

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

June 18, 2026

Agenda Item:	Charter School Renewal Process and Performance Assessment Overview
State Board Goal:	Goal 5
State Board Role/Authority:	Per Iowa Code subsection 256E.1(4) and Iowa Code section 256E.10, the State Board is the sole charter school authorizer that monitors performance and compliance and decides on contract renewal (up to five years).
Presenter(s):	Tina Wahlert, Division Administrator Division of PK-12 Learning Barbara Ohlund, Executive Officer Division of PK-12 Learning
Attachment(s):	One
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.
Background:	The State Board shall monitor the performance and compliance of each charter school including collecting and analyzing data according to the charter school contract.

Renewal Process and Performance Assessment Overview

Iowa Charter Schools

The Iowa Department of Education monitors and evaluates charter school performance to inform Iowa State Board of Education (State Board) renewal decisions at the end of each charter term. This process ensures a consistent, evidence-based review balancing charter school autonomy with accountability for academic outcomes, governance, and financial and operational integrity.

Under Iowa Code section 256E.10, the State Board determines whether a charter contract should be renewed for up to five years based on evidence of school performance under the charter contract, including academic, operations and governance and financial performance. This evidence is gathered through the performance assessment and site visit process and culminates in individual charter **Renewal Performance Reports** issued by the State Board on June 30 for each charter up for renewal. Schools submit a charter response, including a response to required and recommended actions, additional evidence of achievements, improvements and proposed plans for the next contract term within 60 days of receiving the report. Next, schools submit a **Charter Renewal Application**, including their charter response, by October 1. Upon receipt of the application, the State Board has 60 days, or until December 1, to issue a final renewal decision by formal resolution, including the rationale for approval, conditional renewal or revocation. High-performing schools in full compliance may qualify for expedited renewal.

Renewal Process Steps

The charter school renewal process provides a comprehensive evaluation of a school’s performance, integrating quantitative data, qualitative observations and stakeholder perspectives. The six steps are detailed in *Table 1. Renewal Process Timeline*.

Table 1. Renewal Process Timeline

March	April	May-June [June 30]	July-August [August 30]	September-October [October 1]	November-December [December 1]
Step 1: Performance Assessment	Step 2: Site Visit	Step 3: Renewal Performance Report	Step 4: Charter Response	Step 5: Charter Renewal Application	Step 6: State Board Decision
<p>Purpose: Evaluate the school’s academic, operational, and financial performance to identify strengths, concerns, and areas for improvement that inform renewal decisions.</p> <p>Activities: Collect and analyze performance assessment data to inform site visit questions and each school’s Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p>	<p>Purpose: Gather qualitative evidence and assess how the school implements its mission and operations in practice.</p> <p>Activities: Conduct site visits for schools up for renewal, including observations, focus groups, interviews, and document reviews to inform each school’s Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p>	<p>Purpose: Synthesize performance assessment data and site visit findings into a clear review of strengths, concerns and key evidence for renewal decision-making.</p> <p>Activities: Review and approve each school’s Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p>	<p>Purpose: Require the school to submit a written response addressing its individual Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p> <p>Activities: Complete the Charter School Response within the Charter School Annual Report due October 1.</p>	<p>Purpose: Require the school to submit a renewal application that includes its response to the individual Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p> <p>Activities: Complete and submit the Charter School Annual Report, including the embedded response to the Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.</p>	<p>Purpose: Determine whether to renew, renew with corrective action, or revoke the charter contract based on the evidence presented.</p> <p>Activities: Review Charter School Renewal Applications to inform final renewal decisions.</p>

*Note that the cell color and font-formatting indicate the primary responsible party: Blue-bold: Charter Team; Yellow-bold/italics: Iowa State Board of Education; Gray-bold: Charter Schools up for Renewal.

**Charter schools approved for renewal submit contracts for review and approval at the February State Board Meeting for final signature.

Step 1: Performance Assessment

The performance assessment applies the State Board-approved performance framework¹ to evaluate each charter school’s performance at the time of their renewal. Performance assessment results are incorporated into the individual charter **Renewal Performance Reports** issued by the State Board to each renewal charter school on June 30 of any given year. The assessment is organized into the same categories as the framework: Academics, Operations and Governance, Finance and Supplemental Data. Each category includes benchmark criteria for awarding points to the charter school. Charter schools may also earn additional points based on performance at or above state averages in several priority academic and attendance areas.

Table 2. Performance Assessment Categories, Criteria and Total Points outlines the total points available within the overall performance assessment and shows how those points are distributed across the major categories used to evaluate each school. It provides a clear structure for how evidence is translated into a composite score, including both required assessment categories and additional points awarded for results at or above state averages in key academic and attendance indicators. This scoring structure supports consistent evaluation and reporting within each charter school’s **Renewal Performance Report**.

Table 2. Performance Assessment Categories, Criteria and Total Points

Category	Criterion Areas	Total Possible Points
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iowa School Performance Profile Ranking Charter Goal Achievement 	200
Operations and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Policy Document Compliance Operations Document Compliance Student Retention Rate ELL Policy and Procedure Compliance Special Education Policy and Procedure Compliance Special Education Program Implementation 	100
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Fiscal Audit Fiscal Reporting Compliance Actual vs. Projected Enrollment Quality Fiscal Budget: Surplus vs. Deficit 	150
Supplemental Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing Board Member Expertise Properly Endorsed Teaching Staff Staff Retention Rate 	75
Additional Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At or Above State Average Performance: ELA Proficiency and Growth At or Above State Average Performance: Math Proficiency and Growth At or Above State Average Performance: Chronic Absenteeism At or Above State Average Performance: Average Daily Attendance and Attendance Growth 	25
Overall Performance	Academics + Operations + Finance + Supplemental Data + Additional Points=550 total possible points	550

¹ The charter school [performance framework](#) was approved by the Iowa State Board of Education on February 6, 2025.

Table 3. *Performance Assessment Scoring Summary* provides a clear, consistent structure for communicating charter school performance results within each charter school’s *Renewal Performance Report* issued by the State Board. Each performance level reflects varying degrees of achievement and indicates the relative level of risk or concern associated with a school’s current performance record.

Table 3. Performance Assessment Scoring Summary

Level	% points	Summary
5	90-100%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is exceeding expectation. • Document review and school visit results identify no corrective actions. • Performance is at low risk and limited concern.
4	80-89%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is meeting expectation. • Document review and school visit results identify no or limited minor corrective actions. • Performance is at low risk and limited concern.
3	70-79%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is slightly below expectation. • Document review and school visit results identify corrective and/or continuous improvement actions that need response over time. • Performance is at slight risk and concern.
2	60-69%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is below expectation. • Document review and school visit results identify substantial corrective actions that need immediate and ongoing response. • Performance is at moderate risk and concern.
1	<59%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is significantly below expectation. • Document review and school visit results identify critical corrective actions that need immediate response. • Performance is at high risk and substantial concern.

Taken together—the renewal process and performance assessment—provide a structured and transparent approach for evaluating charter school performance at the end of each contract term. By combining quantitative measures with qualitative review and organizing results into clear performance levels and point-based categories, the process further aligns with national standards of charter school authorization and ensures consistent and comparable reporting across all charter schools up for renewal. This approach clearly identifies areas of strength and areas that may require improvement or could impact renewal if not addressed.

Note: The charter school renewal process doesn't replace other compliance monitoring, review or accountability processes at the Iowa Department of Education.