

# **Highland Academy Charter School 2023 Charter Renewal Application**

Submitted to:  
ASD Charter Review Team  
Sept 1, 2022

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**(a.) CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR HIGHLAND ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

Upon acceptance by the Anchorage School District, this application shall become an integral part of the Charter School Contract between the Anchorage School District and Highland Academy Charter School, and shall be the governing charter for the school.

**(b.) CONTACT INFORMATION**

Alex Tatum	Jim Dube	Laura Hilger	Amelia Johnson
Chair	Vice-Chair	Secretary	Principal
907-250-4739	907-469-0909	907-250-1097	907-317-3573
tatum_alex@asdk12.org	dube_jim@asdk12.org	hilger_laura@asdk12.org	johnson_amelia@asdk12.org

**(c.) PROVISIONS FOR THE HIGHLAND ACADEMY ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Highland Academy Charter School Academic Policy Committee (APC) consists of no less than nine (9) members, but not more than fifteen (15) members. Board members represent a cross-section of stakeholders: parents, community members, Highland Academy teachers, and students. Board members serve three-year terms and are elected by a majority vote of the current APC. Student representatives are non-voting members. The Principal shall be a perpetual "ex-officio" member of the APC, but shall have no vote.

The Anchorage School District administration shall be entitled to retain a non-voting representative on the Highland Academy Academic Policy Committee.

This person will serve as liaison between the Anchorage School District and Highland Academy Charter. The District representative will provide information, as necessary, to support the Highland Academy Board decisions that may fall within Anchorage School District policy.

See Exhibit A for full school bylaws. See Exhibit O for a listing of current APC membership .

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**(d.) DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Highland Academy Charter School is managed directly by its Academic Policy Committee (APC), working with the principal. The APC is the primary governing body of the school designated to oversee and supervise all aspects of the school. The APC, upon delegation, shall assign to the principal the day-to-day management, financial records and

accountability and other duties as assigned and delegated by the APC or as required by law. The principal must submit for approval or disapproval to the APC all significant policy and curricular and financial decisions that have a substantial impact upon the school.

**General Powers and Duties:**

The APC has the following general powers and duties, which must be carried out in accordance with the charter:

- Create policy
- Approve and monitor the school's budget
- Set and monitor goals and objectives for the program
- Oversee implementation of Highland Academy Charter School's program
- Ensure adherence to the school's charter and policies
- Hire, supervise and evaluate the principal in partnership with a person who holds a current Type B Credential.

Highland Academy Charter School's APC Bylaws: Exhibit A

Highland Academy Charter School's APC Minutes 2021-2022: Exhibit B

**Board Goals**

Highland Academy Charter School's 2022/2023 strategic plan outlines the following major goals as measured by the Climate and Connectedness Survey:

**Improve Peer Climate (CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT)**

- CORE specific activities in Advisory
- Re-emphasize SuperCORES (paper and digital copies)
- Limiting lunch spaces
- Peer partners (within Advisory)
- Advisory partners
- Student Government - peer climate student committee

**Address Student Learning Loss (ACADEMICS & ACCOUNTABILITY)**

- Portfolio for students (work is collected in one space)
  - Reflecting regularly, evidence for conferences
  - Reviewing the portfolio with Advisor
- Goals, strengths, weaknesses - surveys
- Student growth rubrics (PSS standard)
- Data Review Committee to identify needs
- Student Support Committee

**Increase Cultural Connectedness (CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT)**

- Cultural fair (evening event - seasonal celebrations)
- Cultural awareness (communication - verbal, nonverbal)
- Advisory pairings to discuss culture

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## **(e.) DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

### **Mission Statement**

Highland Academy Charter School strives to equip students with the academic, social, and technical skills to excel in today's world and contribute positively to our society and the future.

### **Vision Statement**

Educating for Leadership, Educating for Life

### **Focus Areas**

- Accountability
- Academics
- Character Development
- Career and Service Learning

### **Philosophy**

Highland Academy Charter School is a competency-based learning environment that promotes mastery learning across the curriculum. This philosophy is aligned to our shared vision: "Educating for Leadership, Educating for Life"

- **Academics**
  - Competency based learning
  - Holistic standards
  - Scholarship
- **Accountability**
  - Measure growth
    - MAP Growth & iReady Benchmarks
    - AK Star Summative Assessment
    - Standard proficiency
  - At all stakeholder levels (APC, staff, students)
- **Character Development**
  - Advisory
  - Social-emotional learning
  - Self advocacy and responsibility
  - Citizenship and leadership
- **Career & Service Learning**
  - College & Career Prep
  - Personal, Social, and Service

This is the foundation that guides our teaching and learning. Attention is placed on individual student learning needs in which student voice and ownership are encouraged and expected.

Highland Academy Charter School (HACS) was developed with parent input for students interested in an innovative educational environment that combines interdisciplinary, real world, and project-based learning with rigorous academic expectations. Highland Academy's learning environment focuses on several guiding principles including:

- *Personalization*
- *Student ownership of learning*
- *Shared decision making*
- *Varied and holistic assessments*
- *Social and emotional learning skills*

With a focus on these principles, HACS prepares students to embody its vision of "Educating for Leadership, Educating for Life" beyond the classroom and into adulthood.

