

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHARTER PETITION RENEWAL
FOR
ASPIRE ALEXANDER TWILIGHT COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

NOVEMBER 30, 2020

INTRODUCTION

On September 22, 2020 Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy (“ATCPA”) submitted a charter school renewal petition to the San Juan Unified School District (“district”). This renewal petition was submitted for a five year term starting July 1, 2021 and continuing through June 30, 2026. ATCPA has been in operation since September 2009 and has been an independent charter school authorized by the District since 2012. ATCPA serves students in grades TK-5.

The Board of Education held a public hearing on October 13, 2020 to hear from the petitioners and consider the level of support for the petition. The district charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and ATCPA has provided all necessary information, additions and/or changes requested during the review process. Under new state law (AB 1505) resulting in Education Code section 47605(b), district staff recommendations, including the recommended findings, will be published 15 days prior to the public hearing at which the Board of Education will take action to either grant or deny the charter renewal petition.

APPLICABLE LAW

Education Code section 47607, subdivision (b) states that “[r]enewals and material revisions of charters are governed by the standards and criteria described in 47605, and shall include, but not be limited to, a reasonably comprehensive description of any new requirement of charter schools enacted into law after the charter was originally granted or last renewed.” The Board of Education may deny a renewal petition if the charter school fails to meet the standard for renewal outlined within the *Criteria for Renewal* Education Code section 47605. A renewal petition shall not be denied unless the district makes written factual findings that support one or more of the following findings:

- (1) The charter school presents an unsound educational program for students during the term of its charter. (Education Code section 47605(c)(1).)
- (2) The charter school is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition. (Education Code section 47605(c)(2).)
- (3) The petition does not contain the necessary affirmations set forth in the Charter Schools Act. (Education Code section 47605(c)(4).)

- (4) The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 15 required elements set forth in the Charter Schools Act. (Education Code 47605(c)(5).)
- (5) The petition does not contain a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of Chapter 10.7 (commencing with section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF FACT

1. For a charter school's renewal petition to be approved, it must present a sound educational program for its students, based on the past performance of the charter school. Under new state law (AB1505) Education Code 47607, a charter authorizer must consider the charter school's performance on indicators included in the California School Dashboard when evaluating a renewal petition. This new renewal process creates three tiers of renewal:
 - a. High Performing Charter Schools
 - b. Middle Performing Charter Schools
 - c. Low Performing Charter Schools

A school's identification as belonging to one of the above tiers is determined by the California Department of Education ("CDE") based on Dashboard data. The CDE publishes the list of charter schools and their renewal tiers.

Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy falls in the Middle Performing tier. Schools in the Middle Performing tier may be renewed for a term of five years. (Education Code 47607.2(b).)

When evaluating charter schools that are in this tier, authorizers shall consider schoolwide performance and performance of all subgroups on the Dashboard, and shall provide "greater weight" to performance on measurements of academic performance in determining whether to grant a charter renewal. The authorizer shall also consider clear and convincing evidence, demonstrated by verified data, showing either the school achieved measurable increases in academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school, or strong postsecondary outcomes equal to similar peers. In addition, authorizers shall consider "verified data" for renewal of charter schools. According to Education Code section 47607.2(c), "verified data" is defined as "data derived from nationally-recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced," including postsecondary outcomes. (A list of valid and reliable assessments will be adopted by CDE by January 1, 2021. Until that time charter schools can present data consistent with what is considered "verified" data).

On June 29, 2020, Governor Newsom signed the 2020 Budget Act and accompanying budget-implementing legislation, including Senate Bill (SB) 98 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2020), the Education Omnibus Trailer Bill. Included in this bill is the following: “The new renewal standards in Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2 that depend on Dashboard indicators and state-average performance levels for the two consecutive years immediately preceding renewal have been modified for renewals that would depend on such results for 2019-2020 since there will be no results for that year. In those cases, the renewal standards are now keyed to the results in two of the three years immediately preceding renewal.”

After analyzing the Dashboard data, the review team found the following results in overall performance level and significant subgroup performance level. (In the renewal petition, charter element “Measurable Student Outcomes”, ATCPA provides a detailed comparison to San Juan Unified School District and similar schools within San Juan Unified School District).

For both academic performance areas, English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, there was an increase or maintaining of level change from 2017 to 2018. In both academic performance areas there was a decrease or maintaining of level change from 2018-2019. ATCPA adopted a new math and ELA curriculum in the 2018-2019 school year. Eureka Math was adopted in 2017-18 and El Education was adopted in 2018-19 as a pilot. The dips in math and ELA performance were expected and typical with a new curriculum adoptions as teachers and students adapt to the new materials. The school anticipates increased results as these new programs are integrated across the school. Based on the Dashboard results for 2019, ATCPA is eligible for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) as determined by CDE criteria. As a result of COVID-19, Senate Bill 98 eliminated the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the 2020-2021 school year. In order to meet CSI plan approval requirements, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools identified for CSI on the 2019 California School Dashboard are required to complete the 2020-2021 CSI Prompts Form and submit to its County Office of Education (COE) for review and approval. See attached ATCPS CSI Prompts Form.

