

# Authorizing 101

## Best Practices for Quality Charter Authorizing

### PRESENTERS

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# Who We Are



## Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers

### What is an Authorizer?

Authorizers are the entities that decide who can start a new charter school, set academic and operational expectations, and oversee school performance. They also decide whether a charter should remain open or close at the end of its contract.

Authorizers vary depending on state law. Nearly 90 percent of authorizers across the country are local school districts, but they can also be state education agencies, independent boards, universities, mayors and municipalities, and non-profit organizations.

### Who is FACSA?

- We are an independent, non-profit membership association.
- We serve Florida district staff who do the work of charter school authorizing.
- You can learn more about [FACSA at our website](#).

# How We Support Florida Authorizers

## Technical Assistance

*FACSA has developed a number of technical assistance documents that are readily found in our Resource Library at [flauthorizers.org](http://flauthorizers.org).*

- Capacity Interview Toolkit
- Annual Report Template
- Appeals Timeline, and more.

## Professional Development

*FACSA provides just-in-time professional development as well as partners with both local and national experts to help keep authorizers up-to-date on best practices.*

- Webinars
- Authorizer Bootcamp
- Authorizer Summit

## Mentoring Partnerships

*We connect new authorizers to colleagues in the field who are seasoned professionals ready to assist them through the early years of their new role in authorizing.*

- Mentoring Network
- External Reviewers for Charter Review
- Webinars

## Networking Opportunities

*We provide opportunities for Florida authorizers to meet with each other to discuss current issues and share best practices. We also provide opportunities for our members to join other state organizations like FACSA to share what's happening in our states and the best practices that enable us to tackle the most difficult issues.*

- Monthly Meetings
- Conferences
- Authorizer Summit

# FLORIDA CHARTER SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

**341,926** STUDENTS ENROLLED 

 IN **687** CHARTER SCHOOLS

IN **47** FLORIDA DISTRICTS 

CHARTER SCHOOLS = PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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See this icon? There is a resource available to assist you with this task. Click it to access.

# Overview

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## BEST PRACTICES



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# Getting to know Florida Charter Law & Statutory Requirements

## Know

- **Know** the acronyms and definitions
- Use a cheat sheet to refer to when you hear terms you don't currently know



Acronyms and Definitions

## Go through

- Go through the Charter Law to help you **understand** your role as an authorizer
- Print, tab, and highlight the areas you refer to often

## Read

- **Read** Florida Charter Statute 1002.331 high-performing charter schools
- Understand the differences between high-performing vs. non-high-performing charter schools

## Review

- **Review** the Florida Standard Contract and cross reference with Florida Statute
- Knowing what is in a charter contract will strengthen compliance monitoring practices

# Statutes That Guide Authorizing In Florida

Statute	Scope of Law
<a href="#">Section 1002.33</a>	Establishes charter schools; Application Review, Approval, Denial, Appeals, Contracts, Renewals, Termination, Oversight
<a href="#">Section 1002.345</a>	Financial emergency criteria for charters; corrective action plans
<a href="#">Section 1013.62</a>	Charter eligibility requirements; capital outlay funding, conversion charter schools
<a href="#">Section 1002.331</a>	High-performing charter schools; financial reporting, request to increase enrollment, 15-year contract qualification, high performing charter application to replicate
<a href="#">Section 1002.332</a>	High-performing charter school system; criteria, high performing charter application to replicate
<a href="#">Section 1002.333</a>	Schools of Hope; definitions of School of Hope and Hope Operator, establishment of School of Hope, performance-based agreement
<a href="#">Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act</a>	School safety
<a href="#">Section 1006.07</a>	Student Discipline and School Safety

*Desktop Resource*





# Florida Principles & Standards *for Quality Charter School Authorizing*

# Florida Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing

In 2014, the Florida Department of Education teamed with charter school operators and authorizers to develop the Florida Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. The five standards below form the core of those best practices for charter school authorizing in Florida.

Adopted by the Florida Department of Education this **roadmap** was designed to provide practical guidance to help local school boards and their staffs carry out their work as a standards-based profession.

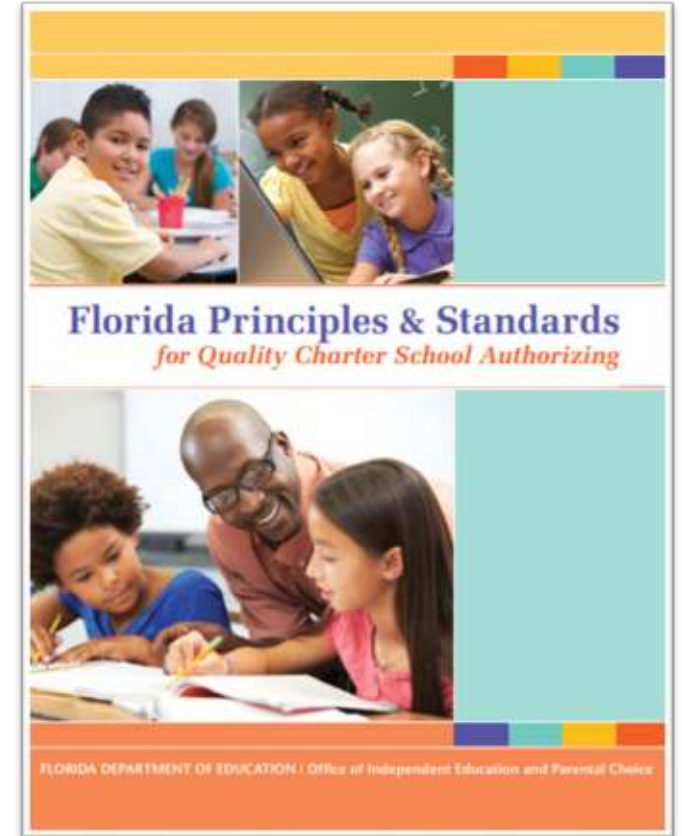
## Based on 3 Core Principles and 5 Standards:

### Principles

1. **Ensure high standards** for application approval and school operation,
2. **Hold charter schools accountable for performance** while, at the same time, respecting each charter school's autonomy (consistent with statutory requirements) and
3. **Protect students and the public interest** in all authorizing and sponsorship functions.

