June 13, 2025

Brian Hayden, Chief Administrator
Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School
652 Midland Avenue
Midland, PA 15059

Dear Mr. Hayden,

Based on a thorough review of Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School's (PA Cyber) renewal application and other documentation, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) is renewing PA Cyber'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 monitor and examine PA Cyber's operations throughout this term to determine whether PA Cyber is meeting the terms of its charter, the requirements of the Charter School Law, and other applicable state and federal mandates. By granting a renewed charter, the Department does not waive and expressly reserves the right to notify PA Cyber 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 PA Cyber in the form of charter revocation or nonrenewal for reasons including, but not limited to, those discussed in this letter or the attached Decision to Renew Charter and Appendix A.

Please note that the Department will continue to monitor the progress of PA Cyber's students by reviewing various data points (e.g., students' academic achievement, assessment participation rate, PASA participation, academic growth, and adjusted cohort graduation rates). And, based on standards for annual meaningful differentiation as identified by Pennsylvania's ESSA State Plan, each year, the Department will calculate and evaluate PA Cyber's progress toward meeting or exceeding its 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 will 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 PA Cyber's charter.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Randy Seely, Division Chief, Division of Charter Schools by email at rseely@pa.gov or by telephone at (717) 705-0353.

Sincerely,

Carrie Rowe, Ed.D.
Acting Secretary of Education

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Pennsylvania 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; be in compliance with the CSL and all other applicable law; provide all material components of each student's education; and maintain the financial ability to provide services.

The Department granted a charter to Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School (PA Cyber) for the term of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2025. PA Cyber submitted a renewal application to continue operating a cyber charter school on October 25, 2024.

Based on a comprehensive review of PA Cyber's operation during the charter term beginning July 1, 2020, including the information submitted with its renewal application; information gathered by the Department's representatives; and other sources of data, the Department is renewing PA Cyber's charter to operate a cyber charter school, subject to this Decision to Renew Charter, the areas for correction noted within Appendix A, and the mutually agreed-upon enrollment parameters outlined herein.

The baseline enrollment number from which any enrollment parameter will be calculated is PA Cyber's highest enrollment in the three years immediately preceding PA Cyber's application for renewal. The baseline number would be used to calculate a one-time 10% enrollment increase that may not be surpassed during any time period PA Cyber is designated for CSI. PA Cyber and the Department have agreed to an enrollment parameter of 12,000 students.

The enrollment parameter will remain in effect at any time PA Cyber is designated CSI and would be lifted if PA Cyber exited CSI. In the event the funding formula for cyber charter schools changes, or if another pandemic is declared, this enrollment parameter may be revisited.

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 PA Cyber's operation and to take action to revoke PA Cyber'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 PA Cyber of any violation and to take action against PA Cyber, if necessary, including revocation or nonrenewal of the charter.

The Department is also providing written notice to PA Cyber of areas of the operation of its cyber charter school that require attention and correction. This notice is provided to allow PA Cyber the opportunity to address areas that may not be in compliance with applicable requirements. Failure to address areas identified by the Department may result in additional action by the Department, including revocation of the charter.

Carrie Rowe, Ed.D.
Acting Secretary of Education

Date Mailed: June 13, 2025

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 Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School (PA Cyber). Based on this assessment and review, the Department has identified areas of operation which PA Cyber must further examine and address.

PA Cyber 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 all applicable requirements. Additionally, as described below, PA Cyber must be prepared to provide the Department with information and documentary evidence as to how it addressed or is working to address each of the areas identified below:

- Assessment Participation
- Academic Proficiency
- Graduation Rate

PA Cyber School 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 PA Cyber's academic performance over its charter term, including, but not limited to, assessment participation and academic achievement.

