

To: Superintendent Vital and AUSD Board of Education
From: Kelly Lara, Director of Student Services
Date: February 25, 2014
Re: Academy of Alameda Charter Renewal Petition Request

Action Requested:

Approve the Academy of Alameda (AOA) renewal charter petition because the charter school has met the standards set forth in the California Charter School Act, Education Code sections 47605 and 47607, which govern charter school renewals. As required by Education Code sections 4605 and 47607, the petition presents a sound educational program; the petitioners are likely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition; the petition contains the required signatures and affirmations; and the petition contains reasonably comprehensible descriptions of all of the 16 elements required by the California Charter Schools Act.

As required by Education Code section 47607 (b), AOA has meet at least one of the following four criteria: (1) attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years, (2) ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years, (3) ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years and (4) (A) achieved academic performance at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that AOA pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in AUSD, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at AOA.

Summary

Staff recommends that the AUSD Board of Education approve the petition to renew the charter of the Academy of Alameda (AOA), under the California Charter Schools Act.

Procedural Background

- 1) A representative from AOA submitted the AOA charter renewal petition on January 14, 2014 at a regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.
- 2) A public hearing was held on January 28, 2014. Representatives from AOA presented.
- 3) AUSD staff conducted a 2-day inspection visit at AOA on January 28 and January 29, 2014.

Statutory Background

Pursuant to Education Code 47605, Charter law outlines the criteria governing the approval or denial of petitions for renewal of charter school petitions. The following excerpt is taken from the Charter Schools Act, Education Code 47605. This excerpt delineates criteria for charter approval and denial:

A school district governing board shall grant a charter for the operation of a school under this part if it is satisfied that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational practice. The governing board of the school district shall not deny a petition for the establishment of a charter school unless it makes written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:

1. *The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.*
2. *The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.*
3. *The petition does not contain the number of signatures required.*
4. *The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in Education Code 47605(d).*
5. *The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 16 required charter elements.*

The following excerpt is taken from the Charter Schools Act, Education Code 47607(b). This excerpt delineates additional requirements for charter renewal:

Commencing on January 1, 2005, or after a charter school has been in operation for four years, whichever date occurs later; a charter school shall meet at least one of the following criteria prior to receiving a charter renewal pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (a):

1. *Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years.*
2. *Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years,*

3. *Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years*
4. *(A) The entity that granted the charter determines that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.*

Discussion

Staff convened a petition review team comprised of leadership within the District, which subsequently conducted an evaluation of the petition pursuant to the Charter Schools Act and with the application of the Alameda Unified School District Charter School Board Policy and Administrative Regulations.

(1) The petition presents a sound educational program.

The Academy of Alameda educational program is sound.

- Academic tests results confirm that the educational program is sound (see academic performance data below).
- The renewal petition describes a standards-based curriculum with the focus on all students being academically, behaviorally and socially successful at high levels and thus is prepared for high school and beyond.
- AOA's educational practices center around key elements for all students: high expectations and high engagement, personalized learning environment, a diverse academic program that supports students at different academic levels, educating the whole child with a focus on five student qualities and time to learn in order to foster academic mastery for all students.
- AOA is implementing research based supports and interventions for students.
- AOA is implementing school wide research based instructional strategies such as Inquiry by Design, Understanding by Design and Teach Like a Champion.
- AOA provides students with California Common Core standards based ELA, Math, Science, Social Science and electives and offers accelerated extension courses in Math and ELA for students who have demonstrated mastery and need an additional instructional challenge.

Academic Performance Data

Academic performance data confirms that the Academy of Alameda (AOA) educational program is sound. Looking broadly at the program over time, it is clear that AOA is consistently performing well, is demonstrating growth, and has exceed the state API target of 800 school-wide in 2013 by earning an API of 808. African American students met the API growth target set by state with a 52-point growth to earn an API of 715. Though

African American students are not yet performing on levels comparable to their peers, African American students are showed marked growth. Socio-economically disadvantaged students achieved a 23-point growth to earn an API of 757. English Learners however, represent an area in need of additional focus as the subgroup declined by 2 points in API earning an API of 762. AOA is attentive to adjusting its program and implementing interventions for any student who exhibits academic struggles. For example AOA is implementing mandatory intervention support during the school day and allows students who do not demonstrate proficiency on assessments to relearn the content and retest.

Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Reports:

Year	API Score	Overall Decile Rank	Similar School Decile Rank
2011	770	N/A	N/A
2012	774	5	6
2013	808	N/A	N/A

(2) The petitioners are demonstrably likely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.

