



## Aurora Academy Charter School Waivers from State Statute Charter Contract 2015-2020 (House Bill 17-1375)

### Non-Automatic Statutes Description and Rationale

- ✓ C.R.S. § 22-9-106 (4) Local Board of Education - Duties  
(substantive) Certificated Personnel Evaluations  
This section requires that employee performance evaluations be performed by a person holding a Professional Principal license.

**Rationale:** The AACCS principal must have the ability to perform the evaluation of all personnel. Should the principal not have a Professional Principal license, this should not preclude him or her from administering the evaluations.

**Plan:** The AACCS Performance Appraisal System is according to CDE guidelines using the state evaluation forms and process.

**Duration of the Waivers:** The AACCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with Aurora Public Schools (APS). Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2020.

**Financial Impact:** AACCS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Aurora Public Schools or the AACCS budget.

**How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated:** Teacher effectiveness is central to student achievement and developing a supportive school culture. Assessment and performance criteria outlined in the school's contract with APS guides the school's efforts to serve its students and serve as the measurement of this waiver's impact.

**Expected Outcome:** With this waiver AACCS will be able to implement its program and evaluate its teachers in sync with its Performance Appraisal System. AACCS expects this to enhance effectiveness, provide for a high level of accountability, and facilitate manifestation of the school's mission for the benefit of the students and the community.

- ✓ 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(B), C.R.S. Adopt district calendar  
✓ 22-32-109(1)(n)(I), C.R.S. Local board duties concerning school calendar

**Rationale:** Aurora Academy Charter School (AACCS) requests that we be granted the authority to adopt our own school calendar and to determine teacher-pupil contact hours in accordance with the Charter School Agreement.

**Replacement plan:** AACS will determine its calendar and hours of operation based on parent and staff recommendations which will be approved by our board of directors annually.

**Duration:** From present to June 30, 2020.

**Financial:** None

**How impact will be evaluated:** It will be measured by parent satisfaction surveys and student performance.

**Expected outcome:** AACS will develop its own daily schedule, hours of operation, teacher-pupil contact hours, teacher work days and yearly calendar.

✓ C.R.S. § 22-63-201 Employment - Certificate required

Prohibits board from entering into an employment contract with a person who does not hold a teacher's certificate or letter of authorization.

**Rationale:** AACS should be granted the authority to hire teachers and administration that will support the school's goals and objectives. The Administrator(s) will not function as a traditional district school administrator, but rather will be responsible for a wider range of tasks and act as the AACS chief executive officer. AACS will seek to attract administrators and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado certificate, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or professional experience. All employees of AACS will be employed on an at-will basis.

**Replacement Plan:** AACS will, where possible, hire certified teachers and administrators. However, in some instances it may be advantageous for AACS to be able to hire teachers and/or administrators without a certificate and who possess unique background and/or skills or fill the need AACS.

**Duration of the Waivers:** AACS requests that the waivers be for the duration of its contract with the Aurora Public School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2020.

**Financial Impact:** AACS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Aurora Public School District or AACS.

**How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated:** The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to AACS, per this Charter School Agreement.

**Expected Outcome:** Because of this waiver, AACS will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background satisfying all staff needs.

✓ 22-63-202, C.R.S. Employment contracts and damage provision

**Rational:** Aurora Academy Charter School (AACS) should be granted the authority to develop its own employment contracts and terms and conditions of employment. All employees of AACS will be employed on an at-will basis.

**Replacement plan:** The written contract will include the damage provision as addressed in 22-63-202 (2)(C).

**Duration:** From present through June 30, 2020.

**Financial:** Each employment contract executed pursuant to this section shall contain a damages provision whereby a teacher or chief administrative officer who violates the 30-day notice provision shall agree to pay damages to AACS as follows: expenses equal to replacing the employee or one-twelfth of the annual salary specified in the employment contract.

**How impact will be evaluated:** n/a

**Expected outcome:** It is expected that this damages provision will assist the school in maintaining a high quality educational system at all times.

- ✓ **C.R.S. § 22-63-203 Probationary Teachers - renewal and non-renewal of employment contract - Specific Duties Provides for contract with probationary teachers and allows for non-renewal and renewal of employment contract.**

**Rationale:** AACS should be granted the authority to develop its own employment contracts and terms and conditions of employment. AACS will be operating differently from other schools with a unique curriculum for which having the proper teaching staff is essential. Not every teacher who is successful in the regular public school will be successful at AACS. All employees of AACS will be employed on an at-will basis.

**Replacement Plan:** Following the waiver text of this document is a sample AACS teacher contract with the terms of non-renewal and renewal of employment contracts and payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher.

**Duration of the Waivers:** AACS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Aurora Public School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2020.

**Financial Impact:** AACS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on Aurora Public School District or AACS.

**How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated:** The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to AACS, per this Charter School Agreement.

**Expected Outcome:** Because of this waiver, AACS will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background, filling all staff needs on an at-will basis.

- ✓ **C.R.S. § 22-63-206 Teacher Employment Compensation and Dismissal Act (substantive) Permits transfer of teachers between schools upon recommendation of district's chief administrative officer.**

**Rationale:** AACS is granted the authority under the Charter School Agreement to select its own teachers. The District should not have the authority to transfer its teachers into AACS or transfer teachers from Aurora Academy to District schools, except as provided for in the Charter School Agreement.

**Replacement Plan:** AACS will hire teachers on a "best qualified" basis.

**Duration of the Waiver:** AACCS requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Aurora Public School Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2020.

