Thomas B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION · CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

TIER 2 · CONDITIONAL RENEWAL

Renewal Application

For schools whose performance pattern warrants a conditional three-year renewal contingent on closing identified gaps.

RENEWAL CYCLE
Fall 2026

ISSUED BY
Office of Sponsorship
The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

FOREWORD

From the Office of Sponsorship

Tier 2 placement reflects three years of state report card evidence that your school is producing satisfactory results for some students while falling short for others, or that your performance pattern is mixed in ways that warrant additional scrutiny before any renewal decision can be made.

The Gap Analysis section of this application is the diagnostic frame for everything that follows. It asks the school to conduct a gap analysis of the indicators where its performance has lagged, and to commit to specific actions tied to those gaps as well as benchmarks or criteria against which to monitor those actions.

Many Tier 2 schools are doing strong work in difficult circumstances. The application does not ask the school to apologize for its performance — it asks the school to be precise about what is working, what is not, and what will be different in the years ahead if it is renewed..

ORIENTATION

How This Application Is Organized

The Tier 2 renewal application has ten substantive sections plus required attestations and a signature page. The Gap Analysis (Section 9) is the structural center of the application and should receive proportional attention.

SECTIONS

1. School Identification — basic data, leadership, board chair, term dates.
2. Performance Summary — strategic priorities over the contract term, the school's responses, and the contextual factors most material to performance.
3. Gap Analysis — diagnostic review of indicators where the school's three-year performance has lagged, with the school's go-forward plan for each.
4. Mission and Model — current state of the school's mission and instructional model, including any evolution since last renewal.
5. Instructional Program — current state of curriculum, classroom practice, instructional supports, and use of student data.
6. Professional Development — the schoolwide systems that build and sustain instructional quality.
7. Governance — the board's oversight, leader evaluation, and ongoing development.
8. Finance — financial position, key forecast assumptions, and audit corrective action status.
9. Material Changes and Notifications — leadership, governance, facility, or grade-span changes since last renewal.
10. Organizational Capacity — board, leadership, and financial position relative to the gap analysis commitments.
11. Required Attestations and Assurances — board-signed certifications.
12. Signature Page.

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

Performance Summary

This section establishes the shared performance record on which the rest of the application rests. Fordham will provide the three-year state report card data summary as Appendix A; this section asks the school to interpret that record in light of the strategic priorities the school has been pursuing.

2.1 Provide a brief narrative summary of the school's three-year performance record against its contractual commitments — including state report card targets and any school-specific goals. Identify the strongest and weakest components. Specific indicators and go-forward plans are addressed in Section 3.

Strong responses are concise (roughly one page), honest about both strengths and shortfalls, and avoid replicating the indicator-level analysis that belongs in Section 3.

2.2 Identify the contextual factors the school considers most important to understanding its performance record.

Contextual factors are real but should be named precisely — enrollment shifts, mobility, leadership transitions, pandemic-era disruptions,finances, competition, demographic changes. This question is not an invitation to deflect from outcomes; it is an invitation to locate them in context.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- Specific identification of strongest and weakest performance components.
- Contextual factors named precisely, not used to displace responsibility for outcomes.

SECTION 3

Gap Analysis

The Gap Analysis is the diagnostic core of the Tier 2 application. The school is asked to identify the root cause of, and the go-forward plan for, each lagging indicator.

Complete one Gap Analysis entry for each lagging indicator. There is no minimum or maximum number of gap entries. Schools should include the entries that the data warrant.

Gap Analysis — Standard Entry Format

Each Gap Analysis entry should be structured as follows:

A. Root Cause. Identify the indicator and explain specifically why your school's performance on this indicator has not met the standard.

Name the underlying cause — not just what the data shows. The most credible responses identify specific decisions, systems, or capacity gaps and acknowledge the school's own role in producing them.

B. Go Forward Plan. Describe the specific actions the school will take to address the root cause in the next contract term, and the measurable targets by which Fordham will assess progress at each annual review.