### Standards

1. Sponsor Commitment and Capacity
2. Application Process and Decision Making
3. Performance Contracting
4. Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
5. Termination and Renewal Decision Making



Online version of  
Florida Principles  
and Standards



# AUTHORIZING CALENDAR

July	August	September	October	November	December
<a href="#">Pre-Opening Site Visits</a>	Board Approves Charter Contracts	<a href="#">Provide notice to charter with process/timeline for renewal School Improvement Plans</a>	Academic Achievement Goals due (1 <sup>st</sup> year charters)	Preliminary Projected Enrollment due	School Improvement Plans due
<a href="#">Contract Negotiations</a>	Review Proposed Charter Budgets	Annual Audits Due	Academic Achievement Goals for remaining contract years due	New Applicant Orientation	<a href="#">Finalize Application Timeline</a>
	<a href="#">Charter Site Visits</a>	<a href="#">Renewal/High Stakes Review</a>	Review Academic Achievement Goals		
		<a href="#">Annual Reports</a>	Begin Renewal Site Visits		
		Property Inventory	Financial Concern Meetings		

January	February	March	April	May	June
Final Recommendations for Charter Renewal Decisions	<a href="#">New Charter Applications</a> – Applications can be submitted and reviewed at any time of the year.	Final Recommendations for New Charter Decisions	Finalize Charter Application Reviews	Monitoring Site Visits	Final Enrollment Projections Due
Update Application Checklist	Renewal Charter Applications Voted at District Board Meeting	Annual Enrollment Capacity Due	Charter Applications presented to Board	Intent to Renew Contract Letters	Scheduling for Next Year
State Accountability Report	<a href="#">Begin Charter Application Reviews</a>	<a href="#">Draft Renewal Contracts</a>		Charter Applications Voted at District Board Meeting	Notify Schools of 5-Year High Stakes Review
<a href="#">Train Charter Review Team</a>		Review Proposed Parent Contracts		<a href="#">Draft Contracts</a>	
		<a href="#">Capacity Interviews</a>			

# Initial Authorization & Application Process

## OVERVIEW

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School Authorizing

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Annual Report

Intervention Protocol & School Improvement Plans

## RENEWALS AND REVOCATION

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## BEST PRACTICES



When you see this icon, there is a resource available to assist you with this task. Click it to access.

## Standard 2 – Application Process and Decision Making

A quality sponsor implements a comprehensive application process that includes clear application questions and guidance; follows fair, transparent procedures and rigorous criteria; and grants charters only to applicants who demonstrate strong capacity to establish and operate a quality charter school.



**Florida Principles & Standards**  
*for Quality Charter School Authorizing*



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

# Standard 2 – Application Process and Decision Making

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Standard 2(A)  
Proposal Information,  
Questions, and  
Guidance



Standard 2 (B)  
Fair, Transparent and  
Quality Focused  
Procedures



Standard 2 (C)  
Rigorous Approval  
Criteria



Standard 2 (D)  
Rigorous Decision  
Making

## STANDARD CHECKLIST: Standard 2(D) – Rigorous Decision Making

- Grant charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in all aspects of the school, consistent with the stated approval criteria,
- Rigorously evaluate each application through a thorough review of the written proposal, a substantive interview with the applicant group, and other due diligence to examine the applicant's experience and capacity, conducted by knowledgeable and competent evaluators,
- When possible, engage for both written application reviews and applicant interviews, highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant educational, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal expertise, as well as a thorough understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability,
- Provide orientation or training to application evaluators (including interviewers) to ensure consistent evaluation standards and practices, observance of essential protocols, and fair treatment of applicants, and
- Conduct application-review and decision-making processes that are free of conflicts of interest and require full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts.



