THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION · CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

Non-Renewal Track Rubric

Application for Reconsideration · Internal Reviewer Tool

RENEWAL CYCLE
Fall 2026

ISSUED BY
Office of Sponsorship
The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

How to use this rubric

This rubric evaluates a Non-Renewal Track school's Application for Reconsideration. The default outcome of Non-Renewal Track placement is closure; the application is the school's voluntary case for a different outcome, and the rubric is held to a correspondingly higher bar. The rubric assesses whether the school has offered a candid acknowledgment of the deficiency pattern, a credible theory of recovery, verifiable evidence of change already underway, a turnaround plan specific enough to be held to, and the organizational capacity to execute.

Scoring scale

4 · Strong — Response is specific, candid, and actionable. Meets every standard the application asked the school to address.

3 · Adequate — Response addresses the application's standards but is uneven in places. Defensible as the basis for a renewal recommendation.

2 · Approaching — Response is partial. Notable gaps in specificity, candor, or evidence; conditions or follow-up warranted.

1 · Insufficient — Response is missing, evasive, or non-responsive. The application standard has not been met.

N/A — The indicator does not apply to this school's model or circumstances. Document the reason.

RONT MATTER

Board Chair Attestation Check

Before scoring the substantive sections, confirm that the Board Chair Attestation in Section 1 of the application has been signed by the board chair and reflects independent board authorship. The attestation cannot be drafted by school leadership or the management organization.

Board Chair Attestation signed and dated (Y/N)	
Date of board action authorizing submission	
Evidence of independent board authorship	

Attestation as threshold

If the Board Chair Attestation is missing, unsigned, or shows clear evidence of having been drafted by school leadership or the management organization rather than the board itself, the application has not met the threshold for substantive review. Document the finding and proceed to non-renewal.

RUBRIC

Scoring the Application for Reconsideration

INDICATOR	4 · STRONG	3 · ADEQUATE	2 · APPROACHING	1 · INSUFFICIENT
1 · Acknowledgment of the Performance Record *Application Section 3. Candor and diagnostic specificity of the school's account of the deficiency pattern.*	Account is candid and precise. Strategy pursued, outcomes produced, and underlying causes are named clearly. Past improvement efforts and their limits are honestly assessed. Preserved capacity is identified.	Account is direct; deficiencies are named as Fordham named them; diagnostic causes are specific and addressable; past efforts and their limits are acknowledged.	Account names some deficiencies but is uneven; diagnostic causes are general; past improvement efforts are described without explaining why they fell short.	Account is defensive, minimizes the deficiency pattern, disputes Fordham's reading, or relies on external factors the school cannot address.
2 · Theory of Recovery *Application Section 4. Plausibility, specificity, and sufficiency of the school's central argument that future performance will materially differ from the past three years.*	Theory is stated clearly enough to be held to. Two to four substantive changes are identified and argued as sufficient — not merely necessary — to address the causes in Section 3. Assumptions and risks are named candidly.	Theory rests on a small number of substantive changes; the argument for sufficiency is articulated; assumptions and risks are named.	Theory names a small number of changes but the argument for sufficiency is weak; risks are not honestly identified.	Theory is restated effort or intention; changes are a long list of incremental adjustments; no argument for sufficiency.
3 · Evidence of Change *Application Section 5. Verifiability of the evidence supporting each substantive change in the Theory of Recovery. Evidence already in place outweighs evidence pending future events.*	Each substantive change is evidenced with documentation Fordham can verify directly. Current status is dated and specific. Gaps are named honestly with a timeline for closing them.	Most changes are documented with verifiable evidence (board resolutions, employment agreements, partnership agreements); gaps are honestly identified.	Some evidence is verifiable, but most rests on commitments rather than implementation; gaps are not honestly identified.	Evidence is rhetorical, depends on future events that have not yet occurred, or is not verifiable through document review or site visit.

INDICATOR	4 · STRONG	3 · ADEQUATE	2 · APPROACHING	1 · INSUFFICIENT
4 · Turnaround Plan *Application Section 6. Specificity of twelve-, twenty-four-, and thirty-six-month milestones, and the honesty of the school's own off-ramp.*	All milestones are named with outcome, measure, target, and verification method. Year 1 leading indicators, Year 2 early outcome indicators, Year 3 state report card outcomes. Board monitoring structure is specific. The school's own off-ramp is honest.	Year 1 milestones are leading indicators; Year 2 includes early outcome indicators; Year 3 includes state report card outcomes; monitoring cadence is specific; off-ramp is named.	Some milestones are specific but not all are measurable; leading indicators are limited; off-ramp is acknowledged but not specific.	Milestones are absent or directional; no leading indicators; monitoring is vague; no off-ramp identified.
5 · Organizational and Financial Viability *Application Section 7. Whether the school has the leadership, governance, and financial capacity to execute the Turnaround Plan over the proposed provisional term.*	Leadership is well-matched to turnaround; board composition and practice have changed in ways tied to the Theory of Recovery; financial position is sound with resources for the plan confirmed; audit findings resolved or actively remediated.	Leadership has relevant turnaround experience; board has evolved its composition or practice; financial position can support the plan; audit findings substantially addressed.	Leadership or governance has changed but capacity questions remain; financial runway is tight; resource commitments to the plan are not fully confirmed.	Leadership lacks turnaround experience; board capacity is unchanged from the period that produced the deficiencies; financial position cannot sustain the plan; audit findings unresolved.

FINDINGS

Score Capture and Notes

1 · Acknowledgment of the Performance Record — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
2 · Theory of Recovery — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
3 · Evidence of Change — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
4 · Turnaround Plan — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
5 · Organizational and Financial Viability — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
Rubric average	

DETERMINATION

Recommendation Logic

The default outcome of Non-Renewal Track placement is non-renewal. The rubric assesses whether the Application for Reconsideration affirmatively overcomes that default.

SCORE PATTERN	RECOMMENDATION	RENEWAL TERM
Rubric average ≥ 3.5 AND every indicator ≥ 3 AND Indicator 3 (Evidence of Change) shows verifiable change already in place AND September data confirms direction of change.	**Provisional renewal**	1 or 2 years; explicit conditions tied to Turnaround Plan milestones; Year 1 and Year 2 trajectory targets
Rubric average < 3.5, OR any individual indicator < 3, OR Indicator 3 (Evidence of Change) shows only planned rather than implemented change, OR September data confirms continued underperformance, OR Board Chair Attestation does not meet threshold.	**Non-renewal**	N/A

RATIONALE

Reviewer Recommendation

Recommended determination	
Rationale	
If provisional renewal — term, conditions, Year 1/2 trajectory targets	
If non-renewal — specific findings driving the determination	
September data update	