Targets must be specific enough to evaluate — not directional aspirations. Name the owner, timeline, and data source that will be used to assess each target.

> **WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE**
>
> - Diagnostic specificity — drivers identified at a root cause level the school can actually address.
> - Honest treatment of actions taken to date, including their limits.
> - Actions specific enough to be observed during a site visit.
> - Timelines that are realistic but not indefinite.
> - Clear owners and accountability — not diffused across the staff.

- Leading indicators that allow the school and Fordham to know early whether actions are working.

SECTION 4

Mission and Model

This section addresses the foundation of the school's identity and the design of its instructional approach. Fordham has the school's most recently approved Educational Plan (Exhibit 1) on file; this section asks the school to confirm or update that record.

4.1 State the school's current mission.

If the mission has been formally revised by the board since last renewal, identify the date of revision and provide the prior mission for reference.

4.2 Describe the school's instructional model in its own terms.

This question asks how the school describes its instructional approach — the curricular choices, the way teachers plan and deliver instruction, the way the school approaches literacy and mathematics, the way the school uses data, and the way the school supports students who need additional time or scaffolding. Use the school's own language.

4.3 Identify any material changes to the instructional model since last renewal, or any planned changes for the next term. For planned changes, describe how the change is intended to address one or more of the gaps identified in Section 3.

Material changes include adoption of new core curriculum, restructuring of intervention systems, significant changes in scheduling or grouping practices, or shifts in the school's theory of how students learn. Include the date and the board action authorizing each change.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- A description of the instructional model in the school's own language — not in the language of any external framework.
- Clear identification of any material changes, with dates of board action.

- Honest treatment of where the model is settled and where it is still evolving.
- Internal coherence between the model described here and the Section 2 performance pattern.

SECTION 5

Instructional Program

This section addresses the core academic program of the school as it operates today, including curriculum, classroom practice, instructional supports, and the use of student data to drive decisions.

5.1 Identify the curriculum your school uses for each subject and grade band. For each, confirm its current EdReports.org or What Works Clearinghouse rating. For ELA in grades K–5, confirm that all core curriculum and reading intervention materials are on the ODEW approved list.

Identify primary curricular materials in use for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, including the grade levels at which each is in use. For elementary grades, address how the school approaches early literacy in particular.

5.2 Describe what teaching and learning has typically looked like in your classrooms over the contract term — and any meaningful shifts that will occur going forward to address the gaps identified in Section 3.

A strong response is observable and specific — it describes what teachers and students actually do, not what the school believes about instruction.

5.3 Describe the school's system of instructional support for students who need additional intervention to access grade-level content and opportunities for enriched learning for higher achieving students.

This includes intervention structures (whether MTSS-aligned or otherwise), supports for students with disabilities, supports for English Learners, and any other system the school uses to ensure access to grade-level rigor for all students and extension structures that provide opportunities for

accelerated learners. If a subgroup is named in the Section 3 gap analysis, the response should describe specifically how the support system will be strengthened for that subgroup in the next contract term.

5.4 Describe how your school's approach to using student data to monitor progress and drive instructional decisions has evolved over the contract term — what has strengthened, where gaps remain, and how the data system will be used to monitor progress on closing the gaps identified in Section 3.

A strong response is honest in both directions — it does not only celebrate progress, and it does not only describe problems.

5.5 Describe how your school has approached civics, history, character education and citizenship instruction during the contract term, and how you intend to approach these subjects in the next contract term.

A strong response demonstrates intentional, structured programming — not incidental coverage of civics content — and identifies any planned changes to that programming in the next contract term

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- A specific, current account of curricular materials in use — not a historical or aspirational description.
- A specific, clear description of daily instructional practice and a detailed description of intended shifts.
- Instructional supports described as a coherent system, not a list of programs.
- Honest acknowledgment of where the use of student data has matured and where it has not.
- Systematic and comprehensive approach to civics and history in structural ways

SECTION 6

Professional Development

This section addresses the school's commitment to professional learning. The focus is on detailing the schoolwide systems and structures that support the development of teachers and leaders.