# Charter Law - Applications

## F.S. 1002.33 (6)(b)

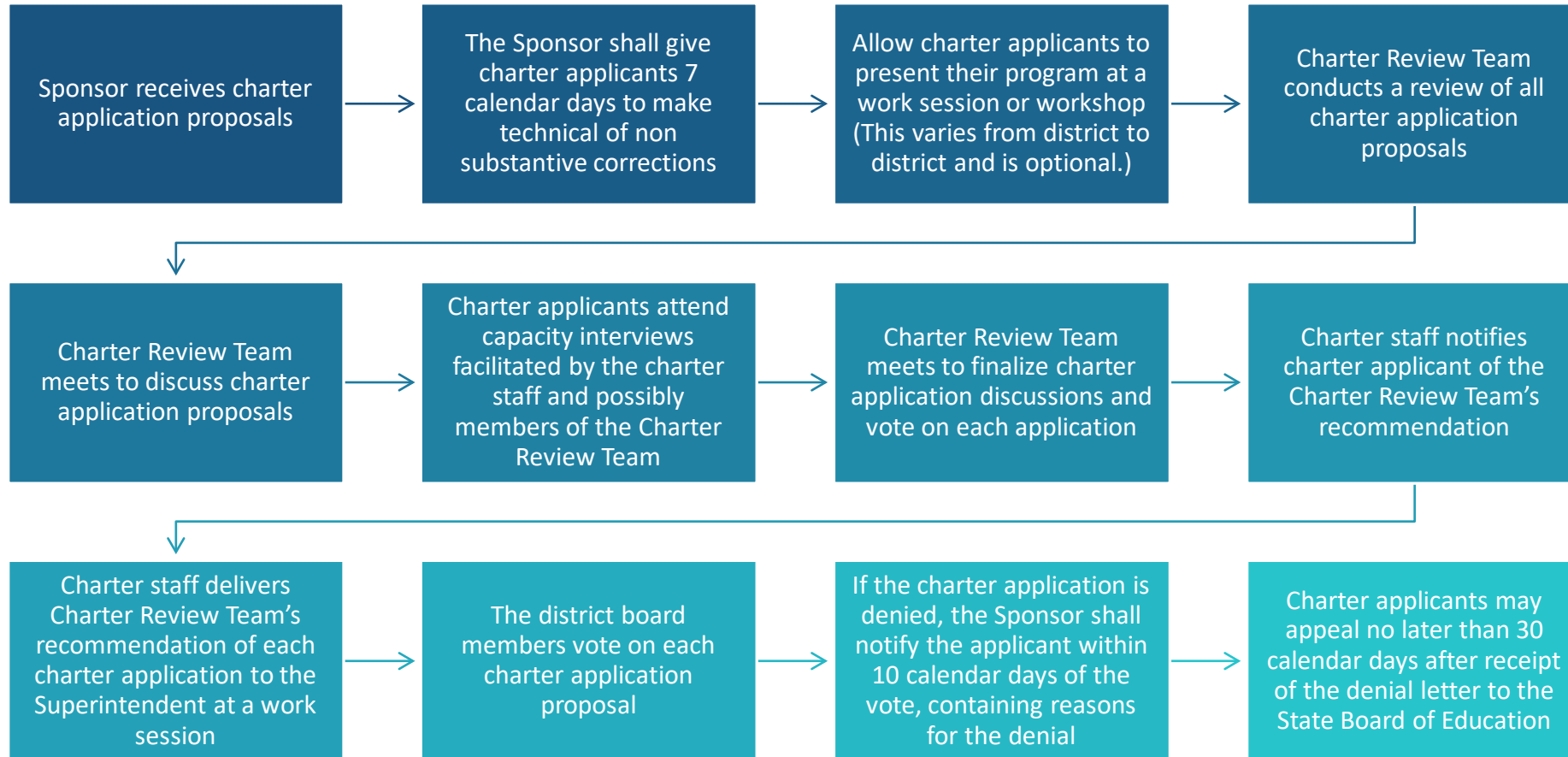


A sponsor shall receive and review all applications for a charter school using the evaluation instrument developed by the Department of Education. A sponsor shall receive and consider charter school applications for charter schools to be opened at a time determined by the applicant.

3.a. A sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or deny an application no later than **90 calendar days** after the application is received, unless the sponsor and the applicant mutually agree in writing to temporarily postpone the vote to a specific date, at which time the sponsor shall by a majority vote approve or deny the application.



# Charter Application Process



# Review Process

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Sample Timeline

Application Evaluation Rubric

# Review Team

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- Establish your team
- Prepare your team for the review
- Outline expectations and communication protocol
- Provide a timeline well in advance to beginning the process



Review Team Training



Training Template



# Who Makes Up the Charter Review Team?

# Education Plan

APPLICATION SECTIONS	DISTRICT STAFF RESPONSIBILITY
<b>Section 1. Mission Guiding Principles and Purpose</b>	Curriculum staff, Charter staff, Community Representative
<b>Section 2. Target Population and Student Body</b>	Charter staff, Community Representative
<b>Section 3. Educational Program Design</b>	Curriculum staff
<b>Section 4. Curriculum and Instructional Design</b>	Curriculum staff
<b>Section 5. Student Performance</b>	Assessment staff
<b>Section 6. Exceptional Students</b>	ESE staff
<b>Section 7. English Language Learners</b>	ESOL staff
<b>Section 8. School Culture and Discipline</b>	Discipline staff
<b>Section 9. Supplemental Programming</b>	Finance staff and district staff that relates to the specific supplemental programming identified in the application

# Organizational Plan

APPLICATION SECTIONS	DISTRICT STAFF RESPONSIBILITY
Section 10. Governance	Legal Counsel
Section 11. Management and Staffing	Human Resources
Section 12. Human Resources and Employment	Human Resources
Section 13. Professional Development	Human Resources
Section 14. Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Charter office staff
Section 15. Parent and Community Involvement	Public or Community Relations staff
Section 10. Governance	Legal Counsel
Section 11. Management and Staffing	Human Resources
Section 12. Human Resources and Employment	Human Resources

# Business Plan

<b>APPLICATION SECTIONS</b>	<b>DISTRICT STAFF RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>Section 16. Facilities</b>	Facilities staff
<b>Section 17. Transportation Service</b>	Transportation staff
<b>Section 18. Food Service</b>	Food service/School nutrition staff
<b>Section 19. School Safety and Security</b>	School safety staff
<b>Section 20. Budget</b>	Finance staff
<b>Section 21. Financial Management and Oversight</b>	Finance staff
<b>Section 22. Start-Up Plan</b>	Charter office staff

# Additional Charter Review Team Members

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Community  
Members

Charter  
School  
Administrator

Charter  
School Parent

Contracted  
External  
Reviewer



# Capacity Interviews

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The purpose of **Capacity Interview** is to determine whether:

1. The proposed educational program is sound
2. The plan is educationally, financially, and operationally comprehensive and cohesive
3. The applicants are likely to implement the proposed program with fidelity

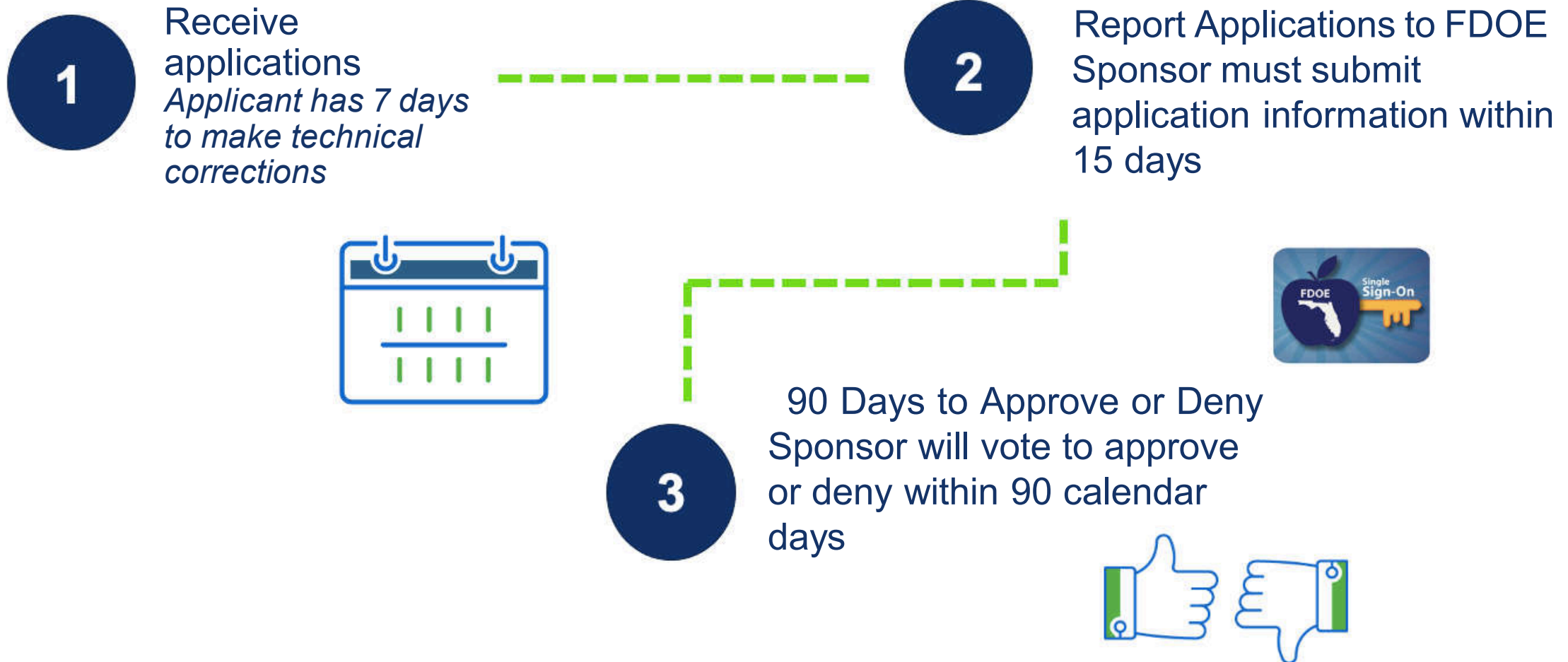


Capacity Interview  
Training-Broward

# Decision Making

APPROVALS,  
DENIALS, AND  
APPEALS

# Application Review Timeline



# Application Submission Tips

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## Waiver

Many Florida districts waive the 90-day timeline for review. If so, ensure rationale is given to applicant.

