Renewal of Community School Sponsorship
Instructions and Timeline

Contract Expiring June 30, 2027

Deadline	Responsibility	Items to Be Completed
09/30/2026	School	Application for Renewal of Community School Sponsorship is submitted
10/01/2026 – 12/31/2026	ESCLEW	Review period and decision-making; high-stakes review completed
01/15/2027	ESCLEW	School is notified of recommendation to the ESCLEW Governing Board
02/28/2027	ESCLEW	School is sent a contract renewal packet for completion
04/30/2027	School	Contract negotiations are finalized and all contract attachments are submitted
05/31/2027	School	School governing authority approves and signs the sponsorship contract and the original, signed contract is returned to the ESCLEW
06/30/2027	ESCLEW	Contract is signed by the ESCLEW Superintendent and executed
09/30/2027	School	School year begins or contract is void **Exception for dropout prevention and recovery programs*

Sponsoring Priorities

Sponsorship encompasses a great deal of legal responsibility and the ESCLEW Community Schools Center takes its responsibilities seriously. At the core, it upholds its mission of being a student-centered authorizer of charter schools, advancing quality educational opportunities throughout the state of Ohio.
Adhering to the *Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing* as established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), the ESCLEW Community Schools Center uses the principles and standards as the foundation of its strategic plan for quality school sponsoring.

Principles
Maintain High Standards
Uphold School Autonomy
Protect Student and Public Interest

Standards
Agency Commitment and Capacity
Application Process & Decision-Making
Performance Contracting
Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
Revocation and Renewal Decision-Making

In accordance with the sponsoring priorities, principles, and standards, this application includes prescriptive requirements and evaluation criteria. In order to preserve the highest standard of quality sponsorship, the school must provide sound evidence of meeting the selection criteria. All sponsored schools seeking renewal must apply through this application. *Only schools that earn at least 75% of possible points will be considered for renewal.*

There are significant consequences for poor performance in academics, finance, operations, and governance. If a school does not perform well, it may be closed automatically by law or by the sponsor, and could be subject to civil liability. It is imperative the school demonstrates its strong educational, operational, and financial performance before the ESCLEW Community Schools Center would agree to renew the sponsorship of the community school.

Step One: Application for Sponsorship

To begin the process of renewing the community school sponsorship contract, follow the timeline and application instructions. Resources are also available on the ESCLEW Community Schools Center website and from state and local organizations. To discuss any questions, contact the ESCLEW Community Schools Center at (419) 246-3137.

All essay portion questions must be answered within the provided template. Any supplementary materials must be clearly labeled as separate attachments. Should a certain criterion not apply, a response stating why it is not applicable is required. No question should be left unanswered. The essay portion accounts for 30% of the final evaluation rubric score. The application must be submitted into Epicenter no later than **September 30, 2026**.

Step Two: Review Period and Decision-Making

As part of the application process, the ESCLEW Community Schools Center will complete a high stakes review. This is a rigorous evaluation of the school's academic, financial, organizational, operational, and compliance performance which aligns to the performance framework of the contract (Attachment 11.6) over the entire contract term. The high stakes review results account for 70% of the final evaluation rubric score.

The ESCLEW Application Review Team includes a core group from the ESCLEW Community Schools Center and external reviewers with expertise and sponsoring experience to make informed application decisions. Annually, and prior to reviewing applications, the Application Review Team is trained on the application process and materials; reviewer protocols; and the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the ESCLEW Community Schools Center. All reviewers sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure form. Any reviewer found to have a real or perceived conflict of interest will be excused to ensure impartiality in the review.

The rubric contains the application framework and evaluation criteria. The high stakes review, which accounts for 70% of scoring, along with the essay portion, which accounts for 30% of scoring, are the primary factors for renewal decision-making. Therefore, the school must present a comprehensive and evidence-based case for renewal.

After evaluating and discussing all the data, each reviewer will individually complete a rubric. The combined scores and comments will be provided to the school in the final evaluation rubric. Should the Application Review Team need additional information to make a determination, the school will be contacted during the review period.

Step Three: Renewal Decision and Contract Term Length

In order to guarantee the most comprehensive and appropriate decisions are rendered, the ESCLEW Community Schools Center only provides evidence-based recommendations to its Governing Board regarding applications for renewal of sponsorship. The ESCLEW Community Schools Center may choose not to renew a school's contract at its expiration date for failure to meet student performance requirements stated in its contract; failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; violation of any provision of its contract or applicable state or federal law; or other good cause.

Should the ESCLEW Community Schools Center choose not to renew the contract, it will notify the school of the proposed non-renewal no later than **January 15, 2027**. The notice will include detailed reasons for the proposed action, the effective date of non-renewal, and a statement which the school may, within fourteen (14) days of receiving the notice, request in writing an informal hearing before the sponsor. The informal hearing shall be held within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the request for the hearing. Within fourteen (14) days after the informal hearing, the ESCLEW

Community Schools Center will issue a written decision either affirming or rescinding the determination to not renew the school's sponsorship contract.

Should the ESCLEW Community Schools Center choose to renew the contract, it will notify the school of the decision and the approved maximum contract term length no later than **January 15, 2027**. The ESCLEW Governing Board currently offers sponsorship contracts for a maximum of five (5) years. The following table outlines the final evaluation rubric score and corresponding contract term length recommendations.

Final Evaluation Rubric Score	Recommended Contract Term Length
90.0% - 100%	Five (5) Year Recommendation
85.0% - 89.9%	Four (4) Year Recommendation
80.0% - 84.9%	Three (3) Year Recommendation
75.1% - 79.9%	Two (2) Year Recommendation
75.0%	One (1) Year Recommendation
74.9% or Lower	Not Recommended for Renewal

Step Four: Contract Negotiation and Attachments

The ESCLEW Community Schools Center will send the school a contract renewal packet no later than **February 28, 2027** which will include the restated contract template, attachment cover pages, and an explanation of changes made, typically statutory and best practices updates.

The school's governing authority, leader, management company (if applicable), and attorney should review the contract to ensure accuracy of all terms. Should the school find any errors or wish to negotiate any contract term, it should discuss the proposed changes with the ESCLEW Community Schools Center as soon as possible.

All contract attachments must be submitted into Epicenter no later than **April 30, 2027**. The attachments will be reviewed for accuracy, completeness, and appropriateness. Should any adjustments be required, the ESCLEW Community Schools Center will notify the school in a timely manner and convey specific instructions for the adjustments.

Step Five: Contract Approval and Execution

After all contract terms are finalized, the contract must be approved by the school's governing authority. The school should prepare a resolution for the governing authority president to sign once the contract is approved. This signed resolution must be included in the contract, so it is best to have a separate resolution signed that day rather than having approval reflected in the unapproved, draft minutes.

Once the school's governing authority has approved the contract resolution, the governing authority president must sign and date the contract. Then, the original, signed contract must be sent via postal mail and received by the ESCLEW Community Schools Center no later than **May 31, 2027**.

All negotiations must be complete and the contract must be signed by both parties prior to the expiration of the current contract. The ESCLEW Superintendent will only sign the contract once all requirements have been met. The ESCLEW Community Schools Center will send a copy of the fully executed contract to the school and the Ohio Department of Education. The contract will also be available for reference in Epicenter. The contract will go into effect on **July 1, 2027**.