whether a school has fulfilled the "goals and student academic achievement expectations as set forth in its charter" [See §§ 38-1802.12 (c)]. Goals are general aims (usually related to a school's mission), which may be categorized as academic, non-academic and organizational, while academic achievement expectations are student academic aims measured by assessments. Goals and academic achievement expectations may be different for different educational programs offered by the school (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, High School, Adult Education).

As explained further below, eligible applicants are encouraged to adopt the Performance Management Framework (PMF) for its goals and student academic achievement expectations. If a school chooses to adopt the PMF, it still may choose to have additional goals outside of the PMF, though not required. A school that either chooses NOT to adopt the PMF as its goals and academic achievement expectations or chooses to adopt additional goals outside of the PMF will need to demonstrate goal attainment each year in its annual report.

a. **Student Academic Achievement Expectations**

PCSB has adopted the Performance Management Framework (PMF) as a means of measuring both student academic achievement and certain other key indicators for all schools serving grades 3-12. The PMF is described in the 2012 Guidelines that can be found here: <https://pcsb-pmf.wikispaces.com/file/view/2011-2012%20PMF%20Guidelines%201-11-13.pdf/397649638/2011-2012%20PMF%20Guidelines%201-11-13.pdf>. Proposed changes to the PMF and descriptions of pilot PMF programs for grades PK-2 and adult education are described here <https://pcsb-pmf.wikispaces.com/>.

As stated above, eligible Applicants are encouraged, though not required, to elect to use the PMF for its goals and students academic achievement expectations. If the applicant does not to use PMF, the applicant is encouraged to create student achievement expectations that meet or exceed the ambition of the Performance Management Framework and that incorporate the state assessment.

1. **For Schools Electing to Use the PMF in Setting Student Academic Achievement Expectations:**

- Schools that adopt the PMF should commit to specific overall PMF scores (measured on a scale of 1 to 100) that will be achieved by specific time frames (for example, “the school will achieve a PMF score of 50 by its 3rd year and a PMF score of 60 by its 5th year”).
- Separate academic achievement expectations should be established for each Performance Management Framework, as appropriate (elementary/middle, high school, adult education, early childhood and/or alternative accountability).
- Applicants may elect to use the PMF for one grade span (e.g., elementary/middle) but not another (e.g., early childhood).
- Please include the following statement in the Charter Application:

“The School Corporation has selected as its measure of academic achievement expectations the indicators listed in the [elementary/middle, high school, adult education, early childhood, and/or alternative accountability] Performance Management Framework(s) developed by PCSB (“PMF”). Accordingly, changes to any PMF implemented by PCSB after a public hearing and notice period for public comments, including changes in state assessments, performance indicators, floors, targets, and formulas, will automatically become part of the measurement of the School’s academic achievement expectations. However, if material changes are made to any PMF that a School Corporation elects not to accept, the School Corporation shall provide PCSB a petition for a charter revision pursuant to §38-1802.04(c)(10).”

2. **For Schools Not Electing to Use the PMF in Setting Student Academic Achievement Expectations:**

- Schools intending to operate multiple grade spans during the life of the charter should identify separate achievement expectations for each grade span to be served by the school (i.e. early childhood, elementary, middle, high school, adult).
- All achievement expectations must be specific and described in a way that the school and PCSB can feasibly measure or determine progress.
- Schools can list student achievement expectations in the following categorical manner:

### **Category 1: Student Performance and Assessments**

Academic achievement expectations in this category should define how student achievement and growth will be measured within each grade span (3-8, 9-12)? For example:

- o Results on the state assessment or equivalent for your student population and specifically students with disabilities (for example measured as percent proficient, percent advanced).
- o Individual student growth on the state assessment or equivalent for students who have taken the assessment more than once (measured as median growth, or movement between categories such as Basic to Proficient).
- o For non-tested grades, specific measures of academic proficiency using externally validated normed assessments.

Be sure to address performance or growth of student subgroups, including students with disabilities and English language learners, in reading and math.

### **Category 2: Gateway Measures**

Academic achievement expectations in this category should define the core standards, skills, or accomplishments that must be achieved to maximize the likelihood of future success. For example:

- o 90 percent of 9th graders will have sufficient credits to graduate on time.
- o 60 percent of 3rd graders will show grade-level reading proficiency as measured by scoring proficient or advanced on the state assessment.
- o [Fill-in x%] will have AP/IB scores and passage rates.

### **Category 3: Leading Indicators of School Success**

Academic achievement expectations in this category should include indicators that apply to your proposed school's program such as:

- o Attendance
- o Re-enrollment
- o Graduation/promotion
- o College acceptance and/or persistence
- o Schools with career and technical programs may set specific goals such as percentage of students earning an industry-recognized certificate and percentage of students employed within three months of graduation.

#### **b. Goals**

- Write goals that connect to your mission.
- For each goal, include the assessment, survey or other mechanism that the school uses to measure each goal.

- For each goal, write a target for years one through five and at full capacity. (Targets should be written as percentages or numbers, such as “96 percent of all students will...”)
- Describe how the data will be collected, stored, analyzed and communicated with PCSB each year.
- How do you plan to track and assess progress toward goals for students with disabilities?

3. **Charter School Curriculum** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (3), (4)]

a. **Student Learning Standards**

- What learning standards will be used for each academic subject, and why did you choose these standards?
- How does the selection of these standards ensure that all students will be nationally and internationally competitive, and meet or exceed expectations of the Common Core State Standards in reading and math and D.C. state standards for science, history, health and other subject areas?
- How will the school ensure that the standards are attainable for English language learners?
- How will the school ensure that the standards are attainable for students with disabilities?

b. **Resources and Instructional Materials**

- What criteria will be used to select resources and instructional materials for each subject area and grade level?
- How will these resources and materials meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners?
- How will these resources and materials lead to the accomplishment of the proposed school’s mission and goals and student academic achievement expectations?
- Describe the timeline for developing a complete curriculum in the planning year; include due dates for curriculum maps, unit plans and lesson plans.

c. **Methods of Instruction**

- What methods of instruction will be used?
- How will you accommodate different learning styles and the needs for all students?
- What specific methods of instruction will you use for English language learners?
- What specific methods of instruction will you use for students with disabilities?
- Why are the chosen methods well suited for the anticipated student population and your goals and student achievement expectations and mission?

d. **Strategies for Providing Intensive Academic Support**

- How will the needs of students who are substantially below grade level in reading and mathematics, but who may not be identified as having a disability, be addressed?
- Describe how you plan to provide a continuum of services for students with disabilities within your school.
- Describe how you will establish a preliminary Child Find system, inclusive of three-tiered academic Response to Intervention strategies, to identify students suspected of having a disability.

e. **Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Accelerated Learners**

- How will the needs of students who are above grade level in reading and mathematics be addressed?

**Note:** See Section J for directions on including curricular materials.

No school will receive **full approval** without submitting a full curriculum for its first year of operation and a completed scope and sequence for all years set forth in the charter. **Approval with conditions** may be granted with a sample curriculum for one grade level and each core subject area.

f. **Graduation/Promotion Requirements**

- PreK-Middle School Programs: Describe the criteria a student must meet to be eligible for promotion.
- High Schools: Describe courses that must be completed at each grade level to receive a high school diploma.
- Alternative and Adult Education: Describe the requirements a student must meet to receive a certificate of completion, and/or career certifications, language acquisition certification, or other programs. Describe the proficiency level(s) that a student must attain to be promoted to the next level or to successfully exit the program.

**Note:** High School Applicants only - Include in Section J, a four-year scope and sequence to ensure that all 9th graders will be on-track to graduate high school in four years with enough credits to enter competitive four-year colleges.

4. **Support for Learning** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (10), (11), (14)]

a. **Planning Year**

- Provide a calendar of activities that the school will undertake from charter approval to opening day. Include such milestones as:
  - o Transitioning to a Board of Trustees
  - o Identifying and hiring key personnel
  - o Creating and finalizing curriculum, including purchasing assessments and materials
  - o Creating discipline, attendance, promotion, and grading policies approved by your school's Board of Trustees and by PCSB, to be included in your charter agreement
  - o Hiring instructional staff
  - o Identifying, purchasing and renovating (if necessary) a facility
  - o Engaging the community and recruiting students
  - o Other
- Discuss what you anticipate will be the challenges of entering a new city and how you expect to address these challenges.

b. **School Organization and Culture**

- What methods will be used to improve student self-motivation, classroom instruction, and learning for all students?
- Describe the plan for building a positive learning environment at the proposed school, including for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Describe plans for acculturating students who enter the school mid-year or after the first year of enrollment or who are English language learners or have disabilities.
- Describe your complaint resolution policy for parents and students.

**c. Safety, Order and Student Discipline**

- Describe how the proposed school will ensure that it has a safe and orderly environment to protect the health and safety of students and faculty.
- Describe the school's philosophy regarding student behavior and discipline for the general student population and for students with disabilities that supports the school model.
- Provide the proposed school's discipline policy for each grade span offered at full capacity or a timeline for completion to be included as part of the charter agreement.

**d. Professional Development for Teachers, Administrators and Other School Staff:**

- Describe the professional development that will be provided to teachers, administrators and staff to implement the educational program and meet the proposed goals.
- Address specific professional development plans you have to provide for teaching students with disabilities and English language learners, including professional development for all staff on special education service delivery model, teacher responsibility to address IEP goals in inclusion classes, and accommodations/modifications.

**e. Structure of the School Day and Year**

- Provide the school's calendar (including the number of days the school will be in session), the daily hours of operation, and the way the school day and year will be organized for instruction, assessment, independent study, professional development, Parent-teacher conferences and extra- or co- curricular activities. Include dates if the school year would need to be extended due to unexpected school closures for inclement weather and emergencies. (Dates are subject to change.)
- High School Applicants only: Include a four-year scope and sequence to ensure that all 9th graders will be on-track to graduate high school in four years with enough credits to enter competitive four-year colleges. Include in the scope and sequence how students who fall off-track can still graduate in four years and be college-ready.

**f. Family Involvement**

- Describe the proposed school's philosophy around family engagement, and how will it promote this philosophy.
- Describe the parent trainings, programs, or initiatives, if any, that will be implemented to support students' families.
- Describe how families will be made aware of the proposed school's performance on the PCSB's Performance Management Framework, the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education's accountability index, and the school's annual report.
- Describe any initiatives currently in place at the existing school(s) to support family engagement in student learning.
- Address how you will include families in your activities and communications who do not communicate in English.
- Describe the way the school plans to inform families about their rights as enumerated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act?
- Describe how you will notify parents in case of school closure, early releases, and late starts due to inclement weather or emergencies.

**g. Community Participation**

- Describe how the D.C. community will be engaged in the planning, development and implementation of the proposed school.
- Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses or other educational institutions.
- Specify the nature, purposes, terms and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities.

**h. Extracurricular Activities**

- Describe the types of sports, recreational, clubs, and other extracurricular activities offerings that are planned. Include plans, if any, for participation in intramural sports with other charter and district schools. Discuss how you will make these programs accessible to all students including those living below the poverty line.
- Discuss how you will make these programs accessible to all students, including those that may be economically disadvantaged.

**i. Technology Plan: *Virtual and Blended-learning School Applicants Only***

- Describe all technological equipment and services that will be required to implement the curriculum, including hardware, software, connectivity, and media storage.
- Specify any equipment that students and families will be responsible for obtaining, and any equipment that the virtual or blended-learning charter school will provide.
- Indicate how the virtual or blended-learning charter school will ensure access to technology for all students. Describe the scope of technological support that will be provided, including where support staff will be located, and the hours (including weekends and holidays) and manner in which support will be accessible to students and families.
- Detail any technological support for which students and families will be responsible.
- Explain the procedures to deliver instruction when equipment, software or connectivity at any location is lost or impaired.
- Describe the virtual charter school's Acceptable Use policy.
- Specify data protection and recovery procedures in the event of a catastrophic system failure.

**B. Business Plan**

**1. Planning and Establishment [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (8), (13), (14), (16)]**

**a. Profile of Founding Group**

- Identify the key members of the founding group and provide a brief bio of each member, highlighting what experience they will bring to the school.
- If founding members have direct experience founding, governing, operating or teaching at an existing school or a school that has closed, please describe the founder's involvement with the school and, if applicable, the circumstances that led to the closure.