## Checklist

A formal process may be used to track submitted applications and ensure requirements are met.

# FDOE Application Evaluation Instrument

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- How is it used?
- Who uses it?

Form IEPC-M1

[Model Florida Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument](#) (Word)

[Model Florida Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument](#) (PDF)

F.S. §1002.33(6)(8)(b)

# FDOE Application Evaluation Instrument



## Rating System:

- **Does Not** Meet the Standard
- **Partially** Meets the Standard
- **Meets** the Standard
  - For each section, reviewers also list:
    - Strengths
    - Concerns and Additional Questions

A response that **meets** the standard will present:

- A clear and compelling mission and vision statement that defines the guiding principles and values of the school
- Adequate references to evidence that the application fulfills the statutory guiding principles and purposes for charter schools (Note: the substance of each addressed principle and purpose will be evaluated within appropriate application sections.)

# FDOE Application Evaluation Instrument (1 of 2)

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Sections Reviewed:

## I. Educational Plan

- Mission, Guiding Principles, and Purpose
- Target Population and Student Body
- Educational Program Design
- Curriculum Plan
- Student Performance, Assessment, and Evaluation
- Exceptional Students
- English Language Learners
- School Culture and Discipline
- Supplemental Programming

## II. Organizational Plan

- Governance
- Management and Staffing
- Human Resources and Employment
- Professional Development
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- Parent and Community Involvement

# FDOE Application Evaluation Instrument (2 of 2)

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Sections Reviewed:

## III. Business Plan

- Budget
- Financial Management and Oversight
- Start-Up Plan

## Addendums

- Addendum A: Replications
- Addendum B: Education Service Providers
- Applicant History Worksheets



# Application Approval

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F.S. § 1002.33(6)

- Application meets statutory requirements set forth in application process
- School has demonstrated strengths
- Any weaknesses could be addressed through contract terms or a sponsor determined remedy

## Next steps

- Review teams present recommendation to superintendent
- Application Summary
- District board vote to approve or deny
  - Vote must occur within 90-day review window

# Application Denial

F.S. § 1002.33(6)(b)3a

- Denial should be clearly tied to statutory requirements and statutory language used to outline denial reasons
  - [Sample denial letter](#)
- Prepare denial with evidence of strong rationale, keeping in mind a potential appeal defense

## Next Steps?

- Recommend to superintendent — district board vote and final decision
- Provide documentation to applicant with specific reasons for denial, based upon good cause
- Provide documentation with the same reasons for denial to FDOE within 10 days
- Report to FDOE on survey

# Application Withdrawal

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- Applicants may withdraw at any time
- If an application will likely be denied, the sponsor can encourage withdrawal to avoid a denial

## **Benefits of Withdrawal for Applicant:**

- Provides opportunity for applicant to avoid denial before school board and public

## **Benefits of Withdrawal for Sponsor:**

- Eliminates preparing denial documents and potential appeal

# Appeals

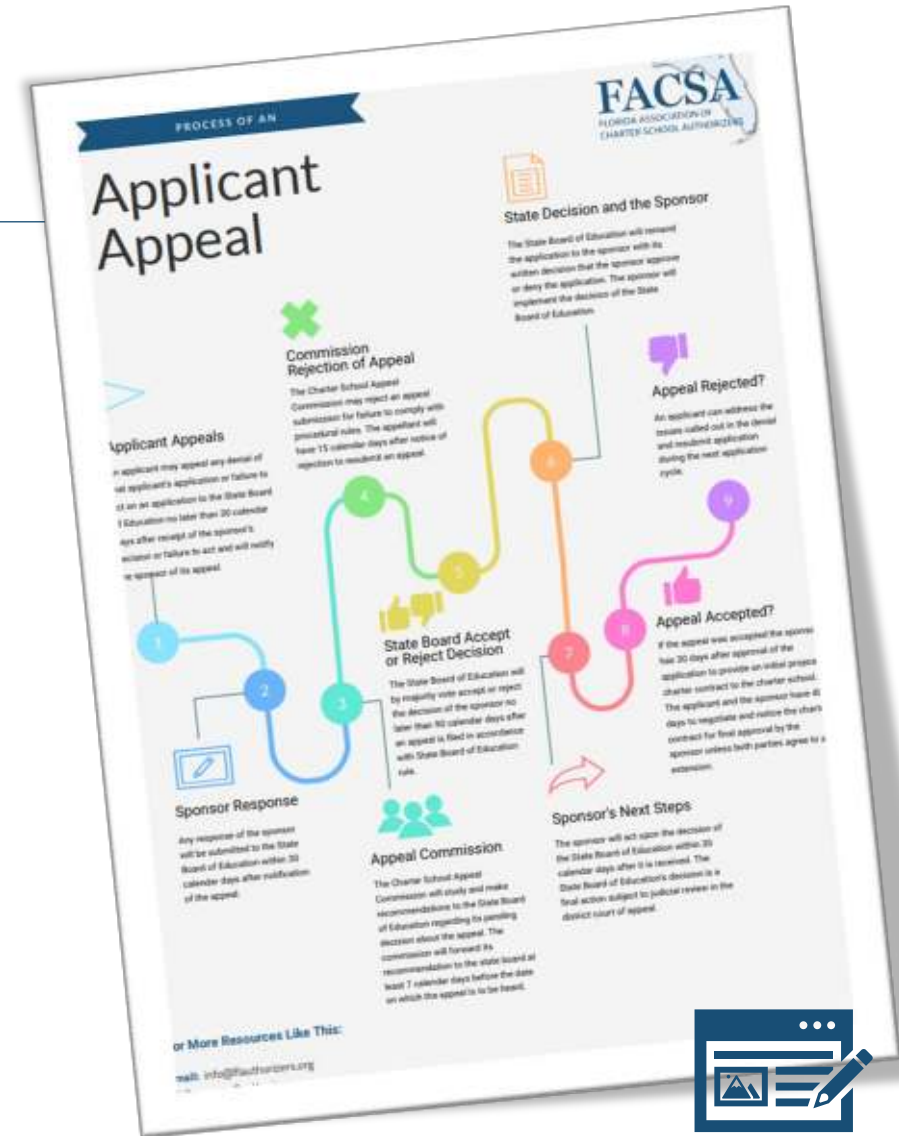
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F.S. § 1002.33(6)(b)

