

# SEACOAST CHARTER SCHOOL

*Where arts and academics go hand in hand*

## **Application for Charter Re-Authorization**

SUBMITTED BY

Seacoast Charter School  
Board of Trustees (See Appendix A for a complete listing)  
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## Introduction

This Seacoast Charter School application is for the renewal of our charter for an arts-integrated elementary charter school in the Exeter New Hampshire area serving grades 1-8. Our projected student enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year is approximately 100 students in five classrooms, grades 1-6. We will continue our planned growth up to our current goal of 160 students in eight classrooms grades 1-8, and increasing up to approximately 130 students (6 classrooms) by the fifth year of operation. Our plan includes one full time teacher for each classroom and a student:teacher ratio of approximately 1:18-1:22 per class.

There has been and remains a consistent demonstration of demand and interest in our school in the greater Exeter area. Our enrollment has grown over the past four years from 8 original students to 50 students this past year. We have 107 confirmed students enrolled for 2008-2009 school year. In addition, we have over 40 students on our waitlist. In past years we have had significant waitlists as well. In 2005-2006 the waiting list reached as high as 100 students and in 2007-2008 hovered around 40-50 students. For the 2008-2009 school year, we have had a total of 35 applications for enrollment for 1<sup>st</sup> grade for 20 openings.

Seacoast Charter School offers a rigorous arts-integrated core curriculum as well as a rigorous study of visual art and music starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. We emphasize process and depth in our instruction. We take artistic processes as the model for academic learning. We ask students to create their own work and then give them the time and training to step back and ask themselves the questions, "What do I like? What do I not like? What do I do to improve it? This series questioning becomes an iterative process that trains students to think and act for themselves, which allows students, especially as they progress, to become more independent and develop along with their teacher an individualized program..

There remains a strong current of support for our charter school in the Seacoast region, including the support of businesses, school personnel, civic leaders, political leaders, and many concerned parents. Over the next five years, we are planning to expand our arts offerings to include more theater, and dance. We are going to continue to expand the boundaries of the integration of all of these arts with the core curriculum. We are going to actively share our curriculum and instructional innovations with other public schools and higher education. We are going to establish ongoing reciprocal relationships with higher education institutions and non-profits. We are going to expand our after-school and summer school opportunities and make them widely available to many students in the Seacoast region. We are going to continue to expand parent involvement in the school, in their child's education, in the education of other children, in the health and growth of the school, and in the their own education as parents and members of a community of lifelong learners.

**a. Educational mission**

The mission of Seacoast Charter School is to provide excellence in core academics and the arts while cultivating the individual qualities and strengths of each child.

1. Provide a rigorous core academic program through Integrated Curriculum Projects
2. Cultivate the individual qualities and strengths of each student
3. Train students to use artistic processes as models for academic learning
4. Offer a comprehensive, multidisciplinary arts program that allows students to explore new ways of thinking, behaving, and learning
5. Support student achievement by creating an inclusive community that actively engages parents, teachers, and students in learning.
6. Promote character development and good citizenship

**1. Provide a rigorous core academic program using Integrated Curriculum Projects**

*The core curriculum program will receive no less than 60% of time available.*

<b>Program Component:</b> Rich child-centered curricula in reading, mathematics, and spelling with a balance of focus on skill development and application.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate acquisition of basic skills</li> <li>• Study state standards and model elementary curricula</li> <li>• Select research-based curricula, which allow teachers to integrate all core subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual pre-testing and post-testing with results integrated into individual program planning</li> <li>• Analyze and evaluate student progress at least annually and longitudinal achievement patterns on internal and standardized assessments</li> <li>• Compile annual and longitudinal portfolios to be used for summative assessment and planning.</li> </ul>

<b>Program Component:</b> Integrated Curriculum Projects which make connections between academic subject areas and the arts.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students answer project questions or goals.</li> <li>• Document Integrated Curriculum Projects, including learning objectives for each unit that are clear and suited for different developmental levels</li> <li>• Have a Curriculum Resources Committee comprised of teachers, parents, and volunteers which works with teachers to identify resources for curriculum projects, e.g. speakers, field experiences, reference materials, project options, sponsors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-assessment for students for each project</li> <li>• Project outlines</li> <li>• Accountability Committee review of portfolios</li> </ul>

