

GETTING READY FOR
RENEWAL? WE CAN HELP.

Charter School Renewal Supports

Writing a renewal application and preparing for a renewal evaluation visit can be a daunting set of tasks—especially for a leadership team responsible for the day-to-day operation of a school. As a thought partner, SchoolWorks can help your school team manage the steps of this process, define and articulate the best case for renewal, and thoroughly prepare for your authorizer’s visit.

ABOUT SCHOOLWORKS

SchoolWorks is an education consulting company with the mission of building the capacity of educators to assess, plan for, and achieve student success.

For more than 20 years, SchoolWorks has provided professional consulting services to support both authorizers and school teams in navigating the charter renewal process. Our experts help school teams prepare for renewal by conducting needs assessments, writing or annotating renewal applications, and hosting mock renewal site visits. For authorizers, our team facilitates renewal site visits and reviews renewal applications to support quality decision making.

With expertise on both sides of renewal, SchoolWorks provides the capacity-building support schools need to successfully manage this challenging and complex process.

Service Offerings

Depending on the timeline of your renewal and your internal capacity, your school team may work with SchoolWorks in a variety of ways. Some of our supports include:

- 1 Needs Assessment.** SchoolWorks recommends that the preparation process begin with a school quality review. Ideally, the review should take place at least ten months before the renewal application deadline. Findings of the review are used to inform Service 2, Renewal Application Preparation.

SchoolWorks will conduct the review using a protocol informed by the authorizer’s renewal expectations. The findings will identify strengths to highlight in the renewal application, and reveal areas for growth that should be proactively addressed prior to the renewal site visit.

The review will be immediately followed by a half-day prioritization session. During this session, the SchoolWorks team will unpack the findings and help the school team determine immediate next steps. Implementation of the resulting action plan will move the needle toward improvement in a measurable way that may be recorded subsequently within the renewal application.

Service Offerings (continued)

2 Renewal Application Preparation. SchoolWorks facilitates the development of the renewal application, and helps prepare the application for submission to the authorizer. This process may take one of two forms:

a. Application Writing: *SchoolWorks writes the application; the school team provides input and feedback.*

In this scenario, SchoolWorks assigns a seasoned application writer to assume the full responsibility for the preparation of the renewal application. To complete this process, the writer gathers documents and input from the school team through a series of in-person and/or virtual interviews. Guided by a detailed project plan, the application is developed over time, and continually updated to reflect ongoing feedback. The final draft is formatted and corrected by our Quality Editor, and then proofread and finalized by our Copy Editor before it is returned to the school for submission.

APPLICATION WRITING



b. Application Review: *The school team writes the application; SchoolWorks provides feedback and support.*

In this case, the school team assumes the responsibility of drafting and preparing the renewal application. The draft application is submitted to SchoolWorks for formative feedback as a step in the development process. A qualified SchoolWorks reviewer utilizes the authorizer’s renewal evaluation criteria to provide an objective review of the draft application. The deliverable of this process is an application draft featuring detailed feedback for the school team and recommendations for improvement of the document in alignment with the renewal evaluation criteria.

APPLICATION REVIEW



3 Mock Renewal Site Visit. If desired, SchoolWorks may also conduct a Mock Renewal Site Visit to further prepare the school team and alleviate anxiety in advance of the official evaluation. Resembling the authorizer’s renewal site visit process, the Mock Renewal Site Visit will be conducted by SchoolWorks utilizing a protocol reflective of the renewal evaluation criteria. Reviewers will mimic the process, while simultaneously providing formative feedback to the participating school team.

SCHOOLWORKS RENEWAL CLIENTS



Get Started

To set up a quick phone call to talk about your renewal needs, please email Jennifer Strock at jstrock@schoolworks.org.

Experience in Supporting the Renewal Process

For more than 20 years, SchoolWorks has provided professional consulting services to support both authorizers and school teams in navigating the charter renewal process. With expertise on both sides of renewal, SchoolWorks provides capacity-building support to help stakeholders successfully manage this challenging and complex process.

Development of Authorizing Frameworks, Standards, and Tools



Chicago Public Schools. SchoolWorks partnered with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) from 2010–2016 to coordinate and facilitate the work of CPS Renewal Comprehensive Evaluation Teams (CET) responsible for reviewing summative evidence of school programs, operations, and compliance with applicable law and regulation over the life of the charter. SchoolWorks provided two Renewal CET members for each review, facilitated and coordinated the process, completed a compliance review of the School Board’s governance practices, and generated the final report.

School District of Philadelphia. In 2009, SchoolWorks partnered with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) to guide the development and implementation of a performance management model. In collaboration with the Office of Charter, Partnership, and New Schools, SchoolWorks created a rigorous, consistent protocol for the evaluation of both charter and district-managed schools and executed the review process. Upon completing each audit, SchoolWorks produced a report detailing key finding of strengths and areas for improvement, as well as recommendations for improvement. As a continued partner in this work, SchoolWorks, in 2019, provided site team members to conduct Renewal Site Visits on behalf of SDP.

