# Charter Renewal Handbook

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# Background on Charter School Renewal

The authority to operate a charter school is granted through a limited-term, renewable contract. Contract renewal is not automatic – it must be earned through strong academic results, financial viability, and operational effectiveness. Charter schools are built around the promise of greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability, and the renewal process provides an opportunity to review the charter school's prior performance. A strong renewal process is critical to protect charter school autonomy, student rights, and the public interest, and ensures that schools are held to high standards.

# Charter Renewal Timing

Upon initial approval as a charter school, the charter school receives authority to operate for a period of up to five years. Prior to the expiration of the initial charter contract, the charter school has the right to apply for the renewal of the initial charter. The charter renewal process primarily occurs during the last year of the charter term. An example charter renewal timeline is included below using a school with a five-year contract.

Sample Charter School Renewal Timeline for a 5-year Contract



The CSI Renewal Handbook provides school leaders and school board members with a clear overview and description of the charter renewal process.

# **CSI Charter Renewal Process Overview**

The primary driver of the renewal evaluation is the CSI Annual Review of Schools. The CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) is the system used to annually evaluate and accredit schools based on the CSI Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance Frameworks. CARS builds upon the evaluation lens utilized by the State—which evaluates academic achievement, academic growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness—by including additional measures related to academic, financial, and organizational performance to provide a more

comprehensive and robust evaluation that includes strong indicators of charter viability and sustainability.

While the majority of the renewal evaluation is based on the evidence of school performance over the charter term, the CSI charter renewal process provides schools with the opportunity to present new or supplemental evidence around school performance in the areas of academics, finances, and organization/governance outside of the information annually captured in the CARS Report.

The CSI charter renewal process is broken into three phases that are designed to streamline the process and align various components of the charter renewal process with ongoing school processes.

Phase 1:
Preparing and Aligning for
Renewal

Phase 2: Working Towards Renewal

Phase 3: Submitting and Finalizing Renewal

The information gathered during the renewal process will help to augment the CSI Renewal Report, in addition to the information included in the CARS Report and existing body of evidence, and may serve to inform the renewal contract, identify areas of needed CSI support, and/or update CSI records.

#### School Board and School Leader Roles

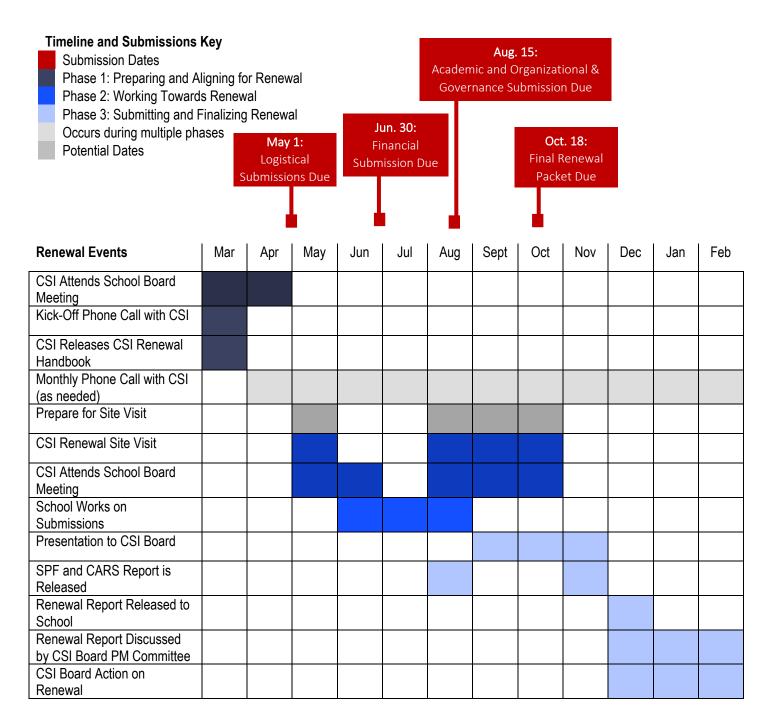
The renewal process requires the involvement of both the school leader and the school board. While the school leader will be the main point of contact throughout the renewal, the school board should expect to be engaged with the renewal process regularly, especially when interacting with the CSI Board of Directors. In addition, many school leaders will include members of their leadership team and other key school staff (finance/business manager, instructional coach, school accountability committee, etc.) in the renewal process.