In 2018-19, PA Cyber's assessment participation rate was 79.5% on the ELA assessment, 79.4% on the math assessment, and 82.6% on the science assessment. With the onset of the pandemic, PA Cyber's participation rate, along with all other cyber charter schools' participation rates, dropped substantially. Although the participation rate is recovering, in 2023-24 the participation rate was 65.6% on the ELA assessment, 65.9% on the math assessment, and 68.8% on the science assessment. This is substantially lower than the 95% assessment participation rate that schools are to attain annually. PA Cyber's Title I grant award is currently in reimbursement status due to these extremely low participation rates, and the Department will continue to closely monitor this issue and PA Cyber's efforts to improve. Further, it was noted as part of the renewal process that PA Cyber has a high percentage of students taking the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment Dynamic Learning Maps (PASA DLM). This assessment is appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet several requirements as determined by the students' IEP teams. According to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Pennsylvania must ensure that no more than 1% of the total tested students are assessed on an alternate assessment. PA Cyber exceeded the requirement to assess no more than 1% of students on the state alternate assessment in 2024 by assessing 2.2% in ELA and Math on the PASA DLM. Notably, PA Cyber's alternate assessment participation rates reach up to 3.07% in certain grade/subject combinations. The Department has identified PA Cyber as a Tier 2 school for PASA participation, which means that PA Cyber must submit a justification for these numbers to the Department. It is the Department's

expectation that PA Cyber's policies and procedures accurately reflect the criteria that must be met in order for a student to qualify for the PASA DLM. Overidentification of students may result in increased monitoring or additional action.

Additionally, PA Cyber's assessment proficiency lags well behind the average of traditional school districts. In 2022-23, the percentage of students achieving proficient and advanced on the ELA combined PSSA and Keystone tests was at 31%, and in 2023-24, this percentage dropped to 27.4%. However, the average for school districts in 2022-23 was at 57.6%, and in 2023-24 that percentage remained at 56.9%. This difference is even more pronounced on the math combined PSSA and Keystone assessment, where the 2022-23 percentage of PA Cyber students proficient and advanced was at 12.8% and dropped to 12.5% in 2023-24. For school districts, the percentage in 2022-23 was 41.1%, increasing to 43.3% in 2023-24. There are similar numbers in the percentage proficient and advanced on the combined PSSA and Keystone science assessments. In 2022-23, PA Cyber had 34.9% of its students proficient or advanced, and that number dropped in 2023-24 to 30.9%. Traditional public schools had 63.2% of their students proficient or advanced in both 2022-23 and 2023-24. On the state Keystone assessments, PA Cyber, while outperforming the cyber charter school average and brick-and-mortar charter average in most areas, still lags behind traditional school districts. On the Literature assessment, in 2022-23, PA Cyber had 56.5% of its students proficient or advanced, compared to 67.4% of traditional public schools. That gap increased in 2023-24, where PA Cyber had 49.8% of its students proficient or advanced, compared to 65.6% of traditional public schools. On the Algebra assessment, in 2022-23 PA Cyber had 25% of its students attain proficient or advanced, compared to 36.6% for traditional public schools. That gap increased substantially in 2023-24, where 24% of PA Cyber students attained proficient or advanced, compared to 44.6% of traditional public schools. On the Keystone Biology assessment, 37.2% of PA Cyber's students attained a score of proficient or advanced in 2022-23, while 53.3% of the students enrolled in traditional public schools attained those scores. In 2023-24, PA Cyber's percentage decreased to 31.9%, while 53.5% of the students in traditional public schools attained proficient or advanced scores.

When reviewing academic growth, PA Cyber has mixed results. Growth has been well below standard for students on the PSSA math assessments for 2022, 2023, and 2024. The same is true for English Language Arts, although PSSA Science growth for both 4th grade and 8th grade has met or exceeded standards. Similarly, growth has been well below standard on the Keystone Algebra and Biology tests but at or above standard on the Keystone Literature test.

PA Cyber's graduation rate is another area of concern. While traditional public school districts averaged a graduation rate of just under 90% for the last three years, PA Cyber's 4- and 5-year combined cohort graduation rate is under 70%. The rate was 62.7% in 2021-22, 65.2% in 2022-23, and 69.5% in 2023-24. This improvement is encouraging and is now just above the 67% threshold used to designate school improvement. However, these numbers are still low. Therefore, notwithstanding that the Department has renewed PA Cyber'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 PA Cyber's charter; as PA Cyber is designated as a school needing improvement (CSI, TSI, or A-TSI), PA Cyber must be prepared to provide to the Department the following:

- A comprehensive needs analysis that identifies the root causes of poor student achievement results;
- A comprehensive data analysis that examines PSSA, Keystone, and PASA DLM 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 assessments[1];
- An explanation of remedial programs that PA Cyber will use to ensure progress from year to year.

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[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 FRCCP, regardless of designated school improvement status.