THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION · CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

Tier 2 Renewal Rubric

Conditional Renewal · Three-Year Term · Internal Reviewer Tool

RENEWAL CYCLE
Fall 2026

ISSUED BY
Office of Sponsorship
The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

How to use this rubric

The Tier 2 rubric evaluates a school whose three-year performance pattern is mixed — strong on some measures, lagging on others. The rubric assesses the quality of the Gap Analysis at the structural center of the application, the school's instructional response to the gaps it has identified, 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.

RUBRIC

Scoring the Tier 2 Application

The rubric mirrors the substantive sections of the Tier 2 application. The Gap Analysis (Indicator 1) is scored once per lagging indicator submitted by the school; record each score in the entry block that follows the rubric.

INDICATOR	4 · STRONG	3 · ADEQUATE	2 · APPROACHING	1 · INSUFFICIENT
1 · Performance Narrative and Context *Application Section 2. Honesty and precision of the school's read of its own three-year record and the contextual factors it names.*	Narrative is direct, balanced, and concise. Context is named precisely and located in relation to outcomes, not used to explain them away.	Narrative identifies both strongest and weakest components honestly; context is named precisely without deflecting from outcomes.	Narrative is mostly fair but uneven — strengths overweighted relative to shortfalls, or context named in general terms.	Narrative is defensive or self-congratulatory; context is used to displace responsibility for outcomes.
2 · Gap Analysis Quality *Application Section 3. Score once per lagging indicator. Quality of the Root Cause diagnostic and the Go Forward Plan, taken together.*	Root cause is candid and diagnostic — naming specific decisions or systems. Go Forward Plan is observable, owned, time-bound, with measurable Year 1/2/3 targets and a defined trigger for changing approach.	Root cause names a specific driver the school can address. Go Forward Plan has named actions, owners, timelines, and measurable annual targets.	Root cause names a driver but lacks specificity. Go Forward Plan has actions but targets are directional or owners are diffused.	Root cause is a restatement of the data or deflection to external factors. Go Forward Plan is aspirational, lacks owners, or has no measurable targets.
3 · Instructional Response *Application Sections 4, 5, and 6. Coherence between the described instructional program, professional learning systems, and the gaps identified in Section 3.*	Instructional program is described in observable terms; PD and coaching systems trace specifically to the gaps identified in Section 3; honest treatment of where systems have matured	Curriculum, classroom practice, and PD are described observably and connected to specific gaps from Section 3.	Some connection between instructional design and identified gaps, but the program description is more aspirational than observable.	Instructional program and PD are described in generic terms with no traceable connection to the identified gaps.

INDICATOR	4 · STRONG	3 · ADEQUATE	2 · APPROACHING	1 · INSUFFICIENT
	and where they have not.			
4 · Governance and Board Engagement *Application Section 7. Evidence of active, independent board oversight of academic performance during the contract term and capacity to oversee Gap Analysis commitments going forward.*	Board is actively engaged with academic data; leader evaluation is independent and consequential; composition and training are explicitly aligned to overseeing conditional renewal.	Board demonstrates independent engagement with academic performance; leader evaluation is substantive; training has produced observable governance practice.	Some evidence of academic engagement but uneven; leader evaluation is procedural; training is reported as attendance rather than capacity gain.	Board oversight is described as passive approval; no evidence of independent engagement with academic outcomes; expertise gaps unacknowledged.
5 · Organizational Capacity to Execute *Application Sections 8, 9, and 10. Whether the school's financial position, leadership team, and operational stability can support the Gap Analysis commitments through the three-year term.*	Financial position is strong; leadership team is well-matched to the plan; resource commitments are confirmed; risks are named candidly with mitigations.	Financial position is sound; leadership team has the bandwidth and expertise to execute the plan; resource implications are honestly identified.	Capacity is adequate in some dimensions but the plan exceeds available resources or leadership bandwidth; resource implications underacknowledged.	Financial position is unstable, leadership capacity is insufficient, or material risks to plan execution are unacknowledged. Any audit finding scored 1 here.

GAP ANALYSIS SCORING

One Entry Per Lagging Indicator

Record one Gap Analysis score for each lagging indicator the school addressed in Section 3 of the application. The average of these scores enters the determination logic. Add additional rows as needed.

Lagging indicator	
Gap Analysis Quality — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
Lagging indicator	
Gap Analysis Quality — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
Lagging indicator	
Gap Analysis Quality — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
Gap Analysis average (Indicator 1)	

FINDINGS

Score Capture and Notes

1 · Performance Narrative and Context — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
3 · Instructional Response — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
4 · Governance and Board Engagement — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	
5 · Organizational Capacity to Execute — Score (1–4)	
Evidence cited / gaps	

DETERMINATION

Recommendation Logic

The table names the recommendation that follows from the score pattern. "GA average" refers to the mean of Gap Analysis scores across lagging indicators. Departures from the logic must be explained in the rationale.

SCORE PATTERN	RECOMMENDATION	RENEWAL TERM
Gap Analysis average ≥ 3.0; Indicators 2–5 all ≥ 2.5; no individual score of 1; September data does not contradict the improvement trajectory.	**Renew**	3 years; Gap Analysis commitments become contractual
Gap Analysis average between 2.0 and 3.0; Indicators 2–5 all ≥ 2.0; no individual score of 1.	**Renew with conditions**	3 years; explicit conditions tied to Gap Analysis milestones
Gap Analysis average below 2.0, OR Indicator 5 (Organizational Capacity) scored 1, OR Indicator 4 (Governance) scored 1, OR September data confirms continued underperformance.	**Non-renewal**	N/A

RATIONALE

Reviewer Recommendation

Recommended determination	
Rationale	
Conditions tied to Gap Analysis	
September data update	