The petitioners are likely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition. The petitioners and Board members are very capable individuals with considerable experience in education, instruction, and fiscal governance and community relations. AOA’s history of successful achievement summarized above is the best evidence for concluding that the petitioners will successfully implement the program set forth.

(3) Petition Signatures

Pursuant to CA Education Code Section 47605(a)(1)(B), the petition contains the signatures by a number of teachers that is equivalent to at least one-half the number of teachers that the charter school estimates will be employed at the school during its next year of operation.

(4) Required Affirmations

Pursuant to CA Education Code 47605(b)(4) the petition contains an affirmation of each of required conditions contained in CA Education Code section 47605(d)(1).

(5) The petition contains reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 16 required charter elements.

Sixteen Elements Table

	Element	Inadequate	Reasonably Comprehensive	Statutory Reference	Evidence
1.	Description of the educational program of the school, including what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21 st century and how learning best occurs.		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(A)	<p>The Academy of Alameda’s mission is to provide middle school students with an excellent education that equips them for academic success in high school and beyond. In particular the school focuses on helping students become self-developed, academically successful, culturally competent, responsible consumers and communicators of and information. AOA focuses students on 5 student qualifies of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparedness 2. Resilience 3. Cultural Competence 4. Integrity 5. Self-Control <p>When interviewing students, students were able to clearly articulate the importance of these skills and the impact that they have on their personal learning. For example, when talking with students about the growth mindset, students shared that each student comes to the school where they are at, that we are not all the same and that we all have to work on our skills. Students continued by explaining that they work on the 5 life skills every Wednesday as a school through advisory and Wednesday assemblies. During an observed Wednesday assembly students learned about gender identity and addressed their own biases so that they could each contribute towards making their campus safe and welcoming for all.</p>
2.	Measures pupil outcomes		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(B)	<p>The Academy of Alameda engages in regular measurement of pupil learning school wide. Teacher teams meet with the instructional coach and Principal to review assessment results and discuss next steps for student learning. In some instances, the Principal debrief individually with teachers whose data indicates the need for further conversation. Students whose test results indicate that they did not learn the desired content are provided with additional instruction both in the classroom and during mandatorial (mandatory intervention within the school day). Students are then permitted to retest and re-demonstrate their learning. In addition to assessments, pupil learning is also measured through teacher observation, student self-assessments, student surveys and parent surveys. Data on student learning is used to plan academic interventions, design skill based groups, determine students in need of acceleration, to guide Professional Learning community work, plan staff development, establish school wide goals and to make budgetary and staffing decisions.</p>
3.	Method by which pupil progress is to be measured		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(C)	<p>Students are evaluated regularly throughout the school year via benchmark assessments, which are tied to California Common Core Standards. Teachers, instructional coach and Principal monitor student mastery</p>

				of standards during regular data review meetings.
4.	Governance structure		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(D) The Academy of Alameda governing board is comprised of community members and educators. The governing board adopts policies consistent with the law and with the Academy of Alameda's mission. Each Board member keeps learning and achievement for all students as their primary focus. This is evident through the Board's frequent review of student achievement learning data. In addition to the Board of Directors, AOA has a well-established Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that advises the Board on all matters related to strengthening the Academy of Alameda community. The Board, PTO and Administration continuously work on seeking out ways to increase parental involvement in the school. Lastly, Academy teachers are invited to attend monthly Board meetings and their input is often obtained through via satisfaction surveys designed at measuring the school's effectiveness and identifying areas in need of improvement.
5.	Qualifications to be met by individuals employed at the school		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(E) The Academy of Alameda has clearly identified qualifications and hiring criteria for all staff. Administrators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Administrators must have a valid Administrative Services Credential, Teaching credential, a minimum of seven years of teaching experience, strong problem analysis and problem resolution skills, proven leadership skills, ability to interact and inspire a team, experience with the needs of low-income and/or minority children. Teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy of Alameda complies with EC 47605(1), which states that teachers in charter schools shall hold a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and shall be subject to periodic inspection by chartering authority. All teachers will be required to hold a CLAD certification or an equivalent recognized by the CCTC. The Academy of Alameda meets the requirements outlined within EC 47605(1). In particular, the criteria for teachers at the Academy of Alameda are that that teachers must have a knowledge of adolescent development, knowledge of learning theories and curriculum development, understanding of the need to use data, experience working collaboratively, willingness to accept input and feedback regarding professional growth, openness to innovative and creative approaches to meeting

