

**Albuquerque Public Schools**  
**Charter School Team**  
Briefing on Charter School Renewals

**What Are Charter Schools? How Do They Work?** A charter school is a tuition-free school that is publicly funded but independently run. In exchange for exemptions from many of the state laws and regulations that govern traditional public schools, charters are bound to the terms of a contract, or "charter," that lays out a school's mission, academic goals, fiscal guidelines, and accountability requirements. On the other side of a charter contract is an authorizer that has the power to shut down charter schools that do not meet the terms of their contracts.

**Who Runs Charter Schools?**

On a day-to-day, operational level, a charter school is run by a school leader or principal and overseen by an appointed board much like a local charity would be. Unlike many traditional public schools, charters are not overseen directly by an elected school board. The role of the Albuquerque Public School Board of Education is limited to determining whether new applications are approved and current charters are renewed or revoked.

**Renewal Options for Charter Schools**

Renewing charter schools have the option to seek renewal from either their local chartering authority (district) or the Public Education Commission (PEC) as the state chartering authority. All renewal applications must be submitted on October 1 of the year prior to when the contract expires. In accordance with Subsection A of 6.80.4.13 NMAC, the chartering authority must then rule in a public meeting on the renewal of the application no later than January 1 of the fiscal year in which the charter expires. The APS Board of Education has set a board meeting date of November 13 to review the charter renewals.

**Schools that are up for Renewal for Fall 2024**

There are seven charter schools up for renewal this year: Digital Arts and Technology Academy, East Mountain High School, La Academia de Esperanza, Los Puentes, Mountain Mahogany, Public Academy for Performing Arts, and South Valley Academy

**APS Renewal Process**

The APS Charter Schools Office forms a renewal team of seven members – three from the APS office, two APS administrators and two charter school administrators to review the [renewal application](#), perform a site visit, and develop a consensus recommendation to the Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education. The APS Board will make a final determination on the renewal and may decide to renew, renew with conditions or for less than a 5-year term, or deny. If the Board decides to renew with conditions or for less than a 5-year term, it must be negotiated with the school. If the Board denies a charter school, we must put the rationale for denial in writing and give them time to respond.

**State Statute Guides Renewal**

New Mexico statute articulates a clear renewal process and criteria for renewal decisions. Charter schools are required to submit renewal applications 270 days before the charter expires (*October 1 of each year*). [The application](#) must contain a number of elements including, “a report on the progress of meeting the academic performance, financial compliance and governance responsibilities of the charter school, including achieving the goals, objectives, student performance outcomes, State standards of excellence and other terms of the charter contract” and “a financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public.”

**Reasons for Denial per State Statute**

1. Has the school committed a [material violation](#) of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter?
2. Has the school failed to [meet or make substantial progress toward achievement](#) of the PED’s minimum educational standards or student performance standards identified in the charter application?
3. Has the school failed to meet generally accepted standards of [fiscal management](#)?
4. Has the school [violated any provision of law](#) from which the charter school was not specifically exempted?