**b. Planning Process**

- Explain how and why the founding group decided to form a school in Washington, DC.
- Describe plans for further recruitment of board of trustees and school leadership.

c. **Corporate Structure and Nonprofit Status of the School**

- Submit copies of by-laws and articles of incorporation if the school entity has been incorporated as a public charter school. The articles of incorporation must comply with 38-1802.04(c)(16) of the SRA. By-laws must include the clause to address mandatory dissolution in SRA §§ 38-1802.13a.(c)(1). If the school entity has not yet been incorporated, please describe the process and timeline under which this will occur.

**Note:** No school will receive **full** approval until copies of by-laws and incorporation documents are provided that demonstrates the school's nonprofit status under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act. A school may receive approval with conditions if it has not received its 501(c)(3) status but can produce evidence of applying.

2. **Governance and Management** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (7), (9); 38-1802.05]

a. **Board of Trustees**

- Describe how the founding group will create an independent and autonomous local Board of Trustees as required by the SRA. The Board of Trustees must include two parents, majority DC residents, and an odd number of people, not to exceed 15.
- Explain the procedure by which board members have been and will be selected.
- Describe how the board will be organized to manage and provide strategic direction for the proposed school.
- Describe the relationship the board will have with the management organization/network, if applicable.
- Outline the succession planning for the board members and leadership.
- Describe the relationship of the Board of Trustees to the school's administrators, staff, parents, and students.

**Note:** Provide Board of Trustees' job description and performance expectations in Section I of the application.

**Note:** The PCSB reserves the right to conduct background checks (AAA Credit Release) on the Board of Trustees for those applications that are granted full approval or approval with conditions.

b. **Rules and Policies**

- Discuss the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees.
- Describe the Board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest.
- Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved: discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.

**Note:** Submit a Code of Ethics Statement in Section I of the application.

c. **Administrative Structure**

- Provide an organization chart that illustrates the administrative and reporting structure of the school and the Board of Trustees. Provide commentary as needed.

d. **Performance History of Charter Management Organization or Education Management Organization, if applicable:**

For Eligible Applicants contracting with a Charter Management Organization (“CMO”) or Education Management Organization (“EMO”), provide the following information to demonstrate that the CMO or EMO has the capacity to successfully provide services to a public charter school in the District of Columbia:

- A list of other schools managed by the CMO or EMO, with address and contact information and demographic profiles of the student body.
- State accountability data for each school in a comparable market for at least the last three years:
- Performance data for all student subgroups served by grade level;
- Data which shows any within school and within comparable schools achievement gaps and how the school has made progress in closing them;
- Non-academic indicators that describe the school’s performance (i.e., student attendance, retention, graduation data, suspensions/expulsions, waiting lists, etc.);
- Descriptive information (i.e., grades served, number of students, years of operation, demographics, student and staff attrition rates, etc.);
- Any additional evidence that the existing design has been effective in raising student achievement (Section I).
- Three years of audited financial statements and management letters and most recent internal financial statements for the organization as a whole and any related business entities.
- Disclose any sanctions placed on the CMO or EMO managed schools short of closure, such as shortened or conditional renewals, withdrawals/non-openings of schools, intervention caused by performance deficiencies or compliance violations.
- Disclose any management contracts broken with any schools and any current or past litigation that has involved the CMO or EMO or any school it operates.
- Disclose any negative publicity that the PCSB would discover through researching the CMO or EMO and explain the circumstances of such publicity.
- Include a draft contract between the CMO or EMO and the school’s Board of Trustees with a clear description of the services to be provided, including the roles and responsibilities of the CMO or EMO in relation to the applicant, the school’s management, and the school’s governing body; a term sheet indicating the fees proposed to be paid by the proposed school, the length of the proposed contract, the terms of the contract’s renewal, and provisions for termination; academic, financial, and operational performance expectations for the CMO or EMO and how the governing Board will monitor and evaluate that performance.

**Note:** In Section I, include an organizational chart showing the relationship among all business entities being operated by or affiliated with the CMO or EMO.

3. **Finance** [See SRA § 38-1802.02 (6)]

a. **Anticipated Sources of Funds**

- Indicate the amount of funding you expect to receive from the per pupil allocation. Include add-ons for grade levels, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Indicate the amount and sources of additional funds, property, or other resources expected to be available for the costs of planning, startup, and operation of the proposed public charter school. Where grants or loans are included, please indicate

- which of these are in hand and which are anticipated. For anticipated grants or loans, please provide evidence of firm commitments where they exist.
- Describe what contingencies are in place in the event that funds for per pupil allocations are not available as early as expected, or are lower than expected.
  - Explain the specific financial goals and objectives for the projected five-year budget (e.g., capital improvements, equipment, increased instructional and staffing costs).

**b. Planned Fundraising Efforts**

- Describe any planned fundraising efforts to supplement the per pupil allocation for operating expenses.
- Discuss plans for raising funds to cover planning and development expenses expected to occur prior to opening the school.

**c. Financial Management and Accounting**

- Describe the financial management and internal accounting procedures of the school, including the fiscal controls that will be put in place to ensure accountability.
- Describe the school's cash flow management plan and how it will ensure availability of funds throughout the year. If the charter school is being established as an outgrowth of an existing organization, describe how the charter school's resources will be segregated from those of the affiliate organization.

**Note:** The charter school must agree to maintain its financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (as defined by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants).

**d. Civil Liability and Insurance**

- Indicate the types of insurance and the levels of coverage sought.

**e. Provision for Audit**

- Describe the provisions that will be made for conducting annual audits of the financial operations of the school.

**4. Facilities** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (6); 38-1802.09]

**a. Identification of a Site**

- Have you identified a site for your school? If so, provide the address and the ward in which it is located and provide a general description of how the facility meets your programmatic needs, including occupancy limits.
- Describe any renovations that may be required.
- Is the site handicap accessible?
- If the site has been purchased, attach a copy of the deed of trust.
- If a lease has been signed for this site, attach a copy and list its key terms. If a lease has not been signed, when will this happen? If there is a draft lease, please attach it.
- If a site has not been identified, list the addresses of sites under consideration and provide a timetable for acquiring the site by lease or purchase.
- If proposing to convert an existing public school, include in the discussion what renovations are planned and whether the city will be expected to provide any capital improvements to the site.

**Note:** No applicant will receive final approval of its charter until it has demonstrated that it has acquired title to or otherwise secured the use of a facility. If converting an existing public school, include a Letter of Intent in Section I indicating the terms and conditions of the proposed lease.

**b. Financing Plans for Facilities:**

- Describe financing plans for acquisition (purchase, lease, etc.) and renovation of a facility.

**c. Building Maintenance:**

- Describe plans for building maintenance, including how applicable codes and standards are met to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

**5. Recruiting and Marketing [See SRA § 38-1802.06]**

**a. Recruitment of Students:**

- What outreach efforts will be made to recruit families and students? Discuss how the school and the education program will be publicized throughout the community.
- Provide a timeline for student recruitment?
- If planning to locate the school in an area that is densely populated with schools, describe a recruitment strategy that will ensure adequate enrollment.
- Provide a contingency plan to ensure viability of the school should enrollment be significantly less than expected.
- If the school is targeted for a specific population, describe how recruitment efforts will ensure a fair and equitable open enrollment process.

**C. Operations Plan**

**1. Student Policies and Procedures [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02(10); 38-1802.06]**

**a. Timetable for Registering and Enrolling:**

- Will the school join the **D.C. common application date** and efforts to develop a common lottery? If not, what is your anticipated application release date, due date and enrollment date?
- Describe the process for enrolling students if more students apply than available spaces in the school and the procedures for allowable preferences.

**b. Policies and Procedures for Open Enrollment, including Waitlist of and Withdrawal of Students:**

- Describe your policies and procedures that will guide the enrollment and withdrawal of students, including verification of District residency and establishing a waitlist or wait pool.
- Explain your policy about accepting students mid-year if space becomes available.
- At what grade levels will you be accepting new students? If you are limiting enrollment to certain grades, explain your reason for this and how you will accommodate annual attrition?

**c. Students with Disabilities:**

- Describe how the proposed school will identify students with disabilities.
- Describe how your school will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to

- students with disabilities according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Specifically,
- o Describe the school's plan for providing a continuum of services for students requiring levels 1 to 4.
  - o Describe how you will serve students with 504 plans
- Identify the data you will use to determine the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities along the continuum of services.
- d. **English Language Learners:**
- Describe how English language learners will be identified.
  - Describe how the proposed school will ensure effective communication with families who are not English speakers.
2. **Human Resource Information** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (12), (18); 38-1802.07]
- a. **Key Leadership Roles:**
- Provide the names and qualifications of the persons who will hold critical positions in the public charter school - chief administrative officer (e.g., executive director, principal or head of school); curriculum leader (e.g., curriculum coordinator or director, lead teacher, principal); business officer; and legal counsel, and the percentage of the person's time that will be assigned to these duties.
  - If permanent selections for these roles have not yet been made, indicate the names and supply the résumés of the individuals who are providing leadership for these areas of responsibility during the planning period. Describe plans to recruit individuals to fill these key leadership roles permanently.
- b. **Qualifications of School Staff:**
- Describe the criteria that will be used in hiring teachers, administrators, and other school staff, and how these criteria will meet or exceed the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.
  - Describe the recruitment strategies that will be employed to achieve the desired quality of staff.
- c. **Staffing Plan:**
- Provide information about the anticipated number of staff members, their positions, specifying those who will serve students with disabilities and English language learners, and the pupil-teacher ratio.
  - Explain how staff will be organized to accomplish the school's mission and goals.
  - Describe plans for teacher retention and professional development.
- d. **Employment Policies**
- Describe policies regarding salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, dispute resolution, evaluation of staff, benefit plans (including pensions), and other matters related to staffing.
  - Describe how salaries and benefit plans will be competitive with the surrounding market to attract the quality of staff desired.
  - Describe policies on equal employment opportunities and maintenance of a drug-free workplace. If these policies are not yet in place, by when will the policies be developed?

- Describe how the existing or proposed policies will assure that the retirement rights and benefits of current employees of the District of Columbia Public Schools will be protected if they accept employment at the proposed public charter school.

**3. Implementation of the Charter** [See SRA §§ 38-1802.02 (6), (15); 38-1802.04(c)]

**a. Maintenance and Reporting of Academic and Non-Academic Performance Data:**

- Describe how the proposed school’s technology structure or plan will be used to enhance the educational environment and how it will aid in general communication with students, parents, and the PCSB.
- Discuss how the proposed technology infrastructure will support the maintenance and transmittal of academic and non-academic performance data.
- Identify the person(s) and/or title(s) of those who will be responsible for collecting, maintaining and reporting data to stakeholders.

**b. Major Contracts Planned**

- Describe all major contracts planned, with a value equal to or exceeding \$25,000, for equipment, educational and other services, leases, improvements, purchases of real property, or insurance. Provide the name(s) of prospective contractors, if known.

**Note:** No applicant will be approved without a timeline that demonstrates adequate plans for procuring needed services, such as identification and renovation of a facility, food services, lease, textbooks, etc. See SRA §38-1802.02(6)(C) and § 38-1802.04(c)(1).

**c. Services Sought from the District of Columbia Public Schools:**

- List and describe the nature and extent of any services to be sought from the DC Public Schools. These might include such things as special education services, transportation, or food services.

**D. Certifications**

**1. Required to be submitted with the initial application:**

- a. An Assurances Form, located in Appendix B, is required to be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant and submitted with the initial application.

**E. Budget**

**1. Budget Narrative**

- a. Provide a budget narrative that includes a description of the assumptions on which revenues are based, as well as the basis for the calculation of line item expenses.
- b. Include a list of all components that make up each line item in the budget. For example, the narrative description corresponding to Line Item 23 “Salary of Teachers” should provide a detailed itemization of the number of teachers and average salary budgeted (i.e., 20 teachers @ \$50,000 = \$1million).

**2. Pre-Opening Expenses**

A public charter school is likely to incur considerable costs before it receives its first payment from the per pupil allocation, usually in October. Provide a budget projection that includes revenues and expenses related to anticipated early planning and implementation costs that are expected to be incurred between the time a charter is awarded and July 1 of the start-up

year, and which are not likely to be covered by the school's first-year operating budget. Also, provide a cash flow projection for this period.

