



AMERICAN ACADEMY FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION  
CHARTER SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

**AMERICAN ACADEMY**  
for  
**LIBERAL EDUCATION**

Application for Continuation  
of  
CHARTER SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

American Academy for Liberal Education  
1050 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW – Suite 400  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202.452.8611  
Fax: 202.452.8620  
[www.aalecharters.org](http://www.aalecharters.org)  
[charters@aale.org](mailto:charters@aale.org)

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## **Introduction**

### **Continuation of Charter School Accreditation**

***Applicants for continued accreditation must provide all information requested in the Continuation Application Form (below)***  
***Please call AALE for further information and a telephone consultation (202) 452-8611***

Accreditation is an AALE full membership status that allows public charter schools to establish formal and publicly recognized relations with the Academy. Accreditation is granted for a period of up to five (5) years at which point a charter school may apply for continued accreditation.

Schools seeking continued accreditation must complete this application and demonstrate that they are still in compliance with the Academy's *Standards for Charter School Accreditation* by submitting to the Academy a thorough, detailed, and concise self-study update report and hosting a small team of site reviewers from AALE.

All AALE application materials are available for viewing, downloading, and printing at our website ([www.aale.org](http://www.aale.org)). Printed copies are available by request from the Academy. AALE lists the names and locations of all accredited charter schools on its website and may, by mutual agreement, include a link to the school website. No other information about accredited charter schools is included on the website, except by mutual agreement.

If you have any questions about AALE charter school accreditation, about this accreditation continuation application packet, or about the Academy's policies and procedures, please feel free to contact us at (202) 452-8611 or email [charters@aale.org](mailto:charters@aale.org).

## Overview of the Continuation Application Process

The time required to complete the AALE process for continued accreditation varies from case to case, but it is possible to complete the entire process within seven months after submission of a complete continuation application. The following offers brief descriptions of AALE's requirements for continued accreditation, a brief description of the continuation application process, and an estimated timetable for completing the process. This schedule is approximate and may extend beyond the estimated timeline. Much depends on the speed with which a school completes the updated self-study and schedules the AALE site. Please note that the AALE Board of Trustees, which grants continued accreditation, meets twice a year, spring and fall.

### Eligibility Requirements

#### School Agreements and Administrative Structure

(see Application pages 11-13)

1. To be eligible for continued accreditation the school must attest to:
  - a. Its commitment and intent to comply with the *Standards* of the Academy, either current or as these may be modified hereafter, consistent with the policies and procedures of the Academy;
  - b. Its understanding and agreement that the Academy may, at its discretion, make known to any agency or member of the public that requests such information, the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding its membership status with the Academy;
  - c. Its agreement to disclose all such information to the Academy as it may require to carry out its evaluating and accrediting functions;
  - d. Its agreement to refrain from making any promotional use of its application for accreditation prior to the actual granting of an accreditation status; and
  - e. Its agreement that failure by the Academy to act favorably upon an application for membership or renewal of membership in the American Academy for Liberal Education, absent a showing of actual malice, shall not, in and of itself, constitute grounds for legal action against AALE by the applicant school or individuals therein. In all cases when a disagreement cannot be resolved through normal AALE appeals procedures, the school and the individuals therein agree to AALE's arbitration policy which provides for final action after review in accordance with the Rules of the American Arbitration Association.

2. The school has a charter and formal authority from the appropriate charter school authorizer to offer instruction, diplomas, and/or certificates of completion in the jurisdiction(s) in which the school operates.
3. The school has an active, policy-making governing board which has the authority and duty to ensure that the school achieves its mission.
4. The school agrees to disclose to the Academy its current and past accreditation status with any of its school accreditors, including any adverse actions taken against the school.

**Mission and Published Information**  
(see Application pages 13-15)

5. The school has a clearly defined, published mission statement that includes a commitment to liberal education and is appropriate to a public charter school.
6. The school has clear, accurate, and current published information describing its course/subject area requirements and other educational programs.
7. The school has clear, accurate, and current published materials accurately describing:
  - a. Diploma/certificate programs.
  - b. Instruction in required and elective subject areas.
  - c. Fees, optional or required, and refund policies.
  - d. Admissions and retention policies.
  - e. Policies and procedures directly affecting parents and students.
  - f. Policies and procedures directly affecting faculty, administrators, and other personnel.
  - g. Academic credentials of faculty and administrators.

**Operations, Learning Resources, Student Services, and Faculty**  
(see Application page 15)

8. The school must be in regular operation and have students enrolled at the time of the site evaluation visit.

9. The school owns or ensures access to adequate learning resources and appropriate services in support of its instruction.
10. For each required subject area of instruction there is adequate faculty expertise for oversight and coordination.

### **Financial Resources and Auditing**

(see Application page 15)

11. The school has established a financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission.
12. The school has accurately completed the School Profile Form included with the application.