				<p>educational goals, good rapport with students and their parents and the ability to differentiate instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy of Alameda teaching staff clearly possesses each of the above criteria as evidenced during inspection. For example, teachers were collectively proficient with the use of data to inform future instruction and readily accessed data to do so. Teachers consistently worked in collaboration with subject alike colleagues, grade level teams, and with the special education specialists to design lessons, teach themes and concepts across the content area and plan for differentiation and intervention. Teachers were collectively open to feedback and input as evidenced by their willingness to make use of the online observation notes tool, Bloom Board. 																				
6.	Procedures of ensuring health & safety of students		X	<p>E.C. 47605(b)(5)(F)</p> <p>The Academy of Alameda follows AUSD emergency preparedness policies and updates its emergency plan and procedures yearly. AOA conducts fire drills at least every two months and disaster drills at least once a trimester. Evacuation routes are posted within classrooms and evacuation procedures are practiced with the student body.</p> <p>The Academy of Alameda follows child abuse reporting regulations and reviews expectations with all faculty.</p> <p>The Academy of Alameda requires that volunteers outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee be fingerprinted and receive a background clearance prior to volunteering.</p> <p>The Academy of Alameda requires students to bring any prescription medication to the office with the accompanying form that authorizes staff to administer the medication.</p>																				
7.	Means for achieving racial and ethnic balance		X	<p>E.C. 47605(b)(5)(G)</p> <p>The Academy offers information nights open to the general public; the general program is addressed as well as programs to assist students with different needs. Flyers are sent out to local families based on zip code, which, due to the diverse nature of Alameda and the surrounding Oakland area, reaches a diverse set of families. The Academy also presents at local middle school option nights.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2011 – 2014 Student Demographics</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Ethnicity</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2011-2012</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2012 - 2013</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2013 - 2014</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>% White</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">24 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Black</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">27 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Hispanic</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">16 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Asian</td> <td style="text-align: center;">33 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">29 %</td> <td style="text-align: center;">29 %</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ethnicity	2011-2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	% White	15 %	24 %	23 %	% Black	23 %	25 %	27 %	% Hispanic	20 %	17 %	16 %	% Asian	33 %	29 %	29 %
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					% Mixed	8 %	5 %	N/A
8.	Admission requirements, if applicable		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(H)	The Academy of Alameda requires that students who wish to attend complete an application form. After admission, students will be required to complete an enrollment packet. Should the number of applicants exceed the number of available spaces, AOA will conduct a public random lottery. Students who reside within the AUSD attendance zone shall be given priority in a lottery. The Academy of Alameda adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act and provides students enrolling under this Act with supplies, materials and free field trips and student activities.			
9.	Manner for conducting annual, independent audits and for resolving exceptions or deficiencies		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(I)	The Academy of Alameda conducts a yearly audit via an independent auditor and forwards all findings to AUSD, the California Controller, the ACOE Superintendent, the State Board of Education, and the California Department of Education. Audits are public record and are provided to the public upon request.			
10.	Suspension and expulsion procedures		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(I)	<p>The Academy of Alameda adheres to EC 48900 et seq which describes the non-charter schools' list of offences and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The suspension procedures are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with parent/guardian and student held by Executive Director prior to suspension unless an emergency situation exists. • Written notification to parent/guardian of suspension. • Duration of suspension time not in excess of 5 days. <p>For infractions warranting expulsion, AOA Board may expel a student after a hearing or can requires that an Administrative Panel compromised of three certificated members may recommend expulsion to the Board.</p>			
11.	Manner for covering staff members through the State Teachers' Retirement System, Public Employees' Retirement System or federal social security		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(K)	All full-time certificated employees who are eligible will participate in the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS). Employees will contribute the required percentage, and The Academy of Alameda will contribute the employer's portion required by STRS. All withholdings from employees and the charter school will be forwarded to the STRS Fund as required. The Academy of Alameda will submit all retirement data through ACOE and will comply with all policies and procedures for payroll reporting. Employees will accumulate service credit years in the same manner as all other members of STRS. Social Security payments will be contributed for all qualifying non-STRS members. The Academy of Alameda Board of Directors retains the option to consider any other public or private retirement plans and to coordinate such participation with existing programs, as it deems appropriate. All full-time operations personnel who are eligible will be covered by a 403b retirement plan. The Federal Social Security program will cover all full-time eligible employees. The Executive Director will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for the retirement coverage have been made.			