Students are expected to achieve competency in standards that are aligned to District, State, and National standards.

The HACS Community recognizes that every child needs an education system that prepares them for participation in a workforce requiring the ability to communicate with others, solve complex problems, and think critically. HACS strives to systematically support students to successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges, and a globally competitive workforce. This includes a focus on competency learning through real-world experiences, in order to provide opportunities to develop leadership for postsecondary success.

In addition to core academic standards, HACS students will learn and achieve competency in additional sets of standards that bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experiences. These are Personal, Social Service Standards (PSS) and College and Career Preparedness Standards (CCP). Embedded in these standards is skill development of communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity which are critical skill sets for success beyond the classroom.

### **Core Values**

Highland Academy Charter School's program emphasizes core values that include leadership and ethics, work and cooperation, humility and integrity, responsibility to community and culture with respect for others. Ultimately, HACS aims to have students become self motivated, competent, lifelong learners prepared to contribute positively to our society. Highland Academy Charter School's core values are represented through:

- A program that guides students in mastering the process of educating themselves through cultivating personal, intellectual, and social-emotional growth. Supported by: instilling integrity through leadership, promoting the value of living an ethical life, and ensuring students make the connection between themselves, their education and the rest of the world.

- A learning environment in which our diverse group of students are held to high standards of growth and progress, supported by a dedicated community of instructors, mentors, parents and peers.

The foundation for these values is a Culture of Respect for Everyone (CORE). Less a system of discipline and more a collective commitment to a physically, mentally, and emotionally safe learning environment, CORE endows all members of the HACS learning community with the responsibility of acting and speaking in a way that honors CORE values. In addition, staff and students also bear the responsibility to hold others accountable to CORE: adult to student, student to adult, adult to adult, and student to student.

### **Core Curriculum Overview**

The core educational program at Highland Academy Charter School supports 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning for all students in reading, writing, science, social environments and mathematics each school year. The curriculum is progressive and students develop competency in one developmental level before moving on to the next. This requires students to complete work on all learning standards in a particular content area and developmental level at a minimal expectational level. Learning is not “one and done,” rather students are given the opportunity to make revisions until they have demonstrated competency.

Upon enrollment, students are assessed and evaluated in the core skill areas (reading, writing, mathematics) to determine initial placement at their developmental levels using both formative (benchmark and diagnostic) as well as summative assessments, and are aligned to Highland Academy Charter School’s standards. Other types of formative and summative assessments are created by teachers to measure and report progress throughout competency levels.

HACS’s guaranteed and viable curriculum is driven by standards (what students must know and be able to do) that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the Alaska State Social Studies Standards. Rubrics and feedback processes specifically outline how student learning is assessed and detail the high expectations for each learner. Students engage in the process of learning by using multiple sources of information.

HACS utilizes blended learning where education combines face-to-face classroom methods with digital learning tools. The input and feedback of peers is central to the learning process at HACS, and students learn strategies and tools for giving and receiving constructive feedback. Interactions in the classroom are deliberate, guided, and designed to improve processes and products. Rather than using only a traditional time-based system, Highland Academy Charter School’s performance based system requires students to progress through academic levels as they meet competency expectations. HACS recognizes that learners bring diverse talents and needs to the learning community, and are committed to providing flexibility within the program to honor those unique talents and needs. Our commitment of time and personnel maximizes our ability to know our students well. We emphasize a low student-teacher ratio, small class sizes, and an advisory system that provides every student at HACS with an adult advocate and academic advisor.

Students must complete performance and content skills at each level before moving to the next. The instructional model includes learning in both content and process standards:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Personal, Social, and Service Skills (Character Education)

- College and Career Preparedness

In order for students to complete a level of instruction at competency, all learning targets (standards) in that level must be completed with at least a minimal\* level of understanding. No individual learning standard is omitted. Students “level up” at one of three levels:

- Advanced – the majority of standards have been mastered at the highest level of understanding and competency while the student has demonstrated proficient competency in the remaining standards
- Proficient – the student has demonstrated proficiency competency in the majority of standards while demonstrating growth and adequate progress on the remaining standards
- Developing – the student has demonstrated sufficient competency in the learning standards in order to be prepared for instruction at the next level of learning

A student who has not demonstrated sufficient competency and is not academically ready for the next level of instruction may remain in an academic level beyond one year of instruction. HACS is committed to giving students the tools they need to be successful as they make progress through their academic careers.

### **Unique Learning Opportunities**

At Highland Academy Charter School, students learn by actively engaging in real world problem solving. This type of work requires critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation. Project-based learning incorporates relevant and current issues, as well as the core disciplines. Students envision the interdisciplinary nature of these projects and find that each task may have more than one solution.

Leveraging current technology opens the environment to anytime, anywhere learning where students are encouraged to connect the learning from real-world activities to the standards they are required to earn on the journey to earning a high school diploma.

Each semester students participate in exploratory *Intensives*. Staff and students work together to develop these non-traditional learning exploration days. The focus of exploration is wide in scope and is dependent on student need, interest and passions, teacher expertise, time, and available resources.