A high-level overview of the roles of each party is outlined below; however, there is overlap between the parties, and the school leader should be involved in the work of the school board, and the school board should review/approve the material developed by the school leader.

School Leadership	School Board
Academic submission	Strategic planning
Financial submission	Board meeting and minutes checklist
Organizational/governance submission	Board self-evaluation
Waiver & policy review	Waiver & policy review
Engagement with CSI staff and board	Engagement with CSI board

This handbook breaks the renewal process up into three phases and presents an overview as well as a more detailed description of the various actions and steps related to submissions.

# Renewal Timeline and Submissions Overview



# Timeline and Submissions by Renewal Phase

# Phase 1: Preparing and Aligning for Renewal

This phase of renewal begins in the spring prior to the renewal year. During this phase, CSI staff will engage with the school leader and school board to outline the renewal process and support the school in aligning existing processes for renewal.

#### **Timeline**

February-April: CSI staff attend school board meeting to provide an overview of the renewal
process
March: Kick-off phone call with applicant
March: CSI releases CSI Renewal Handbook
April: Monthly phone call with applicant (as needed)
April: Review Unified Improvement Plan and begin updating
April/May: Review school board calendar and plan for board actions required as a part of
renewal (strategic plan, board self-evaluation/needs assessment, etc.)

#### **School Submission Requirements\***

Item	Due Date	Notes	
Logistical	5/1	Items to submit:	
Submission		□ Schools must complete, sign, and submit the intent to renew form	
		which includes verifying/updating school profile information.	
		<ul> <li>Schools must draft, adopt, and submit a board resolution</li> </ul>	
		requesting charter renewal.	
		<ul> <li>A <u>sample resolution</u> is provided for schools to use a starting</li> </ul>	
		point when drafting the resolution.	
		<ul> <li>Schools must submit interim assessment login credentials.</li> </ul>	
		<ul> <li>Schools must select a date for the renewal site visit.</li> </ul>	

<sup>\*</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all submissions should be sent to the CSI Authorization email (authorization CSI@csi.state.co.us).

# Phase 2: Working towards Renewal

The second phase of the renewal process takes place during the summer and early fall prior to the renewal year. During this phase, the school leader and school board work towards completing the required renewal submissions and plan for the CSI Renewal Site Visit. CSI staff will continue to engage with both school leader and school board to provide support and guidance in this work. In addition, CSI staff will attend a school board meeting to learn about the school's strategic plan and the results of the school board's self-evaluation.

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Beginning April: Prepare for and schedule the CSI Renewal Site Visit (site visits will occur in Augus
September, or October)
May: Monthly phone call with applicant (as needed)
August/September/October: CSI Renewal Site Visit
May/June/August/September/October: CSI staff will attend either one or two school board meetings
May/June/July: School works on submission requirements (Academic Submission, Financial
Submission, Organizational/Governance Submission) and optional review of existing documents,
June: Monthly phone call with applicant (as needed)

#### **School Submission Requirements**

Item	Due Date	Notes
Financial Submission	6/30	Items to submit:  □ Schools must submit a three-year financial forecast. This must include the next fiscal year plus the next three years.  ○ Schools may use an expanded version of the CDE Uniform  Budget Summary or the CSI Renewal Budget Template. All tabs in either template should be completed.  ○ The next fiscal year budget should be identical to the budget submitted as a part of the annual budget submission process.  □ Financial policies and procedures  ○ CSI has developed Financial Policies & Procedures Guidance that should be used when reviewing and updating policies.
Academic Submission (UIP)	8/15	Items to submit:  □ Current updated draft of Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)
Organizational & Governance Submission	8/15	Items to submit:  Organizational chart  Strategic plan  Board self-evaluation/needs assessment  Confirmation that the school leader evaluation has been completed  Teacher evaluation rubric  School bylaws  Waiver requests  EMO/ESP Management Agreement (if applicable)

