Thomas B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION · CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

TIER 1 · FAST TRACK

Renewal Application

For schools with sustained, demonstrated performance — a streamlined path to a five-year renewal.

RENEWAL CYCLE
Fall 2026

ISSUED BY
Office of Sponsorship
The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

FOREWORD

From the Office of Sponsorship

This application is brief by design. Tier 1 placement reflects three (or more) years of state report card evidence that your school is delivering on the academic and organizational commitments made at last renewal. The default outcome of a complete Tier 1 application is a five-year renewal.

The fast-track pathway exists because Fordham believes that schools producing strong outcomes for students should not be asked to relitigate their case. Our role at renewal is to confirm that the school we sponsored is operating as that school in daily operation and outcomes, surface any material changes since last renewal, and look ahead to the next term.

One exception to the streamlined design: if any indicator on your three-year state report card review was flagged as Falls Far Below, Section 4 asks for a focused gap analysis on those indicators only. This is not a deficiency review. It is a request that strong schools account for a specific signal that ran counter to the broader pattern of performance.

We have written this application to honor the time of school leaders whose schools are working.

ORIENTATION

How This Application Is Organized

The Tier 1 renewal application has six substantive sections plus required attestations. Most schools will complete this application in 8 to 12 pages of response.

SECTIONS

1. School Identification — basic data, leadership, board chair, term dates.
2. Mission and Model Continuity — confirmation that the instructional model and mission approved at last renewal remain in place.
3. Forward-Looking Goals — academic and organizational goals for the next renewal term.
4. Material Changes and Notifications — any leadership, governance, facility, or grade-span changes since last renewal.
5. Targeted Gap Analysis — completed only if one or more indicators were flagged Falls Far Below in the three-year review.
6. Required Attestations and Assurances — board-signed certifications.

SECTION 1

School Identification

Provide the following basic information. This section establishes the record of the application and does not require narrative response.

LEGAL NAME OF SCHOOL	
OPERATING NAME (IF DIFFERENT)	
IRN	
STREET ADDRESS	
GRADES SERVED	
CURRENT ENROLLMENT	
CURRENT RENEWAL TERM — START DATE	
CURRENT RENEWAL TERM — END DATE	
HEAD OF SCHOOL / SUPERINTENDENT	
BOARD CHAIR	
APPLICATION CONTACT NAME	
APPLICATION CONTACT EMAIL	
APPLICATION CONTACT PHONE	

SECTION 2

Mission and Model Continuity

Tier 1 placement assumes the school operating today is substantially the school Fordham sponsored at last renewal. This section confirms that assumption or surfaces where it requires updating.

2.1 Confirm that the school's mission as stated at last renewal remains in effect.

If the mission has been formally revised by the board since last renewal, provide the revised mission statement and the date of board action. If unchanged, a single sentence of confirmation is sufficient.

2.2 Confirm that the instructional model described in the school's most recently approved Educational Plan (Exhibit 1) remains the operating model of the school.

If the model has evolved in ways material to instruction — for example, a change in core curriculum, a meaningful shift in how the school approaches literacy or mathematics, or a change in how the school structures intervention — describe the change, when it occurred, and the board action authorizing it.

> **WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE**
>
> - A clear statement of what is unchanged.
> - Specific identification of any material changes, with dates of board action.
> - No restatement of the original mission or model — Fordham has the approved Exhibit 1 on file.

SECTION 3

Forward-Looking Goals

This section sets the goals against which the school's next renewal term will be evaluated. Goals should be specific, measurable, and ambitious enough to extend the school's trajectory rather than restate current performance.

3.1 Identify three to five academic goals for the next renewal term.

Each goal should name an outcome, a measure, and a target. Where appropriate, identify a specific student group whose progress the goal addresses. Goals should be achievable but not safe.

3.2 Identify two to three organizational goals for the next renewal term that increase effectiveness.

Organizational goals may include enrollment, retention, financial position, governance development, or staff development. Each goal should name a measure and a target.

> **WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE**
>
> - Goals expressed as specific, measurable targets — not aspirations.
> - Targets that represent progress beyond current performance.
> - Honest identification of conditions that could affect goal attainment.
> - Clear identification of which goals address specific student groups, where applicable.

SECTION 4

Material Changes and Notifications

Identify any material changes since last renewal or anticipated in the future. For each change, provide the date, the nature of the change, and the board action (if applicable). Sponsorship records should already reflect these changes; this section creates a single, authoritative summary at the renewal point.