### **Eligibility Documents**

(see Application page 16)

13. All schools applying for accreditation must submit the eligibility documents specified below.
  - a. Evidence of instruction-offering authority.
  - b. The legal charter.
  - c. Copies of the articles of incorporation.
  - d. Current copy of the school catalog.
  - e. Current copy of the faculty/staff handbook.
  - f. Current copy of the student and/or parent handbook.
  - g. Copies of the two most recent externally audited financial statements, including management letters. In place of an audited financial statement schools may submit special reports that include either statements of positive assurance by independent certified public accountants or an appropriate governmental auditing agency as to the material accuracy of current funds, expenditure classifications and amounts in accordance with generally accepted principles of school accounting and the current fund balance sheet. Schools must also demonstrate financial responsibility in accordance with relevant state or district regulations. All accounting practices and financial statements must conform to nationally recognized standards, such as AICPA.

## Estimated Timeline

Note: The following is for illustration purposes only. Early in the continuation application process AALE staff will conduct a consultation with the school to determine a specific timeline with benchmark dates.

### Weeks 1-4

Step I. School submits a completed continuation application. A continuation application fee of \$500 is also required at this time

Step II. AALE staff reviews application materials.

Step III. AALE staff consultation (either by teleconference or in person).

Step IV. School begins self-study update process.

### Weeks 4-12

Step V. School completes and submits self-study update.

Step VI. AALE staff reviews self-study update and makes suggestions where necessary.

Step VII. School and AALE select expert reviewer(s) to conduct site visit. The AALE pool of expert reviewers includes charter, public, and private school faculty, administrators, and board members, education experts from foundations, testing, publishing, policy groups, and higher education institutions, government officials, and others with appropriate experience and expertise.

### Weeks 13-15

Step VIII. Site visit (2 days) and preparation of site visit report; site visit report sent to school.

Step IX. School submits formal response to site visit report.

### Weeks 16-18

Step X. Self-study update and site visit report and school's response sent to Charter School Board of Review. The AALE Charter School Advisory Board is composed of recognized scholars from universities and colleges, as well as representatives from educational foundations and philanthropies leaders of government education agencies, national and local policy experts, charter school founders, and officers.

### Fall/Spring

Step XI. Board of Trustees takes formal action on continuation application. The AALE Board of Trustees includes distinguished scholars and administrators from the higher education community, AALE member schools, and nationally recognized representatives of other public and private organizations. The award of Accreditation status by the Academy thus confers broad, and truly national, recognition.

For more information about AALE reviewers and Board members, please visit the Academy's website, [charters@aale.org](mailto:charters@aale.org).

## Completing the Continuation Application

- This application requires completion of:
1. School Information Form (pages 9-10)
  2. Accreditation Continuation Form (pages 11-16)

Any person authorized by the Chief Executive Officer of a school may complete the information requested in these forms. The School Agreement included with the Accreditation Continuation Form **must** be signed by **both** the Chief Executive Officer and the chairman of the school's governing board. A letter of intent to apply for continued AALE accreditation also must be submitted with the completed application. Although some information is called for more than once on these forms AALE asks that all forms be completed or they will be returned.

AALE requires supporting documentation for certain parts of the application for continued accreditation; these are clearly indicated. In those cases where there have been no changes in the school where documentation is called for, the school may refer to its original accreditation application or self-study. In cases where a school has made changes, we request supporting documentation evidencing the changes be included. School catalogues, bulletins, Web sites, etc. are acceptable. At the appropriate places in these forms we ask for the title(s) of the supporting document(s) and the page number(s) where the relevant information can be found. *Please be sure to include copies of all documents cited in this fashion with the completed application.*

This application packet contains all the forms necessary to complete the application for continued accreditation. Electronic versions of these forms, that can be completed on-screen and printed, may be downloaded from the AALE website ([www.aale.org/charters](http://www.aale.org/charters)).

## Application Fee

An application processing fee of \$500 U.S. is required of all schools applying for continued AALE accreditation. This fee should be submitted with the completed application in the form of a check or money order made payable to the "American Academy for Liberal Education."

### **Returning the Completed Application**

Please return the completed application packet, including all forms and required supporting documents, the signed School Agreement, the letter of intent, and the application fee, to the following address:

American Academy for Liberal Education  
1050 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036

## Continuation Application School Information Form

**School**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**City, State, and Zip Code:**

**Main Phone:**

**Website:**

**Please specify authorizer [University, school district, etc.]:**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Address:**

**City, State, and Zip Code:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Is the chief executive officer the presiding officer of the governing board of this school?**

**Yes**

**No**

**Presiding Officer of Governing Board**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Address:**

**City, State, and Zip Code:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Chief Academic Officer**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Address:**

**City, State, and Zip Code:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**School Re-Accreditation Liaison**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Address:**

**City, State, and Zip Code:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Grade Levels and Enrollment**

**Total Enrollment:**

**Enrollment by Grade:**

Kindergarten	Seventh Grade
First Grade	Eighth Grade
Second Grade	Ninth Grade
Third Grade	Tenth Grade
Fourth Grade	Eleventh Grade
Fifth Grade	Twelfth Grade
Sixth Grade	Other (please specify)

**Operation**

**Year school founded:**

**Years in operation:**

**Calendar system: Semester Trimester Quarter Other**

# Continuation Application

## Accreditation Continuation Form

### A.1 SCHOOL AGREEMENT

Schools seeking membership with the American Academy for Liberal Education are required to complete this agreement, which attests to the school's intent to continue to comply with AALE's *Standards for Charter School Accreditation*.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for accreditation by the American Academy for Liberal Education (Name of School) does hereby agree to abide by the following conditions:

- a. The school is committed to and intends to adhere to the *Standards for Charter School Accreditation* of the American Academy for Liberal Education, either current or as these may be modified hereafter, consistent with the policy and procedures of the Academy.
  