12.	Attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the district who choose not to attend the charter school		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(L)	<p>No student may be required to attend The Academy of Alameda. Pupils who choose not to attend The Academy of Alameda may choose to attend other public schools in their district of residence according to school district policy, or at another school district or school within the District through an intra- or inter-district transfer.</p> <p>The parent(s) or guardian(s) of each pupil enrolled at The Academy of Alameda shall be informed that the pupil has no right to admission in a particular school of a local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.</p>
13.	Employee rights of return, if any		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(M)	<p>Job applicants for positions at The Academy of Alameda will be considered through an open process, and if hired, will enter into a contractual agreement with the school. Any District union employee who is offered employment and chooses to work at The Academy of Alameda will not be covered by his or her respective collective bargaining unit agreement, although The Academy of Alameda may extend the same or similar protections and benefits in individual employee contracts.</p> <p>All provisions pertaining to leave and return rights for district union employees will be granted to employees in accordance with current collective bargaining agreements. Former District employees must consult with the District to determine their eligibility for leave. Return rights are at the sole discretion of AUSD and collective bargaining agreements.</p>
14.	Dispute resolution procedure for school-authorizer issues related to charter		X	E.C. 47605(b)(5)(N)	<p>The Academy and AUSD will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes with AUSD amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures.</p> <p>In the event of a dispute between The Academy and AUSD, Academy staff, employees and Board members of The Academy and AUSD agree to first frame the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and to refer the issue to the District Superintendent and Executive Director of The Academy. In the event that the District Board of Education believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, The Academy requests that this shall be noted in the written dispute statement, although it recognizes it cannot legally bind AUSD to do so. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to AUSD’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.</p> <p>The Executive Director and Superintendent shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than 5 business days from receipt of the dispute statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two Board members from their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the Superintendent and</p>

				<p>the Executive Director of The Academy and attempt to resolve the dispute within 15 business days from receipt of the dispute statement.</p> <p>If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Superintendent and the Executive Director shall meet to jointly identify a neutral third party mediator to engage the Parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the Superintendent and the Executive Director. Mediation shall be held within sixty business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator shall be split equally between AUSD and The Academy. If mediation does not resolve the dispute, either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law. All timelines and procedures in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of AUSD and The Academy.</p>
15.	Statement regarding exclusive employer status of the school		X	<p>E.C. 47605(b)(5)(O)</p> <p>The Academy of Alameda will be deemed the exclusive public employer of the employees of The Academy for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”). The Academy of Alameda will comply with the EERA.</p>
16.	Procedures for school closure		X	<p>E.C. 47605(b)(5)(P)</p> <p>The Board of Directors will promptly notify parents and students of The Academy, the District, the Alameda County Office of Education, The Academy’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which The Academy’s employees participate (e.g., Public Employees’ Retirement System, State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils’ school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.</p> <p>The Board will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of The Academy of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close The Academy.</p>

Charter Renewal Criteria

Rubric Score of 5 = Achieving the Criteria
 Rubric Score of 2 = Not Achieving the Criteria

Criteria 1: Improving Student Achievement

A charter school promotes student learning through a clear vision and high expectations. It achieves clear, measurable program goals and student learning objectives, including meeting its stated performance standards, state and federal performance standards, and closing achievement gaps of students.

	The criteria for making judgments on the quality of the Student Academic Achievement First	Rubric Score	Evidence
1.1	Achieves clear, measurable program goals and student learning objectives, including meeting its stated performance standards, and state and federal standards.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA achieved API growth targets school wide for the 2012-2013 school year. • School wide performance goals are clearly articulated to all students, families and staff. • AOA implements regular benchmarks in all core subjects. Teachers and Students use the results of benchmark assessments to inform future learning or plan immediate interventions. • AOA teachers have created assessments aligned to California Common Core State Standards. • Additionally, teachers assess for student learning using the NWEA Map test in ELA and Math and STAR Reading Test. AOA plans to utilize Smarter Balance Aligned benchmarks to track student proficiency rates.
1.2	Achieves comparably improved student learning outcomes relative to students in traditional public schools that students would have otherwise attended.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AOA API for 2013 is 808. This exceeds the 800 score and is thus considered high performing. The AOA API score is exceeds that of the public school students would have otherwise attended.
1.3	Demonstrates high expectations for student achievement.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of student academic attainment and achievement are expected throughout AOA. • During observation the inspection team observed students engaged in rich critical thinking activities such as determining the mass of two objects and explaining one’s thinking to the class or identifying the charter’s traits from a reading selection and documenting specific sections of the text that supports their point of view. • On a weekly basis all AOA teachers meet in subject alike groups or grade level teams to articulate around skills and concept development in the subject area. • AOA implements benchmarks assessments in all core subjects throughout the school year. AOA teachers utilize the results to inform future instruction and plan immediate intervention. • During the summer AOA teachers engage in professional development and utilize incoming students’ STAR test scores to plan instruction for the upcoming year. Teachers then continue to look at student learning data on teacher-generated assessments throughout the school year.
1.4	Provides a challenging and coherent curriculum for each individual student	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA differentiates instruction for all students. Students in need of intervention are assigned “mandatorial” intervention classes. Strategic literacy classes are offered to struggling readers in addition to the student’s English class, Co-taught ELA is offered to students with IEPs and the most intensive

