



Renewal Report
NACA Freedom and Democracy II (349)

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REPORT INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Report

The renewal report is a summary of findings and a resulting recommendation regarding renewal of the charter or contract for an operator-run school. To inform this recommendation, Baltimore City Public Schools collects and analyzes documentation including the School Effectiveness Review (SER) performed on site at each school and the school's renewal application, along with an evaluation of the school's performance based on the Renewal Rubric and consideration of all other relevant information.

City Schools' renewal criteria are based on state law (§ 9-101, *et seq.*, MD. CODE ANN., EDUC.) and Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners' policy IHB and associated administrative regulations (IHB-RA and JFA-RA). The Board's renewal policy requires that schools up for renewal be evaluated on multiple measures including, but not limited to, the following:

- **student achievement** (constituting at least 50 percent of the renewal score and including measures such as schoolwide performance on state assessments, College and Career Readiness (for schools with high school grades), Highly Effective Instruction (from the SER), academic programming for special student populations, and a school's fidelity to its charter);
- **school climate** (chronic absence, suspensions, enrollment school choice data, and school survey results from parents, teachers, and students);
- **financial management and governance** (annual audits, school budget submissions, grants management, and relevant documentation provided by the school's board); and
- **effective management** (school compliance with laws, rules, policies, and regulations).

The renewal process is a component of City Schools' annual review of its school portfolio, designed to ensure that students and families across the district have access to school options that meet their interests and needs. In 2011, City Schools formed the Renewal Stakeholders Working Group (composed of school operators from a range of school types, Supporting Public Schools of Choice, and the Maryland Charter School Network) to develop a methodology for evaluating the performance of operator-run schools. The result: a fair, transparent, and rigorous renewal framework that reflects schools' unique nature and innovative contributions to student achievement, used for the first time in the 2012-13 school year.

At the conclusion of each year's renewal cycle, staff engages key stakeholders in a review of the process to identify areas for improvement that could be addressed while still maintaining a level of predictability for schools up for renewal in the following year. The most recent round of process review considered the first use of the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment and the implications for renewal, given that, to date, a significant portion of the weight in the academic portion of the renewal decision has been based on assessment data. Changes made to the framework as a result of this most recent review include the following:

- Used PARCC mean scale scores for absolute and change measures; due to limited data no growth measure for this year's process

Final – Board approved on December 13, 2016.

- Continued to allow use of NWEA as alternative for the absolute measure (previously was possible alternative to growth only; temporary change for data from SY14/15 and SY15/16)
- Use City Schools School Survey for all teacher and student satisfaction results; 5 Essentials available as an alternative
- Added MSDE Quality Monitoring Tool to data used for evaluating Effective Programming for Students with Disabilities
- Changed ratings for financial management section to “meets expectations”, “developing”, and “does not meet expectations”.

The Process

The review process has the following components:

- Renewal Rubric (includes data from standardized assessments, school surveys, and the 5 Essentials Survey)
- Application for renewal
- Data tables prepared by City Schools
- School Effectiveness Review

The New and Charter School Advisory Board, a cross-representational group made up of members representing foundations, nonprofit organizations, school choice advocates, school operators, and district representatives, reviews each of these components and makes recommendations to City Schools’ CEO on whether schools should be renewed. Renewal recommendations are then voted on by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. According to Board policy, City Schools may determine that a public charter school is eligible for a five-year contract term, three-year contract term, or nonrenewal.

Actions	Timeline
Schools submit renewal applications	September 8, 2016
New and Charter School Advisory Board reviews renewal applications and makes recommendations to the CEO	September to October , 2016
District presents recommendations to Board at public meeting	November 9, 2016
Board conducts public work session for operators	November 15, 2016
Board votes on renewal recommendations	December 13, 2016

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Operator: Northwood Appold Community Association, Inc.

Configuration: Middle/High school (for the purposes of this review, only middle-grade assessments were reviewed due to age of school)

Type: Transformation

Enrollment: 303 (September 30, 2016)¹

Recommendation

Three-year renewal (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2020)

Renewal summary

Category	Finding
Is the school an academic success? (min. 50% weight)	Developing
Does the school have a strong school climate?	Developing
Has the school followed sufficient governance management and governance practices?	Effective
Has the school followed sufficient financial management and practices?*	Meets expectations

* Financial management considers a review of the operator’s audits over the contract term. “Meets expectations” is the highest rating available.

