

Arizona State Board for Charter Schools



Renewal Application Instructions

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Adopted (date)

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I. RENEWAL PROCESS OVERVIEW

Authorized by Arizona Revised Statute, Title 15, Chapter 1, Article 8, effective September 16, 1994, charter schools are public schools that were established to provide a learning environment that will improve pupil achievement and will provide additional academic choices for parents and pupils.

According to A.R.S. § 15-183 (I), an approved plan to establish a charter school is effective for a fifteen year term. At least eighteen months before the expiration of the approved plan, the charter holder may apply for renewal. Renewal of a charter is based on affirmative evidence in three areas:

- Success of the academic program, including academic achievement
- Viability of the organization, including fiscal management and compliance
- Faithfulness to the terms of the charter, including contract and legal compliance

Evaluation of the charter holder's success in these three areas is based on a variety of information that will serve as sources of evidence in determining renewal. These sources include:

- Written application for renewal
- Student performance data
- Independent financial audits
- Five year interval summary reviews
- Site visit reports
- Monitoring reports

The initial step in the renewal process occurs approximately two years prior to the expiration of a charter when the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (Board) staff members compile and review historical information of the charter holder's performance. During this six-month window, staff examines a balanced body of evidence, including academic achievement of the students at schools operated by the charter holder, as well as the fiscal management and compliance and contract and legal compliance of the charter holder. Board staff may also conduct a site visit. Based upon the charter holder's ability to meet identified performance criteria, Board staff prepares the renewal application components. Eighteen months before the charter expires, Board staff notifies the charter holder of eligibility to apply for renewal and provides the holder with the customized renewal application. Eligibility to apply for renewal occurs eighteen months prior to the charter contract's expiration.

The charter holder has three months in which to complete the application from the time of notification of eligibility to apply for renewal until the renewal application is due. The holder submits the charter renewal application online to the Board no later than fifteen months prior to the expiration of the current charter. If Board staff did not conduct a site visit prior to renewal application submission, staff will conduct the staff visit following submission of the application.

Once the application is submitted, Board staff has three months to prepare a renewal executive summary document, with a profile of the school, including demographic information, a summary of performance and compliance in the three key areas, a business plan summary, and additional required plans or responses submitted with the application. The renewal executive summary provides information for the Board's consideration of whether or not to renew the charter. The Board also has access to any and all renewal-related documents.

The Board will consider renewal based upon the information in the renewal executive summary and notify a charter holder at least twelve months prior to the expiration of the charter if it will not be renewed.

II. CHARTER RENEWAL APPLICATION PROCESS

Actions	Description	Approximate Timeline
Preparation	<i>(Suggested activities)</i> Review contract as it currently exists Identify contract expiration date Confirm authorized representative's email address with ASBCS correct Begin collecting relevant documents as required by the Detailed Business Plan Continue to review academic performance	Approximately 24 months to 18 months prior to charter expiration
Renewal Site Visit	Prepare for possible school site visit conducted by Board staff and work with Board staff on scheduling the visit.	Approximately 24 months to 18 months prior to charter expiration
Look for Notification of Eligibility to Apply for Renewal	Expect notification of eligibility to apply for renewal through an alert sent to the authorized representative at the charter portal at ASBCS Online. The alert will tell where to access the application. The authorized representative should also expect an email containing the same information.	18 months prior to charter expiration
Prepare Renewal Application	Access the renewal application at the charter portal at ASBCS Online: http://online.asbcs.az.gov Prepare and submit appropriate documents no later than the application deadline.	Within three months of notice of eligibility to apply for renewal
Submit Renewal Application	Submit the completed renewal application online through an application wizard on the ASBCS Online database located at: http://online.asbcs.az.gov Reminder: Renewal applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. MST on the deadline date which will be ninety calendar days from the date the charter holder was notified of eligibility to apply for renewal. Submitting the application makes the charter eligible for Board consideration of renewal.	Within three months of notice of eligibility to apply for renewal
Renewal Site Visit	Prepare for a site visit if Board staff did not conduct a site visit prior to renewal application submission. Work with Board staff on scheduling the visit.	Within three months of receipt of the submitted application
Attend Board Meeting	Attend the board meeting when being considered for renewal. Expect notification of the board meeting date, time, and location.	12 months prior to charter expiration

III. RENEWAL APPLICATION

A charter holder becomes eligible to apply for renewal eighteen months before the charter contract expires. For regular renewal, no other eligibility requirements apply. The charter holder is notified of its eligibility to apply for renewal and provided a renewal application. A charter holder may then choose to submit a renewal application or not to apply to be renewed. If the charter holder chooses not to apply, the charter contract expires at the end of its contracted term.