6.1 Describe how your school has built and sustained instructional improvement through lesson preparation and teacher coaching during the contract term, and any planned adjustments to these systems intended to close the gaps identified in Section 3.

A strong response demonstrates that these systems have produced observable changes in classroom practice — not just that they existed. This question asks about the mechanics of your coaching and lesson preparation systems.

6.2 Describe how your school has designed, delivered, and evaluated whole-group professional development during the contract term, and how the PD plan for the next term will be designed to address the gaps identified in Section 3.

A strong response shows that PD has been driven by evidence of what teachers need — not by calendar convenience or vendor availability. This question asks about how professional development was designed and evaluated.

6.3 Describe the instructional leadership capacity your school has maintained during the contract term, and report your staff retention rate for the last three years.

A strong response is honest about whether instructional leadership capacity has been sufficient — and if not, what the school has learned. This question should detail who provides instructional support, what frameworks have been used, an analysis of effectiveness on teacher practice and staff retention, and whether current leadership capacity is sufficient to lead the gap-closure work described in Section 3.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- A specific, current account of protocols, processes, or meeting structures that support the effectiveness of instructional delivery and teacher practice.
- A specific, clear description of how teachers are coached and developed — one-on-one, in cohorts, or as a whole.
- An honest account of where leadership has been successful and where its capacity has been insufficient — and what will be different in the next term.
- An honest account of staff retention for teachers and leaders — and an analysis of root causes and adjustments to be made next term.

SECTION 7

Governance

This section addresses the board's role, effectiveness, and ongoing oversight of the school. For a school in conditional renewal, the board's capacity to oversee gap-closure work is a substantive element of the renewal evaluation.

7.1 Describe the board's specific oversight role during the contract term and its direct engagement with the school's academic and financial performance, including how the board responded as the performance pattern that led to Tier 2 placement became visible.

A strong response demonstrates active, independent governance — not passive approval of school leadership or CMO decisions.

7.2 Describe the board's process for evaluating the school leader during the contract term, and summarize the outcomes of the most recent evaluation.

A strong response demonstrates that the board exercises independent oversight of school leadership — not that evaluation occurred as a formality.

7.3 Describe the training the board has obtained during the contract term and how the board has assessed whether that training has strengthened its governance capacity.

A strong response identifies topics addressed and evidence that training produced strong governance practice.

7.4 Describe the current composition of your governing board and its capacity to oversee a school in conditional renewal.

Address the skill mix currently represented on the board (academic, financial, legal, governance, community), any gaps in expertise the board has identified, and how the board has adjusted its own composition, training, or practices in response to the performance pattern that led to Tier 2 placement. The board roster is provided as Appendix C.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- How the board has monitored and responded to academic performance against contractual goals during the contract term.
- What the most recent leader evaluation found and what, if any, actions resulted. If applicable, how the board evaluates the management company or CMO.
- Evidence that board training has translated into stronger governance practice, not only attendance at training events.
- A candid account of board composition and skill mix relative to the demands of overseeing a school in conditional renewal, including any expertise gaps the board has identified and the steps taken to address them.

SECTION 8

Finance

This section addresses the school's financial standing, sustainability, and audit history. The school's financial statements and audited financials are filed in Epicenter and should not be re-attached here; this section asks for narrative interpretation and the corrective action update.

8.1 Provide a summary of your school's current financial position and the key assumptions underlying your financial forecast for the renewal term.

A strong response is concise and honest — it does not restate numbers from the financial statements but provides context that helps Fordham understand what is driving them.