### 3. **Two-Year Operating Budget**

Using the form available, prepare and submit a Two-Year Operating Budget (using a fiscal year of July 1 to June 30) that includes sources of revenue, both public and private, and planned expenditures.

If the Two-Year and Five-Year Operating Budget Projections include revenues from non-formula grants, donations, and/or activity fees (such as before- and after-school care) that amount to 10 percent or more of total revenues, please submit two- and five-year budget projections that show how the school would continue to operate and meet its objectives using only the funds provided by the per pupil allocation and formula grants.

In addition to the other expenditures associated with operating the public charter school, the applicant must include in its operating budget an Administrative Fee of one-half of one percent of the annual budget of the school, payable to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board to cover the costs associated with the performance of its administrative responsibilities.

### 4. **Estimated Five-Year Budget Projections**

Using the form available, prepare and submit five-year estimates of the public charter school budget. These projections are needed to ensure that a school can cover its estimated fixed and variable costs with its expected per pupil funding.

### 5. **Capital Budget**

In addition to including capital costs in the Two-Year Operating Budget Projection, please provide a capital budget.

### 6. **Cash Flow Projection for Year One**

Using the form available, provide a monthly cash flow projection for the period from July 1 through June 30 of Budget Year One.

## F. **Résumés, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications**

Submit two résumés, Board Member Agreements including a signed Conflict of Interest Form, and a signed personal statement, *in that order*, from each founding member that describes his/her interest in the proposed charter school, his/her role in the development of the application, his/her role should a charter be granted, and the expertise and resources that he/she will bring in establishing the proposed charter school. **One set of résumés should have complete information. The second set of résumés should have all personal information (i.e. street address, city and state, phone number and email) redacted.**

## G. **Conflict of Interest**

Include a Conflict of Interest Form, located in Appendix B, signed by all founding and Board of Trustee members (note: Personal Background Check Consent Forms, also in Appendix B, must be submitted at the time of application under separate cover; Personal Background Check Consent Forms are not to be included in the application). To the extent that additional Board members are in place when the school opens, those members are also subject to such a policy and must sign the Conflict of Interest Form to be provided to PCSB.

## **H. Demographic Analysis**

Using the Demographic Analysis Form provided in Appendix B, collect and report data describing the status of schools in the intended location that serve the same age/grade levels as included in this proposal. Based on the information provided in the analysis, how will the school compete with other schools in the intended location in the recruitment of students and highly qualified teachers and a facility?

## **I. Required Documents**

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws – *Bylaws must include the clause to address mandatory dissolution in SRA §§ 38-1802.13a.(c)(1)*
- Charter School Individual Board Member Agreement (including signed Conflict of Interest Form)
- Charter School Board of Trustees Job Description
- Code of Ethics
- Conversion Endorsement Certification (if applicable)
- Discipline Policy
- Letter of Intent for Facility (if applicable)
- Management Agreement and Related Documents (if applicable)

## **J. Course Curriculum (Scope and Sequence) includes:**

- Course and unit objectives
- Course standards broken down by unit
- Summative assessments that measure standard attainment by unit and for the course
- Instructional materials/textbooks/on-line resources
- Instructional strategies for each unit
- Unit sequence

**Note:** For full charter approval, each course curriculum for the first year of operation and a plan to complete the remaining courses must be submitted and approved. For Approval with Conditions, a sample course curriculum is sufficient.

## Appendix A

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### Conversion Applications - Special Requirements

SRA §§ 38-1802.01 (a) and (b) provide that an applicant seeking to convert a District of Columbia public school or an existing private or independent school in the District of Columbia into a public charter school shall file such an application after the Petition:

- is signed by two-thirds of the sum of (i) the total number of Parents of minor students attending the school; and (ii) the total number of adult students attending the school; and
- is endorsed by at least two-thirds of full-time teachers employed by the school.

Applicants may choose to collect and aggregate parental signatures in one of two ways:

- signatures from Parents representing two-thirds of the students enrolled in the school; or
- signatures from Parents representing two-thirds of the families represented in the school.

To qualify for conversion to charter school status, schools must submit signatures from Parents, adult students, and teachers as of the Spring 2014 term on **March 3, 2014**.

As signatures are being gathered, applicants must provide Parents, teachers, and adult students with a brief summary describing the proposed public charter school. Applicants must obtain conversion endorsement signatures using an individual sheet for each signee that includes the following statement:

*I, the undersigned, affirm that my signature on this form indicates that I have received information describing the proposal to have [School Name] converted from a [type of school: public, private, or independent] school into a public charter school, and that I support the proposal.*

In addition, the signature forms with parental endorsement must include the student's name, Parent's name, and Parent's address with each signature. The signature forms for teacher endorsement must include the teacher's name and the teacher's address with each signature. The signature forms for adult student endorsement must include the student's name and the student's address with each signature.

In addition to endorsement signatures, conversion applications should also include:

1. rosters including the names and addresses of: all minor students, including the names and addresses of their Parents or legal guardians; all adult students attending the school; and all full-time teachers employed by the school;
2. a brief explanation of the procedures that have been used to obtain and count the signatures of Parents;
3. a description of the community outreach efforts that provides clear evidence that the community has been informed of the proposed conversion;
4. the Conversion Endorsement Certification form, provided below, signed by the applicant's authorized representative;
5. achievement data for the school to be converted for the past three years, including performance on District-wide Assessments;
6. attendance data for the school to be converted for the past three years; and

7. a report of incidents involving outside authorities (police, fire department) over the past three years for the school to be converted

### **Conversion Endorsement Certification Form**

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the signatures for the conversion of [Name of School] to the [Name of Proposed Charter School] satisfy the requirements for conversion endorsement as stated in Subtitle B, § 38-1802.01 (a) and (b) of the District of Columbia Reform Act of 1995, as amended.

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Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

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Title

---

Applicant Organization

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Date Submitted

## **Appendix B: Forms**

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The following pages contain the forms referenced in the Application Guidelines. Applicants are asked to make copies of these forms and use them in the preparation of their applications.

1. Declaration of Intent to Apply Form
2. Demographic Analysis Form
3. Assurances Form
4. Conflict of Interest Form
5. Personal Background Check Consent Form

### **Declaration of Intent to Apply Form**

The undersigned individual/organization is considering the possibility of submitting an application to establish a public charter school in Washington, D.C. We wish to participate in all forums and receive all information provided to potential applicants by the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

Entity Interested in Applying \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Proposed School \_\_\_\_\_

Target Population to be Served \_\_\_\_\_

You are invited to provide a one-paragraph description of the public charter school you are interested in establishing.

**Please complete and mail this form to the following address:**

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board  
3333 14th Street, NW  
Suite 210  
Washington, D.C. 20010

**The form may also be emailed to: [applications@dcpcsb.org](mailto:applications@dcpcsb.org)**

*Filing this Notice of Intent is entirely voluntary and does not obligate a potential applicant in any way.*

## Demographic Analysis Form

Name of Proposed School \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Location \_\_\_\_\_

(Address or general location—NE, SW, NW, SE. *If no general location has been identified, provide information for top two options.*)

Projected Age Range and Number of Students Expected to Enroll by Year:

	PK3	PK4	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Adult	TOTAL
Year 1																	
Year 2																	
Year 3																	
Year 4																	
Year 5																	
Year 6																	
Year 7																	
Year 8																	
Capacity																	

Anticipated Student Demographics

	Ethnicity		Race				Students with Disabilities				English Language Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	
	Hispanic	Not Hispanic	B	W	A	Other	1	2	3	4			
<b>Year 1</b>													
<b>Year 2</b>													
<b>Year 3</b>													
<b>Year 4</b>													
<b>Year 5</b>													

**Similar Schools Profile**

Please provide the following information for schools that serve **the same age/grades** as you propose and are located in the same location where you propose to establish your charter school, target the same students you choose to target and/or offer a similar mission or educational program:

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Enrollment 2013-2014<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>% Low Income</b>	<b>DC-CAS Performance (% Proficient reading and math) on most recent test</b>

**NOTES:**

<sup>2</sup>Type = DCPS, public charter school, private, parochial, independent, other

**Assurances Form**  
**(This form must be submitted with the application.)**

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I acknowledge the obligation of the proposed public charter school to comply with the following:

1. Maintain non-profit status under terms stated in the District of Columbia Non-profit Corporation Act prior to receiving a charter. (School Reform Act (SRA) §38-1802.04(c)(16))
2. Seek, obtain, and maintain accreditation for the public charter school from at least one of the accrediting bodies listed in Part B of the District of Columbia School Reform Act or a body otherwise approved by the D.C. Public Charter School Board. (SRA §38-1802.02(16))
3. Remain nonsectarian and not be affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. (SRA §38-1802.04 (c)(15))
4. Submit an annual audit of financial statements according to Government Auditing Standards, by a Certified Public Accountant listed in the Approved Auditor List for charter schools
5. Offer open enrollment to all students who are residents of the District of Columbia, and use a random selection process when the school receives more applications from students of the District of Columbia than there are spaces available. (SRA §38-1802.06 (a), (b), (c), and (d))
6. Provide PCSB with student enrollment data required for submission to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and the District of Columbia Public Schools Office of Categorical Programs. (SRA §38-1802.04 (c)(12))
7. Collect, record, and report attendance, discipline, and enrollment data in compliance with the policies and procedures of PCSB, using the reporting software required by PCSB.
8. Collect and report academic and non-academic performance using technology prescribed by PCSB
9. Not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments for attendance at the public charter school or for participation in its programs, except to Non-Resident Students or for field trips or similar activities. (SRA §38-1802.04 (c)(2))
10. Establish an informal complaint resolution process no later than two months prior to the first date on which instruction commences. (SRA §38-1802.04 (c)(13))
11. Provide training to relevant school personnel and Board of Trustee members in financial management, governance and management, and other areas as deemed necessary by PCSB.
12. Provide PCSB access to and the right to examine all records or documents related to the award, as well as any documents and records, including audit findings, needed to determine the performance of the school under the terms of its charter. (SRA §38-1802.11(a)(2))13.
13. Comply with the following federal and local laws:
  - a. Health and Safety: See SRA §38-1802.02(11) and §38-1802.04(c)(4); Healthy Schools Act of 2010; federal and local laws regarding background checks for all employees and volunteers working with children and referring students to the Child and Family Services Agency for instances of education neglect and suspected abuse
  - b. Building Safety: D.C Building and Fire Codes (D.C. Code § 5-501 et seq.)
  - c. Maintenance and Dissemination of Student Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act,
  - d. Certain Requirements of Educational Institutions: Compulsory School Attendance (D.C.

Code § 38-201 et seq.); Immunization of School Students (D.C. Code § 38-501 et seq.); Tuition of Nonresidents (D.C. Code § 31-301 et seq.); Non-Profit Corporations (D.C. Code § 29-401 et seq.)

- e. Subchapter B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1411, et seq.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794); any and all federal and local laws around providing a free and appropriate public education to all students with disabilities.
- f. English Language Learners: all federal and local laws and applicable regulations regarding identifying and serving students who are English language learners
- g. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act .
- h. Civil Rights Statutes and Regulations of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia: The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.); title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.); title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.); and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)
- i. Background Checks of Employees and Volunteers: Perform an initial background check with respect to each employee and each person who regularly volunteers at the School more than ten (10) hours a week prior to the commencement of such employment or volunteer assignment; consider the results of such background checks in its decision to employ or utilize such persons either directly or through a School Management Contract. From time to time as established by the School Corporation, conduct random background checks on each employee and each person who regularly volunteers at the School more than ten (10) hours a week, but at a minimum once every two (2) years. (D.C. Code §4-1501 et seq.; District of Columbia Municipal Regulations 6B-412-427).
- j. Other: All other laws deemed applicable by PCSB (SRA §38-1802.11(a)(1)(B)).

Signature of Authorized Certifying Official	Title
Applicant Organization	Date Submitted

### Conflict of Interest Form

*(This form must be included in the application  
and completed by all founding and Board of Trustee member.)*

Instructions: Check “yes or no” to each question in the table below. If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, please provide an explanation on a separate sheet of paper, labeling explanations with the number of the corresponding question.