If the charter holder applies to be renewed, in addition to any other requirements, the application for renewal shall require submitting a detailed business plan. Because charter holder performance varies, the application may also require applicants to address academic performance and submit information in the application to demonstrate targeted academic improvement.

An authorized representative will be notified of the charter holder's eligibility to apply for renewal through an alert sent to the designated portal at ASBCS Online. Simultaneously, the renewal application link for an eligible charter holder will become live and found at the authorized representative's portal. The authorized representative will also receive notification of eligibility to apply and where to access the application. For these reasons, it is important for authorized representatives to have current email addresses on record with the ASBCS. An applicant will submit the completed application for renewal online using the renewal application wizard. Because portions of the application will be uploaded separately when using the wizard, applicants should review all portions of the application prior to preparing it for submission.

III a. Academic Performance Section

The renewal application for charter holders with schools that meet or exceed the academic performance level determined by the Board to be adequate will not have submission requirements for the Academic Performance Section of the application. Charter holders with schools not meeting the Board's **level of adequate academic performance**, as identified in the Terms to Know section of the application instructions, will be required to submit any or all of the following in the Academic Performance Section of the application:

A. A Performance Management Plan

B. An explanation with appropriate data and information to support why the school considers the progress made to be reasonable. If this applies to more than one school under the same charter, information for each school must be provided.

C. An explanation of any circumstances that may have prevented the school from performing at a satisfactory level.

Process for Developing Performance Management Plans

Performance management plans are intended to assist schools in addressing academic performance deficiencies with a plan that clearly articulates the academic achievement area in need of improvement, the tools intended to measure improvement, and the degree of improvement to be achieved. The plan will also include identified strategies linked to desired outcomes and designed for meeting identified targets. Separate performance management plans should be developed to address academic performance in each academic content area that is determined to be insufficient to meet the Board's level of adequate academic performance.

Step 1: Conduct a data self-analysis and provide an interpretation for the previous five years, including patterns and trends

Step 2: Based upon the findings from the data analysis, provide a report of underlying reasons for the school's performance problems

Step 3: Create a performance management plan or plans to improve student achievement which includes the following:

- **Indicators** representing academic quality or achievement, **measures** as a means to assess the performance of selected indicators, **metrics** that quantify a given measure, and **targets** that set expectations or define success on particular measures and within a certain period of time
- **Strategies** for meeting targets, including **action steps**, **responsible parties**, timelines, acceptable evidence, and budgets
- **Annual benchmark targets** are identified, if the plan is to be implemented over several years

Each performance management plan must be submitted in a template provided in Attachment A. An opening narrative, with findings from the data self-analysis and underlying reasons for the school's performance problems, must accompany the performance management plan. The opening narrative will serve as an introduction to the plan as well as background for how the plan was developed. If a school is implementing an Arizona School Improvement Plan (ASIP), the applicant should include information in the narrative that describes implementation of the ASIP and may use portions of the ASIP in the performance management plan if the school has found those portions to be effective in addressing academic performance problems.

Step 1: Conduct Data Self-Analysis, Interpret Findings, and Report School Performance to Date

Each school is required to conduct an analysis of its own academic achievement data, including state-required achievement test results as well as internal measures the school uses that are accepted as both valid and reliable. Each school is required to report the findings of its data analysis as an introduction to the school's performance management plan. When developed, the performance management plan should be directly linked, through measures, metrics and targets, to the results of the data analysis. Strategies to accomplish meeting targets should also be linked to the findings of the data analysis. The school may determine how best to report the findings and the school's interpretation of the findings.

Step 2: Determine Underlying Reasons for Performance

Following the data analysis, each school is required to develop, based upon the data analysis, hypotheses about the underlying reasons for the school's academic performance. As an introduction to the performance management plan, the school is required to submit its hypotheses, identify barriers, policies, or past practices that inhibited establishing the conditions for effective practice, as well as what it will take to eliminate the barrier(s). An overview of past efforts to resolve these impediments must be included.

Step 3: Prepare Introductory Narrative

Based upon work conducted in Steps 1 and 2, prepare a narrative, including charts and graphs, which reports the results of the data self-analysis, interpretation of findings, school performance to date and the underlying reasons for the level of performance. The narrative must be a clear and accurate report that serves as the foundation for understanding the performance management plan and its development.