Education Code section 47604.32 identifies the oversight duties of a charter authorizer, including a visit to each charter school at least annually and ensuring that each charter school under its authority complies with all reports required of charter schools by law. In carrying out the oversight duties, the charter authorizer representatives will continue to monitor academic performance through the annual report (informational report due in May of each year - Education Code section 47604.33) and the LCAP and any other reports required by CDE (i.e. Learning Continuity Plan, etc.) in order to verify that the charter school is taking meaningful steps to improve academic performance.

On October 27, 2020 a district representative conducted a virtual renewal visitation to the charter school to verify the implementation of the educational program, visit

classrooms and meet with ATCPA and Aspire staff. The representative observed standards based lessons in all classrooms. The staff discussed the implementation of the newly adopted English Language Arts and English Language Development curriculum, as well as the opportunities provided for staff development during the 2020-2021 school year. Also discussed were the one year priorities the charter school adopted for 2020-2021 that are aligned to the goals, outcomes and actions of the Aspire-wide goals, outcomes and actions. These priorities are: Academic Recovery, Re-opening and Resilience. In addition, staff shared information about their “Wellness Team” (implemented in part as a response to the impact of COVID 19) that identifies needs and provides supports to students, as well as connecting families to community resources.

The district’s charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and has determined that ATCPA has provided the necessary evidence and plans to improve student academic performance to meet this requirement for renewal.

2. For a charter school’s renewal petition to be approved, it must provide evidence that it has the capacity to implement the program set forth in the petition. This includes (but is not limited to) a sound financial and administrative plan, a description of facilities (including location(s) and current and projected availability), etc.

The district’s charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and has determined that ATCPA has provided the necessary evidence in the petition to meet this requirement for renewal.

3. For a charter school’s renewal petition to be approved, it must include the necessary affirmations set forth in the Charter Schools Act. (Education Code section 47605(c)(4).)

The district’s charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and has determined that ATCPA has provided the necessary affirmations in the petition to meet this requirement for renewal.

4. For a charter school’s renewal petition to be approved, it must contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 15 required elements set forth in the Charter Schools Act. (Education Code section 47605(c)(5).)

The district’s charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and has determined that ATCPA has included reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the 15 required elements set forth in the Charter Schools Act.

5. For a charter school’s renewal petition to be approved, it must contain a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

The district's charter review team has thoroughly studied the charter renewal petition and has determined that ATCPA has included the appropriate declaration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, based on the above findings, the district's charter review team recommends to the superintendent that the renewal petition for Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy be granted for a term of five years, commencing on July 1, 2021 and continuing through June 30, 2026.

2020–21 Every Student Succeeds Act Comprehensive Support and Improvement Prompts Form

The instructions for completing this form will begin on page 2.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name	Contact Name and Title	Email and Phone
Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy	Isabelle McDaniel	Isabelle.mcdaniel@aspirepublicschools.org 916-591-6196

Schools Identification

Please list the school(s) in the LEA that are eligible for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).
Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy

Support for Identified Schools

Please describe how the LEA has or will support its eligible schools in developing CSI plans.
<p>In support of strategic allocation of CSI funding, a series of budget meetings were held in the spring of 2020. On February 13th, the financial analyst, associate superintendent, SPED Director and principal met to discuss the details of the 2020-21 budget forecast. On March 26th, 2020, a meeting was held with the area associate superintendent, budget analyst and principal to specifically discuss the distribution of CSI funds and identify top spending priorities. The final round of budget meetings were held on May 8th, 2020, prior to approval by the Aspire Board. The team ensured that resources were being allocated for academic support for target subgroups: English Language Learners, African American students and Special Education students. The budget prioritized funds to support the adoption of the CCSS aligned ELA curriculum, Expeditionary Learning and the English Language Development curriculum, EL Achieve. Both curriculum adoption initiatives were accompanied by targeted professional development initiatives delivered by the curriculum developers. Additionally, a one-year curriculum implementation guide position was developed with the intent of increasing coaching support for all teachers in the first year of implementation. To support targeted needs of Tier 2 students, a partnership with Study Smart Tutors was identified in order to provide one-on-one and small group instruction. In addition, we explored multiple adaptive on-line literacy support programs such as Lexia Reading and iReady ELA. A similar process was used to identify adaptive online interventions in math.</p>

Aspire CV team members supported the administration of the Aspire Student and Family survey during February 2020. The survey provided the opportunity for feedback about current school programs and opportunities to identify areas of continued need. Areas identified as needing improvement, such as school culture initiatives and student behavior were then discussed during leadership team meetings, teacher meetings, and Family Council/ELAC meetings.

The Central Valley Leadership team facilitated a Cross-regional Data Stepback Meeting on Tuesday, March 24th. The CA Dashboard and current 18-19 data were shared on Suspension Rate, Chronic Absenteeism, English Language Arts, and Mathematics by the Principal at the ATCPA Lead Meetings, as well as internal measures of academic progress.

Principal coaching and supervision conversations with the associate superintendent provided the opportunity to review the evidence based initiatives identified on the “What Works Clearinghouse” (WWC) website and ensure that the proposed capacity building initiatives were researched based and had evidence of proven effectiveness.