**Financial Impact:** AACCS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on Aurora Public School District or AACCS.

**How the Impact of the Waiver will be Evaluated:** The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to AACCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

**Expected Outcome:** Because of this waiver, AACCS expects to manage its own personnel affairs. Consistent with the terms of this Charter School Agreement and the Colorado Charter School Law.

- ✓ **State Statute 22-7-1014(2)(a) which requires each district to administer the school readiness assessment to teach student.**

**Rationale:** Aurora Academy Charter School (AACCS) requests that we be granted the authority to adopt our own school readiness assessment to meet the intent of the School Readiness Statute requiring each district to administer the school readiness assessment to each kindergarten student.

**Replacement plan:** AACCS has a full day Kindergarten program utilizing the Core Knowledge curriculum in addition to the Common Core/State Standards. We have identified each component of school readiness as it is defined in statute; physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development and cognitive and general knowledge. For each component, we have identified or developed assessments, observation protocols and other qualitative methods to evaluate each component. Kindergarten students receive Art, Music, Physical Education, Technology and Keyboarding throughout the year where students are assessed in gross motor, fine motor, and cognitive abilities in addition to a rigorous curriculum based on our scope and sequence involving science, social studies, geography, world history, reading, writing, and math.

1. Physical well-being and motor development:

- a. Students receive an average of one 50-minute physical education class per day for nine weeks per year.
- b. Students receive an average of one 50-minute art class per day for nine weeks per year.
- c. Students receive an average of one 50-minute music class per day for nine weeks per year.
- d. The Kindergarten Motor Development Checklist tracks objectives 4, 5, and 6 from Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- e. The “Fine Motor Checklist” tracks objective 7 from *Teaching Strategies GOLD*.
- f. AACCS Kindergarten teachers assess each component of school readiness utilizing observation and teacher notes, photographs and examples of student work, and participation lists and frequency counts.

2. Social-emotional development:

- a. Social Emotional Development is addressed with students through the positive behavior support system designed by the school.
- b. Kindergarteners receive instruction from the Committee for Children *Second Step* on developing social-emotional skills such as making friends, managing emotions and solving problems to set them on the path for social success and academic readiness.
- c. AACCS Kindergarten Trimester Reports “Skills and Behaviors that Support Learning” will be used to track objectives 1, 2, and 3.

- d. AACs Kindergarten teachers assess each component of school readiness utilizing observation and teacher notes, photographs and examples of student work, and participation lists and frequency counts.
3. Language and comprehension development:
    - a. Students will receive 155 minutes of language and literacy instruction per day using *Riggs: The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking*, *Open Court* reading curriculum, shared read-aloud, independent reading practice through Accelerated Reader and free choice time.
    - b. Student skills will be assessed multiple times per year using the Kindergarten Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Checklist, PALS, STAR Early Literacy, Accelerated Reader, and *Write from the Beginning and Beyond* rubrics.
  4. Cognition and general knowledge:
    - a. AACs utilizes Saxon Math curriculum.
    - b. AACs utilizes the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence to teach science and social studies concepts.
    - c. Objectives 8, 9, and 10 will be observed throughout all content areas.
    - d. Objectives 20, 21, 22, and 23 will be assessed using the Saxon Math curriculum and the AACs Kindergarten Math Assessment.
    - e. AACs Kindergarten teachers assess and track objectives 11, 12, 13, and using observation and teacher notes, photographs and examples of student work, and participation lists and frequency counts. This will take place during literacy group, free choice time, and/or recess.
    - f. Student portfolios will be used to collect and maintain data within individual student files. These records will be given to parents at the completion of kindergarten or upon leaving school and summary provided to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher (or place in their academic file).

**School Readiness Intervention Program:** Students not making adequate growth in any of the School Readiness Domains will receive intervention through our Response to Intervention Program in small groups or 1:1 instruction. These students will have an Individual Readiness Plan (IRP) developed and communicated at October Parent conferences. Readiness plans will be maintained as needed from Trimester to Trimester.

For Language and Comprehension development the PALS and STAR Early Literacy assessments are done three times per year. Students not meeting benchmark receive additional intervention and if there is a Significant Reading Disability a READ Plan is developed where the student receives intensive instruction and progress monitoring. Currently, Aurora Academy employs six teachers (3-full-time and 3-part-time) as interventionists to assist students in addition to our SPED team of professionals.

Students requiring additional assistance may be referred to a Physical/Occupational Therapist; Psychologist; Speech Language Therapist, SPED Teacher; Counselor or Mental Health Therapist.

AACS will utilize direct instruction, specific scaffolding, social stories, peer-assisted learning, Tier 1, 2, and 3 intervention, and tracking in Enrich as needed as intervention methods. To facilitate this, teachers will collaborate with parents, teaching aides, the reading specialist, school counselor, special education specialists, special teachers (specifically physical education), and administration.

Student progress toward school readiness will be communicated with parents/guardians during school-wide parent conferences (October and February) and on Trimester report cards (November, March, May). Additional communication will be used as needed for optimal student school readiness.

**Duration of the Waiver:** From present to June 30, 2020.

**Financial Impact:** None

**How impact of the waiver will be evaluated:** The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments developed to align with the state statute. Completed evaluations will be done for each kindergarten student, interventions will be implemented during the school year and completed forms placed in their permanent file in June of the child's Kindergarten school year

**Expected outcome:** Every Aurora Academy kindergarten student will undergo evaluation of each component of the School Readiness Statute 22-7-1014(2)9a) and receive interventions as needed, to ensure student success.