	Questions	Yes	No
1	Do or will you or your spouse have any contractual agreements with the proposed charter school?		
2	Do you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family have any ownership interest in any educational service provider (ESP) or any other company contracting with the proposed charter school?		
3	Did or will you or your spouse lease or sell property to the proposed charter school?		
4	Did or will you or your spouse sell any supplies, materials, equipment or other personal property to the proposed charter school?		
5	Have you or your spouse guaranteed any loans for the proposed charter school or loaned it any money?		
6	Are or will you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family be employed by the proposed charter school, its ESP or other contractors?		
7	Did you or your spouse provide any start-up funds to the proposed charter school?		
8	Did or do you or your spouse, or other member of your immediate family, have ownership interest, directly or indirectly, in any corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity that would answer “yes” to any of the questions 1-7?		
9	Does any other board, group or corporation believe it has a right to control or have input on votes you will cast as a founding member or member of the Board of Trustees?		
10	Do you currently serve as a member of the board of any public charter school?		
11	Do you currently serve as a public official?		
12	Have you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family applied to establish or participated in the establishment of a charter school?		
13	To the best of your knowledge, are there situations not described above that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest between you and the proposed charter school, or which would make it difficult for your to discharge your duties or exercise your judgment independently on behalf of the proposed charter school?		

Signature	Title
Applicant Organization	Date Submitted

**Personal Background Check Consent Form**  
*(This form must be submitted under separate cover with the application  
and completed by all founding and Board of Trustee members.)*

The undersigned hereby authorizes the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) and its agent, Manuel, Daniels, Burke International, LLC, to procure information with respect to the undersigned's criminal, litigation, credit, employment and education histories. Accordingly, the undersigned hereby authorizes all persons, schools, companies, corporations, credit bureaus, and law enforcement agencies to release such information without restriction or qualification to the PCSB and its agent, Manuel, Daniels, Burke International, LLC, and their respective officers, agents, employees, and servants. I voluntarily waive all recourse and release them from liability for complying with this authorization. I authorize that a photocopy of facsimile copy of this release shall be considered as valid as the original.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other name(s) used: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If the above address is less than two years old, previous address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Has the undersigned ever (1) been charged with any criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor), (2) had a civil judgment rendered against the undersigned for or been convicted of a commission of fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion or receiving stolen property or (3) been debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for the award of any government contracts? If so, please explain on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

For individuals only:

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number and state: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned hereby certifies that the information contained herein is true to the best of knowledge of the undersigned.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

For organizations, name and title of authorized signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Opening (Planning Year) Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
REVENUES	501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
1 Per Pupil Charter Payments			0	
2 Per Pupil Facilities Allowance			0	
3 Federal Entitlements			0	
4 Other Government Funding/Grants			0	
5 Total Public Funding			0	
6 Private Grants and Donations			0	
7 Activity Fees			0	
8 Loans			0	
9 Other Income (please describe in footnote)			0	
10 Total Non-Public Funding			0	
11 EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)			0	
12				
13				
14 TOTAL REVENUES				

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
EXPENSES	501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
15 Personnel Salaries and Benefits				
16 Principal/Executive Salary				
17 Teachers Salaries				
18 Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries				
19 Other Education Professionals Salaries				
20 Business/Operations Salaries				
21 Clerical Salaries				
22 Custodial Salaries				
23 Other Staff Salaries				
24 Employee Benefits				
25 Contracted Staff				
26 Staff Development Costs				
27 Subtotal: Personnel Costs				
28				
29 Direct Student Costs				
30 Textbooks				
31 Student Supplies and Materials				
32 Library and Media Center Materials				
33 Computers and Materials				
34 Other Instructional Equipment				
35 Classroom Furnishings and Supplies				
36 Student Assessment Materials				
37 Contracted Student Services				
38 Miscellaneous Student Costs				
39				
40 Subtotal: Direct Student Costs				
41				
42 Occupancy Expenses				
43 Rent				
44 Mortgage Principal Payments				
45 Mortgage Interest Payments				
46 Building Maintenance and Repairs				
47 Renovation/Leasehold Improvements				
48 Utilities				
49 Janitorial Supplies				
50 Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51 Contracted Building Services				
52				
53 Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses				
54				
55 Office Expenses				

Pre-Opening (Planning Year) Budget Worksheet

56	Office Supplies and Materials				
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment				
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
59	Telephone/Telecommunications				
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services				
61	Printing and Copying				
62	Postage and Shipping				
63	Other				
64					
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses				
66					
67	General Expenses				
68	Insurance				
69	Interest Expense				
70	Transportation				
71	Food Service				
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)				
73	EMO Management Fee				
74	Other General Expense				
75					
76	Subtotal: General Expenses				
77					
78	TOTAL EXPENSES				
79					
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)				
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school				
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO				

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

DESCRIPTION		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
		Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
<b>REVENUES</b>					
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments				
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance				
3	Federal Entitlements				
4	Other Government Funding/Grants				
5	Total Public Funding				
6	Private Grants and Donations				
7	Activity Fees				
8	Loans				
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)				
10	Total Non-Public Funding				
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)				
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES				
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive Salary				
16	Teachers Salaries				
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries				
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries				
19	Business/Operations Salaries				
20	Clerical Salaries				
21	Custodial Salaries				
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits				
24	Contracted Staff				
25	Staff Development Costs				
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs				
28					
29	Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks				
31	Student Supplies and Materials				
32	Library and Media Center Materials				
33	Computers and Materials				
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies				
36	Student Assessment Materials				
37	Contracted Student Services				

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

54				
55	Office Expenses			
56	Office Supplies and Materials			
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment			
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance			
59	Telephone/Telecommunications			
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services			
61	Printing and Copying			
62	Postage and Shipping			
63	Other			
64				
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses			
66				
67	General Expenses			
68	Insurance			
69	Interest Expense			
70	Transportation			
71	Food Service			
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)			
73	EMO Management Fee			
74	Other General Expense			
75				
76	Subtotal: General Expenses			
77				
78	TOTAL EXPENSES			
79				
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)			
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school			
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO			

ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	
Facility Size (square footage)	
Average Teacher Salary	
Student/Teacher Ratio	
Other Major Assumptions	

NOTES:

38	Miscellaneous Student Costs			
39				
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs			
41				
42	Occupancy Expenses			
43	Rent			
44	Mortgage Principal Payments			
45	Mortgage Interest Payments			
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs			
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements			
48	Utilities			
49	Janitorial Supplies			
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance			
51	Contracted Building Services			
52				
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses			

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year TWO

DESCRIPTION		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
		Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
<b>REVENUES</b>					
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments				
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance				
3	Federal Entitlements				
4	Other Government Funding/Grants				
5	Total Public Funding				
6	Private Grants and Donations				
7	Activity Fees				
8	Loans				
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)				
10	Total Non-Public Funding				
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)				
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES				
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive Salary				
16	Teachers Salaries				
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries				
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries				
19	Business/Operations Salaries				
20	Clerical Salaries				
21	Custodial Salaries				
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits				
24	Contracted Staff				
25	Staff Development Costs				
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs				
28					
29	Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks				
31	Student Supplies and Materials				
32	Library and Media Center Materials				
33	Computers and Materials				
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies				
36	Student Assessment Materials				
37	Contracted Student Services				

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year TWO

54					
55	Office Expenses				
56	Office Supplies and Materials				
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment				
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
59	Telephone/Telecommunications				
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services				
61	Printing and Copying				
62	Postage and Shipping				
63	Other				
64					
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses				
66					
67	General Expenses				
68	Insurance				
69	Interest Expense				
70	Transportation				
71	Food Service				
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)				
73	EMO Management Fee				
74	Other General Expense				
75					
76	Subtotal: General Expenses				
77					
78	TOTAL EXPENSES				
79					
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)				
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school				
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO				

ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	
Facility Size (square footage)	
Average Teacher Salary	
Student/Teacher Ratio	
Other Major Assumptions	

NOTES:

38	Miscellaneous Student Costs				
39					
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs				
41					
42	Occupancy Expenses				
43	Rent				
44	Mortgage Principal Payments				
45	Mortgage Interest Payments				
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs				
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements				
48	Utilities				
49	Janitorial Supplies				
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51	Contracted Building Services				
52					
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses				

Five-Year Estimated Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Per Pupil Charter Payments					
Federal Entitlements					
Income from Grants and Donations					
Activity Fees					
Other Income					
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>					
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
Direct Student Costs					
Occupancy Office					
Expenses General					
Expenses					
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>					

## Monthly Cash Flow Projection

DESCRIPTION	Pre-Opening	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 9 March	Month 10 April	Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total
1. Cash on Hand (start of month)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Cash receipts														
Per Pupil Charter Payments														
Federal Entitlements														
Grants and Donations														
Activities Fees														
Other Income														
3. Total Receipts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Total Cash Available	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Expenses														
Personnel Salaries and Benefits														
Principal/Executive Salary														
Teachers Salaries														
Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries														
Other Education Professionals Salaries														
Clerical Salaries														
Custodial Salaries														
Other Staff Salaries														
Employee Benefits														
Staff Development Costs														
Direct Student Costs														
Textbooks														
Student Supplies and Materials														
Library and Media Center Materials														
Computers and Materials														
Other Instructional Equipment														
Classroom Furnishings and Supplies														
Student Assessment Materials														
Contracted Instructional/Student Services														
Miscellaneous Student Costs														
Office Expenses														
Office Supplies and Materials														
Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance														

## Monthly Cash Flow Projection

Telephone/Telecommunications		
Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services		
Printing and Copying		
Postage and Shipping		
Other		
Occupancy Expenses		
Rent		
Mortgage Interest Payments		
Maintenance and Repairs		
Utilities		
Janitorial Supplies		
Equipment Rental and Maintenance		
Contracted Building Services		
General Expenses		
Insurance		
Interest Expense		
Transportation		
Food Service		
Administration Fee		
Other General Expense		
6. Total Expenses	\$0	\$0
7. Fund Balance (end of month)	\$0	\$0

## Application Checklist

---

- \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Information Sheet
- \_\_\_\_\_ Executive Summary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Educational Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Operations Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certifications (Assurances Form)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Narrative
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-Opening/Planning Year Budget
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Two-Year Operating Budget
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Five-Year Estimated Budget Monthly Cash Flow Projection
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Capital Budget
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discipline Policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Résumés, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Full Résumés, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Redacted Résumés, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications that will be posted to [www.dcpcsb.org](http://www.dcpcsb.org) and made available to the public upon request.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conflict of Interest Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demographic Analysis Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Articles of Incorporation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bylaws
- \_\_\_\_\_ Code of Ethics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Management Agreement and Related Documents (if applicable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Financial Audits for the Last Three Years
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most Recent Two Years' Annual Reports
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent for Facility (if applicable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Charter School Board of Trustees Job Description
- \_\_\_\_\_ Charter School Individual Director Performance Expectations

The following curricular materials must be included in Section J in the electronic version only, with a link to a portal, website or PDF that can be accessed by applicant reviewers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Learning Standards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assessments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Full Curriculum (for full approval), Curriculum Sample (for Conditional Approval)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scope and Sequence for Earning a High School Diploma (High Schools only)



## Appendix

**Appendix A:** Template for Amendments to Charter School Agreements

**Appendix B:** District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Application Guidelines

**Appendix C:** Sample District of Columbia Public Charter School Performance Reports

**Appendix D:** Sample Financial and Audit Review Report

**Appendix E:** Sample Equity Report

**Appendix F:** Qualitative Site Review Protocol for District of Columbia Charter Schools

**Appendix G:** District of Columbia Charter School Compliance Review Report

**Appendix H:** 2014 District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Organization Chart



# The Next Step/El Próximo Paso PCS

3047 15th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

202-319-2249

[www.nextsteppcs.org](http://www.nextsteppcs.org)

## School Profile (2013–14)

**Board Chair:**

Eduardo Ferrer

**Executive Director:**

Julie Meyer

**Principal:**

Susan Evans-Espinoza

**Grades Served:**

- PK-3  PK-4  K  1  2  3
- 4  5  6  7  8  9  10
- 11  12  GED  ADULT ED

- Before Care  After Care

**Percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers:** 100%

**Student-to-Teacher Ratio:** 11 to 1

**School Mission/Purpose:**

The mission of The Next Step/El Próximo Paso Public Charter School is to provide students who face extraordinary challenges and who are not supported in traditional high schools the opportunity to continue their education.