State University of New York Charter Schools Institute. In 2017, the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute (SUNY) contracted SchoolWorks to review its existing site visit protocols to ensure their alignment to the organization’s Theory of Action. To complete this work, SchoolWorks assessed the extent to which SUNY’s protocols

and processes guided reviewers to collect evidence pertaining to the implementation of key design elements outlined in school charter and/or renewal applications. SchoolWorks then collaborated with SUNY to introduce necessary refinements to these tools. SchoolWorks then provided professional development to SUNY staff to maximize their effectiveness and efficiency in collecting evidence during site visits.

Renewal Site Visit Facilitation



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Since 2000, SchoolWorks has conducted renewal site visits on behalf of the ESE, in accordance with the Massachusetts Charter School Renewal Inspection Protocol. SchoolWorks has worked collaboratively with staff members of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign to complete the entire review process – ensuring that schools are appropriately prepared for the process, that the site visit is completed with fidelity to the protocol, and that the final report contains robust findings based on high-quality evidence. As long-term partners in this work, SchoolWorks executive staff continually provide input into the performance criteria and accountability processes.

Rockford Public Schools. Since 2018, SchoolWorks has engaged with Rockford Public Schools—one of the largest school districts in Illinois. To build capacity within the Rockford Public School team to independently facilitate high-quality renewal site visits to charter schools and generate related reports, SchoolWorks supported Rockford by co-facilitating visits and providing training for Rockford team members.

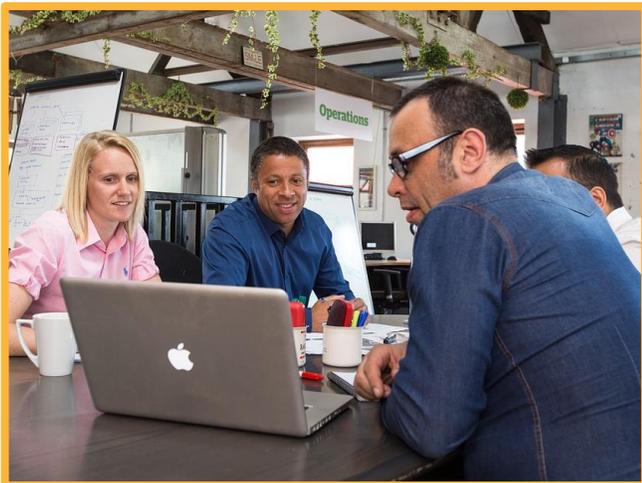


Renewal Site Visit Facilitation (continued)

Denver Public Schools. In 2013-14, Denver Public School District's Office of School Reform and Innovation contracted with SchoolWorks to conduct an external evaluation of a school facing charter renewal. Since then, the district has partnered with SchoolWorks to conduct diagnostic reviews to support schools in their improvement planning, and simultaneously supplement the district's existing school-level accountability data. Reports have been included as a source of evidence in the district's decision making on individual school accountability.

State University of New York's Charter Schools Institute. In 2016, SchoolWorks served as the external expert consultant to coordinate and execute on-site renewal review visits of 13 charter schools authorized by the State University of New York (SUNY). Using the Institute's protocol, SchoolWorks conducted the reviews and provided written reports documenting the analysis of data collected during the renewal site visits and framed by the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

Application Evaluation



San Jose Unified School District and San Juan Unified School District. SchoolWorks partnered with San Jose Unified School District in late 2017 to provide expertise and support in application and renewal decision management. Working with the authorizing staff, SchoolWorks experts developed tools and established transparent procedures for both decision-making processes, and then facilitated the objective review of petitions. SchoolWorks continues to support the San Jose authorizing staff in this capacity. Because of this successful relationship, SchoolWorks was subsequently contracted by San Juan Unified School District in 2019 to provide support for renewal decision management via third-party evaluation of renewal petitions.

Renewal Preparation Support



KIPP: Tech Valley. In 2019, the stakeholders of KIPP: Tech Valley charter school contracted SchoolWorks to support the development of the school's charter renewal application. To begin the process, the SchoolWorks team collected focused input from stakeholders via a combination of virtual and in-person focus groups and interviews. The SchoolWorks team subsequently drafted each section of the application for review and provided formatting and copy editing of the final document. To further prepare the school team for renewal, SchoolWorks hosted a mock renewal site visit in the Fall of 2019. Approval for the charter renewal is currently pending.

Merrick Academy. Founded in 2000, Merrick Academy is one of the first charter schools to open in New York City, and the very first to open in Queens. As the school entered the fourth year of its five-year charter term in 2019, its leaders partnered with SchoolWorks to gain support and assistance in preparation for the renewal process. SchoolWorks worked with the school team to facilitate a mock renewal site visit, using a protocol informed by the SUNY renewal criteria. The full-day site visit featured real-time feedback during interviews and focus groups, followed by a meeting with school leadership. The school received approval of a five-year, full-term charter renewal in February 2020.

Discovery Charter School. In 2015, Discovery Charter School of Rochester, NY engaged SchoolWorks to support the school team through the renewal process. SchoolWorks began by conducting a Quality Review at the school in order to learn about strengths and opportunities for improvement. After analyzing findings and facilitating an action-planning process, SchoolWorks advised on the school's approach and strategy for renewal. While the school took ownership for drafting most of its application, SchoolWorks provided substantive feedback throughout the process. In 2016, the NYSED Board of Regents approved a 3-year renewal. (The school subsequently received a short-term 2-year renewal in 2019.)