8.2 Provide a current-year update on any required corrective action from the most recent independent financial audit.

Identify each finding from the most recent audit, the school's corrective action commitment, and the current status of that work. If there are no outstanding findings, state so directly. Fordham participates in audit exit conversations and is looking for a candid status, not a re-submission of the audit itself.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- A summary of the school's current financial health, including any significant changes from the prior contract period.
- The two or three key assumptions driving the financial forecast — enrollment projections, staffing costs, facility costs, or other material factors.
- Any financial risks the school has identified and how it plans to manage them.
- Honest, current status on every audit finding, not a restatement of the original finding language.

SECTION 9

Organizational Capacity

This section addresses whether the school has the organizational capacity to execute the Gap Analysis commitments made in Section 3 — the leadership, governance, and financial position required to deliver on the commitments made in this application.

9.1 Describe the leadership team responsible for executing the Gap Analysis commitments.

Identify the head of school, principal(s), and any other instructional or operational leaders central to plan execution. Provide the current leadership organizational chart as Appendix B.

9.2 Describe the board's role in monitoring the Gap Analysis commitments.

Strong Tier 2 boards engage substantively with academic performance, not only with finance and compliance. Describe how the board reviews academic data, how it engages with the go-forward plan, and how it holds school leadership accountable for progress. Provide the current board roster as Appendix C.

9.3 Describe the school's financial position relative to the Gap Analysis commitments.

Identify any resource implications of the go-forward plan and confirm that the school's financial position can support those resources. The most recent board-approved budget is filed in Epicenter.

9.4 Identify any organizational capacity risks the school is monitoring.

This may include anticipated leadership transitions, board recruitment needs, financial pressures, or facility decisions on the horizon. The point is to surface known risks, not to enumerate every possibility.

WHAT A STRONG RESPONSE WILL INCLUDE

- Leadership team described with specific roles and responsibilities for plan execution.
- A board engagement model that addresses academic performance, not only fiduciary matters.
- Honest treatment of resource implications of the go-forward plan.
- Risks named candidly, with any mitigations identified.

SECTION 10

Material Changes and Notifications

Identify any material changes since last renewal. For each change, provide the date, the nature of the change, and the board action (if applicable).

10.1 Leadership changes.

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

10.2 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. A full board roster is requested in Section 10. Indicate any planned changes to board composition or structure for the future.

10.3 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.

10.4 Other material changes.

Identify any other change since last renewal or on the horizon that, in the school's judgment, Fordham should be aware of at the renewal point.

SECTION 11

Required Attestations and Assurances

The following attestations are required of all Tier 2 renewal applicants. Each attestation must be acknowledged by the board chair through signature on the signature page (Section 12). Supporting documentation should be appended where indicated.

ATTESTATIONS

1. The school's board has reviewed this application in full, including the Gap Analysis (Section 9), 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, as detailed in Section 7.2).
6. The board has reviewed the most recent three years of state report card data and accepts the gap analysis presented in Section 9 as a candid account of where the school's performance has lagged.
7. The board commits to monitoring progress against the Section 9 Gap Analysis commitments throughout the next renewal term, including regular review of the leading indicators identified in each Go Forward Plan.

8. The board commits to engaging with Fordham on plan progress at intervals to be established at contract execution, and understands that progress against the plan will be a primary input into the next renewal decision.
9. The school has adopted board-approved special education policies and procedures — either ODEW's Model Policies and Procedures or an ODEW-approved alternative — and has submitted current-year verification through ODEW's Monitoring System. The submission documentation is provided as Appendix F.

Required Appendices

- Appendix A: Three-year state report card data summary (provided by Fordham, included by school for record).
- Appendix B: Current school leadership organizational chart.
- Appendix C: Current board roster, with member names, roles, term dates, and date of last election.
- Appendix D: Most recent independent financial audit — cover and management letter only. (Audited financials and current budget are filed in Epicenter.)
- Appendix E: If applicable, documentation of any board action referenced in Sections 3 or 8.
- Appendix F: ODEW Monitoring System submission verifying current-year board adoption of special education policies and procedures.

SECTION 12

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 including the Gap Analysis, 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 —