**2. Cultivate the individual qualities and strengths of each student**

*To help students realize their intellectual and social potential by providing individually planned instruction founded on each child’s individual qualities, strengths and innate curiosity.*

<b>Program Component:</b> A curriculum program based on known standards, course objectives, and rubrics that challenges students to progress.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop clear performance rubrics for Integrated Curriculum Projects.</li> <li>• Use assessment and skill screening data to assure accurate information for creating each child’s <i>Personal Learning Plan</i> (PLP), including regularly-updated skill levels and content mastery data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing reviews with parents, staff and students</li> </ul>

<b>Program Component:</b> Strong content and skills assessment program.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct pre and post-assessments for each student in reading, writing, and math.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze assessment results in the annual report.</li> </ul>

<b>Program Component:</b> Instruction founded on each student’s strengths and interests according to an Individualized plan.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, students and teachers complete a comprehensive questionnaire and interview to detail strengths, weaknesses, and goals at the beginning of the year (PLP)</li> <li>• Plan Integrated Curriculum Projects to allow for flexibility for individual students.</li> <li>• Students will demonstrate increasing independence in their work over the course of eight years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure student performance against goals of PLP</li> <li>• Student portfolios</li> </ul>

**3. Train students to use artistic processes as models for academic learning**

*To develop critical thinking skills in students regarding all of their work through increased ownership and an emphasis on process.*

<b>Program Component:</b> Arts in the classroom	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize process and learning from mistakes in academic classes</li> <li>• Students will demonstrate increasing independence of thought and proactive self-correction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolios of student work</li> <li>• Progress reports documenting skill and content knowledge development</li> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>

**4. Offer a comprehensive, multidisciplinary arts program that allows students to explore new ways of thinking, behaving, and learning**

*To provide a rigorous, experiential arts program, including visual arts, movement, dance, theatre, and music, allowing students to explore new ways of thinking, behaving, and learning. The arts program will receive 15% of time available.*

<b>Program Component:</b> A separate, varied arts program in addition to the core curriculum.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop specific skills and content knowledge in each of the arts.</li> <li>• Emphasize artistic process and learning from mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolios of student work</li> <li>• Progress reports documenting skill and content knowledge development</li> </ul>

**5. Support student achievement by creating an inclusive community that actively engages parents, teachers, and students in learning.**

*To support student achievement by creating a learning community that actively engages parents in significant and substantial ways both inside and outside the classroom so that they become learning partners with students and teachers.*

<b>Program Component:</b> Parents as Learning Partners	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer orientation materials that define a mission and philosophy of a shared learning community among staff, parents, and students</li> <li>• Provide options to parents for meeting this involvement expectation, accommodating different parent situations.</li> <li>• Develop after school learning opportunities for parents and students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Survey, responsiveness</li> <li>• Collect and report data on % of parent and type of parent involvement</li> </ul>

**6. Promote character development and good citizenship**

*To promote sound character development by helping students relate and communicate with others, develop leadership skills, and understand their individual rights and those of others. The Young Leaders Program will receive at least 5% of time available.*

<b>Program Component:</b> Town Meeting	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer opportunities for student leadership, public speaking and public participation</li> <li>• Allow for learning opportunities that integrate students across the grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation</li> </ul>

**Program Component:** • Ongoing modeling and reinforcing of mannerly social interaction and qualities of good citizenship

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate community action into Integrated Curriculum Projects.</li><li>• Create behavior expectations in each class with student input.</li><li>• Conduct discipline system, which emphasizes student growth and learning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Portfolio and exhibitions</li><li>• Teacher observation</li></ul>

## **(b) Governance and organizational structure and plan**

### **2. Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees will govern Seacoast Charter School with statutory responsibilities under RSA 194-B:5 for “general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school.” The composition of the board of trustees is outlined in the Seacoast Charter School bylaws.