Topics can be scientific, technical, artistic, philanthropic or physical. *Intensives* address a range of standards and provide opportunities to be introduced to novel and non-traditional learning opportunities. Students experience content they may not be familiar with and explore their desire to develop a deeper understanding of areas in which they may be interested outside of the traditional classroom. Students spend a week in half or full day intensive, hands-on activities dedicated to the particular topic they have chosen.

Research shows that students who have the freedom to choose different strategies and approaches become more involved in the learning process and will be more likely to approach other problems with an open mind. The curriculum is academically rigorous. Student voice and choice in the learning process is a significant driver in student motivation. *Intensives* are one example of HACS's dedication to utilizing real-world experiences, and brain based learning to allow students to realize their individual potential.



## **Social-Emotional Learning and Career Readiness**

Two critical and unique elements of the HACS curriculum are Standards sets for *Personal and Social Service* (PSS) and *College and Career Preparedness* (CCP). These standard strands cover a range of essential skills and dispositions, and encompass a set of attributes necessary to promote the growth of young adults who are ready for college, the work force, and at the most basic level, adulthood.

HACS recognizes that social-emotional learning has become a critical component of education nation-wide in general and in the Anchorage School District in particular. HACS not only explicitly teaches these critical skills but assesses them for all students through the completion of PSS standards. The student's advisor is the mentor through which PSS standards are assigned, assessed, and earned.

Elements of PSS include:

- Personal Growth
- Service to the Community
- Personal Expression
- Health
- Social Skills

Students engage in activities in and out of school to cover the standards in each of three levels of PSS. The culmination of each level is a PSS Advancement in which students present the growth they've made as a result of completing this work to a panel including their advisor, teachers, administrators, and peers. A PSS advancement is a celebration of learning in the truest sense.

CCP standards cover a range of skills and attributes necessary for a successful transition to college and the working world. Also set at three levels of increasing complexity and demand, CCP standards include:

- Professional etiquette
- Personal finance
- Internet safety
- Ethics
- Career exploration
- Collaboration

PSS and CCP standards round out a HACS education by complimenting academic skills with the unquantifiable attributes that standardized tests don't measure. These elements of student growth and development are as important as content knowledge. Whether it's perseverance, social-emotional intelligence, metacognition, or executive functioning, these abilities indicate potential and success as much if not more so than academic ability. Students earn 3 elective credits in each of these content areas, which are required for graduation from Highland Academy.

## **Curricular Review**

Highland Academy Charter School reviews and revises its standards on a cyclical basis to ensure what students need to know and be able to do keeps pace with the knowledge and skills required in today's interconnected global environment. Further, rubrics and other assessments are revised as necessary to ensure alignment and rigor with standards. Review and if necessary, revision, takes place on a four-year cycle as follows:

- Year 1 - Language Arts
- Year 2 - Science; College and Career Preparedness
- Year 3 - Social Studies
- Year 4 – Mathematics; Personal, Social Service

Standards in HACS College and Career Preparedness strand (CCP) were revised in the summer of 2016. This revision consisted of the combining of two previously independent strands: Careers and Technology, as well as a streamlining of the technology-related standards to focus more on application of technology skills to learning and careers. Personal Social Service (PSS) and College and Career Preparedness standards, were most recently revised in 2022, and emphasize the skills for healthy living, self-knowledge, service to the community, personal growth and responsibility, and job readiness. Technology standards within the CCP strand align to the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S), ISTE, and ASD’s XXVI goals.

Students participate in all required state and national tests.

Highland Academy Charter School recognizes that a comprehensive assessment system is designed to identify student strengths and areas of need. Key to that process is the systematic and systemic program known as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support at Highland Academy Charter School**

From the Anchorage School District website, “The Anchorage School District defines Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the academic, social/emotional and behavioral needs of ALL students.”

The success of an MTSS framework is dependent on the effective interaction of student outcomes:

- data used for decision-making,
- use of evidence-based practices to get to student outcomes, and
- the systems which adults need in order to support the implementation of the practices.

MTSS is an important framework for pulling apart the content students must know and the processes students must be able to demonstrate in order to be proficient learners. Highland Academy Charter School’s competency-based instructional framework is the foundation of an MTSS system that is embedded in the components of Shared Vision, Shared Leadership and Personal Mastery. There is an implicit recognition that each student learns at their own pace and that placement in a student’s academically appropriate instructional level begins the process of providing support in an appropriately challenging learning environment.

The Shared Vision at HACS grounds the learning community to work towards a common outcome for student learning. Shared Leadership engages all stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process. Additionally, it provides a framework that encourages students to take ownership of their own learning, thus they are able to articulate problem areas. Instructional design focuses on personal competency. Rubrics, standards-based assessment data, web-based programs along with formative and summative assessments are used to compare, contrast, and validate student

progress.

The most powerful tools that support student learning are the standards and rubrics. The standards are a clear picture of what students need to know and be able to do, while the rubrics detail the criteria for determining progress towards competency. Rubric assessments fall into the following categories:

Cumulative Analytical Assessments: Assess the ability to measure the application of skills and knowledge in the context of real world situations.