- Applicants may appeal denial decision to the State Board of Education (SBE) within 30 days of receipt of decision
- Any response from the sponsor to the SBE must be received within 30 days of notice of appeal
- Charter School Appeal Commission conducts study and makes recommendation to the SBE
- SBE then votes to accept or reject decision within 90 days of appeal
- Sponsor then acts upon the SBE decision within 30 days

# Appeals Process

1. An applicant may appeal any denial of the applicant's application or failure to act on an application to the State Board of Education no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the sponsor's decision.
2. Any response of the sponsor will be submitted to the State Board of Education within 30 calendar days after notification of the appeal.
3. The Charter School Appeal Commission will study and make recommendations to the State Board of Education.
4. The State Board of Education will by majority vote accept or reject the decision of the sponsor no later than 90 calendar days after an appeal is filed.



Appeal Process

**BREAK**  
**5 Minutes**

# CONTRACTS

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## BEST PRACTICES



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# Standard 3 – Performance Contracting

A quality sponsor executes contracts with charter schools that articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, funding, administration and oversight, outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences, and other material terms. The contract is an essential document, separate from the charter application, that establishes the legally binding agreement and terms under which the school will operate and be held accountable.



**Florida Principles & Standards**  
*for Quality Charter School Authorizing*

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# Standard 3 – Performance Contracting

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Standard 3(A)  
Contract Term,  
Negotiation, and  
Execution



Standard 3 (B)  
Rights and  
Responsibilities



Standard 3 (C)  
Performance Standards



Standard 3 (D)  
Provisions for Education  
Service or Management  
Contract (if applicable)

# Charter Law - Contracts

## F.S. 1002.33 (7)



The terms and conditions for the operation of a charter school, including a virtual charter school, shall be set forth by the sponsor and the applicant in a written contractual agreement, called a charter.

**(7)(b)** The sponsor has 30 days after approval of the application to provide an initial proposed charter contract to the charter school. The applicant and the sponsor have 40 days thereafter to negotiate and notice the charter contract for final approval by the sponsor unless both parties agree to an extension. The proposed charter contract shall be provided to the charter school at least 7 calendar days before the date of the meeting at which the charter is scheduled to be voted upon by the sponsor.

# Florida Standard Charter Contract (1 of 3)

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- **Section 1: General Terms**
  - General application approval
  - Charter term, charter renewal, nonrenewal, and termination
  - Educational program
  - Other general statutory requirements
- **Section 2: Academic Accountability**
  - Annual academic objectives
  - Assessment information
  - Student graduation and data requirements



Form IEPC-SC

# Florida Standard Charter Contract (2 of 3)

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- **Section 3: Students**

- Grade levels, recruitment, class sizes
- Racial/ethnic balance
- ESE administrative services, EL services, and student discipline procedures

- **Section 4: Financial Accountability**

- State, local, federal, and grant funding
- Capital outlay funds
- Restricting charging tuition or fees in charter schools
- Financial record-keeping and oversight requirements



Form IEPC-SC

# Florida Standard Charter Contract (3 of 3)

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- **Sections 5–12**
  - Other topics covered in the contract include:
    - Facilities
    - Transportation
    - Food Services
    - Insurance and Indemnification
    - Governance
    - Human Resources
    - Required Reports and Documents
    - Miscellaneous Provisions



Form IEPC-SC

# Types of Contract Negotiations

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- Initial contract negotiations
- Modifications or amendments to an executed contract
- Renewals

# Statutory Requirements for Initial Contract

- The sponsor must provide a proposed charter contract 30 days after approval of the application.
- The applicant and sponsor then have 40 days to negotiate the contract unless both parties agree to an extension.
- The sponsor must provide the charter to the school seven days before the public meeting at which the charter is voted on.
- The Department of Education will provide mediation services for disputes related to the charter.



# Contract Negotiation Norms

- Stay true to the district/authorizer mission
- Uphold charter autonomy
- Provide equal time for the school and sponsor
- Ensure modifications are in the best interests of students and families
- Seek community input where appropriate





# Statutory Requirements for Modifications

## **F.S. § 1002.33 (7)(d)**

“A charter may be modified during its term upon the recommendation of the sponsor or the charter school’s governing board and the approval of both parties to the agreement.”

(Modification may include consolidation of multiple charters into a single charter.)



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CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

# Why modify a charter contract?

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A charter contract is modified when there are substantial changes to the original contract.

Examples of reasons for modification:

- Change of address
- Change in capacity/enrollment/grade configuration
- Consolidation/separation of schools
- Change in school's mission

# Contract Modification Process

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1. School's governing board submits a written request
2. Sponsor reviews the request
3. Sponsor may want to meet with the school leader and governing board members
4. Board votes to approve or disapprove

# Renewal Contract Negotiations

## 1002.33(7)(19)(c)(1)

The charter of a charter school that meets these requirements and has received a school grade lower than a “B” pursuant to s. 1008.34 in the most recently graded school year must be renewed for no less than a 5-year term except as provided in paragraph (9)(n).

Charter schools operating for a minimum of 3 years and demonstrating exemplary academic programming and fiscal management are eligible for a 15-year charter renewal.

The 15-year charter renewal that may be granted to a charter school that has received a school grade of “A” or “B” in 3 of the past 4 years and is not in a state of financial emergency.

High-performing schools are authorized to receive a modification of its charter to a term of 15 years or a 15-year charter renewal.

**During the renewal process, the contract negotiation process may occur again.**

# Florida Standard Charter Contract Resources

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[Standard Contract](#)



[FACSA Contract Negotiations](#)



[Florida Charter School Contract Negotiations: District Considerations for Exceptional Students - Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers](#)

# Oversight & Monitoring



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## BEST PRACTICES

# Standard 4 – Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation

A quality sponsor conducts contract oversight that competently evaluates performance and monitors compliance; ensures schools' legally entitled autonomy; protects student rights; informs intervention, termination, and renewal decisions; and provides annual public reports on school performance.