**Unique School Characteristics**

- Bilingual GED program (English/Spanish)
- Dual enrollment and college scholarships
- ESOL classes
- Day and night classes
- Full- and part-time options

## Accountability Plans

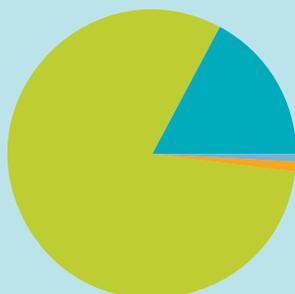
For schools that do not receive a Performance Management Framework (PMF) score,\* PCSB uses the Accountability Plan system to measure academic performance. Accountability Plan results are determined by whether the school met or missed specific performance targets that were established by that school and approved by PCSB.

Schools and programs with accountability plans do not receive a PMF tier.

\* For a list of reasons why a school would not receive a PMF score, see page 11 of the complete book of reports.

## Student Demographics (2012–13)

**Total Enrollment:** 250



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> African American	17.3%	English Language Learners: 60.6%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino	80.9%	Low Income: 94.0%
<input type="checkbox"/> White	0.0%	Special Education: 5.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander	1.1%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Indian	0.0%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	0.7%	

## Transportation



**Metro/Bus Service\***

Columbia Heights Metro Station/52, 53, 54; S1, S2, S4

\*Please check [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com) for updates.

# The Next Step/El Próximo Paso PCS

2013 School Performance Report

(2012–13)

## Grades measured: Adult Ed/GED

Student Progress Targets	Progress Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will show an average increase of at least a grade level equivalent of growth in reading on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).</li> </ul>	Students achieved an average increase of 2.6 grade levels.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will show an average increase of at least a grade level equivalent of growth in mathematics on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).</li> </ul>	Students achieved an average increase of 2.0 grade levels.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners will show an average increase of at least a grade level equivalent of growth in English language proficiency on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).</li> </ul>	Students achieved an average increase of 0.73 grade levels.	No

Student Achievement Targets	Achievement Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% of eligible students will pass the General Education Development exam.</li> </ul>	74.6% of the students passed.	Yes

Leading Indicators Targets	Leading Indicators Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average, enrolled students will attend school 69% of the time.</li> </ul>	Students enrolled attended, on average, 76.0% of the time.	Yes

<b>TOTAL TARGETS MET</b>	<b>4</b> OF <b>5</b>
--------------------------	----------------------



## School Profile (2013–14)

**Board Chair:**

Vito Germinario

**Executive Director:**

Kaye Savage

**Principal:**

Lela Johnson

**Grades Served:**



Will grow to eighth grade

Before Care  After Care

**Percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers:** 100%

**Student-to-Teacher Ratio:** 13 to 1

**First School Year:** 2008–09

**School Mission/Purpose:**

Excel Academy Public Charter School provides preschool through eighth grade girls a solid academic foundation and enrichment opportunities to prepare them to succeed in high school and college and to develop the skills and confidence they need to make healthy, positive lifestyle choices.

## PMF Pilot — Early Childhood

Schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through second grade could elect to participate in a Performance Management Framework (PMF) pilot in 2012–13 as an alternative to being evaluated using Accountability Plans. These schools are not being tiered for the 2012–13 school year.

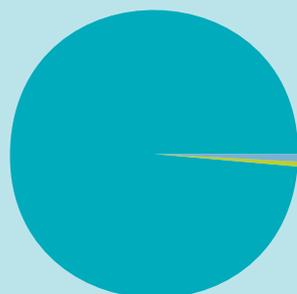
\* For a list of reasons why a school would not receive a PMF score, see page 11 of the complete book of reports.

### Unique School Characteristics

- All-girls, single-sex education
- High-performing early childhood program (K-2)
- Academically rigorous curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards
- Before- and after-school programs available
- Enrichment opportunities include PE, health, music, art, technology, Latin, and Saturday Academy
- Fresh food prepared daily at our on-site kitchen

## Student Demographics (2012–13)

Total Enrollment: 515



African American	98.8%	English Language Learners: 0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	0.6%	Low Income: 100.0%
White	0.0%	Special Education: 7.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	
Native American/Indian	0.0%	
Other	0.6%	

## Transportation



**Metro/Bus Service\***  
Anacostia Metro Station

\*Please check [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com) for updates.

(2012–13)

### Grades measured: PK3–2

Student Progress Targets	Progress Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 students will advance from Emerging to Satisfactory in literacy/language on the mCLASS CIRCLE: letter assessment.</li> </ul>	88.0% of students met this goal.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of pre-kindergarten-3 through first-grade students will advance at least one level in mathematics on the mCLASS CIRCLE: math.</li> </ul>	80.0% of students met this goal.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of kindergarten through second-grade students will advance at least one level in reading on the mCLASS Text Reading Comprehension assessment.</li> </ul>	77.0% of students met this goal.	Yes

Student Achievement Targets	Achievement Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of kindergarten through first-grade students will score at the 40th percentile or higher in Reading/Math Composite score on the Terra Nova assessment.</li> </ul>	86.0% of students met this goal.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of kindergarten through second-grade students will score proficient or higher in reading on the mCLASS Text Reading Comprehension assessment.</li> </ul>	76.0% of students met this goal.	Yes

Leading Indicators Targets	Leading Indicators Results	Met Target?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average, pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 students will attend school 88% of the days.</li> </ul>	The average daily attendance was 90.8%.	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average, kindergarten through second-grade students will attend school 92% of the days.</li> </ul>	The average daily attendance was 93.7%.	Yes

**TOTAL TARGETS MET**

**7** OF **7**



# 2013 School Performance Report

## Two Rivers PCS

WARD 6



1227 4th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

202-546-4477

www.tworiverspcs.org

Tier

2013 Score:  
**69.9%**



2012 Score: 73.8%



2011 Score: 75.0%



### School Profile (2013–14)

**Board Chair:**

Ann Gosier

**First School Year:** 2004–05

**Executive Director:**

Jessica Wodatch

**Principal:**

Maggie Bello (Elementary) and Elaine Hou (Middle)

**Grades Served:**



Before Care  After Care

**Percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers:** 100%

**Student-to-Teacher Ratio:** 12 to 1

**School Mission/Purpose:**

To nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

**Unique School Characteristics**

- Expeditionary Learning model, which emphasizes interactive, hands-on, project-based learning
- Responsive Classroom school
- A supportive community of learners
- Integrates the arts, Spanish, and physical education
- Highly skilled, dedicated staff
- An engaged and active parent community

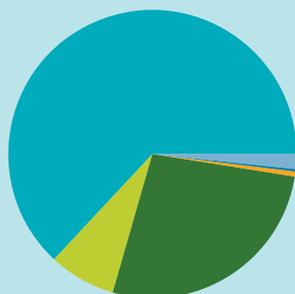
### Tier Explanations

- 1 High Performing** (65.0–100)
- 2 Mid Performing** (35.0–64.9)
- 3 Low Performing** (0.0–34.9)

For schools serving grades 3–12, PCSB has implemented the Performance Management Framework (PMF) to assess school-wide academic performance. Schools are rated by tiers: **Tier 1** schools meet standards of high performance; **Tier 2** schools fall short of high performance standards but meet minimum overall performance standards; and **Tier 3** schools fall significantly short of high performance standards, showing inadequate performance.

### Student Demographics (2012–13)

Total Enrollment: 496



African American	63.1%	English Language Learners: 4.4%
Hispanic/Latino	7.7%	Low Income: 39.3%
White	26.8%	Special Education: 23.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6%	
Native American/Indian	0.2%	
Other	1.6%	

### Transportation



**Metro/Bus Service\***  
NoMa-Gallaudet Metro Station/90, 92, 93

\*Please check [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com) for updates.

# Two Rivers PCS

2013 School Performance Report

(2012–13)

**Grades measured: 3–8**



**Points Earned**  
**Points Possible**

**Percent of Possible Points**

## Student Progress (40 points): Academic improvement over time

Growth on DC-CAS Reading over time



$\frac{13.3}{20.0}$

66.5%

Growth on DC-CAS Mathematics over time



$\frac{13.8}{20.0}$

69.0%

## Student Achievement (25 points): Meeting or exceeding academic standards

Elementary grades DC-CAS Reading

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{2.8}{5.0}$

56.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{0.98}{1.25}$

78.4%

Elementary grades DC-CAS Mathematics

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{3.2}{5.0}$

64.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{1.25}{1.25}$

100.0%

Middle grades DC-CAS Reading

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{2.3}{5.0}$

46.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{0.44}{1.25}$

35.2%

Middle grades DC-CAS Mathematics

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{2.5}{5.0}$

50.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{0.64}{1.25}$

51.2%

## Gateway (15 points): Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success

Proficient and Advanced 3rd grade Reading



$\frac{3.4}{7.5}$

45.6%

Proficient and Advanced 8th grade Mathematics



$\frac{5.7}{7.5}$

76.0%

## Leading Indicators (20 points): Predictors of future student progress and achievement

Attendance



$\frac{10.0}{10.0}$

100.0%

Re-enrollment in this school



$\frac{9.6}{10.0}$

96.0%

**TOTAL SCORE**

**TIER 1**

$\frac{69.9}{100.0}$

**69.9%**

For a more detailed explanation of the indicators, see our user guide.



# 2013 School Performance Report

WARD 8



# National Collegiate Preparatory PCHS

4600 Livingston Road, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

202-832-7737

www.nationalprepdc.org

Tier

2013 Score:  
**51.4%**



2012 Score: 49.0%



2011 Score: 48.6%



## School Profile (2013–14)

### Board Chair:

Allison Mayas

### First School Year: 2009–10

### School Mission/Purpose:

Our mission is (1) to provide a rigorous 9th–12th grade standards-based college preparatory curriculum to maximize our students' academic achievement, (2) to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum which integrates international studies themes across the academic curriculum leading to an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, and (3) to prepare our students to be self-directed, lifelong learners equipped to be engaged citizens of their school, community, country, and world.

### Executive Director:

Jennifer L. Ross, MSW, LCSW

### Principal:

Dianne Brown, Ed.D.

### Grades Served:



Before Care  After Care

Percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers: 100%

Student-to-Teacher Ratio: 12 to 1

### Unique School Characteristics

- College preparatory curriculum; offers International Baccalaureate Diploma as an authorized IBO school
- Candidacy Stage for accreditation from Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools
- International studies program with opportunities to travel abroad
- Entire senior class graduated and was accepted to college
- Small class size

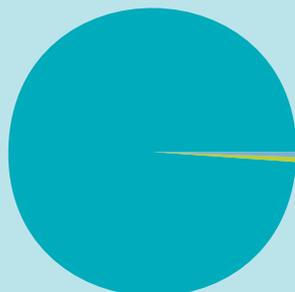
## Tier Explanations

- 1 High Performing** (65.0–100)
- 2 Mid Performing** (35.0–64.9)
- 3 Low Performing** (0.0–34.9)

For schools serving grades 3–12, PCSB has implemented the Performance Management Framework (PMF) to assess school-wide academic performance. Schools are rated by tiers: **Tier 1** schools meet standards of high performance; **Tier 2** schools fall short of high performance standards but meet minimum overall performance standards; and **Tier 3** schools fall significantly short of high performance standards, showing inadequate performance.

## Student Demographics (2012–13)

Total Enrollment: 310



African American	99.0%	English Language Learners: 0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	0.6%	Low Income: 89.7%
White	0.0%	Special Education: 18.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	
Native American/Indian	0.0%	
Other	0.4%	

## Transportation



### Metro/Bus Service\*

Anacostia Metro Station/A4, A5, A6

\*Please check [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com) for updates.