Student Self-Assessments: Student directed assessments of knowledge and skills in a particular standard and level.

Skill Assessments: Demonstration of knowledge and skills through basic recall of facts and specifics.

As outlined above, Highland Academy Charter School's model aligns with the district MTSS initiative, addressing the goal to increase the effectiveness of instruction so students achieve competency in learning standards across content areas.

The educational model at HACS places students at their development level regardless of age, thus students with special needs are fully integrated into the general education program. The student centered, individualized nature of HACS allows teachers to target IEP goals and move students through the required levels at a pace that meets the unique needs of each child. Related service providers, when possible, work in the classroom setting to support the students within the context of that learning. When this is not possible, space is provided for pull out services (Speech, OT, PT).

English Language Learner (ELL) students are fully integrated in the general education program. HACS coordinates additional support for English Language Learners with the ASD ELL Department. Without the constraints of time, ELL students can progress through the course of study at a pace that supports English language acquisition and may include a modified course of study

## **ASD Goals and Guardrails - XXVI**

### **Math Proficiency**

Beginning September 2020, the percentage of students in grades 3-9 proficient in mathematics on the state summative assessment will increase from **40%** to **55%** by May 2026.

### **College, Career, Life Ready**

Beginning with the Freshman Class in September 2020, the percentage of high school students graduating Life Ready as well as College and/or Career Ready will increase from a baseline of **TBA%** in Spring 2022 to **90%** in Spring 2026.

## **Community Connections**

A practical understanding of ethics and integrity is not only a part of our curriculum, but also an essential element in the workplace. Students learn how personal ethics relate to moral codes, as well as building responsibility, leadership, integrity, and teamwork. Community service projects and volunteer work are required at all levels of the Personal, Social and Service Learning strand. Students are also expected to participate in job shadows and internships with a focus on exploring career interests.

The schedule at HACS is designed to meet the rapidly changing needs of today's learner and the needs of an evolving workplace. The schedule is re-evaluated each spring to ensure that it is meeting student needs, student voice, and providing optimal opportunities for core instruction, elective offerings, and supportive and productive advisory time. Students involved in extracurricular or academic activities at other facilities may receive waivers for release time from HACS, continuing their project work outside of the school.

The core curriculum offers the opportunity to participate in real-world projects often supported by community members, organizations, or partners that give students the opportunity to learn while working on problems of interest and concern in the community. At certain times of the school year, members of the community are invited to lead intensives where students can explore various subject matters in a deep and meaningful way. In addition, extended learning opportunities are provided for students to submerge themselves into different aspects of our community. Participation in programs such as Lego Robotics and Real World Design Challenge provide natural opportunities for partnerships with mentors to support student learning.

Students that are engaged in learning opportunities off campus during the school day such as internships, KTH, AMCS, etc., must complete an Off-Campus ILP (Individual Learning Plan) that shows what standards they are completing, how they will do this, and when they will submit their work. Students who leave campus during the day must have earned enough credits to have gaps in their schedule to allow for these opportunities. Students are not missing class to complete internships or other alternative learning opportunities. Students are held accountable for these types of learning opportunities by meeting with their teachers to go over their work and revising assignments/projects until proficiency is reached.

### **Staff Roles and Relationships**

Highland Academy Charter School staff members have an opportunity to form close bonds with every student. Each student has an advisor with whom they meet regularly to address important personal, social, future career, and academic challenges and opportunities. The advisor becomes familiar with each student's personal needs, strengths, and family background, and functions as the point of communication with the student's family. Advisors serve as a student's academic coach, PSS and CCP facilitator, and family point of contact. The advisor-student relationship is critical to the growth and progress of students across disciplines and throughout their years at HACS. Students will often work with the same advisor across multiple years.

Staff members embrace professional development in research-based best practices that support teaching and learning. Professional development topics include (but are not limited to):

- School-wide action or improvement plans including data analysis
- Pedagogy (in general, by content)
- Technology use and innovation
- Formative/Summative Assessments
- Interventions for struggling students
- Social, Emotional Development (Mindset, Habits of Mind)
- Brain research

The professional learning community of HACS strives to be a highly collegial and collaborative team. Teachers have planning times at the beginning of each school year, allowing them to develop team unity and curriculum projects that challenge and motivate students. Additionally, in-service planning days prior to each semester and weekly group planning time are provided to give teachers both formal and informal opportunities to review, revise, and propose

curriculum activities, thus developing the genuine interdependence that is critical to the success of the learning program HACS. By planning multidisciplinary curriculum projects together, teachers become a collaborative team invested in the performance of each student as well as the performance of the whole school.

### **Parent Involvement that Supports Learning**

Parent involvement in their child's educational experience is a critical component to success. Transparent communication is a key aspect of HACS student/parent/teacher partnership. Parents have 24/7 access to HACS Academy's on-line learning management system, *Empower* (Exhibit F). *Empower* provides information on a child's progress towards standards competency in each content strand. Notes from teachers detail assignments and/or projects used to evaluate student progress. Additionally, students are expected to revise work that does not meet expectations for competency. *Empower* allows parents to monitor student-defined goals and/or work with their child to set and monitor goals. Parents also have access to playlists that are linked to the standards being addressed, the tasks/projects to be completed, a calendar of due dates, and the ways in which learning will be assessed. Additionally, HACS utilizes quarterly reports to provide parents with information regarding their child's classroom performance, work habits, and progress toward completing levels of instruction.