**Florida Principles & Standards**  
*for Quality Charter School Authorizing*



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# Standard 4 – Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation

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Standard 4(A)  
Performance  
Evaluation and  
Compliance  
Monitoring



Standard 4 (B)  
Respecting  
School Autonomy



Standard 4 (C)  
Protecting  
Student Rights



Standard 4 (D)  
Intervention



Standard 4 (E)  
Public Reporting



# Charter Law - Oversight

## F.S. 1002.33



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F.S. § 1002.33(2): Guiding Principles; Purpose

F. S. § 1002.33(5): Sponsor Duties

- Monitor and review the charter's progress toward the goals established in the charter

# FDOE Academic Accountability System

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## Accountability System Overview

- School Letter Grade
  - Two A grades: High performing charter status
  - "D" or "F" letter grade: school to appear before sponsor and submit school improvement plan
  - Three consecutive grades below a "C": corrective action and school improvement plan required
  - Two consecutive "F" grades: contract terminated
- Letter grades monitored annually by FDOE

# Monitoring Academic Performance

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## Timeline

### Annual Academic Review

- **Year 1:** By October 15 of the first year, the school provides achievement goals
- **Year 2:** By October 15 of the second year, the school provides achievement goals for the remaining years
- **Ongoing:** Annually, the school reports its performance against the academic goals

## Statutory Requirements

- F.S. § 1002.33(2): Guiding Principles; Purpose
- F. S. § 1002.33(5): Sponsor Duties
  - Monitor and review the charter's progress toward the goals established in the charter
- F. S. § 1002.33(8): Causes for Nonrenewal
  - The sponsor shall make academic achievement for all students the most important factor
- Florida Standard Contract: Section 2 – Academic Accountability
  - The annual objectives must include goals around growth and proficiency on state assessments

# Compliance Monitoring

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## Monitoring Financial Performance

- Monthly and quarterly reports
- Annual financial audit from each charter school
- Federal funds and grants

## Monitoring Operational Performance

- Enrollment
- Governance: board meetings, board actions

## Monitoring Health and Safety

- Fire, building, health, and food service inspections
- Marjory Stoneman Douglas requirements
- Mental health plans

Quality authorizers visit each school as appropriate and necessary for collecting data that cannot be obtained otherwise and in accordance with the contract, while ensuring that the frequency, purposes, and methods of such visits respect school autonomy and avoid operational interference.

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# Florida Principles and Standards:

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## Standard 4A

# Site Visits

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## Authorizers conduct site visits for different purposes.

- Builds communication between the authorizer and charter school.
- Observes the education program and operations in action.
- Informs continuous improvement for charter schools.
- Provides additional data to assess progress toward charter goals.
- Informs the annual report and renewal decision.

# Site Visit Activities

- School Walk-Through: Walk through of school to observe school culture, facility, safety, learning environment
- Classroom Observations: Observe fidelity to their model and best practices for instructing students with disabilities and English learners
- Document Review: Review documents such as IEP records, teacher credential documents, school safety plans, enrollment documents



# Annual Report

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What is the purpose of an annual report?

## Evaluate

- Evaluate the charter school's compliance and performance standards which are linked to the Florida statutes and/or model contract.

## Support

- Provide feedback, support school improvement, and inform interventions for schools.

## Inform

- Inform high-stakes decisions such as renewal.

## Communicate

- Share information about the school's performance with the school and the public



[Annual Report Sample](#)



Quality authorizers will establish and clearly communicate at the outset an intervention process that states the general conditions that may trigger intervention, give timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies, and allow schools reasonable time and opportunity for remediation in non-emergency situations.

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# Florida Principles and Standards:

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## Standard 4D

# Intervention Protocol & School Improvement Plans

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## Common resources for intervention include:

1. Failure to meet academic performance expectations (state school improvement requirements may apply);
2. Failure to meet indicators of financial health;
3. Violations of federal or state statute or policy;
4. Issues pertaining to student safety, equity, or access;
5. Adverse findings during monitoring or oversight;
6. Material substantiated complaints from parents or other stakeholders.

**BREAK**  
**5 Minutes**

# Renewals & Revocation



When you see this icon, there is a resource available to assist you with this task. Click it to access.

## OVERVIEW

Florida Charter Law & Statutory Requirements

Florida Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing

Authorizing Calendar

## INITIAL AUTHORIZATION & APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Process

Review Process

Decision Making

## CONTRACTS

Florida Standard Charter Contract

Contract Negotiations

## OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION

Compliance Monitoring

Site Visits

Annual Report

Intervention Protocol & School Improvement Plans

## RENEWALS AND REVOCATION

Renewal Package

## BEST PRACTICES

# Standard 5 – Termination and Renewal Decision Making

A quality sponsor designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal/non-renewal decisions, and terminates or non-renews charters when necessary to protect student and public interests.



**Florida Principles & Standards**  
*for Quality Charter School Authorizing*



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

# Standard 5 – Termination and Renewal Decision Making

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Standard 5 (A)  
Termination



Standard 5 (B)  
Renewal/Non-  
Renewal  
Decisions based  
on Merit and  
Inclusive  
Evidence