Step 4: Create Performance Management Plan

Performance management plans must be submitted on the Performance Management Plan template (Attachment A). A separate plan must be submitted for each academic indicator the school intends to improve. The template is available under the *Help* tab of the online renewal application wizard.

The plan should focus on academic priorities that the school determines are essential based upon the school's review of available data. For each indicator the school will be addressing, the plan should include all measures, metrics and targets related to that indicator as well as strategies, action steps, timelines, evidence of meeting action steps, and budgets to meet the targets. If the plan is to be implemented over several years, annual benchmark targets must be identified and included in the plan.

A performance management plan includes:

- the academic area (*indicator*) to be addressed for improvement based upon data analysis findings reported in the opening narrative.
- aspect(s) of the academic area that will be focused upon (*measures*).
- reasonable and appropriate ways to measure the identified improvement area (*metrics*).
- rigorous and realistic targets for improvement (*targets*). Targets are not excessive for where the school is now, nor should they be too minimal for the degree of improvement necessary.
- annual benchmark targets, which reflect incremental progress toward the end target.
- strategies that are capable of being implemented through an appropriate commitment of time and resources and are capable of providing the intended results to meet the targets.
- action steps for accomplishing the strategies for improvement. Action steps must reveal a progression of actions from start to finish for each strategy and must include evidence the applicant will use to show accomplishment of action steps.
- allocated resources, i.e. time, money, personnel, etc., for implementing the strategies and timelines specified within the plan. **NOTE: Performance management plans must align with budget plans submitted in the Detailed Business Plan section, and submitted budgets must reflect expenditures included in each performance management plan.**

Annual Reporting Requirement for Performance Management Plans

By August 1, after every school year, for the duration of the performance management plan's implementation, the school must submit an annual report to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools' office. The annual report will include identifying progress toward meeting the elements of the performance management plan and providing evidence that the plan is being implemented with fidelity. If the school has more than one plan, a separate annual report should be submitted for each of the school's performance management plans.

III b. Detailed Business Plan Section

This section of the renewal application addresses the charter holder's plan for its next charter term. In accordance with A.R.S. § 15-183 (I), all applicants are required to complete this section.

Note: Proposed or anticipated changes to the charter that require approval of an official charter amendment must go through the formal amendment process.

I. Organizational Chart

Provide an organizational chart that illustrates the structure of the organization by showing the different levels of management. The chart should include graphics that identify key positions and reflect the operation and flow of communication from the corporate level to school operations. For this section, provide a narrative that explains the organizational chart and clearly describes the reporting structure for each level of the corporation. For key personnel, the narrative should include position titles, rather than names, and specific responsibilities.

II. Sustainability

A. Organization's Fiscal Viability

Part 1: Complete the budget templates (Attachment B and C) and submit a budget plan for the next three years of operation. The budget proposal must account for any major changes in or anticipated by the organization and identified in the business plan. The Board will also consider the two previous years of existing financial performance information.

Part 2: Provide a narrative that clearly describes the structures and systems in place in the organization to ensure fiscal viability. Include information on the following:

- Accounting procedures
- Process used in fiscal decision-making
- Site-level personnel with fiscal authority
- The organization's fiscal viability related to fundraising
- Philanthropic support from the community

B. Strength and Stability of the Governing Body

Part 1. Provide a list of current members. Identify the area of expertise (e.g., financial, legal, education, etc.) that the member provides for the governing body or the role filled (e.g., parent, teacher, business member, etc.).

Part 2. Provide a narrative that describes governing body member recruitment/selection and development. Include the training/orientation process that is provided to all school governing body members.

Part 3. Provide a narrative that clearly outlines the governance structure and organization of the school. The narrative must include a description of the role, responsibilities, and mandated obligations, including Open Meeting Law and policy decisions, of the school's governing body. The narrative must also include the structures and systems in place for decision-making at the governing body level.

Part 4. Describe the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's academic performance.

C. Strength and Stability of the Charter Holder

Part 1. Provide a list of current officers, directors, managers, or partners of the corporation.

Part 2. Provide a description of the role and responsibilities of the charter holder. Include a narrative that clearly outlines the function of the charter holder and indicate if the charter holder is the same as the school's governing body.

Part 3. Describe the role of the charter holder in monitoring the school's academic performance.