			<p>intervention of Language! is offered to students who fall below the 40th percentile on the CSTs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to intervention in ELA, the AOA offers students enrichment learning opportunities to accelerate students who are in need of greater challenge. Honors level Literature circles are offered 6th - 8th grade. During inspection, students expressed that these classes provided them with needed challenge and allow opportunity for all learners to learn at their own rate and level. • Similarly to ELA, AOA offers a variety of mathematics intervention. Supported Algebra Foundations I and II are offered to students who are one to two grade levels below and are designed to accelerate learning that students are on track by 9th grade. An instructional aide supports this class and after school tutoring is offered to students in need of more support. Additionally, AOA offers its most intensive intervention of Math Principals, which covers basic math concepts. • In addition to intervention in Math, the AOA offers students enrichment learning opportunities to accelerate students who are in need of greater challenge. Advanced Algebra Foundations I and II and 8th grade Algebra are offered. • AOA offers the GOLD after school program to provide additional enrichment classes for students. • The special education department works closely with the general education teachers, in some cases co-teaching courses, in an effort to ensure that instruction is appropriately differentiated and that modifications are implemented for any student who needs them. Teachers stated that there is significant support for and communication around students with high needs. •
1.5	Implements and directs learning experiences (consistent with the school’s purpose and charter) that actively engage students.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA provides a rigorous, relevant, accessible education for students enrolled in its 6-8 program. • AOA utilizes common core standards-aligned curriculum, instructional materials, resources and textbooks in the 6-8 program. • AOA’s believes key elements to academic success are high expectations and high engagement, personalized learning environment, diverse academic program, educating the whole child and providing time to learn. During inspection each of these key elements were observed. For example, all teachers implemented instructional strategies from “Teach Like a Champion”. In particular the strategy of No Opt Out was observed throughout each classroom. Teachers did not allow students to opt out of the learning occurring in the classroom. Teachers held student accountable for participating in the learning activities. Additionally, the personalized environment was observed in as much as students were being provided with opportunities to learn with a variety of support such as intensive intervention or accelerated honors class.
1.6	Allocates appropriate resources in the way of instructional materials, staffing and facilities to promote high levels of student achievement.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are utilized effectively to promote student achievement. <p><u>Time:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA has designed the school day bell schedule to allow for intervention time within the school day and as a result, attending intervention is no longer optional for students but is instead mandatory. In addition to intervention time within the school day, AOA operates a “drop rotation schedule”. This

			<p>allows for students to take classes over longer blocks of time. AOA has an early release on Wednesdays to allow for professional learning community time. Staff utilizes this valuable time to meet in grade level teams, subject alike teams and collaborate on important learning related topics.</p> <p><u>Fiscal Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA has added an Intervention Coordinator, Dean of School Culture and an Instructional Coach to aide in student learning, improving instruction and establishing a positive school campus. • AOA utilizes its funding to bring in talented professional developers to assist the staff with increasing cultural competence and student engagement. <p><u>Instructional Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA facilitates Inquiry By Design within its Language Arts classrooms and offers Language! within its tier 3 ELA intervention class.
1.7	Promotes academic risk taking by supporting students in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment characterized by trust, caring and professionalism.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academy of Alameda strives to facilitate a positive learning environment for all students. While instruction and learning is their first priority, AOA certainly recognizes the impact that a positive school culture has on students' ability to learn. To that end, AOA implements the Web orientation program to orient 6th grade students into the AOA school at the start of the school year. This orientation program is led by trained 8th graders and serves to build a positive rapport between both 6th grade students and 8th grade students. Furthermore, throughout the school year, 8th grade Web leaders organize additional gathering with their 6th grade mentees. In meeting with several 8th grade Web Leaders, it was observed that the 8th graders value the opportunity to mentor and guide the 6th grade students and take their role very seriously. 6th graders commented that the Web program made starting school a pleasant experience. • Students report that they are well informed as to their academic progress. Teachers communicate with students and families on a regular basis and though the school does not have a formal parent-teacher conference structure, students believe that teachers are very receptive to such meetings should they be necessary. School Loop, and daily emails with assigned homework are examples of communication tools used by the school. • Students cited the Honors English Course as a positive development and stated their desire for similar advanced courses in other subject areas, though appreciate efforts made by teachers to provide more challenging work within existing courses.
1.8	Productively engages parental and community involvement as a part of the school's student support system.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA has an active PTO organization. • AOA welcomes parent involvement in their monthly AOA board meetings.
1.9	Shares its vision among the school community and demonstrates its mission in daily action and practice.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AOA vision is demonstrated in its mission and daily actions and communicated out to all stakeholders. During inspection, students were able to clearly articulate what being an Academy Olympian is all about. The following are examples of how the school demonstrates its mission through daily action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The AOA educational philosophy of High Engagement can be seen in all of the AOA classrooms.