CSI Charter Renewal Handbook

# Phase 3: Submitting and Finalizing Renewal

The third phase of charter renewal takes place from early fall through CSI Board action on renewal applications in December and January. During this phase, CSI staff will provide feedback on initial submission drafts, request any additional information based on the release of the State School Performance Framework and/or the CARS Report, conduct the CSI Renewal Site Visit, and support the school in preparing for their visit with the CSI board.

#### Timeline

August: Monthly phone call with applicant (as needed)
September/October/November: School leader and board members attend a CSI Board of Director
Meeting
September: Release of the SPF and CARS Report
September: Monthly phone call with applicant (as needed)
October: Renewal submissions revised and resubmitted (as needed based on feedback from CSI
staff and board, and the results of the SPF and CARS Report)
Early December: Renewal Report released to school
December/January/February: CSI board Performance Management Committee discussion of
Renewal Report and Recommendation**
December/January/February: CSI board action**

#### **School Submission Requirements**

Item	Due Date	Notes
Final Renewal Packet Submission	10/18	In addition to submitting any required revisions to documents submitted in June/July/August, schools should submit reviewed bylaws (if applicable), policies, and waivers as outlined below ("Required Review").
Response to CSI Renewal Report (optional)	12/8	Schools have the option to add supplemental evidence to the report, if vetted and approved by CSI staff.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Specific dates subject to annual approval of the annual CSI Board of Directors Meeting schedule.

# Action & Submission Detailed Information and Resources

**KEY:**  $\supseteq$  = Renewal Action  $\square$  = Renewal Submission

#### **Phase 1: Preparing and Aligning for Renewal**

#### >> Review Renewal Letter and Renewal Handbook

Description: CSI will email the school leader and school board chairs in the spring

prior to renewal to begin the renewal process. The email will include as attachments, a renewal letter which outlines the renewal process, the customized Intent to Renew form, and the CSI Renewal Handbook (this

document).

Deadline: Complete prior to the first renewal phone call

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

#### >> Schedule Initial Renewal Phone Call

Description: CSI will work with the school to schedule a phone call in the early spring

to review the renewal process and ensure that the school leader and board chair understand the renewal process. We will also schedule monthly phone calls with school leaders and board chairs (as needed) to ensure that there is an open and regular communication between CSI

and the school throughout the renewal process.

Deadline: Complete initial phone call by April 15

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: Renewal Timeline & Submissions Overview

**Charter Renewal Process** 

#### Submit Interim Assessment Login Credentials

Description: Provide CSI with a username and password to the school's online

assessment platform. Please ensure that this username is associated with the highest levels of permissions so CSI can pull the reports properly. CSI will conduct an analysis of the school's local interim

assessment data as a supplement to the state assessment data for use in the school's improvement planning process and renewal evaluation.

Deadline: May 1

Contact: Please reach out to Collin Phillips (collinphillips@csi.state.co.us) with any

questions about this submission.

#### **Submit Intent to Renew Form**

Description: Using the Intent to Renew form emailed to the school leader and board

chair, schools should complete the form and submit to CSI to begin the renewal process. The Intent to Renew form includes basic information about the school which should be reviewed and corrected (if needed).

Deadline: May 1

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: Intent to Renew form attached to initial email.

#### □ Submit Board Resolution

Description: A school board resolution requesting charter renewal with CSI must also

be submitted with the Intent to Renew.

Deadline: May 1

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: SAMPLE Signed Board Resolution Requesting Charter Renewal

#### >> Schedule CSI Renewal Site Visit

Description: The CSI Renewal Site Visit serves to provide additional context and

insight into how the school is implementing their program. CSI Renewal

Site Visits occur in August, September, or October.