Monthly Principal professional development led by Superintendent, Associate Superintendents, and Regional Academic Content Specialists supported the principal in determining culture and instructional priorities, data analysis, and determining evidence-based interventions that address student performance gaps. The focus on building teacher capacity as culturally responsive educators would be supported by professional development and analysis of the book, “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain” by Zaretta Hammond. In addition, the work of the “Wellness Team” focused specifically on developing systems and accountability measures to promote the collaboration and lesson internalization/adaption of Ed Specialist and general education teachers. Moreover, the development of a comprehensive attendance team was prioritized (counselor, admin team, business manager). The work of the team focused on aligning systems for consistent family communication, internal tracking, and celebrations of positive attendance.

Monitoring and Evaluating Effectiveness

Please describe how the LEA will monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the plan to support student and school improvement.

The CSI plan implementation will be monitored at a site and regional level. The associate superintendent, CV curriculum manager, teacher leadership team and administration will meet bi-weekly to discuss progress towards plan implementation and review data. The following data sources will be accounted for:

1. Academic Data Collection:

In line with the CV-wide assessment calendar, diagnostic reports for iReady, STAR Ren, DIBELS, math benchmarks and data on IEP goal progress will be analyzed during data meetings at a site and regional level

2. Review of Curriculum implementation:

The completion rate of unit/lesson planning protocol will be reviewed for adaptations and targeted supports for ELLs and students with special needs

3. Coaching and Professional Development Records:

Coaching debrief notes, classroom observation videos, professional learning plan progress reports, PD surveys and meeting slides as well as classroom observation notes/videos will be reviewed to gauge effectiveness of professional development offerings

Monthly Principal professional development led by Superintendent, Associate Superintendents, and Regional Academic Content Specialists will continue to support the principal in determining culture and instructional priorities, data analysis, and evidence based interventions that address student performance gaps.

Quarterly data meetings with the principal, Superintendent, and Regional Academic Content Specialists to analyze student academic performance data and determine appropriate coaching, Tier 1 instructional, and intervention next steps will continue. Data reviewed will continue to include both formative and summative assessments: CA Dashboard data, ELPAC data, and internal data such as DIBELS and STAR reading, and ASPIRE Interim performance for both ELA and Math.

The principal will continue to align School Site Action plan with LCAP goals and CSI plan. Weekly admin meetings and lead/coaching meetings will include components that ensure to review and monitor implementation of plan, and staff quarterly data analysis meetings will allow all staff members to determine assets, areas of growth, and determine modifications needed as necessary to ensure student achievement outcomes are met.

The principal will continue to lead monthly SSC and quarterly ELAC meetings with staff representatives and families. Meetings will include components that ensure to review and monitor implementation of the plan so that members can determine assets, areas of growth, and determine modifications needed as necessary to ensure student achievement outcomes are met.

Instructions

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the local educational agency (LEA), in partnership with stakeholders, to develop and implement a plan to improve student outcomes in each school identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). The CSI plan must be approved by the school, LEA, and its state educational agency (SEA). For purposes of the ESSA, the State Board of Education (SBE) serves as California's SEA.

At its January 2019 meeting, the SBE took action to approve three CSI Prompts to be included in the Plan Summary of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LEA would use the CSI Prompts to report how it was developing its CSI plans and monitoring improvement progress. The County Office of Education (COE) would then approve the CSI Prompts and submit a list of the LEAs with approved prompts to the SBE for final approval.

In response to the effects of COVID-19 on California's education system, Senate Bill 98 waives the requirement of the LCAP for the 2020–21 school year (SY). The attached form replaces, for the 2020–21 SY only, the CSI Prompts requirement in the Plan Summary of the LCAP.

Each LEA with schools identified on the 2019 California School Dashboard (Dashboard) for CSI, shall complete this form and submit to its COE for approval no later than **October 31, 2020**. The COE shall determine the method of submission that best meets its local context.

A COE that serves as an LEA with schools identified for CSI on the 2019 Dashboard and that generally submits an LCAP to the CDE, shall complete and submit the 2020–21 CSI Prompts form to the CDE at LCAPreview@cde.ca.gov no later than **October 31, 2020**.

The required details and prompts are as follows:

Provide the LEA's contact information in the space provided in the form:

- **Name of the LEA**
- **Contact Name and Title**
- **Contact email address and phone number**

Complete each prompt in the space provided.

- **Schools Identified:** Identify the schools within the LEA that have been identified for CSI.
- **Support for Identified Schools:** Describe how the LEA has or will support the identified schools in developing CSI plans.
- **Monitoring and Evaluating Effectiveness:** Describe how the LEA will monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the CSI plan to support student and school improvement.

LEAs: Complete and return this form to your COE no later than **October 31, 2020**.

COEs that serve as an LEA with schools identified for CSI and that would normally submit an LCAP to the CDE: Complete and return this form to the CDE at LCAPreview@cde.ca.gov no later than **October 31, 2020**.

For questions, please contact the School Improvement and Support Office (SISO) at 916-319-0833.