The Board of Trustees will establish governing policies, including policies that establish subcommittees and standing committees of the Board. Such committees may include, but not be limited to, Finance, Governance, Development, Personnel, and Curriculum Resources.

The Board of Trustees plan for governance will support National School Board Association’s Key Work of School Boards, which focuses governance on student achievement. The eight- (8) key action areas are these:

1. Accountability: publishing an annual report with student achievement data; using data to improve the program and track the school’s success; assuring students and staff know what is expected.
2. Systems thinking: acknowledging the twin imperatives of student achievement and community engagement.
3. Collaborative relationships: building relationships with political and business leaders and others who promote high student achievement as the top priority.
4. Alignment: basing staffing and resource allocations on student achievement priorities; staff training is exclusively tied to student achievement priorities in meeting charter school goals.
5. Assessment: measuring student success at regular intervals; the school will use multiple measures instead of relying on a single high stakes test; students will learn to do their own self-assessments as an integral part of instruction.
6. Continuous improvement - continually using data to improve the program.
7. Climate: creating a positive climate for student success; fostering a culture that promotes the highest expectation for achievement of all students.
8. Standards: using state and national standards that define what students are expected to know; keeping standards constantly in front of students, parents, and staff; developing curriculum so achievement is measurable.

## **(c) Methods by which trustees and their terms are determined**

Board selection is outlined in the bylaws. In general, openings on the Board will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Board present and participating..

## **(d) General description and location of facilities to be used, or potential location if such information is available**

Seacoast Charter School is currently housed in the Old Sanborn High School in Kingston, NH. The school will work toward establishing a permanent home over the next five years.

**(e) Maximum number, grade, or age levels, and, as applicable, other information about pupils to be served**

The Seacoast Charter School currently has approximately 100 students enrolled. The school plans to grow but will remain a small school with a maximum enrollment of approximately 160 students in eight classes, grades 1-8.

**(f) Curriculum &  
(g) Instructional goals**

*The following description gives an overview of curriculum objectives in core content areas. The curriculum will be based on known standards and have course objectives that challenge all students. Curriculum and instruction decisions need the commitment and buy-in of the school's teachers. Curriculum decisions are made in concert with student learning results. Accordingly, the charter school will have an Accountability Committee to review student learning and use assessment results to make curriculum recommendations.*

Overarching Goals<sup>1</sup>:

- >95% of students will make 1 year's gain in reading, writing, and math each year
- >95% of students will show gains in information and concept understanding in core curriculum areas, as per pre- and post-unit assessments

Our curriculum will be designed to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, spelling, history and geography, and science. Foreign language, technology, and health content will be woven into the core academic program. The arts are emphasized through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary arts program beyond core academic instructional time as well as through Integrated Curriculum Projects.

The curriculum will be thematic with themes changing every six to eight weeks to enhance learning connections. For each unit, key information and concepts will be outlined and developed to serve as a teaching and assessment tool, e.g., used for pre- and post- assessment of information and concepts known and learned. The school will offer a rigorous curriculum that, at the least, will cover state standards and will rely, in part, on the Core Knowledge Sequence, developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation. Our Charter School will not limit itself, however, to Core Knowledge materials for grades 3-5.

**Overview of Academic Program**

Goal:

- >95% of students will show gains in information and concept understanding in core curriculum areas, as per pre- and post-unit assessments

**VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Seacoast Charter School Annual Accountability Plans for detailed goals and measures.

Goals:

- Introduction to and practice of visual, performing and musical arts, with a progression toward mastery.
- Students will demonstrate >75% mastery of selected concepts, vocabulary, and skills.

Students will attend separate classes in visual, performing, and musical arts, focusing on acquiring specific skills through practice and application, with an emphasis on the artistic processes unique to each medium. In addition, students will have the opportunity, and be encouraged to apply their knowledge of these artistic processes and ways of thinking to all aspects of their curriculum. .