The CSI Renewal Site Visit structure includes classroom observations, stakeholder focus groups and interviews with school staff. While the site visit protocol will primarily focus on areas of improvement, the visit will also include an opportunity for the school to highlight components of their program that are unique or are related to the school mission. The Review Team and the school leader will establish clear and observable outcomes for the site visit through the pre-visit questionnaire and pre-visit planning meeting. CSI staff will provide three options for a fall site visit date in early

spring.

Deadline: Schools must communicate their selected site visit date by May 1st.

Contact: Please reach out to Michael McManus

(MichaelMcManus@csi.state.co.us) with any questions about this action.

Resources: <u>CSI Renewal Site Visit Protocol</u>

CSI Renewal Site Visit Checklist

CSI Renewal Site Visit Pre-Visit Questionnaire

#### CSI Staff Attend School Board Meeting

Description: CSI staff will share an overview of the renewal process with the school

board, as well as outline expectations for school board involvement in the renewal process. School boards will be provided with checklists and guiding questions as well as a self-evaluation template. CSI will schedule a second board visit during the second phase of the charter renewal process, at which time the school board will share the results of their self-

evaluation as well as their most recent strategic plan.

Deadline: Complete by the end of May

Contact: CSI will contact the school leader to schedule attendance at a scheduled

school board meeting. Please reach out to Ryan Marks

(ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us) with any questions about this action.

#### Review Unified Improvement Plan and Begin Updating

Description: The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) plays a central role in the renewal

process^ and the schools going through renewal should being reviewing their most recent UIP and begin the update the UIP with renewal in mind. CSI will provide UIP training and supports for all schools in the spring as

they complete their annual improvement planning process.

^An alternate academic narrative may be submitted if the school does not plan on updating the UIP.

Please reach out to CSI if interested in submitting the alternative narrative.

Deadline: Ongoing; complete first review by the end of May; completed draft due by

August 15

Contact: Please reach out to Jessica Welch (jessicawelch@csi.state.co.us) with

any questions about this action.

Resources: CSI UIP Webpage

CSI UIP Handbook
CDE UIP Webpage

#### **Phase 2: Working Towards Renewal**

#### Work on Academic, Financial and Organizational & Governance Submissions

Description:

Schools should begin working on completing the required academic, financial, and organizational/governance submissions during the late spring and over the summer. Many of the submissions and documents that are required should already exist but will need to be reviewed and updated as needed prior to submission to CSI as a part of the renewal application.

Academic Submission Requirements:

Current updated draft of the Unified Improvement Plan

Financial Submission Requirements:

□ Schools must submit a three-year financial forecast. This must include the next fiscal year plus the next three years.

Schools may use an expanded version of the <u>CDE</u> <u>Uniform Budget Summary</u> or the <u>CSI Renewal Budget</u> <u>Template</u>. If not using the CSI renewal budget template, an enrollment forecast and staff roster with FTE and ratios must also be submitted. The next fiscal year budget should be identical to the budget submitted to CSI as a part of the annual budget submission process

☐ Financial policies and procedures

Organizational/Governance Submission Requirements:

Organizational chart
Strategic plan
Board self-evaluation/needs assessment
Confirmation of completion of the school leader evaluation/
Teacher evaluation template
School bylaws
Waiver requests

Athe school leader evaluation process and rubric which have been previously submitted as a part of the renewal application will be collected during the annual organizational submissions process in the Fall.

EMO/ESP management agreement (if applicable)

Deadline: June 30– Financial submission

August 15– Academic and Organizational & Governance submission

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: Academic, Financial, and Organizational/Governance Requirements for

Renewal

CSI Renewal School Budget & Forecast Template
CDE Uniform Budget Template for Renewal
Board Strategic Plan Overview and Example

CSI Strategic Planning Guide for Charter School Boards

Financial Policies and Procedures Guidance

#### CSI Staff Attend School Board Meeting

Description:

During this meeting, the school board will provide an update on their progress towards completing the renewal requirements with a focus on the results of the board self-evaluation and the school strategic plan. CSI staff may ask for additional information during this board meeting, depending on any areas of concern (academic, financial, or organizational/governance) identified in advance. In preparation for this meeting, boards should review the Board Meeting and Minutes Compliance Checklists and complete a self-evaluation prior to this meeting. The school board should also review the Guiding Questions for School Boards as they work with the school leader during Phase 2.