III. Succession Plan

A. Submit a succession plan for the charter holder, which describes replacing the officers, members, partners, or board in the event of retirement, resignation, or other circumstances.

- B.** Submit a succession plan for the school’s instructional leadership team which may include:
- Development of a clear career course at the school (e.g., teacher to master teacher to assistant principal, etc.)
 - Creation or refinement of incentive plans (e.g., merit pay, flex hours, etc.)
 - Ongoing professional development
 - High standards for hiring qualified personnel
 - Appropriate resources to bring in new personnel

IV. Facilities Plan

Submit a facilities plan, by site, including any plans for expansion.

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IV. SUBMITTING THE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Renewal applications will be submitted online through an application wizard on the ASBCS Online database located at <http://online.asbcs.az.gov>. **Please note that, for some sections, more than one individual document may need to be uploaded on the online renewal application wizard.** Renewal applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. MST on the deadline date which will be ninety calendar days from the date the charter holder was notified of eligibility to apply for renewal. The deadline date will also be identified when the charter holder receives the application components.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SECTION:

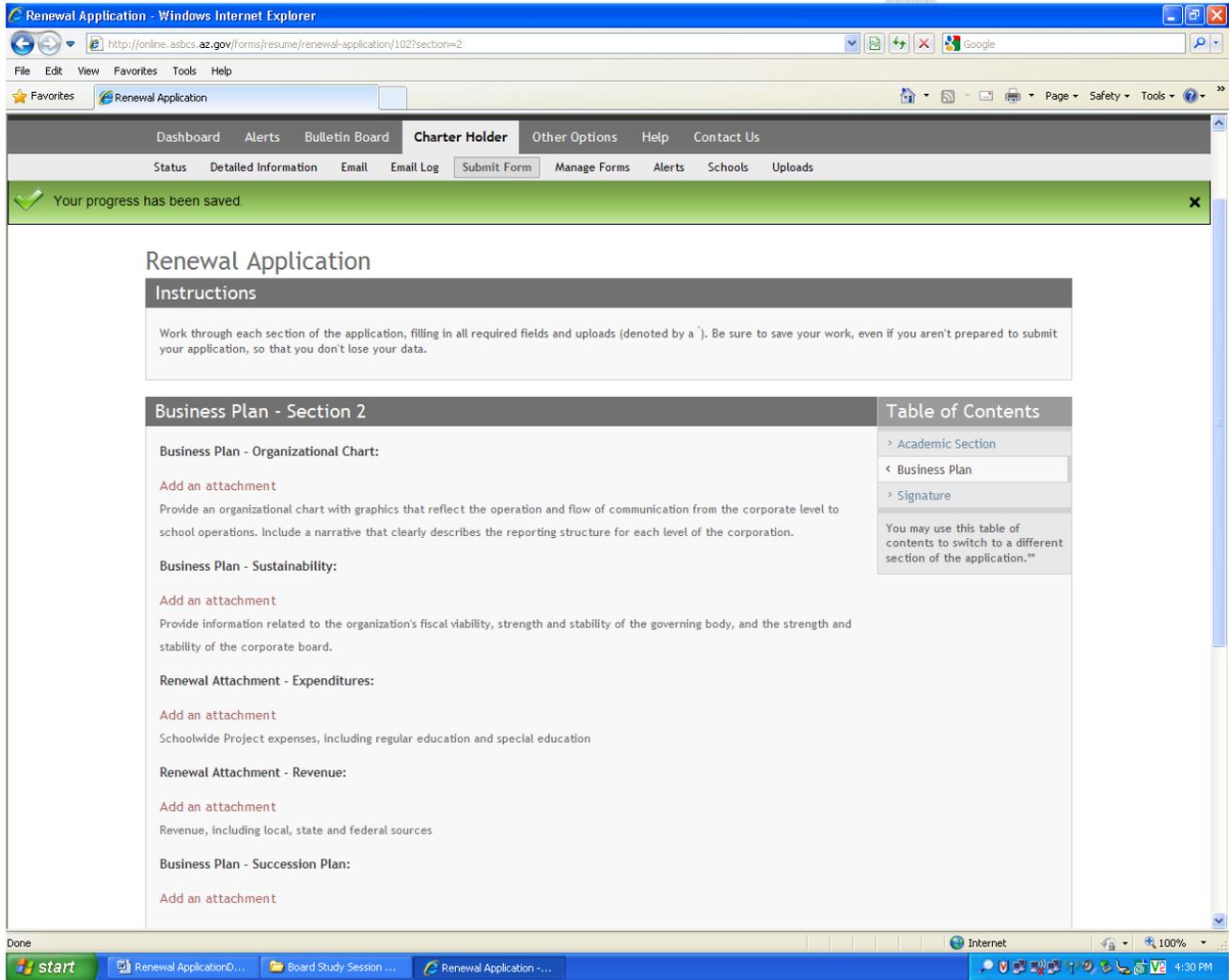
If you are required to submit a performance management plan or have another academic performance requirement, the renewal application wizard will be enabled to accept the submission requirement. The performance management plan requires the plan itself as well as additional documentation to support the plan. For this section, the renewal application wizard is capable of uploading multiple documents to enable applicants to meet the application requirements. A template for completing and submitting the plan is available under the *Help* tab of the renewal application wizard.

