BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Renewal Report
Baltimore Design School (382)

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's renewal application, and an evaluation of the school's performance based on the renewal rubric, the School Effectiveness Review (SER) performed on site at each school 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 IHBJ and associated administrative regulations (IHBJ-RA and JFA-RA). The Board's 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), academic programming for special student populations, and a school's fidelity to its charter
- **School climate** (chronic absence, suspensions, enrollment trends, school choice data, and school survey results from parents, teachers, and students)
- **Financial management and governance** (annual audits, school budget submissions, grants management, board documentation; compliance/adherence with federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations)
- An overall finding of not effective in any of the key areas (Student Achievement, School Climate, or Financial Management/Governance) may be the basis of a non-renewal decision.

The renewal process is a component of City Schools' annual review of its schools, designed to ensure that students and families across the district have access to school options that meet their interests and needs. The framework was originally developed in 2011 by 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) who worked 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, and a process for reviewing and updating the framework each year.

At the conclusion of each year's renewal cycle, staff engages operators and other 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 Process

Based on recommendation of staff and feedback from school operators and other stakeholders following the normal feedback and review cycle, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners approved a modified renewal process for school year 2021-22. This modified process was designed to take into considerations the lingering impacts of the Covid19 pandemic on student data while still holding operators accountable to delivering strong programs for students. This year's process takes a focused look at data in the key areas (Student Achievement, School Climate and Effective Financial Management and Governance). Since the scope of certain data items like state assessments is limited, the Board approved modifications so that the only terms schools will be eligible for are either a three-year renewal term or non-renewal[1]. Non-renewal recommendations will be considered for schools where the evidence indicates serious financial sustainability concerns, or inability to comply with critical state, federal and local guidelines that places students, staff or the district at risk. Thus, schools that earn a "Not Effective" rating in any of the following metrics will be recommended for non-renewal by the Charter and Operator-Led Schools Advisory Board to the CEO:

- Effective Programming for Students with Disabilities,
- Audit Content, Internal Controls,
- Operator Capacity, or
- Strategic Leadership/Governance (All of Domain 4 from SER).

If a school is considered for non-renewal based on any of these four metrics, the Board will also consider the school's record of renewal and academic performance, as measured in the Academic Success section of the renewal rubric, in making its renewal decision.

In addition to determining the renewal or non-renewal of a school's contract, the renewal process informs the Board and the public on the efficacy of school performance and practices, as well as helping identify areas for growth in schools' planning for their next contract term.

The revised process continues to use the following components:

- Renewal Rubric (Updated to reflect the above changes)
- Application for Renewal
- Data Tables prepared by City Schools
- School Effectiveness Review (Streamlined to include fewer key actions in metrics used in the School Climate section of the renewal rubric)

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[1] In the modified renewal process for 2021-22, schools will not be eligible for a 5-year term or 8-year "extended" term. However, the outcome of the 2021-22 renewal process will allow schools to earn progress towards an extended renewal term in the future. According to Board Policy IHBJ – Public Charter Schools, "A public charter school shall only be eligible for an extended renewal term if the school has two or more consecutive full renewals, including demonstrating quality programming for all student groups." For the 2021-22 renewal process, a school that receives "Meets Expectations", "Effective" or "Highly Effective" in each of the four metrics that could lead to non-renewal listed above, as well as "Effective" or "Highly Effective" in the overall Academics section, will be considered to have earned a full renewal for their progress towards an 8-year extended renewal in future renewal processes.

The process starts with a review by the Charter and Operator-led Schools Advisory Board, whose members represent foundations, nonprofit organizations, school choice advocates, school operators, and district representatives; and whose function is to provide advice to the CEO on renewal and other issues as they relate to operator-led schools. In performing its review, the Advisory Board looks at all data and information, both quantitative and qualitative, to make sound recommendations to the CEO. After its review of the components above, the Advisory Board makes recommendations to City Schools' CEO on whether charters or contracts should be renewed. The CEO considers the recommendations and the quantitative and qualitative review, and then makes her own recommendation to the Board. In some instances, the nature or severity of an issue raised during the renewal process is serious enough to give it extra weight in formulating the renewal recommendation and, ultimately, the renewal decision, especially in instances where the issue affects the wellbeing of students, staff, or the district as a whole.