# National Collegiate Preparatory PCHS

2013 School Performance Report

(2012–13)

Grades measured: 9–12

KEY



Points Earned  
Points Possible

Percent of  
Possible  
Points

## Student Progress (15 points): Test score improvement over time

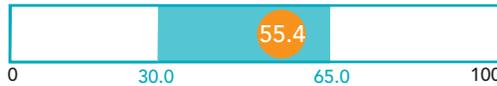
Growth on DC-CAS Reading over time



$\frac{7.1}{7.5}$

94.7%

Growth on DC-CAS Mathematics over time



$\frac{5.4}{7.5}$

72.0%

## Student Achievement (30 points): Meeting or exceeding standards

High grades DC-CAS Reading

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{0.7}{10.0}$

7.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{0.1}{2.5}$

4.0%

High grades DC-CAS Mathematics

Proficient and Advanced



$\frac{0.0}{10.0}$

0.0%

Advanced only



$\frac{0.0}{2.5}$

0.0%

Advanced Placement and International  
Baccalaureate performance (12th)



—

N/A

## Gateway (30 points): Outcomes aligned to college and career readiness

Graduation rate



$\frac{4.5}{7.5}$

60.0%

PSAT performance (11th)



$\frac{3.4}{7.5}$

45.3%

SAT performance (12th)



$\frac{2.1}{7.5}$

28.0%

College acceptance rate



$\frac{7.5}{7.5}$

100.0%

## Leading Indicators (25 points): Predictors of future student progress and achievement

Attendance



$\frac{7.4}{10.0}$

74.0%

Re-enrollment in this school



$\frac{6.9}{10.0}$

69.0%

9th grade credits (on track to graduate)



$\frac{3.7}{5.0}$

74.0%

**TOTAL SCORE**

**TIER 2**

$\frac{48.8}{95.0}$

51.4%

For a more detailed explanation of the indicators, see our user guide.

## Appendix

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**CHARTER AUDIT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CHARM™)**  
**Achievement Preparatory Academy**  
**Annual Financial Report**  
**June 30, 2012**

<b>FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT</b>		<b>FINANCIAL DASHBOARD</b>				<b>Indicator of Concern</b>
<b>PROFILE</b>	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>FY2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012 DC-PCS Median</b>	<b>Indicator of Concern</b>
<i>PCS Established:</i> 2007	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>FY2011</b>				
Enrollment	202	138			349,943	< 0
DC Funding Allocation	2,747,474	1,743,219	137,907	204,150	638,842	< 0
Federal Awards	279,201	193,467	205,653	266,283		
Unrestricted Cash, end of year	483,365	337,677	6.3% (unavailable)	3.6% (unavailable)	3.6%	< -1.5%
<b>GAAP FINANCIALS</b>						
<b>Financial Position</b>	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>FY2011</b>				
Total Assets	766,087	548,588				
Current Assets	626,952	421,398				
Total Liabilities	163,253	83,661				
Current Liabilities	163,253	83,661				
Net Asset Position	602,834	464,927				
<b>Financial Activities</b>						
Support and Revenues	3,292,123	2,280,391	602,834	464,927	1,995,012	< 0
Expenses	3,154,216	2,076,241	0.19	0.22	0.31	< 0.00
Surplus (Deficit)	137,907	204,150				
<b>LIQUIDITY</b>						
Operating Surplus (Deficit)			3.8	5.0	1.9	< 0.5
Earnings before Depreciation (EBAD)			55	59	59	< 30
Aggregated 3-Year Total Margin			225,379	205,235	729,610	< 0
			322,361 (unavailable)		430,174	< 0
<b>DEBT BURDEN</b>						
Debt Ratio			0.21	0.15	0.66	> 0.92
Debt Service Ratio			0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	> 20.0%
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>						
Net Asset Position			602,834	464,927	1,995,012	< 0
Primary Reserve Ratio			0.19	0.22	0.31	< 0.00
<b>PCSB COMPLIANCE MEASURES</b> (Future measures)						
Contract Compliance			N/A	N/A		
Timely Audit Submission			N/A	N/A		
<b>TRENDING MEASURES</b>						
(For Information Only)						
Revenues per Student			16,298	16,525	17,660	
Expenses per Student			15,615	15,045	16,462	
Program Expenses per Student			13,323	12,178	10,999	
G&A Expense Ratio			14%	19%	33%	
Personnel Expense Ratio			57%	53%	49%	
Occupancy Expense Ratio			16.6%	14.4%	(unavailable)	
<b>NOTES TO FINANCIAL REPORT</b>						
<p><b>Financial Dashboard:</b> Definitions for these measures accompany the report. Additional measures relating to enrollment variance and funding allocations are compiled for information only and are available upon request. Contact PCSB at 202-328-2660 or operations@dcpcsb.org.</p> <p><b>PCSB Compliance Measures:</b> These two measures will be considered during the FY2013 iteration of the CHARM™ Annual Financial Report.</p> <p><b>The CHARM™ Score:</b> A composite indicator of financial health, the CHARM™ Score of audit and financial performance is currently being evaluated by the DC charter school community.</p>						

**CHARTER AUDIT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CHARM™)**  
**Achievement Preparatory Academy**  
**Annual Audit Summary**  
**June 30, 2012**

<b>FINANCIAL AUDIT</b>		<b>OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>AUDITOR</b>		<b><u>OPINION DATE</u></b>	
FY2012: McQuade Brennan, LLP		8/21/12	
FY2011: Stanfield & Phillips, LLC		10/10/10	
<b><u>SUMMARY OF FY2012 AUDIT RESULTS</u></b>			
Opinion on the Financial Statements (GAAP)		Unqualified	
Material Weaknesses in Internal Control over Financial Reporting (GAS)		No	
Noncompliance Material to the Financial Statements (GAS)		None	
Opinion on Major Federal Award Programs (A133)		N/A	
Material Weaknesses in Internal Control over Major Federal Programs (A133)		N/A	
Findings and Questioned Costs		None	
Unresolved Prior Year Audit Findings		None	
Going Concern Issue		No	
Debt-Default Issue		No	
<b>PCS COMMENT (limited to 600 characters)</b>			
No feedback received from school. However, PCSB's position on the school's fiscal health is as follows: Based on audited results, PCSB deems the school to be compliant with GAAP standards, to be economically viable, and to have shown no patterns of fiscal mismanagement.			
		<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE</u></b>	
		No recommendations are offered.	

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# AppleTree Early Learning PCS – Columbia Heights

## 2012-13 Equity Report

**What are Equity Reports?** The Deputy Mayor for Education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), DC Public Schools (DCPS), the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) and NewSchools Venture Fund have partnered to create the city's first Equity Reports. Equity Reports are a complement to OSSE's School Report Cards, DCPS' School Scorecards and PCSB's Performance Management Framework.

The first step in ensuring equity is making the data transparent and comparable. This report is meant to make schools, parents and the larger community aware of metrics related to equity that exist across DC schools.

Equity, when used in education, refers to all students receiving the same caliber of education regardless of the neighborhood they live in or their demographic characteristics, such as their race, ethnicity, special education status or other factors.

### SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS (SY 2013-14)

Grades	PK3-PK4
Ward	1
Address	2750 14th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009
Contact	202-667-9490 <a href="http://www.appletreeinstitute.org">www.appletreeinstitute.org</a>
Type	Public Charter School

### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

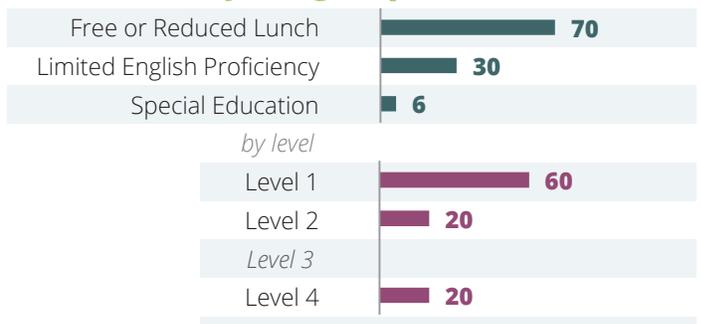
#### Total Enrollment (#)

161 Students

#### Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (%)



#### Enrollment by Subgroup (%)



## ATTENDANCE

### In-Seat Attendance Rate (%)

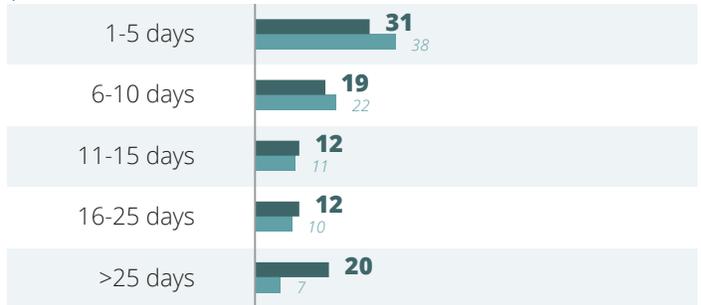
**This School** 87  
City Average \* 91

#### How are attendance and absences calculated?

In-seat attendance measures the average percent of students in the classroom on a given day. Education agencies in the District of Columbia calculate a number of different absence statistics. This in-seat attendance rate enables a close, but not perfect, comparison of daily attendance between DCPS and public charter schools.

### Unexcused Absences (%)

percent of students absent for...



**This School** ■  
City Average \* ■

## DISCIPLINE

**Defining discipline.** The suspension rates show the percent of students receiving an out-of-school suspension. Any student suspended out-of-school for at least one day is counted on the left, and any student receiving at least one long-term suspension (11+ days) is counted on the right. Subgroup results show the percent of students in that subgroup receiving a suspension.

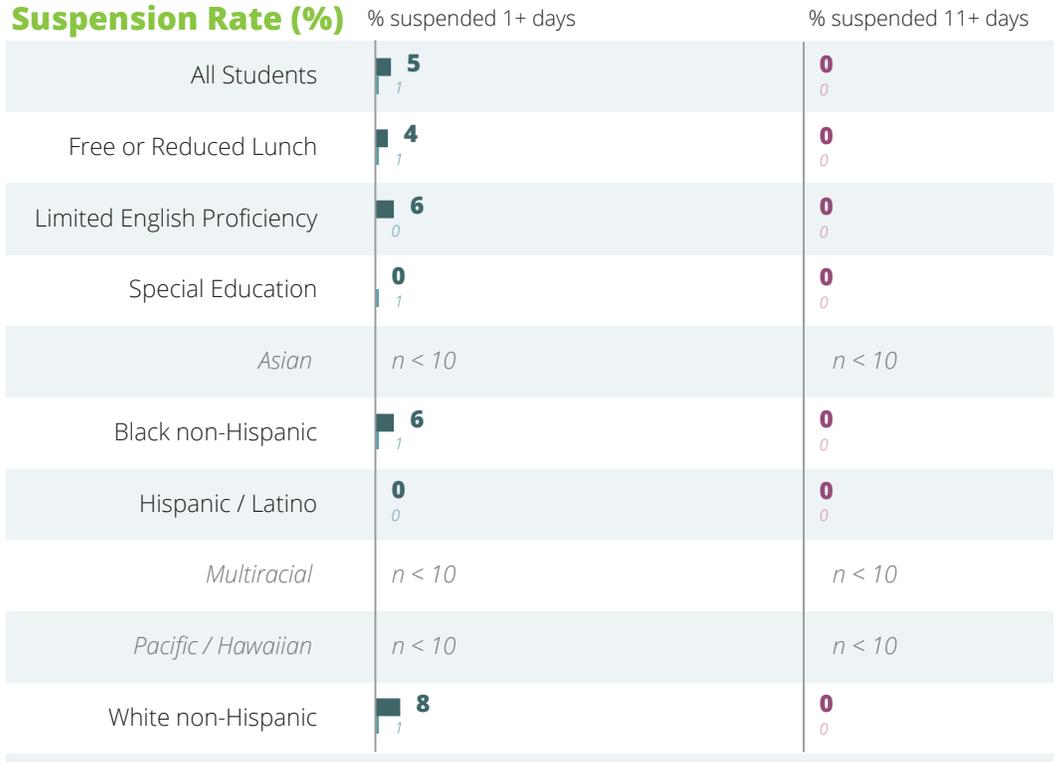
### Total Exclusions (#)

**This School** 0

### Expulsion Rate (%)

**This School** 0.00  
City Average \* 0.01

### Suspension Rate (%)



**This School** ■  
City Average \* ■

**This School** ■  
City Average \* ■

\* The City Averages displayed on this page only include the average of those grades served by this school in school year 2012-13.