If a charter holder meets the Board's level of adequate academic performance and is not required to complete the academic performance section of the application, the renewal application wizard will have a statement in this section of the application that informs the charter holder that nothing is required to be submitted for this section.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Renewal Application' page. The browser is Internet Explorer, and the URL is <http://online.asbcs.az.gov/forms/create/renewal-application/1>. The page header includes the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools logo and the AZ.GOV logo. The navigation menu includes 'Dashboard', 'Alerts', 'Bulletin Board', 'Charter Holder', 'Other Options', 'Help', and 'Contact Us'. The 'Charter Holder' section is active, showing 'Status', 'Detailed Information', 'Email', 'Email Log', 'Submit Form', 'Manage Forms', 'Alerts', 'Schools', and 'Uploads'. A note at the top states: 'Note: please refrain from using the Back button while editing your application.' The main content area is titled 'Renewal Application' and contains an 'Instructions' section with the text: 'Work through each section of the application, filling in all required fields and uploads (denoted by a ^). Be sure to save your work, even if you aren't prepared to submit your application, so that you don't lose your data.' Below this is the 'Academic Section - Section 1' section, which includes 'Academic Performance' and 'Performance Management Plan:'. The 'Academic Performance' section states: 'This section of the renewal application addresses the success of the academic program, including academic achievement. After a review of the charter's school or schools academic achievement levels for students at the grades the school(s) serve, it has been determined to be insufficient to meet the Board's level of acceptable performance. Therefore, the charter holder is required to submit the following:'. The 'Performance Management Plan:' section includes an 'Add an attachment' button and a list of requirements: 1. Indicators representing academic quality or achievement, 2. Measures as a means to assess the performance of selected indicators, 3. Metrics that quantify a given measure, 4. Targets that set expectations or define success on particular measures and within a certain period of time, 5. Please use the template provided to submit the completed performance management plan. A 'Table of Contents' sidebar is visible on the right, listing 'Academic Section', 'Business Plan', and 'Signature'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications, and the system tray with the time 4:29 PM.