LANGUAGE ARTS: Reading, Writing, and Literature

Goals:

- Acquisition of fluent word reading and comprehension skills.
- Acquisition of an extensive and advanced vocabulary
- Acquisition of spelling, and creative and expository writing skills
- Acquisition of speaking skills—expression and deportment

Students will progress through a research-based reading program that emphasizes phonemic awareness and decoding skills in early, skill-building stages, while nurturing the reader's ability to comprehend and interpret prose and poetry of different genres. The curriculum will guide students through phonics skills, identification of syllables and phonemes, blending and decoding through unfamiliar multi-syllabic words, and recognition of irregularly spelled words.

Students will have regular and frequent lessons in the practice of writing of Standard English. Using research-based proven programs, lessons will develop the mastery of the principles and applications of correct grammar usage-- including parts of speech, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraph development. Students will have ample opportunity to practice and reinforce writing skills in composition and essays to develop writing style and creativity through prose and poetry.

Students will be exposed to a rich array of quality children's literature. Funds permitting, our school will offer such auxiliary programs as Accelerated Reader, which allows for self-monitoring of each student's progress in reading skills, including comprehension.

Our school believes that public speaking and mannerly, interpersonal communications are also important assets of sound character development. Speaking and listening skills will be integrated into the school's academic and arts program.

MATHEMATICS

Goals:

- Acquisition of fluency with math facts
- Acquisition of math reasoning and estimation skills
- Application of math skills to real life scenarios
- Acquisition of new concepts representing challenging international standards

Our math program will follow standards produced by the *National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the NH Curriculum Frameworks*

Children will be challenged to progress in the mastery of new mathematical skills and concepts and the application of those concepts in real world scenarios. Math instruction will involve whole class and small-group presentations addressing ability and strengths at all levels.

## SCIENCE

### Goals:

- Acquisition of science concepts in a broad array of science areas
- Gain understanding of science in our lives and surroundings
- Students will have mastery of >75% of selected concepts, vocabulary, and skills of each unit

The science curriculum will follow the general guidelines of the Core Knowledge program with an emphasis on experiential learning and the scientific process. Students will be expected to think as scientists as they participate in a highly experiential program. Scientific method and process skills will be the basis of hands-on experiences in lab and field activities. Topics will be examined authentically, using real life practical applications, to encourage connection and understanding of our world, with increasing sophistication each year, or each grade level.

## CULTURAL STUDIES/HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY

### Goals:

- Gain understanding of the world in a geographical sense.
- Gain understanding of cultures/civilizations, past and present.
- Students will have mastery of >75% of selected concepts, vocabulary, and skills of each unit

Our curriculum will guide students through world history from ancient cultures to current events. Students will explore topics in geography and history gaining an understanding of their diverse physical and cultural world. The curriculum will be supported by independent and cooperative projects requiring a variety of research skills. The program will foster critical thinking skills and problem solving introduced via the artistic process.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### Goals:

- Acquisition of introductory, conversational Spanish
- Exposure to countries where Spanish is spoken and their cultures

Spanish will be the foreign language featured in our curriculum. Students will practice conversational Spanish, developing facility with vocabulary words and phrases. Students will be introduced to cultural awareness and sequentially to more complex vocabulary and some grammar skills.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Goals:

- Students will use computers and other technologies as one resource for research among many and as one mode communicating ideas among many
- Students will learn effective internet research practices, yielding reliable information

Students will be expected to understand the computer as a tool to assist learning; and how to use a computer for research projects, assignments, and presentations. Students will be introduced to multimedia software and equipment.

## HEALTH/FITNESS

Goal:

- Exposure to varied health and fitness topics
- >75% will have mastery of selected concepts, vocabulary, and skills of each

**(h) Achievement tests to be used to measure pupil academic and other goal achievement including, but not limited to, objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science, and mathematics**

1. Our charter school students will be assessed in each of the core academic skill areas by a combination of ongoing curriculum-related assessments, including annual and longitudinal portfolios, and standardized tests, including the New England Common Assessment Program and the TerraNova.

2. For all content areas, students will each keep a portfolio of their work, which will be used to discuss and review what has been covered and learned during the school year. Each piece of work in a student's portfolio will be presented as evidence of growth toward mastery of specific achievement benchmark reported on the trimester progress reports.