			<p>Teachers implement research based engagement strategies such as cold call, graphic organizers, cooperative grouping and no opt out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The AOA educational philosophy of a personalized learning environment is evident throughout the many student interviews conducted during inspection. Students commented that there are different expectations for different students based on student need and that students collectively understand that every student on campus has different needs. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of a diverse academic program is evident throughout AOA’s core classes, electives, tiered intervention classes and enrichment honor’s program. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of educating the whole child is evident throughout both the staff and students’ understanding of the “growth mindset”. In interviews with students, students expressed that if they work hard, they can be good at all subjects. Students saw their ability levels as something that can grow with effort. Teachers collectively shared that they believe that all students can achieve at high levels with support. ● The AOA educational philosophy of providing time for students to learn at different rates is evident in AOA’s intervention time within the school day and accelerated enrichment classes offered as an extra class.
1.10	Involves staff, students, parents and other stakeholders in its accountability for student learning and in the school’s program evaluation process.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AOA engages students, parents and staff in regular surveys on the school’s effectiveness and utilizes the results to plan programs, classes, interventions, etc.

Criteria 2: Strong Leadership

The leaders of a charter school are stewards of the charter’s mission and vision and carry out their duties in a professional, responsible and ethical manner. Charter school leaders use their influence and authority for the primary purpose of achieving student success.

	The criteria for judging the quality of Ethical Leadership.	Rubric Score	Evidence
2.1	Effectively communicates and engages stakeholders in the vision mission of the school.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director of AOA engages parents, teachers and Board Members in the Future Summit workshop where goals are discussed and decided upon collaboratively. Teachers report that the AOA Administration is open and approachable and willing to talk about anything. In fact, for the past three years the Executive Director sends out a teacher satisfaction survey twice per year in an attempt to hear feedback from teachers. The survey results are shared with both the staff and the AOA Board. Additionally, the Executive Director utilizes a leadership committee comprised of members of the teaching staff and works in collaboration with them.
2.2	Consistently puts into practice the educational program outlined in its charter.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA consistently implements the educational program outlined in its charter. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The AOA educational philosophy of High Engagement can be seen in all of the AOA classrooms. Teachers implement research based engagement strategies such as cold call, graphic organizers, cooperative grouping and no opt out. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of a personalized learning environment is evident throughout the many student interviews conducted during inspection. Students commented that there are different expectations for different students based on student need and that students collectively understand that every student on campus has different needs. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of a diverse academic program is evident throughout AOA’s core classes, electives, tiered intervention classes and enrichment honor’s program. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of educating the whole child is evident throughout both the staff and students’ understanding of the “growth mindset”. In interviews with students, students expressed that if they work hard, they can be good at all subjects. Students saw their ability levels as something that can grow with effort. Teachers collectively shared that they believe that all students can achieve at high levels with support. ○ The AOA educational philosophy of providing time for students to learn at different rates is evident in AOA’s intervention time within the school day and accelerated enrichment classes offered as an extra class.
2.3	Generates and sustains a school culture conducive to staff professional growth.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director of AOA collaborates with teachers on the leadership team to utilize student learning data and survey data to plan a professional development focus for the school year. For example, the Common Core Committee attended a common core conference and returned to the school site where they then worked with departments to assist them in breaking down the standards and identifying what needed to be changed.

