



New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools

Red Bank Charter School

Renewal Site Visit Summary October 28, 2016

Renewal Process Overview

Central to the charter school concept is the trade-off between greater autonomy and increased accountability. Charter schools operate under fewer regulations than traditional public schools and are consequently held to higher accountability standards. Charter school leaders understand the greater emphasis placed on results-based accountability and the importance of producing positive outcomes. If a school is not producing marked results, it runs the risk of its charter being revoked.

In July 2012, the Department released the [Performance Framework](#) which outlines academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all New Jersey public charter schools are evaluated. In August 2015, the [Organizational Performance Framework](#) was revised to provide clear and precise information on how a charter school's organizational performance is evaluated. The Performance Framework is used throughout the charter term as the basis for school evaluation, monitoring and intervention and in all high-stakes decision making, including replication, expansion, renewal and closure.

The decision to renew a charter for each subsequent five-year period will be based on a comprehensive review guided by the following three questions within the Performance Framework:

1. Is the school's academic program a success?
2. Is the school financially viable?
3. Is the school equitable and organizationally sound?

During the renewal process, the Department reviews the school's renewal application, annual reports, student performance on state assessments, site visit results and other information in order to make a renewal decision. The Commissioner of Education will notify a charter school regarding the granting or denial of the renewal on or before February 28 of the last school year of the current charter term. The notification to a charter school that is not granted a renewal shall include reasons for the denial.

Renewal Site Visit Overview

On October 28, 2016, from 9:30AM to 12:00PM, the following site visit team members visited Red Bank Charter School

Name of Reviewer	Organization
Jane Marano	NJDOE, Monmouth County
Deborah Bleisnick	NJDOE, Monmouth County
Allie Cobb	NJDOE
Julie Bunt	NJDOE

Through the renewal process, the Department gathers evidence and data based upon the criteria laid out within the Performance Framework. After the visit, the review team aggregated the evidence and data collected to create this Renewal Site Visit Summary Report.

Charter School Basic Information

The information below was provided by the school in its 2015-2016 annual report and renewal application.

BASIC INFORMATION	
Name of School	Red Bank Charter School
Year School Opened	1998
Grade Level(s) in 2015-2016	PreK - 8
Current Enrollment	200
Maximum Enrollment	200
Current Waiting List	113
School Address(es)	58 Oakland Street, Red Bank NJ 07701
District(s) / Region of Residence	Red Bank
Website Address	www.redbankcharterschool.com
Name of Board President	Roger Foss
Board President email address	r.foss@redbankcharterschool.com
Board President phone number	732 450 2092
Name of School Leader	Meredith Pennotti
School Leader email address	m.pennotti@redbankcharterschool.com
School Leader phone number	732 450 2092
Name of SBA	David Block
SBA email address	d.block@redbankcharterschool.com
SBA phone number	732 450 2092

Findings and Ratings

This section presents the site visit team’s findings based on its review of the school. Due to the abbreviated nature of this site visit, the review team did not rate the school on all of the performance areas within the Framework. Data and information presented below was primarily gathered through an analysis of academic performance, renewal application, annual report, site visit documents, classroom observations and interviews conducted during the Renewal Site Visit.

Organizational Performance Framework
Findings
<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter. The mission of Red Bank Charter School is to “ensure a secure and nurturing environment that will be conducive to learning and will challenge students to achieve academic excellence.” On the day of the visit, the key design elements of the mission were evident throughout. The environment in hallways and classrooms, in interactions among staff and students, was warm and nurturing. The delivery of the mission is supported by an explicit character education program that is measured annually through a school climate survey and by a service learning initiative that begins in Pre-Kindergarten and culminates with an off-site internship in the eighth grade. After analyzing student needs, the school decided to expand its offerings to include, among other things, a STEM lab and an Algebra 1 course. The school works cohesively with receiving schools through articulation meetings and with students through a survey of graduates that asks for feedback on areas of strengths and weaknesses in the program.</p> <p>The school promotes a culture of high expectations and is safe, respectful and supportive. Interviewed students spoke about the community feel of the school. They indicated that the school feels like a “family” where they are free to pursue activities they find interesting and may have a positive impact on the community. Recently, students participated in a research project about physical and intellectual disabilities in order to prepare for their service learning at the Arc of Monmouth. Another group of students was looking to begin a little free library in the community for their service learning. Notably, interviewed students were able to articulate their desire for curriculum enhancements in writing and believed that by having these conversations with staff they would encourage change.</p> <p>The board has the capacity to govern the school effectively. Red Bank Charter School operates with a nine person board comprised of community members and parents. Six members of the board are board elected, while three members of the board are appointed by the parents of the school. Currently, the board is composed of individuals with notable expertise in education, the law and finance. Interviewed board members expressed their commitment to achieving the strategic goals of the school. One of these goals is to ensure that the charter school is serving the diverse school-age population of Red Bank. To that end, the board last year requested, and school administration implemented, a weighted lottery to provide a 3:2 enrollment preference to economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, the school increased communications to the community to ensure a broad understanding</p>

of what the charter school is and how to apply. This year, for example, information about the school was sent to every postal customer in Red Bank.

Within the school, there is a clear and well-functioning organizational structure that appears to lead to continuous improvement. Under the direction of the school lead and the director of curriculum, and supported by the work of consultants, curriculum was reviewed and revised by faculty over the summer. Teachers worked in teams with the consultants to evaluate the standards and participate in curriculum mapping. Faculty meetings are conducted twice a month and provide teachers with opportunity to evaluate data and check in with each other.