Deadline: Complete prior to early September and before presentation in front of the

CSI Board. This can be scheduled to align with the CSI Renewal Site

visit.

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: Board Meeting Compliance Checklist

Board Minutes Compliance Checklist

Sample Governing Board Calendar by Month School Board Focus Questions by Topic

#### Phase 3: Submitting and Finalizing Renewal

#### Complete the CSI Renewal Site Visit

Description: The CSI Renewal Site Visit serves to provide additional context and

insight into how the school is implementing their program.

Deadline: CSI Renewal Site Visits may occur in August, September, or October.

Contact: Please reach out to Michael McManus

(MichaelMcManus@csi.state.co.us) with any questions about this action.

Resources: <u>CSI Renewal Site Visit Protocol</u>

CSI Renewal Site Visit Checklist

CSI Renewal Site Visit Pre-Visit Questionnaire

#### >> Engage with the CSI Board of Directors

Description: Schools will attend a CSI Board meeting in the fall of renewal year.

Schools will be asked to prepare a brief presentation for this meeting. This is an opportunity for the CSI Board to ask questions to augment the information provided by the school in the areas of academics, finance, and organization/governance. CSI staff will be available to meet with the school leader in preparation for this meeting. In addition to the school leader, schools board members are strongly encouraged to attend this

meeting.

Deadline: Western Slope Regional CSI Board Meeting - September

Colorado Springs Regional CSI Board Meeting - October

Denver Regional CSI Board Meeting - November

Contact: Please reach out to Michael McManus

(MichaelMcManus@csi.state.co.us) with any questions about this action.

# Revise and Re-submit Academic, Financial & Organizational/Governance Submissions

Description: After initial submissions are made in June and August, CSI staff and/or

the CSI Performance Management Committee may provide feedback and/or request additional information based on the SPF and CARS Report. Schools will have until the final submission date in October to make requested changes and submit additional

information/documentation.

Deadline: Ongoing as feedback is received

Final renewal submission is due on October 18

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

Resources: Academic, Financial, and Organizational/Governance Requirements for

Renewal

Board Strategic Plan Overview and Example

CSI Finance Forecast Template

CDE Uniform Budget Template for Renewal

CSI Strategic Planning Guide for Charter School Boards

Financial Policies and Procedures Rubric

## > Review the CSI Renewal Report and Recommendation

Description: The CSI Review Team will examine the existing body of evidence and

complete a comprehensive and robust evaluation that considers indicators of charter viability and sustainability as well as the renewal

application.

The draft report is released to the school leader and board chairs in advance of the December and January PM Committee and CSI Board meetings in order to ensure that the information contained in the report is

an accurate reflection of the school performance. Applicants are

encouraged to review the report, ask any clarifying questions about the

evidence included in the report, and identify any errors.

The CSI Renewal Report, including the recommendation, will be shared

with the school leader and board chairs before the report and

recommendation are provided to the CSI Board.

Deadline: Early December for December Board action, early January for January

Board action or early February for February Board action (if providing

feedback to CSI)

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

## Attend the December, January, or February CSI Performance Management Committee Meeting

Description: The CSI Performance Management committee will review the CSI

Renewal Report and Recommendation and discuss potential board action and draft a recommendation to provide to the CSI Board of Directors regarding board action on the renewal applications. The school leader and school board members are encouraged to attend (either in-person or virtually). Schools will be split into three groups in order to allow for

adequate time for discussion and recommendation. Schools will be

notified in late summer whether they will be discussed as part of group A

(December), group B (January), or group C (February).