			In addition, AOA held 2 professional development days where they focused on the goals of the school for the future. AOA included staff and parents in the professional development workshop. Moreover, AOA teachers have begun to engage in instructional rounds. 6 teachers participated in instructional rounds during the fall of 2013 and visited 3 different classrooms to observe for questioning strategies being used.
2.4	Actively monitors and evaluates the success of the school's program.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA consistently reviews student learning data and parent and student survey results and uses the data to evaluate the success of the program and plan future initiatives. Staff engages in regular data analysis meetings where they review student learning results on both summative and formative assessments. Some teachers engage in conferences with students to discuss their assessment results.
2.5	Provides regular, public reports on the school's progress towards achieving its goal to the school community and to the school's authorizer.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA reports on the school progress regularly at AOA Board of Education meetings.
2.6	Treats all individuals with fairness, dignity and respect.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA strives to recognize and value the diversity of its staff and students. AOA staff engage in courageous conversations about equity and have worked with an outside facilitator to have deep conversations about
2.7	Has a cogent understanding of the laws that govern charter schools and monitors the trends, issues and potential changes in the environment in which charter schools operate.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA regularly monitors charter laws and policies and attends charter school focused conferences to stay up to date.
2.8	Makes management decisions and uses his/her influence and authority for the primary purpose of achieving student success.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AOA Executive Director is strongly focused on student success and learning.
2.9	Abstains from any decision involving a potential or actual conflict of interests.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AOA Executive Director abstains from making any decisions that would be a conflict of interest.
2.10	Respects diversity and implements practices that are inclusive of all types of learners consistent with the school charter.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA strives to recognize and value the diversity of its staff and students. During inspection, AOA facilitated a diversity assembly with students that focused on gender identity. AOA has engaged staff in diversity training around cultural competence.
2.11	Engages community involvement in the school.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOA has an active PTO and involves parents in the school. Parents were invited to participate in the Futures Summit and participate in planning the focus for the upcoming years.

Criteria 3: A Focus of Continuous Improvement

A charter school engages in a process of continuous self-improvement in order to increase the effectiveness of its educational program. The school regularly assesses and evaluates student learning based on stated goals.

	The criteria for judging the quality of the Continuous Focus on Improvement	Rubric Score	Evidence
3.1	Uses information sources, data collection and data analysis strategies for self-examination and improvement.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA implements regular benchmarks in all core subjects. Teachers and Students use the results of benchmark assessments to inform future learning or plan immediate interventions. • AOA teachers have created assessments aligned to California Common Core State Standards. • Additionally, teachers assess for student learning using the NWEA Map test in ELA and Math and STAR Reading Test. AOA plans to utilize Smarter Balance Aligned benchmarks to track student proficiency rates. • AOA reports on the school progress regularly at AOA Board of Education meetings.
3.2	Establishes benchmarks and a variety of accountability tools for monitoring student progress and uses the results of these assessments to improve curriculum and instruction.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are evaluated regularly throughout the school year via benchmark assessments, which are tied to California Common Core Standards. • Teachers, instructional coach and Principal monitor student mastery of standards during regular data review meetings.
3.3	Establishes both long and short term goals and plans for accomplishing the school’s mission as stated in its charter.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA is focused on continuous improvement. To that end, AOA adopts initiatives that are research based and proven to support student learning. • AOA engages parents to participate in the Futures Summit and assist in planning the focus for the upcoming years.
3.4	Uses student assessment results to improve curriculum and instruction.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement is measured utilizing meaningful, reliable and valid performance benchmarks on a regular basis among teacher teams, instructional coach and administration. In addition, student assessment results are reviewed with the Board as well.
3.5	Use the results of evaluation and assessment as the basis for the allocation of resources for programmatic improvement.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA utilizes materials, equipment, staff and facilities effectively to optimize student learning.

Criteria 4: Responsible Governance

A charter school board and administration establish and implement policies that are transparent and focused on student achievement. Charter school board members and administrators have a cogent understanding of and comply with the laws that govern charter schools.