The Parent, Teacher, Student Organization (PTSO) provides an opportunity for parents, teachers, students, and community members to work together in support of student needs and school goals. In addition to a collaborative working relationship, students also have the opportunity to further develop leadership skills.

In addition, parents, teachers, students, and community members have the opportunity to serve on the Academic Policy Committee (APC). The APC is the policy-making branch of HACS. The powers granted to the Board are set forth in School District Policy 333.4. The Board shall adopt, amend or revoke policies in accordance with the procedures established in these by-laws. It is important to have stakeholder involvement at all levels of the HACS learning community. Student board members have the opportunity to further develop leadership skills.

### **Conclusion**

Highland Academy Charter School offers students a unique learning environment predicated on the belief that when students take charge of their own learning, they develop not only strong academic skills, but life skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom. In this rigorous competency-based system, students are expected to make progress and growth on all learning standards and achievement is measured by the satisfactory completion of standards rather than an average of multiple assessments resulting in a letter grade.

### **(f.) ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Highland Academy Charter School uses the same calendar of registration as other alternative programs in the ASD. HACS also uses the same lottery system as all optional programs in ASD.
- Students in grades 6-12 will be placed into reading, writing and mathematics before the start of school based on previous grades, as well as benchmark and summative assessment scores. These students will begin school consistent with the ASD calendar.

- Highland Academy Charter School follows the ASD lottery and enrollment guidelines per ASD policy. Lottery dates may be added if school and community needs require. (Exhibit G)
- For students who have IEP and 504 plans, admissions procedures at Highland Academy Charter School follow the Anchorage School District "Lottery School Admission Procedures for Special Education Students: dated 10/7/2009. (Exhibit J)
- Highland Academy Charter School is strictly a "school of choice" and is 100% lottery based for ASD students. Parents are encouraged to attend tours and meet with administration to be fully informed about the school's program prior to their child attending the school. A "New To The Model - Parent Academy" program is offered for parents when school begins. Additionally online video tutorials are available throughout the year for parents who require help with Empower.
- Each student's mathematics and language arts skills are frequently assessed to determine proper academic placement within the program. Assessment results from MAP Growth, AK Star, and iReady are also used to determine appropriate placement.
- Enrollment policies, access to curriculum, services and activities of the program are non-discriminatory with regard to religion, language, physical handicap or national origin of children and their parents.

**(g.) ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

Highland Academy Charter School follows the Anchorage School District administrative policies and regulations as they apply to charter schools within the provisions of law and school board policy with the following exceptions:

- Highland Academy Charter School may alter current district in-service days to enable and accommodate program needs. If applicable, this will be submitted in advance for approval to ASD. (Exhibit P)
- Highland Academy Charter School requests the same waiver as ASD for the parent-teacher conference schedule.
- Highland Academy Charter School employs a full time principal. Members of the APC may be given waivers of confidentiality to review appropriate principal personnel files for screening applicants prior to interview.
- Highland Academy Charter School currently has no requested exemptions from current bargaining agreements, but the APC reserves the right to request exemptions in the future, should the need arise.

**(h.) FUNDING AND ALLOCATION AND ANNUAL PROGRAM BUDGET**

Funding for Highland Academy Charter School is based on the State of Alaska's per-pupil funding formula; as per AS 14.03.260. In addition, the school's funds may be supplemented by grants, fundraisers within the school community, and additional funds (if any) supplied by ASD.

**(i.) METHOD BY WHICH THE CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL ACCOUNT FOR RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES**

Highland Academy Charter School will be in compliance with AS 14.17.910 Restrictions Governing Receipt and Expenditure of Money from Public School Foundation Account. The charter school will account for receipts and expenditures by using and complying with District accounting, audit and ruled fiscal procedures. The charter school agrees that it will comply with local, state, and federal requirements for receipt and use of public money. Highland Academy Charter School will allow District personnel or District auditors to access financial information to perform an annual review or special audit of accounting information. The charter school will cooperate with the School Board and the Department of Education in complying with the requirements of AS 14.17.910.

The Principal and Administrative Assistant oversee the day-to-day financial aspects of Highland Academy Charter School. The principal and the APC Treasurer ensure that accurate and reliable information is available for the entire APC to make sound financial decisions.

All leases, debts, and other financial obligations shall be those of Highland Academy Charter School and shall not constitute a debt, liability, or financial obligation of the School Board or the District.

#### **(j.) LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE FACILITY**

Highland Academy Charter School is currently located at 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Anchorage, 99504. The building is leased from Boniface Center, LLC, PO Box 202845, Anchorage 99520, and our facility is sub-leased from the Anchorage School District.