The ultimate decision on all operator renewals rests with the Board, which considers the recommendations and rationale of the CEO, the operator renewal report, testimony given at public Board meetings and work sessions, the contents of the official record and the factors listed in policy IHBJ and administrative regulation IHBJ-RA for charter schools, and policy FCA and administrative regulation FCA-RA for non-charter schools. This includes the Board's ability to consider prior partial renewal terms afforded to operators who have had serious challenges in the prior renewal that remain issues that continue to affect the wellbeing of students, staff, or the district as a whole based on evidence in this renewal process. In particular, as Policy IHBJ states, "[t]he Board may decide that a public charter school is not eligible for two consecutive partial renewals."

Actions	Timeline
Schools submit renewal applications	September 2, 2021
Charter and Operator-led Schools Advisory Board reviews renewal applications and makes recommendations to the CEO	September to October 2021
District presents recommendations to Board at public meeting	November 9, 2021
Work Session for operator to provide oral testimony to Board in a meeting open to the public	December 9, 2021
Board votes on renewal recommendations	January 11, 2022

Baltimore Design School #382

> *Operator:* Baltimore Design School, Inc.
> *Configuration:* Middle/High
> *Type:* Transformation
> *Enrollment:* 514[2]

Recommendation

3-year renewal

Discussion

On January 11, 2022, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners voted to renew the contract with Baltimore Design School, Inc. to operate Baltimore Design School for a three-year term running from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025.

The school was rated "Meets Expectations" in Audits/Internal Controls, and "Effective" in Effective Programming for Students with Disabilities, Operator Capacity, and Strategic Leadership/Governance. The school was rated "Effective" in Academics.

Baltimore Design was rated "Effective" in Fidelity to Charter/Application Overall, indicating that *the school has implemented the mission expressed in its school application and the mission is clear to most stakeholders*[1]." The school's mission to foster creativity, develop academic and critical thinking skills, and prepare students for college and career in design fields is apparent throughout school programming. Partnerships with local colleges and universities, as well as companies with a design focus are used to enhance school programming and student experience.
Additionally, "[*t*]*he school has made a good to fair effort to gather data to assess its efficacy and has implemented effective strategies to address any challenges evident in the data, particularly in the areas of student performance, enrollment, student attendance, dropout rates, attrition and student choice data/school demand*." The school has implemented a clear process for data collection and analysis to track academic and climate data. These practices are aligned to the school's goals and for each goal area the school has a plan to address challenges. For example, one of the goals is to reduce absence and chronic absence; the school's data analysis practices along with root cause supports (family meetings, schoolwide use of PBIS, providing resources to families, and utilizing partnerships) have resulted in the school's attendance being higher than the district average in both middle and high school grades, as well as has led to chronic absence rates lower than the average and a reduction of the school's chronic absence rates over the three-year period considered (2017-18 through 2019-20). Even with these successes, the school still recognizes the need to continue to improve in a variety of areas including to deepen and broaden its works with teachers in data analysis, creation of goals and using the goals to drive school-wide improvement.
Baltimore Design School was rated "Highly Effective" in its 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate, with a three-year average of 99% of diploma-track seniors graduating within four years of entry to high school. The school was also rated "Highly Effective" in College and Career Readiness, which

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[2] Total enrollment counts reflect the MSDE official enrollment file for grades k-12, 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.

considers participation and success in career and college indicators (e.g., SAT, Advanced Placement, and Career and Technical Education) and enrollment in college. The school has taken steps to increase student preparation for post-graduation success through activities such as the expansion of programming and participation in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming going from virtually no participation to 63.5% participation for the class of 2020 in either Interactive Media Production or Construction Design Management CTE pathways, the expansion of Honors courses and Advanced Placement courses (including AP 2-D Art and Design, AP Studio Art, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, AP English Literature and Composition, etc.) and partnerships with Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Loyola University of Maryland, Morgan State University, University of Baltimore, and Baltimore City Community College resulting in 58.1% participation in dual enrollment for the class of 2020. This varied approach resulted in 100% participation (in activities such as ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement, and Career and Technical Education), 68.9% success (in activities such as ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement, and Career and Technical Education) and 78.9% of the class of 2019 being enrolled in college; all components of the College and Career Readiness measure.