Standard 5 (C)  
Cumulative Report  
and Renewal  
Application



Standard 5 (D)  
Fair, Transparent  
Process



Standard 5 (E)  
Public Closures

# Charter Law - Causes for Nonrenewal or Termination

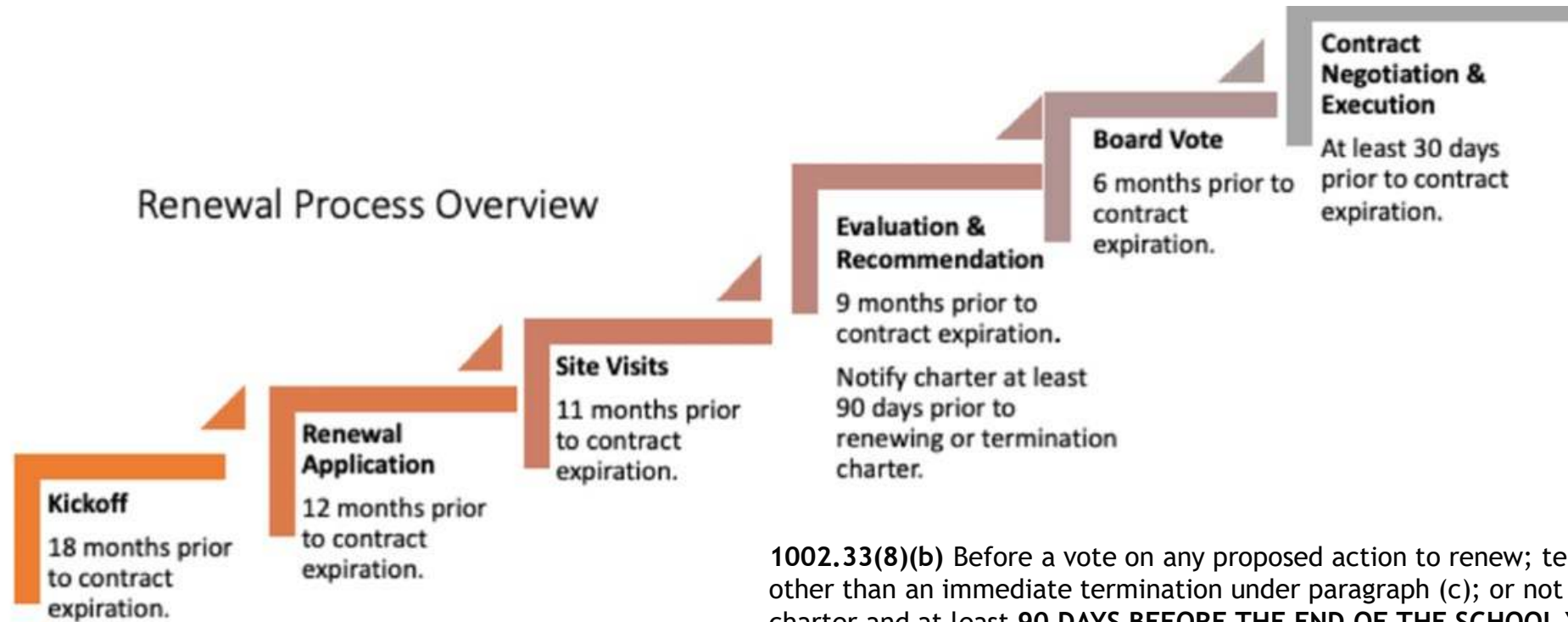
## F.S. 1002.33(8)



(a) The sponsor shall make student academic achievement for all students the most important factor when determining whether to renew or terminate the charter. The sponsor may choose not to renew or may terminate the charter only if the sponsor expressly finds that one of the grounds set forth below exists by clear and convincing evidence:

1. Failure to participate in the state's education accountability system created in s. 1008.31, as required in this section, or failure to meet the requirements for student performance stated in the charter.
2. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management due to deteriorating financial conditions or financial emergencies determined pursuant to s. 1002.345.
3. Material violation of law.

# Renewal Process



**1002.33(8)(b)** Before a vote on any proposed action to renew; terminate, other than an immediate termination under paragraph (c); or not renew the charter and at least **90 DAYS BEFORE THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**, the sponsor shall notify the governing board of the school in writing of the proposed action to renew, terminate, or not renew the charter. A charter automatically renews with the same terms and conditions if notification does not occur at least 90 days before the end of the school year.

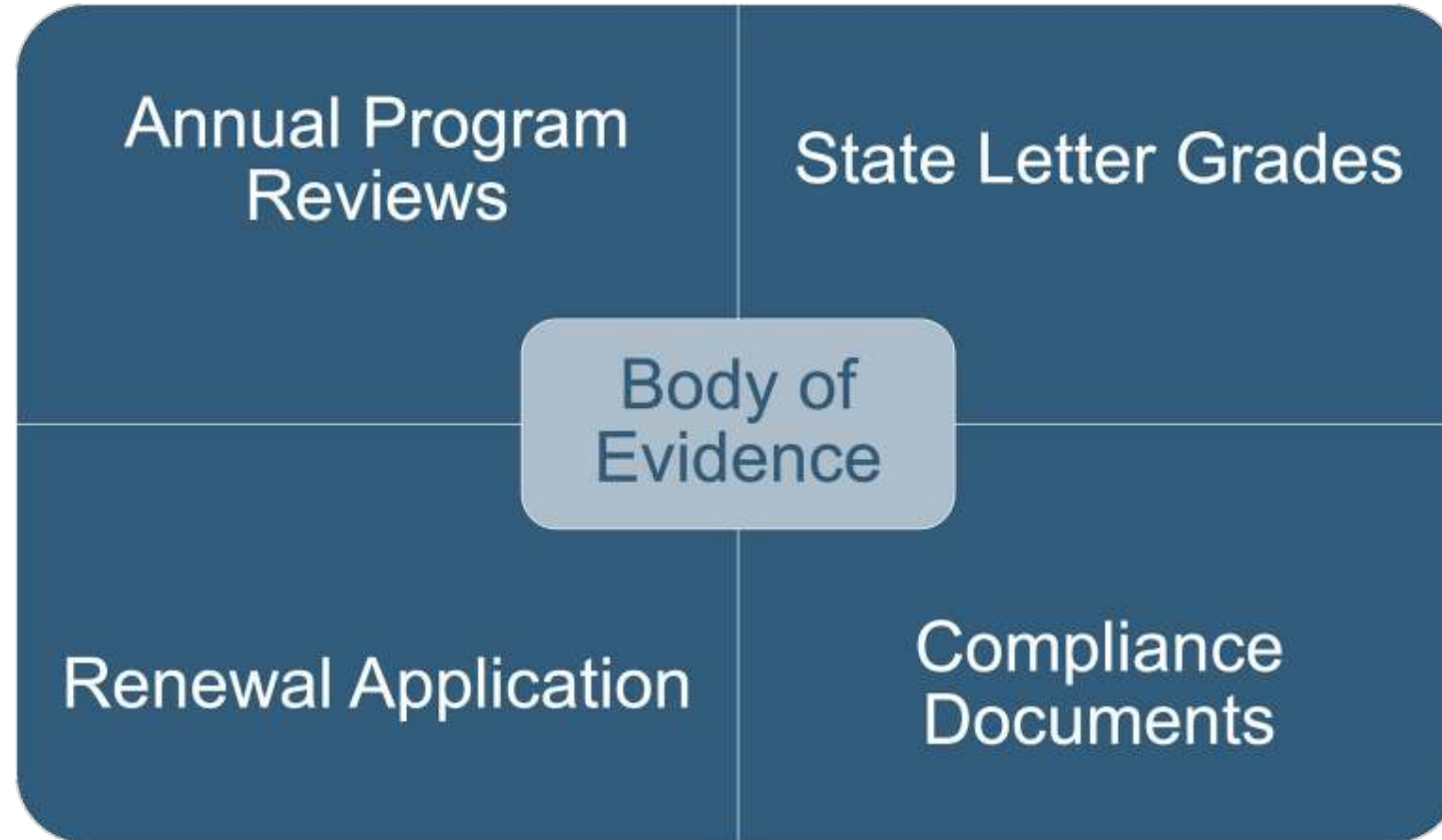


# Kickoff Meeting

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- Provide Overview of Renewal Process
- Schedule Regular Check Ins
- Schedule Site Visit
- Questions and Answers

# Body of Evidence



Quality authorizers require schools seeking renewal to apply through a renewal application, which provides the school a meaningful opportunity to respond to the cumulative report, to correct the record, if needed, and present additional evidence regarding its performance.

