

Academy of Alameda Elementary School Charter Renewal Petition: Findings and Recommendation

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In a Nutshell

- Staff recommends renewal
- Based on the renewal petition, site visit findings, board, leadership, parent, and staff interviews, staff has found that:
 - School has a clearly articulated mission and vision emphasizing social justice and has developed plans for implementing that vision
 - School has struggled to consistently implement that vision in day-to-day classroom instruction, in part because of the challenge of adding a new grade level each year
 - Parents and other stakeholders support the school
 - While the school has engaged in recruitment and outreach efforts, its student population does not reflect the population of surrounding AUSD schools
 - School's finances are solid
 - School has strong internal oversight

Renewal Petitions: Process

- Renewal process:
 - Per Ed Code, primary criterion is academic performance
 - Review all areas of schools (academics, finance, compliance, charter language) by variety of AUSD offices (Teaching & Learning, Special Ed, Finance, Legal)
- Materials considered:
 - Petition; SBAC/Dashboard data; LCAP; policies; interviews with board, leadership, staff, parents, students; site visit observations; budget; audit reports; enrollment data; special education/SELPA data; AUSD staff observations from throughout charter term

Renewal Standard

- Renewal petitions are governed by the same basic standard as initial petitions, but with additional threshold showing.
- Threshold showing: charter school must show demonstrated academic performance “at least equal” to comparable district schools. (EC 47607(b))
 - Comparable schools are the District schools charter students would otherwise have attended and those with similar student populations to the population served by the charter school.
- Schools making threshold showing are then evaluated across the board; emphasis still on academic performance:
 - “The authority that granted the charter shall consider increases in pupil academic achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter school as the most important factor in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.” (EC 47607(a)(3)(A))

Renewal Standard

- Essentially, if a school has satisfactory pupil achievement, there is a presumption that the petition must be approved
- To overcome presumption, there must be a finding that:
 - The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school, or
 - The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition, or
 - The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of its academic, financial, and compliance programs
- Findings must be specific, written, and supported by substantial evidence

AUSD Review Questions

- Is the school academically sound?
- Is the school an effective, viable organization?
- Has the school been faithful to the terms of its charter?
- Are the school's plans for a future charter term reasonably comprehensive?

AUSD Review Rubric

- AUSD uses criteria set out in attached rubric to measure adherence to standards:
 - Improving Student Achievement
 - Strong Leadership and Responsible Governance
 - Focus on Continuous Improvement
 - Fiscal Accountability
- Criteria subdivided into specific areas of focus
 - Graded on 5-point scale (1/Unsatisfactory, 2/Inadequate, 3/Underdeveloped, 4/Proficient, 5/Excellent)
 - Scores 3 or above required for renewal recommendation

AoAES: The Basics

- First year of instruction in 2015-16
- Planned as K-5 school
 - Began with grades K-1; currently serves K-4
- Overseen by same Board and Executive Director as AoA Middle School, but with different principal and separate charter
- Shares Chipman site with AoAMS; schools have long-term agreement to use facility
- Currently enrolls 254 students
 - 196 Alameda residents

Threshold Showing: Demographics and Comparable Schools

17-18 Demographics	AoAES		AUSD		Ruby Bridges		Paden		Maya Lin		Haight	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Enrollment	203		9503		504		374		415		554	
SED	43	21%		31%	340	67%	168	45%	97	23%	286	52%
SWD	5	2%		11%	60	12%	38	10%	78	19%	64	12%
EL	37	18%		15%	179	36%	111	30%	59	14%	183	33%
Asian	37	18%		29%	115	23%	102	27%	57	14%	173	31%
Black/African American	22	11%		7%	86	17%	28	7%	28	7%	37	7%
Filipino	15	7%		7%	31	6%	31	8%	24	6%	56	10%
Hispanic/Latino	47	23%		15%	106	21%	64	17%	60	14%	118	21%
White	47	23%		29%	90	18%	81	22%	184	44%	78	14%
Two or More Races	29	14%		11%	46	9%	52	14%	54	13%	71	13%
Not Reported	5	2%		1%	14	3%	11	3%	12	3%	14	3%

Threshold Showing: Academic Data

- Presents a challenge
- State testing (SBAC) begins in Grade 3
- Because AoAES has been phasing in grades during the most recent charter term, only one cohort of third-graders (52 students) has taken the SBAC
- Accordingly, must look to other measures identified in school's LCAP as well