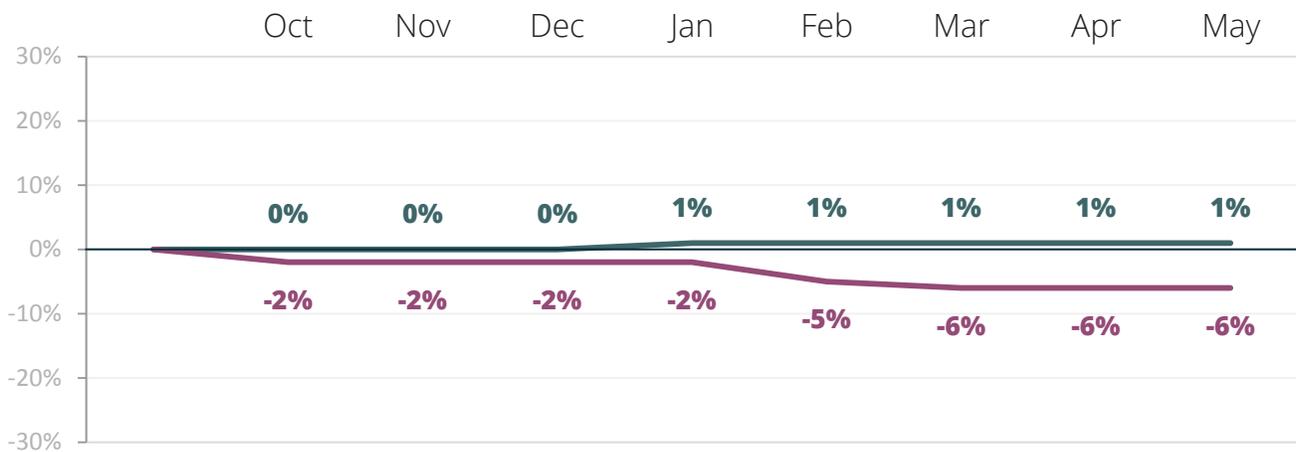
\*\* Public charter schools create their own attendance and discipline policies. To learn more about this school's policies, please visit <http://bit.ly/1djn02G>

**STUDENT MOVEMENT**

**What does student movement look like?** The chart below shows how this school's student population changed throughout the year. The cumulative number of students admitted is shown as a proportion of the school's total enrollment on the blue line. Cumulative student withdrawals are shown on the purple line.

**Mid-Year Entry and Withdrawals (%)**  
*This School*

**Total Enrollment**  
161 Students



**Net Cumulative Change (%)**

-5%

— % of Students Entering  
— % of Students Withdrawing

**Mid-Year Entry and Withdrawals (%)**  
*City Average \**

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<b>Entry</b>	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	7%
<b>Withdrawal</b>	-3%	-3%	-4%	-5%	-6%	-6%	-7%	-7%

\* The City Averages displayed on this page only include the average of those grades served by this school in school year 2012-13.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

# **Qualitative Site Review Protocol for DC Charter Schools**

Updated November 2013

DC Public Charter School Board  
3333 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20010  
Phone: 202-328-2600  
Fax: 202-328-2661

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## Overview and Purpose of the QSR

DC Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) has developed a review instrument that helps inform our determination of whether a public charter school is meeting the goals and student expectations as described in its charter agreement.

The purpose of this instrument is to provide PCSB board members, PCSB staff, public charter school leaders, and other community members with qualitative evidence to complement the quantitative evidence gathered in the Performance Management Framework (“PMF”) and through other quantitative data.

Qualitative Site Reviews (“QSR”) are comprised of two components that are conducted at the campus level and two that are conducted at the school level:

- a. An introductory meeting with school leaders to gather information about the school’s mission, vision, and academic program (school);
- b. Unannounced school visits (campus);
- c. Observation of the school’s board meeting(s) (school);
- d. Observation of a school’s parent event(s) if it is pertinent to the school’s goals (campus).

The QSR team produces a final report containing an overall assessment for each campus within the Local Education Agency (“LEA”), which is sent to the school leader and board chair within six weeks after the visits.

At the heart of the QSR are classroom observations, which are conducted during unannounced school site visits in a pre-determined two-week window. Using the Framework for Teaching<sup>1</sup> rubric, trained PCSB staff and consultants collect objective, qualitative evidence of the teaching and learning occurring at the campus.

In school year 2013- 2014, PCSB will complete QSRs at campuses that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school years.
- Eligible for five-year or ten-year Charter Review during the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school years.
- Designation as a Focus/Priority school by Office of the State Superintendent (“OSSE”)<sup>2</sup>.
- Tier 3 ranking on the PMF during the 2012-13 school year<sup>2</sup>.
- Meeting less than 30% of targets in an Accountability Plan during the 2012-13 school year<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.danielsongroup.org](http://www.danielsongroup.org)

<sup>2</sup> Initially the QSR will only apply to the relevant campus in the case of multi-campus schools. PCSB reserves the right to expand the QSR to the entire LEA based on its initial findings.

The following represents a general overview of the QSR process, as well as some of the required documents to be made available before the visit.

## **Conducting the Qualitative Site Visit**

### **Pre-Visit Meeting**

PCSB assumes that the school leader will act as the coordinator and liaison for the QSR; however, the school has the option of designating another person to assume this role. PCSB works with the designated person to ensure that key documents are provided to PCSB and the QSR team prior to the on-site visits.

PCSB will invite school leader(s) to meet approximately two months prior to the QSR Two-Week Window. The QSR coordinator will meet with school leadership to discuss the following items:

- Introductions/Purpose of the Meeting
- Overview of Qualitative Site Visits
- School's Mission and Goals
- Site Visit Logistics
- Details about unannounced site visit window
- Discussion about Board Meetings and Parent Meetings (if applicable)

For schools undergoing charter renewal or review, a member of the charter agreement team also attends the pre-visit meeting to discuss the alignment of the QSR with the charter renewal/review process.

The following documents are requested to be electronically submitted prior to the pre-visit meeting (please see Required Documentation, page 9, for more details):

- Professional Development Calendar
- Teacher Roster
- Master & Daily Schedule and School Calendar
- Floor Plans (if useful)
- Dates that may conflict with the unannounced two-week visit window, such as field trips, school-wide testing, assemblies, presentations, other visitors, etc.
- Dates for Parent Meetings for the school year
- Dates for Governing Board meetings for the school year

## **Unannounced Two-Week Visit Window**

At the pre-visit meeting, PCSB and the school agree upon a two-week window during which the QSR team may arrive at various times to observe classrooms and the school. It is requested at the pre-visit meeting that the school let PCSB know of dates in the two-week window when students would not be in classes (professional development days, field trips, assessment testing, etc.)

A list of possible observers will be given to the school at the pre-visit meeting. PCSB will inform the school of changes prior to the two-week window. Schools should plan on two to four hour observations. Some classrooms may be observed more than once. PCSB's goal is to observe more than 75% of the teaching staff, with a focus on the core content teachers

Classroom visitors will not be disruptive to classroom activities. Visitors will not interrupt the lesson, and will take cues from the teachers and students as to where to sit, and if appropriate, to talk with students. The classroom visitor will be taking notes during the observation. If the school leader learns of any improprieties done by the observer, s/he should notify Erin Kupferberg, [ekupferberg@dcpcsb.org](mailto:ekupferberg@dcpcsb.org) immediately to file a complaint.

## **Governing Board Meeting**

A PCSB staff member or consultant will attempt to observe the majority of one governing board meeting for the school. The purpose of this visit is to gauge the extent to which the school's governance is providing effective oversight of the charter school.

## **Parent Event**

At PCSB's discretion, based on the pertinence to the school's goals, a PCSB staff member may observe part of a parent event at the school.

## **QSR Report**

After the unannounced two-week window, the QSR team prepares a written report that includes the team's findings and the evidence to support those findings. The report includes evidence and findings on the charter's mission and goals, classroom environments, instructional delivery, and comments on other material topics, such as meeting the needs of all learners, school climate, and governance. The QSR team lead will set a meeting with school leadership to go over the findings. The goal of the report-out is to share evidence-based findings with the school collected throughout the two-week observation period and at the board meeting and parent event, if applicable. The QSR report will be submitted shortly after the two-week window to the school's board chair and school leader and the objective qualitative evidence can be used to identify trends and areas of strengths and weaknesses. The report will be used to inform charter renewals, charter reviews, ESEA Waiver reports, and to provide the Board with complementary evidence to support (or not) a Tier 3 PMF score.

The school can respond to findings in the report that it disagrees with by submitting a written response to PCSB's Deputy Director.

## **Team Organization and Reflection**

In addition to the team lead, the Review Team comprises other PCSB staff and consultants who are assigned to visit the school during the unannounced two-week window. The review team will consist of two or more individuals, depending on the number of core-content teachers in the school.

### **Responsibilities of the Team Lead:**

- Contact the Review Team prior to the unannounced two-week window and disseminate information submitted by the school for the QSR visit.
- Assign a set of teachers to observe to each member of the Review Team
- Indicate times of day specific members should observe at the school (am or pm) to observe a variety of classrooms.
- Collect all observation notes from each member of the team
- Organize and conduct follow-up meeting for team members to discuss observations
- Write the QSR report
- Set up a time with the school to give a report-out of the QSR findings to leadership within two weeks of the unannounced two-week window
- Serve as a liaison between the school leadership and the team by answering questions, receiving calls of concern, or in cases of emergencies, such as if the school closes unexpectedly due to inclement weather and the two-week window needs to be revisited.

### **Responsibilities of the Review Team:**

- Review documents from the school and QSR templates prior to the unannounced two-week Window, specifically the school's mission and goals.
- Plan to spend approximately four hours at the school during the two-week window, please consult the school's schedule when determining your visit schedule.
- During school observations, refrain from judgment and ground comments in evidence, observations, and data.
- Refer to the entire QSR Evidence Collection Form when observing a school and collect observations and evidence in each section, including each of the goals possible for the school.

- Submit all QSR paperwork (Classroom Observation Form and QSR Evidence Collection Form) by the last day of the unannounced two-week window.
- Be available to meet with the Review Team in the two days following the unannounced two-week window by phone or in person.
- Review the QSR report draft, written by the Team Lead, for factual accuracy and validate that the report is aligned with the review team's impressions and opinions of the school.

## **Verbal School Report Out/Debrief**

The Team Lead will contact school leadership to schedule a time (within one week after the Two-Week Window) to verbally share the Review Team's initial findings, structured by classroom observations.

## **QSR Report**

- The Team Lead drafts the QSR report.
- Members of the review team will review the report to ensure that it is factually accurate and aligned with the review team's impressions and opinions of the school. Corrections and suggestions for improvement are incorporated according to consensus.
- PCSB reviews and issues the final report to the Board Chair and school leadership.
- School leadership may prepare a written response to the QSR report to the Deputy Director of PCSB.
- The QSR report and the written response, if applicable, will become a permanent part of the school's record.
- The report will be used to inform charter renewals, charter reviews, ESEA Waiver reports, and to provide the Board with complementary evidence to support (or not) a Tier 3 PMF score.

## Required Documentation

Checklist – <u>Pre-Visit</u> documentation – due to PCSB electronically prior to the pre-visit meeting.	Submitted?
1. <b>Conflicts with Two-Week Window</b> that will affect classroom observations	
2. <b>Directions</b> to the school, including telephone number and any necessary parking instructions	
3. <b>Staff and Teacher Roster</b> that includes all teachers names, room numbers, subject and/or grade taught or administrative role, number of years teaching, and number of years teaching at the school (template in Appendix B)	
4. <b>Professional Development Calendar</b> for current school year	
5. <b>Master class schedule</b> that clearly indicates the subjects taught and times, teachers, and room assignments for all classes	
6. <b>Floor Plan</b> if this document will assist reviewers navigate your school	
7. <b>School Calendar</b> to include all non-school days, half days, assemblies, etc.	
8. <b>Governing Board Meetings</b> to include days, time, and location	
9. <b>Parent Events</b> to include days, times and location (daytime and evening events, if applicable)	

## Responsibilities of the School Leader

Pre-Visit
<p>A. Review the QSR Protocol and speak with the school leadership team to orient them to the purpose of the QSR. It is the expectation of the review team that all classrooms in the school will be available for observations.</p> <p>B. After receiving the QSR Notification letter from PCSB, confirm the dates of the pre-visit meeting and the Two-Week Window within one week.</p> <p>C. Review the required documentation list and gather the information the QSR team needs to submit for the pre-visit meeting. Send the documents to PCSB QSR Coordinator electronically. These documents will be used to prepare the QSR Review Team for the visits.</p>
During the Unannounced Two-Week Window
<p>A. Confirm with school staff that visitors will arrive announced to observe classrooms.</p>

B. Provide front office staff with the list of possible visitors.
<b>After the Unannounced Two-Week Window</b>
A. Review the QSR report. Disseminate and discuss finding with constituent groups.
B. School leader may prepare a written response to be sent to PCSB.