The current building consists of approximately 21,000 square feet. Student instruction areas include twelve classrooms, a computer lab and two group meeting rooms, a common meeting area, which also serves as a lunch room and play area, and a fenced off outside play area. Office and staff support areas include a Principal office, an Assistant Principal office, a Special Education/Related Services office, a staff lounge, nurse's office, faculty workroom, and janitorial/storage spaces. See the building floor plan attached as Exhibit Q.

Highland Academy Charter School shall meet and maintain the federal, state and local building, fire health and safety requirements applicable to other public schools in the District.

#### **(k.) TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL**

Highland Academy Charter School is currently fully staffed with teachers and an assistant principal that meet the district and state eligibility requirements. All teachers are certified in their content areas. In the event that a teacher position becomes open: teachers will be selected from the ASD eligible-for-hire list. Further, the assistant principal position is selected from the ASD eligible-for-hire list and must hold a current Type B credential. Teacher and Assistant Principal evaluations are performed in an equivalent manner as ASD (and if applicable) under appropriate union.

Highland Academy Charter School employs a full-time principal who possesses a current Alaska Type B administrative Certificate, meets all ASD eligibility requirements, and is in good standing. When it becomes necessary to fill the principal position, all candidates will be evaluated and selected by the APC. The hiring process is outlined in the Charter School bylaws (see Exhibit A). All candidates are required to be on the ASD eligible-for hire list for administrators. The principal is to be evaluated by a person holding an Alaska Type B credential; currently the ASD employs a Charter

School Director who provides this service. The principal will be evaluated in an equivalent manner as other ASD administrators.

**(l.) OTHER STAFF IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL**

As budget allows, Highland Academy Charter School shall employ the following staff (either full or part time) in addition to teachers:

- Paraprofessionals
- Noon duty
- Administrative Assistant
- School nurse
- School counselor

Highland Academy Charter School shall honor all applicable bargaining agreements related to other staff positions. No specific waivers to contracts are being requested at this time. The APC reserves the right to request waivers in the future and shall follow the applicable policy guidelines, if deemed necessary.

**(m.) PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO**

For the 2022/2023 school year the full-time equivalent of certificated personnel at Highland Academy Charter School was a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:16. Calculated as (# of full-time students/# full-time equivalent teachers= 178/11). Average class size is 24.

**(n.) NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED**

The charter school serves no more than 300 students, grades 6th through 12th . The projected enrollment for 2022/2023 is 200.

Highland Academy Charter School will provide school district administration the names of students who have pre-registered as well as those on the waiting list for the charter school prior to the starting date of the charter school year.

**(o.) TRANSPORTATION**

Parents or guardians of students at Highland Academy Charter School shall be responsible for transportation to and from school.

**(p.) FOOD SERVICE**

Students will bring their own lunches and eat in the multipurpose room. Hot water and a limited number of microwaves will be available. Students may also bring their own personal snacks for a mid-morning break. To meet the needs of the school community, the PTSO offers lunch items for students at reduced cost.



**(q.) TERM OF THE CONTRACT**

Highland Academy Charter School shall operate under the Anchorage School District in the status of a charter school, as outlined by the State of Alaska and the School Board of ASD, for the period of ten years, beginning with the school year 2023/2024.

**(r.) TERMINATION CLAUSE**

The School Board may terminate the charter school contract. The School Board shall provide written notice to the Academic Policy Committee (APC) of its intent to terminate the contract and the reasons therefore. Prior to termination, the School Board and the APC shall attempt to remedy the violations or other reasons asserted for termination.

The charter school APC may also terminate the contract on an annual basis. In such an event, the APC must notify the District by February 1 of a given school year of its intent to cease operations the following school year. This date may be waived by action of the School Board upon a recommendation of the Superintendent.

**(s.) CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE FOR RECEIPT AND USE OF PUBLIC MONEY**

Highland Academy Charter School shall comply with all local, state and federal requirements for the receipt and use of public money.

**(t.) STATE REQUIREMENTS**

Highland Academy Charter School has not received a request for information from the State Department of Education and Early Development.

**(u.) OTHER REQUIREMENTS OR EXEMPTIONS**

There are no additional provisions, waivers or exemptions being requested at this time.

**CONTRACT BETWEEN HIGHLAND ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL & THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The previous items in this document constitute agreements as to the description, philosophy, administrative policies, and budgetary terms between Highland Academy Charter School and Anchorage School District.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

Highland Academy Charter School shall adequately protect against liability and risk. The program shall include safety training with all employees and students, and purchase of insurance coverages as required by the Anchorage School District Risk Manager. The level of coverage shall be defined by ASD.

HACS shall operate in such a manner as to minimize the risk of injury or harm to students; employees, and others. The Anchorage School District Risk Manager will review school operations for compliance with appropriate local, state shall review school operations and federal safety practices/codes and School Board policies.

## **BREACH OF CONTRACT**

Failure to comply with the provisions of this contract is considered a breach of contract and may result in the termination of the charter school. During the annual review with the School Board, compliance with the provisions of the contract will be monitored. It is understood that if any allegations of noncompliance with the charter school contract, by the school or the school district, are presented either during the annual review or at any other time, then the School Board shall investigate these allegations. Any legal costs incurred as a result of an investigation of noncompliance by the charter school will be borne by the charter school. Any legal costs incurred as a result of an investigation of noncompliance by the school district will be borne by the school district. Prior to canceling the charter school contract, the School Board, school district, and the charter school shall attempt to remedy any violation of the contract.