3. A Personal Learning Plan for each student will have individual learning expectations and will be reviewed as part of each student's accomplishments. Progress on goals in their Personal Learning Plan will be reported in trimester Progress Reports. This will provide a third source of data on student learning and achievement.

### **Assessment Calendar (based on 180-day school year):**

September                      Pre-test in math, writing, reading, and the arts in each grade

September/October:      Identify goals for student's personal learning plan

October:                      Required NECAP Assessment

Throughout year:        Portfolio creation and reporting on trimester progress reports

Mid-Year:                    Formal mid-year assessments in reading and writing as needed

End of May:                Post-Tests in reading, writing, and math

**(i) For schools offering high school grade levels.... N/A**

**(j) Staff overview including qualifications sought for professionals and Paraprofessionals**

The school sets a goal of one FTE teacher and one FTE assistant for each classroom, with some assistant services provided by volunteers or teachers in training.

No less than 50% of teachers employed by the school will have New Hampshire teaching certificates as required by New Hampshire Charter School statute. Because of our rigorous core curriculum, the school anticipates hiring elementary teachers with Masters degrees, strong liberal arts backgrounds, and an interest in the arts. In addition, we will seek adults who have prior experience working with children and have strong recommendations as ethical role models.

Teaching Assistants hired to work in the Seacoast Charter School will meet three criteria: intelligence, very supportive with children, and strong recommendations as ethical role models. Our goal is to hire Teaching Assistants who are working toward becoming classroom teachers.

**(k) Personnel compensation plans, including provision for leaves and other benefits, if any.**

The charter school will comply with all state and federal laws pertaining to employment compensation and leave provisions. The school will comply with all laws pertaining to pre-employment requirements, such as Criminal History Records under RSA 91-A: 1.

The Board of Trustees will continue to work toward developing a competitive salary agreement as funding permits. Teachers will have opportunities to receive additional salary for assuming responsibilities for operational needs of the school. This system will allow for a teacher directed school to the extent agreed upon by teachers and the Board and allow for more experienced teachers to have more supervisory roles and increased compensation. The Board will reserve the right to provide bonuses to the entire teaching staff, based on availability of funds, for collective achievement of school goals.

Benefits will include contributions to the public teacher retirement plan according to state requirements. Other benefits for full-time teachers may include, but not be limited to, health, life, and other insurances; professional development; child care; private retirement contributions; health and wellness; and/or personal services.

Each full-time teacher will receive a maximum of ten days of personal leave a year with pay<sup>2</sup>, to be used in whole or in part as determined by the individual employee, according to his or her needs.

**(l) Pupil transportation plan, including reasonable provision from the charter school's own resources for transportation of pupils residing outside the district in which the charter school is physically located.**

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<sup>2</sup> See Personal Leave Policy for more details.

Seacoast has developed transportation relationships with each of the towns in which we have resided. We will continue to do this. Families from other towns must find their own transportation.

For purposes of transportation, Seacoast Charter School will follow guidelines of 194-B: 2, IX, which states *"Pupils who reside in the school district in which the open enrollment or charter school is located shall be provided transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for is RSA 189:6 and 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the charter school."* Students attending the charter school who reside in the host school district shall ride district transportation with the charter school providing for added route costs, if so billed.

For students attending the charter school from outside the host district, the charter school shall serve as an open enrollment school under 194-B: 1, VI: *"Open enrollment school" means any public school which, in addition to providing educational services to pupils residing within its attendance area or district, chooses to accept pupils from other attendance areas within its district and from outside its district."*

Under RSA 194-B: 2, IX, the charter school has no obligation to transport students from outside the host district who are choosing to attend the charter school. *"For the purposes of open enrollment, neither the sending nor the receiving school district shall be obligated to provide transportation services for pupils attending an open enrollment school outside the pupil's resident district"* (RSA 194-B: 2, IX).

**(m) Statement of Assurances related to Commitment to Nondiscrimination**

The charter school celebrates diversity in all its forms<sup>3</sup>. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of its educational programs or in any other way that is prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees will develop and adopt a policy and will have administrative procedures to address any concerns.