The state performance ratings are based on the most recent years when the state assessment was given which are for school years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. For PARCC absolute performance (2018-19), schools are compared to schools with similar levels of students considered economically disadvantaged (ED) because absolute performance on assessments is highly correlated to the relative wealth of student populations. In this measure, Baltimore Design was rated "Highly Effective" in both Algebra I (100th percentile) and ELA 10 (100th percentile), "Effective" in math 6-8 (65th percentile in the ED comparison group), and "Not Effective" in ELA 6-8 (42nd percentile). In PARCC growth performance which looks at the extent to which a school can improve individual student performance year to year over the three-year period considered, the school was rated "Developing" for math 6-8 (65th percentile overall) and "Not Effective for ELA 6-8 (40th percentile). The school should continue to take steps to improve student performance with a special focus in middle grades. Some of the steps the school has already begun to take include adding quarterly intervention times where students engage in data-based activities using learning platforms as well as time for additional teacher-based instruction in needed areas. For this school year the school indicated it planned to add tutoring for students who need the most support based on assessment data (FEV Tutoring).

For more information on school practices, please also see the school's School Effectiveness Report available at www.baltimorecityschools.org.

Findings (Middle/High school rubric)

Category 1. Has the school followed sufficient financial management and governance practices? Has the school had challenges with meeting critical district, state or federal guidelines? Has the school delivered strong academic programming for students will disabilities that demonstrates a trajectory of growth? Has the school provided strategic leadership and governance?

Sub-Category	Renewal Metric	City Schools Rating
1.1 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**
1.2 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.	**Effective**
1.3 Operator Capacity	The extent to which the school has operated effectively, and the operator has consistently met all state, federal reporting requirements 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.)	**Effective**
1.4 Strategic Leadership/ Governance	School Effectiveness Review Score - Strategic Leadership	**Effective**
There is no overall rating for this section as each metric is considered individually.		

Category 2. Is the school an academic success?

Sub-Category	Renewal Metric	City Schools Rating
2.1 Absolute Student Achievement	Average Mean Scale Score PARCC ELA (grades 6-8)	**Not Effective**
	Average Mean Scale Score PARCC Math (grades 6-8)	**Effective**
	Average Mean Scale Score PARCC ELA 10	**Highly Effective**
	Average Mean Scale Score PARCC Algebra I	**Highly Effective**
2.2 Student Achievement Trend	Trend in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC ELA (grades 6-8)	**Highly Effective**
	Trend in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC Math (grades 6-8)	**Highly Effective**
	Trend in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC ELA 10	**Not Effective**
	Trend in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC Algebra I	**Not Effective**
2.3 Student Achievement Growth	Growth in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC ELA (grades 6-8)	**Not Effective**
	Growth in Average Mean Scale Score PARCC Math (grades 6-8)	**Developing**
2.4 College and Career Readiness	Participation and Success in indicators of college and career readiness; College Enrollment within 16 months of graduation	**Highly Effective**
2.5 Fidelity to Charter/Application Overall	The extent to which the school has fully implemented the mission expressed in its charter application and this mission is clear to all stakeholders. The extent to which the school has delivered high quality programming for all student subgroups. The extent to which the school 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.	**Effective**
2.6 Student Graduation Rate: 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Percent of diploma-track students who graduated from City Schools with their freshman-year cohort, averaged over school years 2018-2020	**Highly Effective**
Academics Overall Rating		**Effective**

Category 3. Does the school have a strong climate[3]?

As part of the modified renewal process for 2021-22, Domains 1-3 of the School Effectiveness Review (SER), which are considered in the Climate section of the renewal rubric, were modified and abbreviated. These domains did not receive overall ratings and are summarized below. For more information on the efficacy of school practice in these domains please see the full SER report available on the district website at https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/renewal.

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction		
Domain	**Description**	**Rating**
1.1	School leadership supports highly effective instruction.	**Effective**
1.2	Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.	**Not Rated**
1.3	Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.	**Developing**
1.4	Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching, and learning can occur.	**Not rated**

Domain 2: Talented People		
Domain	**Description**	**Rating**
2.1	The school implements systems to select effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs meet the needs of the school.	**Not Rated**
2.2	The school develops teacher and staff capacity through individualized support and professional development.	**Highly Effective**

Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

Domain	Description	Rating
3.1	The school has a clear vision and mission that promotes a student-centered, culturally relevant learning that prepares students for future success.	**Effective**
3.2	The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families and the community.	**Effective**
3.3	The climate and culture of the school creates a welcoming learning environment that meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student.	**Not Rated**