Deadline: December, January, or February

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<u>ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</u>) with any

questions about this action.

#### > Attend the December, January, or February CSI Board of Directors Meeting

Description: The CSI Board of Directors will review the CSI Renewal Report and

Recommendation, hear the recommendation from the Performance Management Committee, discuss potential board action, and take action on the renewal applications. Applicants are encouraged to review the report, ask any clarifying questions about the evidence included in the

report, and identify any errors.

Deadline: December, January, or February

Contact: Please reach out to Ryan Marks (<a href="mailto:ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us">ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us</a>) with any

questions about this action.

# **Appendix**

# Academic, Financial, and Organizational/Governance Requirements for Renewal

#### Academic, Financial, and Organizational/Governance Requirements for Renewal Document

 This document contains an outline for all academic, financial, and organizational/governance submissions during the renewal process. Please be sure to review this after reading this handbook to get a better understanding of renewal submissions.

#### CSI Strategic Planning Guide for Charter School Boards

• This document contains a step-by-step guide to strategic planning developed by CSI to support charter school boards in developing a strategic plan. The document includes guidance around the strategic planning process, suggested content, and a template.

#### CSI Renewal School Budget & Forecast Template

 This document contains instructions on how to use the document, an enrollment forecast tab, a staffing forecast tab, a forecast assumptions tab, and a 3-year forecast tab to provide your school with an easier way to complete your financial forecast submission requirement.

#### CDE Uniform Budget Template for Renewal

• This document includes the CDE Uniform Budget Summary format for the renewal forecast. It also includes an enrollment forecast tab and a staffing forecast tab, which are required if using this format.

#### CSI Financial Policies and Procedures Guidance

• This document contains guidance around the school financial policies and procedures.

#### CSI Renewal Site Visit Overview and Documents

#### CSI Renewal Site Visit Protocol

• This document provides the purpose of the renewal site visit and gives an overview of the process, including the general timeline and logistics.

#### CSI Renewal Site Visit Checklist

• To complement the above document, the checklist provides a list of tasks you should accomplish and when you should accomplish them for a successful renewal site visit.

#### CSI Renewal Site Visit Pre-Visit Questionnaire

Prior to the site visit, CSI will schedule a phone call with the school leader to discuss all
of the items available in this questionnaire. Please review this document prior to this
phone call to have responses prepared. You do not need to fill out this document, as CSI
will send a completed version after your phone call discussion.

# **Board-Specific Resources**

#### School Board Focus Questions by Topic

 This resource offers guiding questions for school board members to consider on a variety of important topics. Board members can use this resource to help plan out priorities for the year using focused questions on key topics.

#### Sample Governing Board Calendar by Month

• This document can be used to help charter school governing boards determine monthly board meeting topics. The scheduling of these topics may vary for your school, depending on school year, board meeting, and assessment schedules.

#### **Board Meeting Compliance Checklist**

• To ensure your school board meetings are compliant with legal requirements and best practices, your board can fill out this checklist.

#### **Board Minutes Compliance Checklist**

• To ensure your school board minutes are compliant with legal requirements and best practices, your board can fill out this checklist.

#### CSI Strategic Planning Guide for Charter School Boards

• This document contains a step-by-step guide to strategic planning developed by CSI to support charter school boards in developing a strategic plan. The document includes guidance around the strategic planning process, suggested content, and a template.

#### Governance Needs Assessment

This is a sample board needs assessment/self-evaluation. To use this document, you
can either print it or fill it out in Excel. The instructions page and the instructions at the
top of each tab provide information on how to fill out the forms. If you fill it out in Excel,
ratings will auto populate based on your responses. Please reach out to Ryan Marks
(ryanmarks@csi.state.co.us) with any questions about using this document.

#### SAMPLE Signed Board Resolution Requesting Charter Renewal

 This document provides a sample board resolution for requesting charter renewal with CSI. Your board can use this completed document to submit your board's resolution to request renewal, due June 1<sup>st</sup>.