4.1 Leadership changes.

Identify any change in head of school, principal, or other instructional leadership since last renewal or on the horizon. Identify any intended changes to leadership staffing or organizational structure. Include the date of transition and the current leader's start date.

4.2 Governance changes.

Identify any change in board composition material to the board's capacity to govern — including changes in board chair, treasurer, or members with specific expertise (legal, financial, instructional). Identify any intended changes to board staffing or organizational structure. A full board roster is requested in Section 6.

4.3 Facility, grade-span, or enrollment changes.

Identify any change in physical location, grades served, authorized enrollment, or enrollment patterns material to the school's operating model. Include date and any associated board or sponsor action.

4.4 Identify any additional specific risks or conditions the school will be monitoring during the next term that could affect achievement of the goals in section 3. Indicate if there are any known factors that may threaten the success of the school (demographics, policy, funding, etc) or any other material changes.

This is a candid forecasting question, not a deficiency disclosure. Examples include demographic shifts in the catchment area, or known funding changes. Identify any other change since last renewal that, in the school's judgment, Fordham should be aware of at the renewal point. Examples include changes in management or service contracts, changes in the school's legal or corporate structure, or

significant changes in the school's financial position. Identify any major changes on the horizon that will impact the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the school.

SECTION 5 · CONDITIONAL

Targeted Gap Analysis

Complete this section only if **one or more indicators on your three-year state report card review were flagged Falls Far Below.** Schools with no Falls Far Below flags should mark this section Not Applicable and proceed to Section 6.

Tier 1 placement signals that the broader pattern of performance is strong; this section asks the school to account for a specific indicator that ran counter to that pattern.

Complete one Targeted Gap Analysis entry for each indicator flagged Falls Far Below. Most Tier 1 schools will complete one entry; a small number will complete two.

TARGETED GAP ANALYSIS

5.1 Identify the specific indicator flagged Falls Far Below and the year(s) in which it was flagged.

Name the indicator precisely — for example, 'Achievement Component, Performance Index, 2023–24' or 'Gap Closing, English Learner subgroup, 2024–25.'

5.2 Describe what the school understands to be the underlying drivers of performance on this indicator.

This is a diagnostic question. Strong responses identify specific, knowable factors — student group composition, curriculum alignment, staffing changes, attendance patterns, instructional gaps — rather than general explanations.

5.3 Describe the actions the school has taken or is taking in response.

Include actions already underway and any actions planned for the coming year. Be specific about what will be different and when results would be expected to appear.

5.4 Identify the indicator-specific goal the school is committing to for the next renewal term.

State the goal as a specific target on the same indicator, with a year by which the target is expected to be reached. This goal becomes part of the renewal record.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- A precise, candid diagnostic — not a defense of the result.
- Identification of drivers the school can actually address through its instructional or organizational practice.
- Actions specific enough that progress can be observed during a site visit.
- An indicator-specific target the school is willing to be held to.

SECTION 6

Required Attestations and Assurances

The following attestations are required of all Tier 1 renewal applicants. Each attestation must be acknowledged by the board chair through signature on the signature page (Section 7). Supporting documentation should be appended where indicated.

ATTESTATIONS

1. The school's board has reviewed this application and authorizes its submission to the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.
2. The information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of the board's knowledge.
3. The school remains in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing community schools in Ohio.
4. The school remains in compliance with the terms of its current sponsorship contract with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, including all financial, governance, and operational requirements.
5. The school's most recent independent financial audit has been completed and submitted, with no material findings outstanding (or, if findings are outstanding, with a corrective action plan in place that has been shared with Fordham).
6. The school's board has reviewed the most recent three years of state report card data and the forward-looking goals set forth in Section 3.
7. The school's board commits to ongoing engagement with Fordham regarding the goals identified in this application throughout the next renewal term.

REQUIRED APPENDICES

- Current board roster, with member names, roles, term dates, and date of last election.
- Most recent board-approved organizational budget.
- Most recent independent financial audit (cover and management letter).
- Current school leadership organizational chart.
- If applicable, documentation of any board action referenced in Sections 2 or 4.

SECTION 7

Signature Page

By signing below, the head of school and the board chair affirm that the information provided in this application is accurate, that the board has reviewed and authorized this submission, and that the school will engage with Fordham throughout the next renewal term in accordance with the terms of sponsorship.

Head of School

NAME

TITLE

SIGNATURE

DATE

Board Chair

NAME

TITLE

SIGNATURE

DATE

— END OF APPLICATION —