



Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Nov 01, 2021 - School Board Meeting
Category	F. Action Items
Subject	4. ASD Memorandum #027 - Charter School Renewal: Aquarian
Access	Public
Type	Action
Recommended Action	To approve the Aquarian's charter renewal for an additional 10 years through the 2031-2032 school year.

Public Content

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #027 (2021-2022)

November 1, 2021

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: DR. DEENA BISHOP, SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL: AQUARIAN

ASD Core Value: Public education should be responsive to an ever-changing world

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approval of the Aquarian's charter renewal for an additional 10 years through the 2031-2032 school year.

PERTINENT FACTS:

State Statute 14.03.2559(c)(11) limits charter school contracts to a term not to exceed 10 years.

Anchorage School Board Policy and Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) regulations require charter schools to reapply for approval of their charter within 12 months of the expiration date of their current charter. Aquarian's charter will expire on June 30, 2022.

The District utilizes the DEED application format for charter school review and application process.

Aquarian's charter was first approved by the Anchorage School Board during the 1997-1998 school year. The school maintains a steady enrollment of approximately 380 kindergarten - sixth grade students with a strong lottery waitlist.

Aquarian is reapplying to the Anchorage School Board and DEED for a 10-year renewal of its charter.

There are currently nine charter schools in ASD. Each charter school is governed by an elected board called an Academic Policy Committee (APC). Each APC hires its principal who in turn is the administrator of the school. The Aquarian APC is made up of many dedicated parents and staff who continue to provide positive and responsible governance over Aquarian.

The charter school's application to the District will include any requested waivers outside of School Board policy and administrative regulations. If approved by the School Board, these waivers will be included in the school's charter and contract.

Aquarian's mission is to collaborate with community support, create a balanced and rewarding learning experience through academic excellence and fine arts, and strive to meet children at their level through unique instruction that values the whole child.

Aquarian has been a successful charter school with strong academic performance as seen in recent PEAK's results. The school offers leveled math instruction on a daily basis, 45 minutes of Art instruction, 90 minutes of Spanish instruction and 45 minutes of STEM instruction every four days.

To assist with differentiated instruction, Aquarian has a part-time teacher assistant in every classroom and parents are encouraged to volunteer two to three hours a month.

Aquarian is the only charter school in the District that is housed in an ASD facility. According to Alaska Statute 14.03.255, ASD cannot charge the charter school a lease that exceeds the true operating cost of that facility. This arrangement gives Aquarian Charter a tremendous savings that is not afforded other District charter schools.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Aquarian Charter School was added to the District's successful school bond. The portion of the bond allotted to Aquarian was 6.8 million dollars to replace and repair the aging roof and HVAC system in the ASD facility that houses Aquarian.

The Aquarian renewal application was open through Google Docs to the Administrative Review Team ("Team") for two weeks, during which time the Team added their suggestions and feedback for the charter renewal proposers. The Team was made up of representatives from many departments in the District including, but not limited to: ELL, STEM, OEC, Human Resources, Ed Tech, Curriculum, Special Education, Gifted, Finance, Risk Management, Operations, Maintenance and Elementary Education. The Team met with the proposers for an administrative review on September 22, 2021.

Aquarian had the opportunity to make any further changes or modifications to their application based on the above-mentioned meeting. This memorandum presents the final charter school reapplication to the School Board.

Attachment: A - DEED Charter School Renewal Application Form
B – Charter Renewal Contract

Prepared by: Chris Barr, Director, Charter Schools

Approved by: Mark Stock, Deputy Superintendent
Jim Anderson, Chief Financial Officer
Mike Fleckenstein, Chief Information Officer
Tom Roth, Chief of Operations
Dan Barker, Senior Director Elementary Education
Dave Whiting, Senior Director Purchasing
Andy Ratliff, Senior Director Management & Budget

M027a_Aquarian Charter School 2022 Reapplication.pdf (8,372 KB)

M027b_Aquarian Renewal Contract with ASD.pdf (848 KB)

Administrative Content

Executive Content

Motion & Voting

To approve the Aquarian's charter renewal for an additional 10 years through the 2031-2032 school year.

Motion by Andy Holleman, second by Dora Wilson.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yea: Margo Bellamy, Dave Donley, Pat Higgins, Andy Holleman, Carl Jacobs, Kelly Lessens, Dora Wilson

Last Modified by Katy Grant on November 2, 2021