



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Evaluation of Remote Charter Academies

H259 - 2023 Appropriations Act.

G.S. 115C-218.125; S.L. 2023-134, sec. 7.26(a)

Date Due: November 15, 2024

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

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Legislation

§ 115C-218.125. Evaluation of Remote Charter Academies.

The State Board of Education shall evaluate the success of remote charter academies approved under this Part. Success shall be measured by school performance scores and grades, retention rates, attendance rates, and, for grades nine through 12, high school completion and dropout rates. The Board shall report by **November 15** of each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the evaluation of these academies and on any recommended statutory changes.

Remote Charter Academy Application Process

Upon passage of [G.S. 115C-218.120](#), under advisement of the Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB), the Office of Charter Schools collaborated with NCDPI Virtual Instruction Support Services to develop remote charter applications and tools that aligned with processes that had been approved and implemented for traditional LEAs. The Office of Charter Schools adopted and revised pre-existing applications and tools to meet charter school requirements and specifications. The 2024-25 academic year marks the inaugural operation of remote charter academies. (Two full virtual schools operate under a legislative pilot: NC Virtual Academy and NC Cyber Academy).

Two separate and distinct application processes were developed for remote charter academies (RCAs). **1-New** remote charter academies would be required to apply as part of the annual charter application window in accordance with [16 NCAC 06G .0508](#). **2-Existing** charter schools already in operation could elect to apply for a remote charter academy via the amendment process.

All decisions regarding approval or denial of RCA applications must be made by the Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB).

1) New RCA Applicants

Applicants for a new remote charter academy must submit a completed charter application via the Edlusion platform and pay the application fee in accordance with [16 NCAC 06G .0508](#). As of the 2024 charter application cycle, updates to the North Carolina charter application includes an entirely new section designated for remote academies. The addition of the RCA set of questions can be located in Section 8 of the Edlusion charter application.

The Office of Charter Schools received a total of three RCA applications in the 2024 *new* application cycle. These three remote charter applications will be evaluated by OCS staff, NCDPI Exceptional Children, NCDPI Multilingual Learner, external subject matter experts and members of the Charter Schools Review Board. Following evaluations, RCA applicants will appear before CSRB from September- December 2024 where approval or denial decisions will be made.

2) RCA Amendment Applicants

Existing charter schools could elect to apply for a remote charter academy to begin with the 2024-2025 school year via the amendment process. Once an application was deemed complete by the Office of Charter Schools staff, the application was forwarded to CSRB for consideration. The following outlines the requirements for RCA amendment requests.

Application materials for Epicenter amendment submission:

1. A completed Remote Charter Academy application saved as a PDF.
2. A budget aligned to the minimum requirements outlined in the submitted application.
3. A Remote Instruction Plan that outlines the requirements found in the submitted application in a format that is intended for stakeholders such as staff and families.
4. Board minutes with a motion to:
 - a. Approve the completed Remote Charter Academy application and its contents.
 - b. Approve the budget aligned to the minimum requirements outlined in the Remote Charter Academy application.
 - c. Approve the Remote Instruction Plan developed for stakeholders such as staff and families.

The application deadline was Friday, May 17, 2024 at 5PM EST. [Interviews](#) were scheduled in order of application receipt and took place at the following CSRB meetings: May 6, and June 11, 2024. The Office of Charter Schools received a total of seven RCA applications, which were submitted as amendments. These seven remote charter applications were reviewed by OCS staff members and members of the Charter Schools Review Board. All seven RCA applications were approved.

Current Status

Of the seven approved RCAs, five began operations in fall 2024: Telra Institute (62L), Northeast Carolina Preparatory School (33A), Ascend Leadership Academy (53B), Pine Springs Preparatory Academy (93N), and Uwharrie Charter Academy (76A). Two schools deferred implementation of the remote programs and will reconsider whether to implement prior to the 2025-2026 school year.

As the approved RCAs have just begun operations this school year, there is no data to report related to evaluation of programming.

Request

The Office of Charter Schools requests that this report due date be revised to January 15th each year. As state academic data is approved each year at the October State Board of Education meeting, a November 15th due date does not provide enough time to both present for discussion in October and action in November, and analyze the data requested for evaluation.