Discussion

On December 13, 2016, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners voted to renew the contract with Northwood Appold Community Association, Inc. to operate NACA Freedom and Democracy II for three additional years. Accordingly, the new contract term will run from July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2020.

The school was rated developing in Academics and Climate, effective in Governance, and meets expectations in Financial Management.

The school was rated effective in the area of highly effective instruction based on the School Effectiveness Review (SER), which considers how teachers plan and deliver instruction, adjust instruction based on data, and create a positive classroom environment, and how school leaders support the instructional program at the school. The school was rated Not Effective for its absolute performance on Math PARCC (placing in the 45th percentile with a 704.2 mean scale score for grades 6-8) and Not Effective on absolute performance on English/Language Arts PARCC (placing

¹ Total enrollment counts reflect the MSDE official enrollment file, which includes students enrolled on September 30 each year. This file is verified by MSDE prior to becoming the official enrollment count for the year.

in the 26th percentile with a 702.7 mean scale score for grades 6-8). The school was rated effective in talented people based on the SER, which considers how the school creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and creates and implements systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and schoolwide goals. Finally, the school was rated effective in vision and engagement as evidenced by the SER, which considers whether a school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff; cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with each of those stakeholder groups; and creates a culture that reflects and embraces students, staff, and community diversity.

Findings (middle school rubric)

Category 1, Academics: Is the school an academic success?

	Renewal Metric	Rating
1.1 Absolute student achievement	Average mean scale score, PARCC math (grades 6–8)	Not effective
	Average mean scale score, PARCC English language arts (grades 6–8)	Not effective
1.2 Student achievement change	Change in average mean scale score, PARCC math (grades 6–8)	Effective
	Change in average mean scale score, PARCC English language arts (grades 6–8)	Not effective
1.3 Student achievement growth	n/a	
1.4 SER, highly effective instruction	SER score in this category	Effective
1.5 Fidelity to charter/application overall	The extent to which the school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has fully implemented the mission expressed in its charter application and this mission is clear to all stakeholders • Has delivered high-quality programming for all student subgroups • Is gathering data to assess its efficacy and has effectively addressed any challenges evident in the data, particularly in the areas of subgroup performance, enrollment, student attendance, dropout rates, attrition, and student choice data/school demand 	Developing
Overall rating for Category 1, Academics		Developing

Category 2, Climate: Does the school have a strong climate?

	Renewal Metric	Rating
2.1 SER, talented people	SER score in this category	Effective
2.2 SER, vision and engagement	SER score in this category	Effective
2.3 Parent, teacher, and student satisfaction	School survey, teacher rating	Developing
	School survey, student rating	Not effective
	School survey, parent rating	Not effective
2.4 Cohort retention	Cohort retention rating	Not effective
2.5 Student attendance, chronic absence	The extent to which the school has implemented effective strategies that have kept student attendance high and chronic absences low over the course of the contract	Developing
2.6 Suspensions	The extent to which the school has implemented effective strategies that have kept suspensions low over the course of the contract	Not effective
2.7 Effective programming for students with disabilities	The extent to which the school has a demonstrated a strong trajectory of growth, is aware of its data and responsibilities to students with disabilities, does not have any gaps or has decreased gaps in the data as it relates to performance and climate metrics for students with disabilities over time, and has effectively and consistently implemented processes, interventions, and strategies to support student outcomes over the course of the contract	Developing
Overall rating in Category 2, Climate		Developing

Category 3, Finance and Governance: Has the school followed sufficient financial management and governance practices?

	Renewal Metric	Rating
3.1 Audit content, internal controls	The extent to which the school’s independent auditor’s reports offer unqualified opinions and no management points in each of the years of the charter term; the extent to which statements of cash flow and ratio of assets to liabilities indicate that the operator has strong performance on their short term liquidity measure	Meets expectations
Overall rating in Category 3, Financial Management		Meets expectations
3.2 Operator capacity	The extent to which the school has operated effectively and the operator has consistently met all state and federal reporting requirements and critical district or federal obligations and has not received any Notices of Concern or Notices of Reprimand during the contract period (evidence that may be considered includes compliance with state or federal reporting requirements, budget submissions and monitoring reports, quarterly reports, and the relative number, frequency and severity of Notices of Concern or Notices of Reprimand)	Developing
3.3 SER, strategic leadership/governance	SER score in this category	Effective
Overall rating in Category 3, Governance		Effective