## **EXHIBITS**

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(v.) Exhibits

A. By-laws [Draft By-Laws Here](#)

By-Laws  
of the  
Academic Policy Board

Highland Academy Charter School

A public charter school of the  
Anchorage School District

Article 1 Highland Academy Charter By-Laws

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Section 2	Location
Section 3	Fiscal Year
Section 4	Members

Article 2 Academic Policy Board

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Section 1	Contracts
Section 2	Grants

Article VII – Amendments to the By-Laws

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Article VIII – Adoption

**Article II – Academic Policy Committee**

**Section 1 Number Positions**

The Academic Policy Board shall consist of no less than nine (9) or more than fifteen (15) members. The Board shall include the following positions: a representative from higher education, a representative from the technology sector, a representative from the environmental sciences, a representative from the business community, a representative from the financial sector, a representative from the legal sector, parent representatives, and employee and student representatives. Student representatives are non-voting members.

## **Section 2 Elections, Term**

Each Board member will be elected for a term of three (3) years, at which time they will be eligible to renew their term with a Board vote of consensus. The person(s) receiving the highest number of votes cast will be elected as a Board member, notwithstanding the number of votes received may be less than a majority of the votes cast. Board Elections will be held annually at the August meeting.

## **Section 3 Vacancies**

Any vacancy occurring on the Academic Policy Committee shall be filled by vote of the remaining members of the Board. The replacement members shall be elected for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor in office.

## **Section 4 Resignation**

Any member may resign at any time by giving a written notice to the Secretary or Chairperson of the Academic Policy Committee. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

## **Section 5 Attendance**

All Academic Policy Committee members are expected to attend all regular meetings, all special meetings and all training sessions. All attempts and consideration will be made with regard to members' varying time commitments when planning special meetings and training sessions. The Secretary or the secretary's designee of the Board shall maintain a record of attendance of Board members at all regular and special Board meetings.

## **Section 6 Removal**

Academic Policy Committee members are expected to attend all regular meetings. The Academic Policy Committee may remove any member who has missed +two (2) meetings by a majority vote. All Academic Policy Committee members will follow the protocols attached to the by-laws outlining expected Board behavior. Any Board member who does not follow the protocols may be removed by a majority vote. Any Board member who acts independently of the Board for their own benefit or the benefit of an outside agency or group may be removed from the Board by a majority vote. Any officer elected or appointed by the Academic Policy Committee may be removed from office (but not from the APC) by a majority vote whenever in its judgment the best interests of the School would be served.

## **+Section 7 Conflict of Interest**

Service on the Academic Policy Committee is a trust created in the interest of the common good and for the benefit of the school. It is the intent of these by-laws to maintain confidence and prevent the use of this membership for private gain or any other improper purpose. Any member recognizing an action item which would benefit them in any way personally should remove themselves from the discussion and vote of said item. Employees serving on the Academic Policy Committee will not participate in the evaluation of their direct supervisor. Employees would not participate in an executive session when it pertains to another employee.

**+Section 7 Rules of Order**

Unless inconsistent with law, meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's rules of order when pertaining to motions for action items.

**Section 8 Compensation**

No compensation shall be paid to the Board members for their services.

**Section 9 Indemnification**

The personal liability of the members of the Board shall be limited to the extent allowable under the laws of the State of Alaska.

**Section 10 Liability**

No member or former member of this Board shall have any personal liability to the organization for money damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a member except as provided in AS 10.20.151(d).

**Section 11 Powers and Duties**

The Board is the policy-making branch of Highland Academy. The powers granted to the Board are set forth in School District Policy 333.4. The Board shall adopt, amend or revoke policies in accordance with the procedures established in these by-laws.

The Board will support the academic operation of the school and ensure the fulfillment of the mission of the school.

The Board will select the principal of the school. That person must have a current Type B certificate and must be, have been or be eligible to be employed with the Anchorage School District.

The Board will review and monitor the operational business plan that focuses on student achievement.

The Board will measure the progress of both student and staff performance.

The Board will approve and monitor the school's annual budget.

The Board will act as fiscal agent, including the receipt of funds for the operation of the school in accordance with charter school laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the school.

The Board will involve parents and the community in the support of school programs.

The Board will coordinate with the Labor Relations Office and respective labor unions in the case of termination or non-retention to ensure compliance with statutory due process requirements.

The Board is responsible for executing all other responsibilities provided for in the State of Alaska Department of Education, the charter school by-laws and this charter necessary to ensure the proper operation of the school.

## Article III – Officers of the Academic Policy Committee

### **Section 1      Designation**

Officers of the Academic Policy Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board members may appoint an assistant treasurer, assistant secretary, or other officers as in their judgment, may be necessary or advisable.

### **Section 2      Election of Officers**

The election of the Board shall be members of the Academic Policy Committee and shall be elected annually in the month of August. The remaining members of the Board may fill any vacancies in Office.