	The criteria for judging Responsible Governance.	Rubric Score	Evidence
4.1	Ensure that policies are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.	5	AOA strives to implement all policies in a fair and consistent manner.
4.2	Monitor the trends, issues and potential changes in the environment in which charter schools operate.	5	AOA monitors trends and changes that impact charter school operations. AOA attends charter school conferences to stay current.
4.3	Seek input from impacted stakeholders.	5	AOA seeks input from all stakeholders through a variety of methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent, student and staff surveys. • Consultation of the teacher leadership team. • Teacher satisfaction surveys. • Representatives from all stakeholder groups attend the Future Summit to participate in setting the future goals of the school.
4.4	Enact policies that respect diversity and implements practices that are inclusive of all types of learners consistent with the school charter.	5	AOA strives to have a racially and ethnically diverse student body and works to educate both the student body and the staff on issues of diversity. For example, during inspection, AOA students participated in an assembly focusing upon gender identity.
4.5	Actively engage the school’s authorizer in monitoring the school’s educational program and its fiscal status.	5	AOA submits requested reports and data to AUSD (authorizer).

Criteria 5: Fiscal Accountability

A charter school fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds and maintains publicly accessible fiscal records. The school conducts an annual financial audit, which is made public.

	The criteria for making judgments on Fiscal Responsibility	Rubric Score	Evidence
5.1	Creates and monitors immediate and long-range financial plans to effectively implement the school’s educational program and ensure financial stability.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA monitors there immediate and long-range financial plans as evidenced by their multi-year budget summary provided to the inspection team.
5.2	Conducts an annual financial audit, which is made public.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA is fiscally sound. The prior year audit report shows net financial position of \$1million dollars. Per review of the Multi-year budget summary the charter school projects a positive ending fund balance for the subsequent two fiscal years. • AOA demonstrates good fiscal judgment. Per review of the independent auditor’s report for fiscal years 6/30/12 and 6/30/13, they have no financial statement findings and have an “unmodified” report, which is a clean opinion.
5.3	Establishes clear fiscal policies to ensure that public funds are used appropriately and wisely.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA utilizes an outside consultant, Ed Tec to aide in their financial management.
5.4	Ensures financial resources are directly related to the school’s purpose: student achievement of learning goals.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOA utilizes financial resources to support the programs, objectives and goals outlined in the school’s charter. This is evidenced by AOA’s use of financial resources to add staff to aide in the continuous improvement of instruction (instructional coach), intervention computer programs for mathematics, research based curriculum and consultants focused on diversity and increasing student engagement.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Alameda Unified School District's Board of Education approve the petition for the renewal of the Academy of Alameda. The petition satisfies the five legally required categories of Education Code 47605:

1. *The charter school presents a sound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school;*
2. *The petitioners are demonstrably likely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition;*
3. *The petition contains the numbers of signatures required;*
4. *The petition contains an affirmation of each of the conditions described in Education Code 47605 (d);*
5. *The petition contains reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 16 required charter elements*

The petition satisfies at least one of the following criteria set forth in Education Code 47607:

1. *Attained its Academic Performance Index (API) growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years.*
2. *Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years,*
3. *Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years*
4. *(A) The academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend, as well as the academic performance of the schools in the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school.*

This approval is for the charter program and operation in its entirety as proposed and revised herein. Any subsequent material revision of the provision of this charter may be made only with the approval of the District as charter authorizer (Education Code 47607 (a) (1)). Any material revision to any charter component must be proposed and considered according to the standards and criteria in Education Code 47605 (Education Code 47607 (a) (2)) and in applicable Board Policy and Administrative Regulations.

The term of this charter will be from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2020, the term required for a renewal under the California Charter Schools Act (Education Code 47607 (a)(1)). The District will not accept a charter renewal request more than one year prior to the expiration of the charter.

A charter may be revoked by the authority that granted the charter if the authority finds that the charter school committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in its charter (Education Code 47607(c)(1)). The Board of Educations' approval of this charter shall incorporate the text revisions, conditions on opening and associated deadlines listed below as a condition of the charter.

The District retains the authority to delay renewal for a period of up to one year, if any of the conditions are not satisfactorily met by the associated deadlines. Not meeting any one of the conditions and associated deadlines set forth in this approval may be grounds for revocation as set forth in the California Charter Schools Act (Education Code 47607 (c)(1)).

Staff recommends that the Academy of Alameda focus on addressing the following during the next five years.

1. Frequently monitor credentials and ensure that all teachers are compliant with California Commission on Teaching Credentialing requirements.
2. Continue to seek out methods to increase parental and community involvement in the school with a special focus on increasing the parental involvement of subgroups who have a historical history of being disenfranchised.
3. Reflect upon the possibility of adding a structure for parent conferences to discuss student performance.
4. Continue to investigate and implement best practices for supporting English Learner achievement.
5. Continue to work to maintain high levels of academic achievement for all students as you transition to the common core.