



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

October 14, 2025

Dr. Matthew R. Flannery, Chief Executive Officer
21st Century Cyber Charter School
1245 Wrights Lane
West Chester, PA 19380

Dear Dr. Flannery,

Based on a thorough review of 21st Century Cyber Charter School's (21st Century) renewal application and other documentation, and a mutual agreement concerning enrollment parameters, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) is renewing 21st Century's charter, subject to the information contained in this letter and any areas for correction noted within the Decision to Renew Charter and Appendix A. The renewed charter shall be effective for a term of five years, beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2030.

The Department will continue to routinely monitor and examine 21st Century's operations to determine whether 21st Century is meeting the terms of its charter, the requirements of the Charter School Law, and other applicable state and federal mandates. By renewing this charter, the Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to notify 21st Century of any violation of the terms and conditions of its charter and to seek correction of such violation. In addition, the Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to take action against 21st Century in the form of charter revocation or nonrenewal in a manner consistent with Charter School Law for reasons including, but not limited to, those discussed in this letter or the attached Decision to Renew Charter and Appendix A.

The Department will also continue to monitor the progress of 21st Century's students by reviewing various data points (e.g., students' academic achievement, assessment participation rate, academic growth, and adjusted cohort graduation rates). The academic performance of all public schools, including cyber charter schools, is evaluated based on standards for annual meaningful differentiation as identified by [Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan](#). Each year, the Department will calculate each public school's progress toward meeting or exceeding long-term goals.

The Department will require any cyber charter school that is designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI) to take specific corrective actions. Through regional improvement teams, the Department shall provide technical assistance and support in developing, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based strategies aligned to each school's most pressing needs. Cyber charter schools designated for CSI or A-TSI will be required to partner with regional improvement teams for the duration of their designation. Failure to exit CSI status may serve as a basis for revocation or nonrenewal of the cyber school's charter.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Amy Lena, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education by email at alena@pa.gov or by telephone at (717) 783-4307.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Rowe". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Carrie Rowe, Ed.D.
Acting Secretary
Department of Education

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

21st Century Cyber Charter School : **Charter Renewal Effective:**
Renewal Application : **July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030**

Decision to Renew Charter

Pursuant to the Charter School Law (CSL), 24 P.S. §§ 17-1701-A – 17-1751-A, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) has the authority and responsibility to renew or not renew the charter of a cyber charter school. 24 P.S. § 17-1741-A(a)(3). The Department may decide not to renew a charter based on the criteria set forth in section 1729-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1729-A. A cyber charter school must be in compliance with the material conditions, standards, and procedures contained in the written charter; meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4; meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management and audit requirements; and be in compliance with the CSL and all other applicable laws.

The Department granted a charter to 21st Century Cyber Charter School (21st Century) for the term of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2024. On September 29, 2023, 21st Century submitted a renewal application to continue operating a cyber charter school and has continued to operate its cyber charter school by extension of the previous charter term.

Based on a comprehensive review of 21st Century's operation during the charter term beginning July 1, 2019, including the information submitted with its renewal application, information gathered by the Department's representatives, and other sources of data, the Department is renewing 21st Century's charter to operate a cyber charter school. Subject to this Decision to Renew Charter, the areas for correction are noted within Appendix A. Because 21st Century has been designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), the mutually agreed-upon enrollment parameters are outlined herein and in the charter. With the exception of the agreed-upon enrollment parameter, which becomes effective immediately, 21st Century may continue to operate its cyber charter school under its current charter.

The baseline enrollment number from which the enrollment parameter is calculated is 21st Century's highest October snapshot from the previous three years from the date in which 21st Century submitted its renewal application; the baseline number is used to calculate a one-time 10% enrollment increase that may not be surpassed during any time 21st Century is designated for CSI and will remain in effect while designated CSI. The enrollment parameter will be removed if 21st Century exits CSI. In the event the funding formula for cyber charter schools changes, or if another pandemic is declared, the enrollment parameter as defined above may be revisited and the parties agree to negotiate in good faith to establish a higher enrollment parameter so as to ensure the school's ability to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

The renewed charter shall be effective for a term of five (5) years beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2030.