### **Section 3      Duties of Officers**

Chair

1. The Chair will preside at all meetings of the Academic Policy Committee. The duties of the officers will be such as are usually imposed upon such officials of non-profit organizations, and are required by law, and such as may be assigned to them by members of the Board from time to time.

Vice-Chair

2. The Vice Chair will serve in the place of the Chair if the Chair is unable to serve or attend a meeting. The Vice chair will perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the APC.

Secretary

3. The Secretary will keep minutes of the meetings of the APC in computer files and /or one or more books provided for that purpose. The secretary will maintain an updated list of the mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of each member of the APC. The secretary will perform other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the APC. A secretary designee may be assigned to assist the Secretary.

Treasurer

4. The Treasurer will work with the Principal to prepare, review and present the annual budget, and will ensure that it justly supports the mission and goals of the school. The treasurer will work with the principal to review all other budget items ensuing from grants, gifts, donations and individual projects by staff and fundraising events. The treasurer will meet with the principal prior to each meeting to prepare updates.

## Article IV – Meetings of the Academic Policy Committee

### **Section 1      Regular Meetings**

The Academic Policy Committee will meet at least once every quarter to consider, change, or adopt policy at such time and place as the members of the Board may designate. Notice of regular meetings of the Board shall be given to each member not less than seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. All such meetings will comply with the open meetings law.

**Section 2 Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Academic Policy Committee may be called by the Chair or by two or more members to be held at such time and place as is specified in the notice of the meeting. Special meetings may be called on a three (3) day notice.

**Section 3 Quorum**

At all meetings of the Academic Policy Committee, a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the Board. In the event a member or members have removed themselves due to a conflict of interest, the count of the remaining members will qualify the quorum.

**Section 4 Executive Sessions**

All regular and special meetings of the Academic Policy Committee shall be open to the public, except that, upon a vote of a majority of the members present, an executive session may be held to discuss any one or more of the following:

1. Personnel
2. Legal
3. Financial
4. Student records

**Article V – Committees of the Academic Policy Committee**

**Section 1 Membership**

The Academic Policy Committee may, by resolution, establish such standing or special committees, composed of Directors and other persons, and may from time to time be determined.

The Academic Policy Committee may direct the principal to form work groups to complete work to be determined from time to time.

**Section 2 Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the committees and or work groups to report findings at all regular meetings of the Academic Policy Committee. Any and all recommendations of a committee or work group must be submitted to the Academic Policy Committee for official action.

**Section 3 Meetings**

Committees of the Academic Policy board will comply with the same policies concerning public meeting notices in Article IV, Section I above.

**Article VI – Contracts and Grants**

**Section 1 Contracts**

The Academic Policy Committee may not authorize any member or members of the Board to enter into any contract and to execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Board. Such authority shall be executed through vote of the Board.

**Section 2 Grants**

The Academic Policy Committee or any member of the Board may accept, on behalf of Highland Academy Charter School, any contribution, gift, grant, bequest, or device for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the school.

**Article VII – Amendments to the By-Laws**

**Section 1 By-Law Amendments**

These By-Laws may be altered, amended, or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted at any regular or special meeting of the Board by affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board. All proposed by-law amendments shall be submitted, in writing, to each member at least one regular meeting prior to the meeting in which a vote on the proposed amendments is to be taken.

Definitions:

Policy: A policy is a governing principle, rule, plan or course of action. Policy defines the rules and administrative formulas by which agreed upon action and conduct of affairs is based. Policy is derived from successful actions and experience and forwards the basic purposes and leads to successful outcomes.

By-Laws: a set of rules that a corporation or group adopts to handle its internal affairs and methods of operation.

**Article VIII – Adoption**

These By-Laws are duly adopted by the Academic Policy Board at a meeting held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

B. [Copy of Minutes 2022](#) (see website for minutes from 2019-current)

C. [APC Goals](#)

D. [Student Handbook Insert](#)

E. [Empower Tutorial](#)

F. [New Teacher Handbook](#)

G. Family Partnership in Conferences

H. Aggregate Student Data

I. Climate & Connectedness Survey Results (in folder)

J. Lottery Application & Process for SPED (in folder)

K. [Graduation Requirements](#)



L. [PSS Advancement Forms](#)

M) [Project Playlist](#)

N) Intensive Catalog

O) Current APC Membership

Chair (Community Member) - Alex Tatum

Vice-Chair (Parent) - Jim Dube

Secretary (Community Member) - Laura Hilger

Treasurer (Teacher)- Todd Burningham

Parent - Ulf Asplund

Parent - Robin Brosius

Community Member - Brenda Bidwell

Community Member - Shelly Morgan

Community Member - John Trampush

Teacher - Kelly Daugherty

Student - Joey Winter Alumni - Lily Spiroski

P) 2022/2023 Inservice Calendar (attachment)

Q) Building Floor Plan (attachment)

R) [Personal, Social, Service and College, Career Prep Standards 22/23](#)

S) Math Standards

T) Language Arts Standards

U) Science Standards

V) Social Environments Standards

W). [KnowledgeWorks Data Findings](#)

X) Accreditation report 2019