

Aquarian - Renewal Application Summary

The Anchorage School District (ASD) approved Aquarian Charter School's renewal application on November 01, 2021, for 10 years, through the end of SY 2031-2032. Aquarian first opened in 1997 and last renewed in 2012. Aquarian is a K-6th grade school that is unique in that students are assessed in both reading and math and placed according to academic level rather than grade level.

Changes proposed since last renewal:

- Name change: Aquarian Charter school changed to Aquarian
- Updated mission, vision, beliefs/values statement
- Flexibility in curriculum choices, if needed
- Aquarian will no longer conduct gifted testing/provide small group gifted instruction

Program Information:

Aquarian currently occupies an ASD owned facility at 1705 W. 32nd Ave. in Anchorage, AK. The facility is 39,000 square feet in size, containing 17 classrooms, a music, art, resource, multipurpose, and Spanish room, a library, and playground. Aquarian and ASD are working together to create an updated lease agreement. The MOU between ASD and Aquarian Charter School Academic Policy Committee had an expiration date of May 21, 2020. Aquarian was approved for bond funding (6.8 million dollars) to update the boiler, roof, and perform other critical maintenance on the building in 2020. Repairs are expected to continue through 2022. Aquarian has a program school budget of \$3,899,789 (FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23). Other revenue sources include Anchorage School Bond funds, ESSER funds, and funding generated through PTO fundraisers. Aquarian has maintained a savings allocation averaging around 2.5% of the annual operating budget for future building needs and growth.

Aquarian shall maintain the pupil-teacher ratio: 18:1. The charter school shall enroll a minimum of 150 students and a maximum of 400 students at all times, current enrollment ending last school year being 377. At the time of executing the contract, Aquarian had 48 teachers and staff and one principal.

Aquarian's previous assessments scores show that 70% of students score above the 50th percentile in reading, and 68% of students score above the 50th percentile in math. Aquarian is piloting two new language arts curricula, with the plan to implement in the 2022/2023 school year for K-5th instruction. Aquarian has a math curriculum that will be discontinued after the 2026/2027 school year, a new math curriculum will be identified using ASD's curriculum approval process.

School Mission:

With community support, Aquarian strives to meet children at their level through unique instruction that values the whole child, academic experience, and fine arts to create a balanced and rewarding learning experience.

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School Vision:

Aquarian cultivates a creative community of lifelong learners and compassionate, engaged citizens.

Beliefs/Values (Philosophy):

- A diverse and stimulating educational experience
- Meeting children where they are academically
- Each child as an individual
- School autonomy in curriculum and teaching methods
- Academic excellence
- Consistent exposure to:
 - Fine Arts
 - World Language
 - Physical Education
 - Health Education
- Identifying children's needs and strengths to guide their growth and help them meet their potential
- Inclusive school environment
- Celebrating growth
- Educational enrichment beyond the curriculum
- Responsible citizenship
- Diversity
- Contribution to the community
- Professional development and growth
- Family engagement and volunteering
- Partnership between educational staff and families

Goals of Aquarian:

- Maintain a program that adheres to the vision, mission and values of Aquarian.
- Increase diversity throughout the Aquarian community and create a climate that promotes inclusion and diversity in education.
- Continuously strive to improve and expand the educational experience through innovation.
- Work collaboratively with the Anchorage School District to facilitate planned and future improved to building and program.