**(n) Method of coordinating with a pupil's local education agency for matters pertaining to special education.**

The charter school will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting. These laws and rules are continually being revised, but over time the basic concepts are consistent.

**Charter Public Schools & Special Education**

Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B: 11, III, the local school district continues to be responsible for special education decision-making for any identified student who seeks attendance at a charter school. Decision-making for special education services needed and student placement stays with the local school district. In an individualized program with tutorial support, students otherwise requiring special

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<sup>3</sup> See Seacoast Charter School Non-Discrimination Policy for more detail.

education may be more independent of special education services.

Local school district responsibility is current law for students placed in private schools or other public schools. Thus, these guidelines represent no change from current decision-making placement and services procedures.

RSA 194-B: 11, §III, states that all options available to the parent and the local education agency are retained. Regarding special education, options now available to parents and the local district include:

- 1) the parent accepting or rejecting the district-proposed education plan in full or in part,
- 2) the local education agency providing some services to the child outside the assigned district school or outside the typical school hours,
- 3) an education plan of short duration or one that allows for a trial period in a program,
- 4) either the parent or the schools initiating the resolution of disagreements about the district's recommended program through the Department of Education.
- 5) the charter school will recommend a transition period for special students to assure that the placement decision is appropriate and successful.

#### Coordinating With A Pupil's School District

The charter school will respect the role and responsibility of the local school district. In coordinating with the student's local education agency charter school personnel will

- 1) respect the LEA's statutory authority for handling special education decision-making, and
- 2) assign a charter school liaison to collaborate with the local education agency on individual student matters.

#### Current School District Special Education Responsibility

In 1994, Section Ed 1102.11 defined "educational decision making process" in RSA 186-C: 14 II (b), as the "identification, evaluation, and placement, as well as the hearing, mediation, and appeal procedures." Under ED 1106.01 in the 2002 rules revised, the special education process is defined as:

- 1) referral,
- 2) evaluation,
- 3) determine eligibility,
- 4) development of an IEP (individualized education plan), and
- 5) placement.

Definitions under July 2002 revised Department of Education Rules for Special Education explain current district responsibility:

Ed 1102.31 "Local education agency" (LEA) means the local school district "as defined in 34 CFR 300.18, and includes "school district" as defined in RSA 198:38, II. (CFR refers to federal special education law.) Ed 1102.32 "Local school board" means the elected governing body of the LEA (local education agency) which is responsible for providing elementary and secondary education to all children who reside in the district.

Responsibilities for the Local Education Agency are:

CHILD FIND: State compliance code ED 1103.01 says the district will comply with federal code 34 CFR 300.125, relative to child find procedures. The local district is required to identify, evaluate, and classify all students determined to be students with educational

disabilities who are under 22 years of age. "The LEA shall develop a written child find system which assures all potential children with disabilities residing within its jurisdiction are referred to the IEP team." Ed 1103.02 LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY CHILD FIND: The local education agency annually shall contact representatives private schools within its jurisdiction to advise them of the local education agency's responsibility to identify and evaluate all students who are suspected of or known to be children with a disability and who are enrolled in such schools, and referrals from schools shall be forwarded to the IEP team for further evaluation.

#### Decision Making Components

The educational decision making process has many components, all defined in federal and state law and rule. This is a very specialized area of school administration. It is in the school district's interest to assure that properly trained and licensed administrators oversee these procedures for all district children, wherever they go to school. Some broad components where decisions are made:

#### Ed 1107.02 Process; Provision of Free & Appropriate Education

(a) The local education agency shall establish a process for referral and evaluation that includes individual participants responsible for decision-making and implementation.

(b) §300.344 IEP TEAM: General: The <school district> shall ensure that the IEP team for each student with a disability includes a representative of the public agency who is knowledgeable about the general curriculum ...§300.347 ...and is likely to be responsible for <implementing any part of the students special ed program> (e.g. a charter school representative).