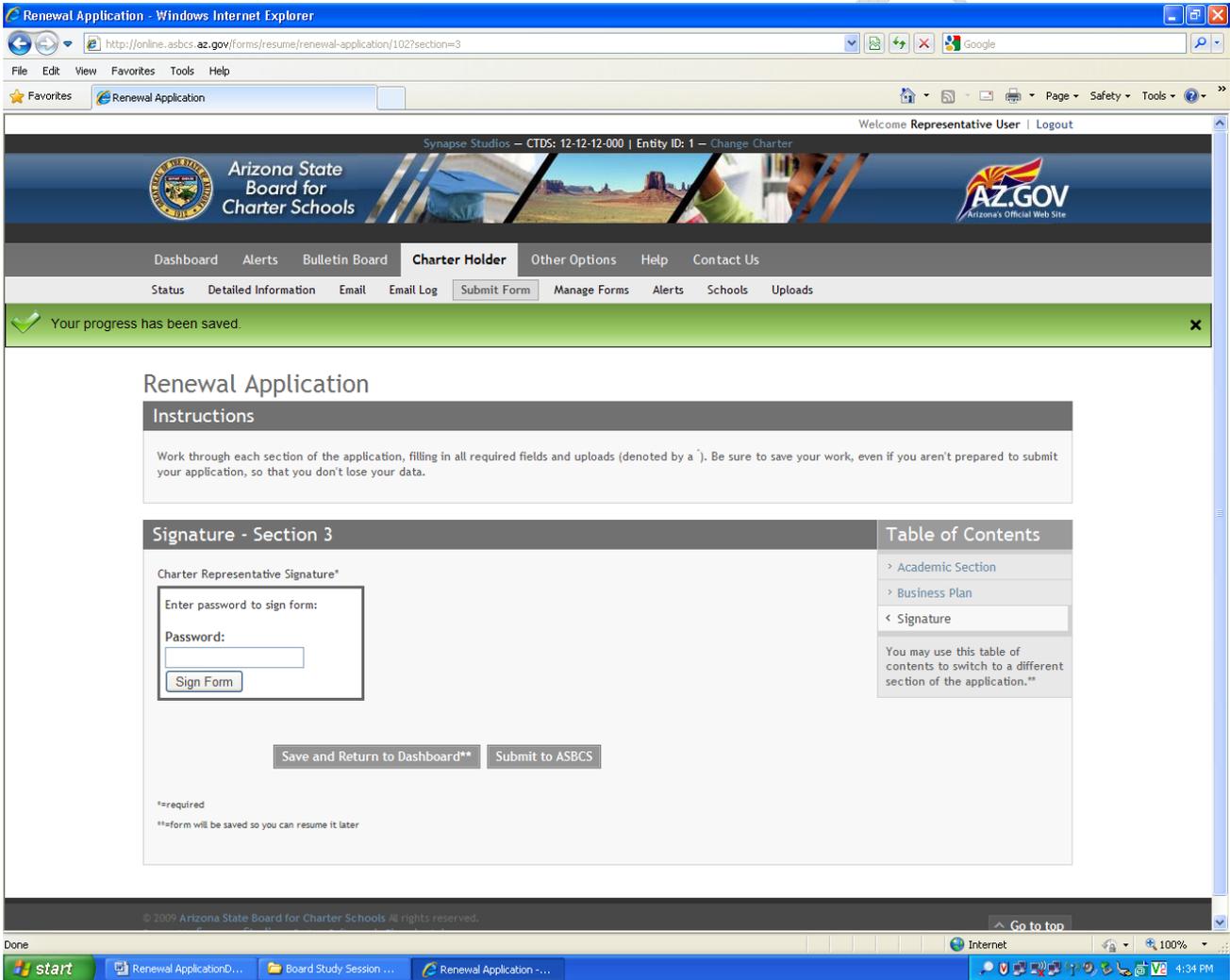
DETAILED BUSINESS PLAN SECTION:

Parts of the detailed business plan are required to be uploaded separately. Applicants should prepare the business plan portion of the application accordingly. The renewal application wizard for the business plan includes the following sections and topics: organizational chart, sustainability, expenditures, revenue, succession plan for both the charter holder and governing body, and facilities plan.



DIGITAL SIGNATURE:

Once the application is complete and ready for submission, the authorized representative will digitally sign the application by typing in his/her password and clicking “Sign Form”. The renewal application wizard will indicate that the signature was accepted and the date it was signed. Once submitted, the representative will receive notification indicating submission status as well as a link to a copy of the submitted application. The representative has the option of withdrawing the application at any time.



V. TERMS TO KNOW

Action Steps – Steps identified to accomplish a strategy’s intended outcome and are capable of being implemented through an appropriate commitment of time and resources

Annual Benchmark Targets – Intended increments of results or definitions of success determined annually that will lead to meeting the final target for plan

Application – The Board-approved forms and instructions, which are available through ASBCS Online and in writing

Application Package – The application, narrative, and documents described in the application

Authorized Representative – Individual with the power to bind a charter holder contractually according to the charter holder’s Articles of Incorporation, operating agreement, or by-laws

Board – The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools

Budget – Anticipated costs of allocated resources in reference to the Performance Management Plan

Indicator – Academic area to be addressed for improvement

Level of Adequate Academic Performance – (to be determined by the Board)

Measures - Identification of what aspect(s) of the indicator (academic area) will be focused upon

Metrics - Reasonable and appropriate ways to measure the identified improvement area (generally numeric)

MST – Mountain Standard Time

Performance Management Plan – Strategic plan focusing on increasing student achievement; components include indicators, measures, metrics, and targets as well as strategies and action steps

Online Renewal Application Wizard – New alternative way to submit application and all related documents online

Responsible Party – The person responsible for ensuring the task assigned is completed

Scoring Criteria – A tool used to evaluate specific documents of the application package. The tool must include a description of the components to be scored and the criteria required to demonstrate mastery.

Strategy – Plan or method for obtaining a specific goal or result

Targets – Intended results or definition of success within a certain period of time