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# Florida Principles and Standards:

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## Standard 5C

# Renewal Application Process

## Part 1. Renewal Reflection

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Reflect on the school's progress and key accomplishments in the academic, operational compliance and governance, and financial areas.

### Is the academic program a success?

- Describe and reflect on the school's mission and vision.
- Has the school made reasonable progress in meeting internally established educational goals during the term of its charter?
- Has student performance significantly improved and/or been persistently strong on internal and external academic assessments?
- Is the school effectively serving all students, including students with disabilities and English learners?



Renewal Toolkit

# Renewal Application Process

## Part 2. Examples of Required Body of Evidence Submissions

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- FSA and/or Other State Accountability Test Results
- Annual Student Gains
- Accountability Plan and/or School Improvement Plan
- Accountability Plan Progress Report
- Progress in Meeting Academic Goals
- Board Meeting Agendas
- Board Committees
- Strategic Plan
- Board Handbook
- Long-term Budget
- Financial Policies and Procedures
- Annual Independent Audit

# Renewal Evaluation (1)

## Standard for Renewal (F.S. § 1002.33(8)(c)(1))

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- Student academic achievement for all students must be the most important factor when determining renewal.
- Charter may be renewed if program review demonstrates charter goals successfully accomplished and no grounds for nonrenewal.

## Renewal Evaluation (2)

### Standard for Renewal (F.S. § 1002.33(8)(c)(1))

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- In order to facilitate long-term financing for charter school construction, charter schools operating for a minimum of three years and demonstrating exemplary academic programming and fiscal management are eligible for a 15-year charter renewal.
- Such long-term charter is subject to annual review and may be terminated during the term of the charter.

## Renewal Evaluation (3)

### Causes for Nonrenewal or Termination (F.S. § 1002.33(8)(a))

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- Failure to participate in state's accountability system
- Failure to meet GAAP standards for fiscal management
- Material violation of law



# Renewal Evaluation (4)

## Program Review

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Use the body of evidence to assess if:

- ✓ the academic program is a success
- ✓ the school is faithful to the terms of its charter and complies with all applicable laws
- ✓ the school is governed effectively
- ✓ the school is financially solvent/viable

# Renewal Evaluation Considerations (1)

## COVID-19 Impact

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- Schools have had disruption to their educational models
- Students have had inconsistent learning experiences and access to technology
- Authorizers lack state assessment data for 2019-20 and data for 2020-21 may be incomplete

# Renewal Evaluation Considerations (2)

## COVID 19 Impact

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- Expand evidence/data schools can provide to demonstrate performance trajectory (i.e., formative and summative assessments)
- Work with schools to agree on academic measures to assess performance in 2019-20
- Understand how representative 2020-21 assessment data is of student population
- Use annual reviews and site visits to inform renewal decisions moving forward

# Renewal Recommendation

## Developing Report/Recommendations

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- Authorizer staff review body of evidence and create report/recommendations based on body of evidence
- Provide school opportunity to review and provide feedback
- Finalize evaluation to support district board's decision making

# Board Vote



At least 90 days before renewal decision, the authorizer must notify the school of the proposed action in writing

The board votes on the renewal decision

The notice must provide grounds for the decision in detail

The school may request a hearing

# Renewal Contract



**Like initial contracts, state statute requires use of standard renewal contract.**



[Standard Renewal Contract](#)

# Best Practices

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**BEST PRACTICES**



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# District Best Practices

Establishing best practices ensures quality authorizing and supports Florida's Principles and Standards.



## Potential Applicant Q&A Sessions

- This session should serve as an opportunity for new applicants to understanding your districts processes for receiving and reviewing applications and who to contact for questions.
- This could be an online pre-recorded webinar or live event.

## Review Committee

- This is a panel of district experts who will review applications. It should be made up of a good representation of those who oversee the process/s for each section of the application.
- National and Florida state principles and standards for quality authorizing recommend that charter authorizers incorporate at least one application reviewer that is external to the district. This can improve the rigor of a charter application review and add credibility to authorizer decisions.
- A sub-section of this committee would oversee contract renewals.

## Capacity Interview

- Information within the charter application and gleaned during the capacity interviews should serve as a comprehensive picture of a charter applicant's understanding of the requirement for schools to offer robust services and special education programming.



# District Best Practices

Establishing best practices ensures quality authorizing and supports Florida's Principles and Standards.



## Online Monitoring Tool

- Charters.Link is a free online compliance tool provided by the state of Florida to assist Authorizers and Charter Schools collect and organize their materials and facilitate effective communication. The tool serves as a document repository, two-way communication dashboard, and reporting tool.

## Site Visits

- School visits are appropriate and necessary for collecting data that cannot be obtained otherwise. National and Florida state principles and standards for quality authorizing recommend that charter authorizers conduct site visits.

## Contract Renewal

- Schools should know what to expect when it's time for their contract to be renewed.
- Well defined process should be communicated to the school.

## Authorizer Bootcamp

- New district staff should attend bootcamp, a 12-hour professional development course that walks new authorizing staff through the intricacies of quality charter authorizing.



# WRAP UP

# Workshop Survey

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# RESOURCES

- [FDOE Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument](#)
- [FACSA External Reviewer Information](#) (December 2020)
- [FACSA External Reviewer FAQs](#) (December 2020)
- [FDOE Guidance on Charter Applications](#)
- [FACSA Capacity interview Toolkit: Exceptional Student Education](#) (March 2020)
- [FACSA Capacity interviews](#) (February 2021)
- [FACSA Applicant Appeals Process](#) (February 2021)
- [FDOE Standard Charter Contract](#)
- [Florida Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing](#)
- [FACSA Website: \[www.flauthorizers.org\]\(http://www.flauthorizers.org\)](#)