The Department reserves the right to continue to assess and review 21st Century's operation and to take action to revoke 21st Century's charter based on any information that was or could have been reviewed prior to this charter renewal or discovered during future or ongoing assessments or reviews. The Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to notify 21st Century of any violation and to take action against 21st Century, if necessary, including revocation or nonrenewal of the charter.

The Department is also providing written notice to 21st Century regarding areas of its cyber charter school operations that need attention and correction (see Appendix A). This notice is provided to allow 21st Century the opportunity to address areas that may not be in compliance with applicable requirements. Failure to attempt to address areas identified by the Department may result in additional action by the Department, including revocation of the charter.

APPENDIX A

Pursuant to section 1742-A of the Charter School Law (CSL), 24 P.S. § 17-1742-A, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) has conducted an assessment and review of 21st Century Cyber Charter School (21st Century). Based on this assessment and review, the Department has identified areas of operation which 21st Century must further examine and address.

21st Century must be prepared to provide information and documentary evidence to the Department during any future Department review of the cyber charter school's operations that demonstrates that the cyber charter school operates in compliance with this charter. Additionally, as described below, 21st Century must be prepared to provide the Department with information and documentary evidence on how it has addressed or is working to address each of the areas identified below:

- Assessment Participation
- Academic Proficiency
- Graduation Rate

21st Century must improve its assessment and accountability program.

A cyber charter school must meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4, including state student assessment requirements in Chapter 4. 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.51-4.52. The Department expects all schools, including cyber charter schools, to improve academically from the prior year, as demonstrated by various indicators, individually, collectively, or in any combination.

The Department examined various indicators related to 21st Century's academic performance over its charter term, including, but not limited to, assessment participation, academic performance, and graduation rates.

In 2018-19, 21st Century's assessment participation was 82.4% on the ELA/Literature assessments, 83.9% on the Math/Algebra assessments, and 86.3% on the Science/Biology assessments. With the onset of the pandemic, 21st Century's participation rate, along with all other schools' participation rates, dropped substantially. Although the participation rate has recovered some, in 2023-24 the ELA/Literature participation rate was only 69.1%, Math/Algebra was 71.7%, and Science/Biology was 72.6%. This is lower than the 95% assessment participation rate that schools are to attain annually.

Additionally, 21st Century's assessment proficiency lags behind the statewide averages while significantly outperforming many school districts and cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania. In 2022-2023, 21st Century's combined ESSA Indicator for ELA proficiency was 49.2% and in 2023-24, this percentage dropped to 47.5. However, the statewide average was 54.5% in

2022-2023 and 53.9% in 2023-2024. The difference is more pronounced when reviewing the combined PSSA and Keystone Math assessments. In 2022-2023, 21st Century only had 20.6% of their students attain proficient or advanced, compared to a statewide average of 38.3%. While 21st Century did make some progress in 2023-24, with 25.5% proficient or advanced, the statewide average was 40.2%. 21st Century's combined ESSA Indicator for Science proficiency in 2022-2023 was better at 44.3% but dipped slightly to 43.8% in 2023-2024. The statewide average was 58.9% in 2022-2023 and 59.2% in 2023-2024.

21st Century's graduation rate is another area of concern. Under ESSA, Section 1111(c)(4)(D), "all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one third or more of their students" receive Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) designations. 20 U.S.C. § 6311(c)(4)(D). 21st Century has been designated CSI for their graduation rate, although numbers have improved in recent years.

Therefore, notwithstanding that the Department has renewed 21st Century's charter, the Department may require corrective action and/or use designation as a CSI school or failure to exit CSI status as a basis for nonrenewal or revocation of 21st Century's charter. As 21st Century is designated as a CSI school, 21st Century must be prepared annually to provide the Department with the following:

- A comprehensive needs analysis that identifies the root causes of inconsistent student achievement results;
- A comprehensive data analysis that examines PSSA, Keystone, and PASA data;
- An assessment participation plan submitted through the Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Portal (FRCPP) each year the school fails to attain a 95% participation rate on state assessments¹; and
- An explanation of remedial programs that 21st Century will use to ensure progress from year to year.

¹ A school that does not meet the 95% participation rate on state assessments may be required to submit an assessment participation plan through the FRCPP, regardless of designated school improvement status.