- b. The school understands and agrees that the American Academy for Liberal Education, at its discretion may make known to any agency or member of the public that requests such information, the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the status with the Academy.
  
- c. The school agrees to disclose to the American Academy for Liberal Education any and all such information as the Academy may require to carry out its evaluation and accrediting functions.
  
- d. The school agrees to refrain from making any promotional use of its application for accreditation prior to the actual granting of status.

Signature – Chief Executive Officer

Signature – Chairman of the Board

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

## **A.2 INSTRUCTION OFFERING AUTHORITY**

Is the school chartered with formal authority from the appropriate charter school authorizer to offer instruction, certificates of completion, or diplomas in the jurisdiction in which the school operates?

Date chartered:

Name and address of the charter school authorizer:

Instruction, diplomas, and/or certificates the school is empowered to confer by this authority:

Legal name of charter school if different from name publicly used:

## **A.3 GOVERNING BOARD**

Does the school have an active policy-making governing board which has the authority and duty to ensure that the school achieves its mission?

Name of governing board:

How many members does the board have at this date?

Number of voting members:                      Number of non-voting members:

What is the maximum number of members the board may have?

Does the presiding member of the board have a contractual, employment, personal or family, or financial interest in the school? If yes, please specify on an attached sheet.

Do other voting members of the governing board have contractual, employment, personal or family, or financial interests in the school? If yes, please specify on an attached sheet.

#### **A.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Does the school have a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to manage and insure the quality of the school?

Is the CEO also the presiding officer of the school's governing board?

#### **A.5 ACCREDITATION**

Date of accreditation or most recent renewal:

Is this accreditation current or has it lapsed ?

Please list any and all agencies currently accrediting your school or any of its programs (if necessary attach a separate sheet listing accrediting agencies and dates of accreditation or last renewal):

Have any of these agencies ever taken adverse action against the school (e.g., notices or probations)?

If so, please indicate which agency and describe each action (attach a separate sheet if necessary):

The information requested in eligibility requirements B.6 through E.15 below will most often be found in a school's catalog, handbooks, bulletins, and other public documents. Please provide the title of the supporting document and the page number(s) where the relevant information can be found. After the first full citation of a document, feel free to abbreviate. Please include copies of all documents cited in this fashion with the completed renewal application.

#### **B.6 MISSION STATEMENT**

Does the school have a clearly defined and published mission statement that includes a commitment to liberal arts education?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document containing the full text of the school's mission statement:

## **B.7 REQUIRED COURSES OR SUBJECT AREAS**

Does the school have clearly defined and published information describing its course or subject area requirements?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document that describe the school's course/subject area requirements:

## **B.8 PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

Do the school's published materials clearly and accurately describe:

a. Required areas of study?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

b. Optional/elective areas of study?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

c. Fees (optional or required) and refund policies?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

d. Admissions and retention policies?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

e. Policies and procedures directly affecting students and parents, including expected/requested contributions of service, etc.?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

f. Policies and procedures directly affecting faculty, administrators, and other personnel?

Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

g. Academic credentials of faculty and administrators?  
Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) containing the full statements:

### **C.9 OPERATIONS**

How many years has the school been in continuous operation?

### **C.10 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Does the school own or ensure access to adequate learning resources and appropriate services in support of:

a. Required subjects/ courses offered?  
Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) that describe the learning resources and other services:

b. Optional/elective subjects/courses offered?  
Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) that describe the learning resources and other services:

c. Student services?  
Please provide title(s) and page number(s) of the published document(s) that describe the learning resources and other services:

### **C.11 FACULTY OVERSIGHT AND COORDINATION**

Is there adequate faculty expertise for oversight and coordination in each required subject area?

### **D.12 FINANCIAL BASE**

Has the school established a financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission and educational objectives?  
Please elaborate on a separate page.

## E.14 ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTS

All schools applying for accreditation must submit the documents specified below:

- a. Evidence of charter school authorization.
- b. Copies of the Articles of Incorporation and/or the legal charter.
- c. Current copy of the school catalog.
- d. Current copy of the faculty/staff handbook.
- e. Current copy of the parent/student handbook.
- f. Copies of the two most recent externally audited financial statements.

The most recent of these statements must have been made within one year of the accreditation site team visit. In place of an audited financial statement schools may submit special reports that include either statements of positive assurance by independent certified public accountants or an appropriate governmental auditing agency as to the material accuracy of current funds, expenditure classifications and amounts in accordance with generally accepted principles of school accounting, and the current fund balance sheet. Schools must also demonstrate financial responsibility in accordance with relevant state or district government regulations. All accounting practices and financial statements must conform to nationally recognized standards, such as AICPA.