Threshold Showing: SBAC Results

	ELA SBAC—Percentage Meeting or Exceeding						Math SBAC—Percentage Meeting or Exceeding					
17-18 Demographics	AOA 3rd		Maya Lin 3rd		Haight 3rd		AOA 3rd		Maya Lin 3rd		Haight 3rd	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All Students		19%		57%		62%		38%		60%		62%
SED		11%		32%		48%		27%		32%		47%
SWD				17%						17%		
EL		8%		53%		47%		33%		40%		60%
Asian		17%		50%		58%		50%		42%		70%
Black/African American												
Filipino												
Hispanic/Latino		21%		27%		76%		47%		47%		65%
White				80%		88%				92%		71%
Two or More Races						57%						71%

Threshold Showing: LCAP Local Measure Results

- Math:
 - 60% of students grades 1-3 demonstrated proficiency based on Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) assessment (students meeting target grade-level year-end RIT score) in 2017-18
 - 69% of students grades 1-2 were proficient in 16-17
- ELA:
 - 60% of students in grades K-3 demonstrated proficiency on year-end Fountas and Pinnell reading levels (students meeting year-end reading level goal) in 17-18
 - 54% of students K-2 proficient in 16-17

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 1 (Student Instruction)

- Criterion score: 3.3/5.0
- Observed strengths:
 - School leadership (Board, Executive Director, Principal) have clear shared academic vision for school and are implementing strategies to carry out that vision (i.e., expanding the school's Rtl structures for students who continue to perform below grade level as measured via MAP, F&P, and other local measures and increasing outreach to foster connectedness of families who are non-English speaking and/or non-Alameda residents)
 - The school has established clear and measurable goals within their LCAP and has aligned spending to those goals
 - There is a strong social justice focus at the school, including a restorative practice focus reflected in school's 0% suspension rate
 - Families were able to express that the social justice value guides the work of the school

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 1 (Student Instruction)

- Observed weaknesses:
 - Site team observed classroom-level challenges with classroom management and standards-based instruction
 - School has had to hire new teachers each year to keep up with grade level growth and struggled to adequately train new teachers
 - School's recruitment efforts have not been successful in increasing enrollment of students with disabilities
 - Families indicated there is no structure for parents to participate in school-level governance at the elementary level
 - EL instruction was tied to outdated reclassification criteria and instructors did not demonstrate understanding of EL data or issues

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 2 (Leadership & Governance)

- Criterion score: 4.1/5.0
- Observed strengths:
 - School mission and vision clearly understood at all levels; board actively involve in shaping mission and uses mission statement as tool for evaluation of leadership
 - Board regularly receives professional development and has developed onboarding instruction for new members
 - Staff professional development is well-considered and targeted to observed needs of staff
 - Multiple avenues exist for the board to receive feedback from stakeholders
 - Board members comprise a broad range of backgrounds and skills
 - No material legal or oversight issues during charter term

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 2 (Leadership & Governance)

- Observed weaknesses:
 - Parent stated there was not a formal vehicle for providing school-level input.
 - School's recruitment efforts have not been successful in increasing enrollment of students with disabilities.
 - Stakeholder participation in formal processes like board meetings and uniform complaint process is not robust.

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 3 (Improvement/Data Use)

- Criterion score: 4.5/5.0
- Observed strengths:
 - School uses summative and formative assessments in both math and ELA; measures and progress on those assessments tracked through the school's LCAP
 - Review team observed examples of the school using data to make resource allocation decisions, including hiring of reading specialist in light of below-target 16-17 ELA performance
- Observed weaknesses
 - Areas affecting student performance but not expressly measured by existing assessments (i.e., classroom management) possibly underemphasized

Summary of Findings:

Criteria 4 (Fiscal Accountability)

- Criterion score: 5.0/5.0
- Observed strengths:
 - School has adequate reserves
 - School assessed as low-risk using California Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) oversight checklist
 - Audit conducted in accordance with industry standards; audit showed no material weaknesses
 - Spending linked to LCAP and tracked by school

Summary of Findings: Recommendations

- Continue professional development to improve classroom management
- Conduct student survey regarding school safety
- Review and revise EL instructional program and reclassification criteria
- Establish school site council or equivalent
- Consider how school can better attract and retain students with disabilities

Timeline

- Findings will return for action at the Board's next meeting
- If AUSD rejects a petition, petitioner has the right to appeal to County Board of Education
- Could then appeal to State Board of Education as well
- December 2018 - Spring 2019: Appeal proceedings before County, State (if needed)

Questions?