### **PCSB & School Work Flow and Timelines**

<b>Pre-Visit</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
PCSB: sends out scheduling letter to schools electronically. Pre-visit meeting dates and document request is attached	Two to three months prior to Two-Week Window
SCHOOL: confirms date for pre-visit meeting and unannounced two-week window	As soon as possible upon receipt
SCHOOL: prepares pre-visit documents and sends electronically to PCSB	Electronically submitted prior to pre-visit Meeting
PCSB: prepares QSR review teams and disseminates school information to the review team	Two-weeks prior to Two-Week Window
<b>After Two-Week Window</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
PCSB Team Lead (with input from team members): creates a draft QSR report, with evidence-based findings	Within one week after the Two-Week Window
PCSB QSR Review Team: reviews the draft report to ensure that it is factually accurate and aligned with the review team’s impressions and opinions of the school	Within two weeks after the Two-Week Window
PCSB: issues the final QSR report to the Board Chair and school leadership that will also go in the school’s permanent file and be used to evaluate the school’s performance for high-stakes reviews (e.g. ESEA Waiver reviews, 5- and 10-year charter reviews, low PMF performance reviews), and charter renewal.	Within four to six weeks after the Two-Week Window
SCHOOL leadership: may prepare a written response to the QSR report that becomes a permanent part of the school’s record	As soon as possible after the final report is issued

Acknowledgements: This document is based in part on work by the New York State Education Department.

# Appendix A

## Qualitative Site Review Rubric



# PCSB Qualitative Site Reviews Rubric

Updated July 2013

# **Components 2 – 3: Framework for Teaching Classroom Observation Tool**

## **Citations:**

1. Charlotte Danielson, *The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument*, 2011

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<p><b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b></p>	<p>Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among members of the class.</p>
<p><b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b></p>	<p>The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.</p>	<p>The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to “get by.”</p>	<p>The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.</p>	<p>Students assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.</p>
<p><b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b></p>	<p>Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.</p>	<p>Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.</p>	<p>Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.</p>	<p>Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.</p>
<p><b>Managing Student Behavior</b></p>	<p>Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.</p>	<p>Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.</p>	<p>Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.</p>	<p>Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher’s monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers’ response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.</p>

## INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<p><b>Communicating with Students</b></p>	<p>Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.</p>	<p>Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.</p>	<p>Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.</p>	<p>Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.</p>
<p><b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b></p>	<p>Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.</p>	<p>Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.</p>	<p>Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.</p>	<p>Students formulate may of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.</p>
<p><b>Engaging Students in Learning</b></p>	<p>Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.</p>	<p>Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.</p>	<p>Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.</p>	<p>Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.</p>

<b>Instructional Delivery</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<p><b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b></p>	<p>Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.</p>	<p>Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.</p>	<p>Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.</p>	<p>Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.</p>

## **Appendix B**



## Appendix C

## Sample Qualitative Site Review Report



<Date>

<Board Chair's Name>, Board Chair

<Campus Name>

<Campus Address>

<Washington, DC Zip Code>

Dear <Board Chair>:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2013-14 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2013-14 school year
- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2013-14 school year
- School eligible for 10-year Charter Review during 2013-14 school year
- School designated as Focus/Priority by Office of the State Superintendent
- School had a Tier 3 rank on the Performance Management Framework during the 2012-13 school year
- School met less than 30% of targets in Accountability Plan during the 2012-13 school year

### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of <Campus Name> between <Dates>. The purpose of the site review is for PCSB to gauge the extent to which the school's goals and student academic achievement expectations were evident in the everyday operations of the public charter school. To ascertain this, PCSB staff and consultants evaluated your classroom teaching by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* observation rubric. We also visited a board meeting.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused primarily on the following areas: charter mission and goals, classroom environments, and instructional delivery.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at <Campus Name>. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that <LEA Name> is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS**

This table summarizes <LEA Name>'s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission:	
Goals:	

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS<sup>3</sup>**

This rubric summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited", "satisfactory", "proficient", and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, XX% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Classroom Environment domain.

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>		Limited %
		Satisfactory %
		Proficient %
		Exemplary %
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>		Limited %
		Satisfactory %
		Proficient %
		Exemplary %
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>		Limited %
		Satisfactory %
		Proficient %
		Exemplary %
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>		Limited %

<sup>3</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
		Satisfactory	%
		Proficient	%
		Exemplary	%

**INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY**

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited", "satisfactory", "proficient" and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, XX% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Instructional Delivery domain.

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students		Limited	%
		Satisfactory	%
		Proficient	%
		Exemplary	%
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques		Limited	%
		Satisfactory	%
		Proficient	%
		Exemplary	%
Engaging Students in Learning		Limited	%
		Satisfactory	%
		Proficient	%
		Exemplary	%
Using Assessment in Instruction		Limited	%
		Satisfactory	%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
		Proficient	%
		Exemplary	%

## Appendix

**Appendix A:** Template for Amendments to Charter School Agreements

**Appendix B:** District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Application Guidelines

**Appendix C:** Sample District of Columbia Public Charter School Performance Reports

**Appendix D:** Sample Financial and Audit Review Report

**Appendix E:** Sample Equity Report

**Appendix F:** Qualitative Site Review Protocol for District of Columbia Charter Schools

**Appendix G:** District of Columbia Charter School Compliance Review Report

**Appendix H:** 2014 District of Columbia Public Charter School Board Organization Chart



**XYZ Public Charter School  
COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT  
2013-2014**

INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION	RATIONALE	COMPLIANCE STATUS	COMMENTS	
Discipline Policy and Due Process	Student handbook or other written document that outlines the school's discipline policy and procedures	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.06 (g); guidance for PCSB staff when contacted by parents			
	Student handbook or other written document that outlines the school's attendance policy and procedures	Compliance with the Attendance Accountability Amendment Act; fidelity to the school's charter			
Student Health	Option 1: Notice of assigned nurse on staff	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (c)(4) and the Student Access to Treatment Act of 2007			
	Option 2: Copy of staff certificate to administer medications		Student Safety	Current roster of all employees and volunteers (working greater than 10 hours at the school) with indication that background check has been conducted	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (c)(4)
Sexual Violation Protocol Assurance Policy	Compliance with Mandated Reporter laws in DC Code Section 4-1321.02				
School Emergency Response Plan (Assurance letter)	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (c)(4)				



**XYZ Public Charter School**  
**COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT**  
**2013-2014**

INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION	RATIONALE	COMPLIANCE STATUS	COMMENTS
Charter School Employees	Employee handbook or other written document on policies and procedures governing employment at the school, including employee handling of student records	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04, 38-1802.07, FERPA, the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007, and applicable state and federal employment laws		
Insurance	Certification that appropriate levels of insurance have been secured	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (b)(4)		
Occupancy, Lease and License for the Facility	Certificate of occupancy with an occupant load equal or greater than the number of students and staff in the building Lease/Purchase Agreement (submitted for new campuses or new leases only) Basic Business License	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (c)(4)		
High Quality Teachers: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	For Title I schools, teacher roster with HQ status, and how the status was met; action plans indicated for all non-HQT staff	Compliance with ESEA guidance to ensure that all elementary and secondary subject area teachers are highly qualified		



**XYZ Public Charter School  
COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT  
2013-2014**

INDICATOR	DOCUMENTATION	RATIONALE	COMPLIANCE STATUS	COMMENTS
<b>Fiduciary Duty: Board of Trustees</b>	Board roster	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.05		
	Board meeting minutes submitted			
	Board calendar with meeting dates			
	Board Bylaws (submitted for new LEAs or revised bylaws only)			
<b>Articles of Incorporation</b>	Articles of Incorporation (submitted for new LEAs or revisions only)	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04		
<b>Special Education</b>	Continuum of Services Chart	Compliance with DCMR Rule 5-E3012 and IDEA §300.115		
<b>Litigation Status</b>	Litigation Proceedings Calendar (or nonapplicable memo)	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.11 (a)		
<b>School Calendar</b>	School Calendar	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.11 (a)		
<b>High School Courses for Graduation</b>	High School Course Offering	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.11 (a); school's charter		
<b>Annual Report</b>	Annual Report (SY 2012-2013)	Compliance with the School Reform Act Section 38-1802.04 (c) (11)		
<b>Accreditation Status</b>	Letter or license of accreditation or seeking accreditation (schools at	Compliance with School Reform Act Section 38-1802.02 (16)		

## Appendix

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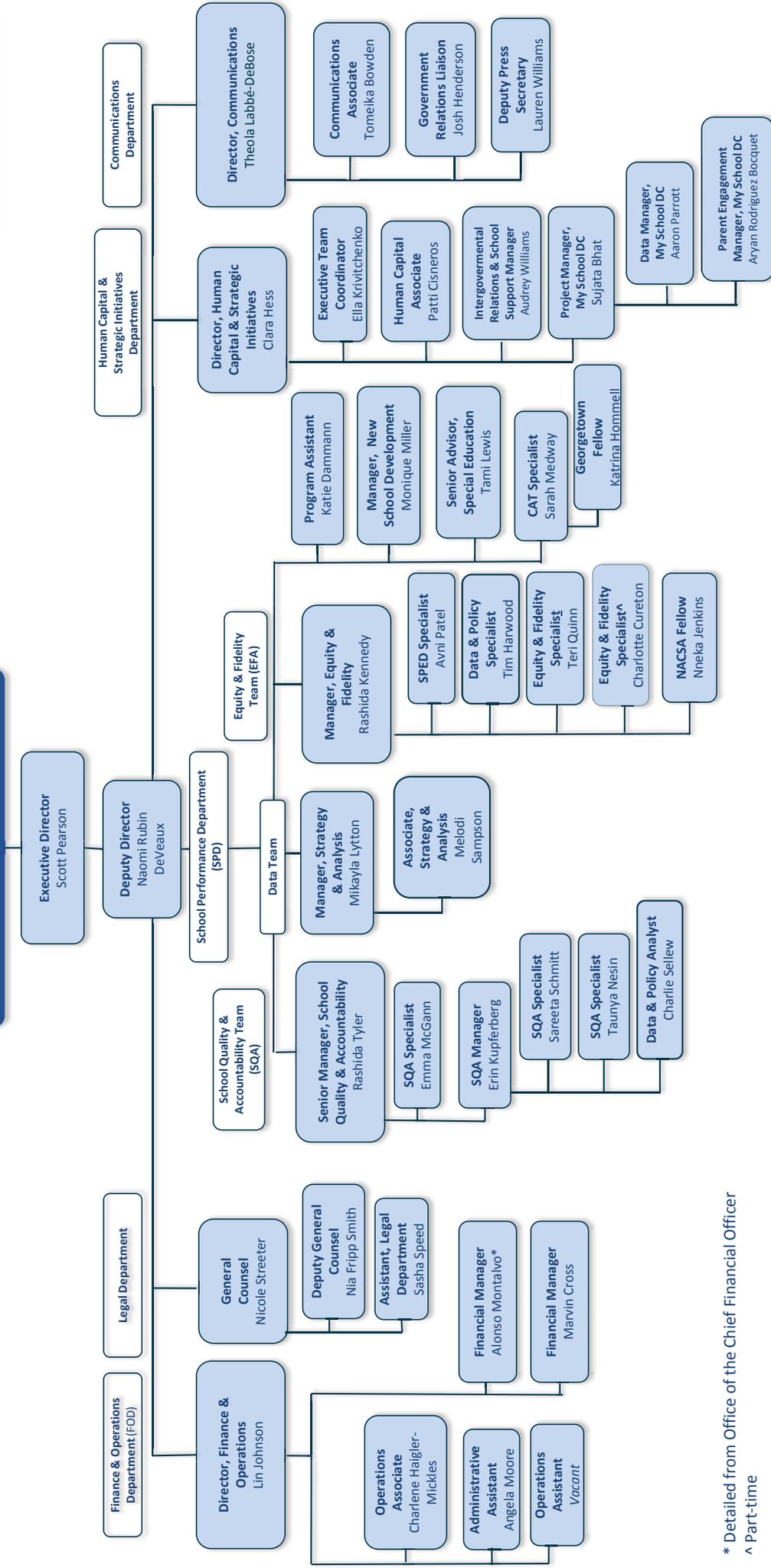
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# DC Public Charter School Board 2014 Organizational Chart



## The Public Charter School Board



\* Detailed from Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
^ Part-time