#### Ed 1109.02 IEP Meetings & Development

The local education agency is responsible for review and revision of the IEP and will initiate and conduct meetings for the purpose of developing, reviewing and revising the individualized education programs for students placed in district programs and for those placed in private facilities and/or other non-district programs. An IEP must be in place at the beginning of each school year.

#### Ed1109.03 IEP Team

The public agency shall ensure the IEP team for each child with a disability includes at least one regular education teacher of the child if the child is participating in the regular education program (must invite a charter school teacher).

#### Ed 1109.04 Parent Participation

(a) The local education agency shall ensure that one or both of the parent or parents with educational decision-making authority for the child with a disability receive written notice... and

(c) parent participation shall be in accordance with 34 CFR.300.345.

#### Ed 1109.05 Copies Of IEP

(a) The local education agency shall provide each teacher and service provider listed as having responsibility for implementing the IEP with a copy of the complete IEP for working and monitoring purposes. In addition, the LEA shall provide a private school or non-LEA provider responsible for implementing the IEP with a copy of the IEP. (The public school must give any other school copies of the program they and the parent have agreed to implement.)

Ed 1109.06 The local education agency, as the responsible public agency, shall ensure the attendance or participation of teachers of private school and/or other non-district program representatives at IEP meetings. If the representative cannot attend, the agency shall use other methods, including individual or conference calls, to ensure participation by the private school or facility. (§300.349) Any meetings to review and revise the child's IEP may be initiated and conducted by the private school or facility at the discretion of the public agency. (The public school district decides how much responsibility they would like

the charter school staff to have in holding meetings, if any.)

#### Ed 1009.10 (a) Monitoring And Evaluation of IEPs

The local education agency shall develop and implement procedures designed to ensure that individualized education programs are monitored in a regular and systematic manner. The individualized education program team may be reconvened at any time to review the provisions of the IEP.

Should a parent or legal guardian want his/her special education-eligible child to be considered for the charter public school program, nothing prevents that parent from applying to the charter school. However, the local education agency and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) would need to discuss this placement at a required decision-making meeting. A representative of the charter public school should be invited to attend this meeting. It is customary to invite a representative from the potential receiving school when a different school placement is being considered.

RSA 194-B:11,V.(a) states "A sending district may provide funds, services, equipment, materials or personnel to a charter or open enrollment school, in addition to the amounts specified in this section in accordance with the policies of the sending school district." This important provision allows the responsible local education agency and the charter school to cooperate creatively to meet a student's special education needs which are not part of the school's charter.

Monitoring and annual evaluation of an individual education program is the responsibility of the local education agency. The charter school will cooperate with the LEA by designating a liaison for each student with an IEP.

In sum, the charter school will collaborate with our local education agency in the following manner:

1. designating a designated special education liaison for the charter school who will coordinate with the local public school on any matters pertaining to special education;
2. considering a trial period for student whose placement appropriateness is not fully known;
3. providing time for training for staff to better understand the needs of a student's educational disability and program;
4. providing a welcoming and supportive environment.

#### **(o) Admissions Procedures**

The Charter School will actively recruit a diverse population of students from the region who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Enrollment in the school shall be open to any resident of the State of New Hampshire. Methods of enrollment shall not be designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

Procedures

**Informational Meetings.** The Charter School will offer regular informational meetings for prospective applicants.

**Application Packet.** The Charter School will provide application packet to parent(s) or guardian(s) of any prospective student. This packet will include information about the

school's instructional and operational philosophy and a copy or summary of the school's student-related policies. It will give instructional procedures for transfer of student with all appropriate state acceptable forms necessary. These packets will be made available to interested parents/guardians.

**Submit Application.** Parents will submit their Application of Interest to the Head of School.

**Notification.** The Head of School will notify prospective students of the status of application and information about openings, and the lottery.

**Lottery.** In the event that there are more applicants than spaces in the school, enrollment will be determined by a lottery held on a pre-determined day and time. Remaining students will be placed on a waiting list by grade in order determined by lottery. The Head of School will inform all applicants of admission/lottery results.

**Meeting.** Admitted students and their parents/guardians may have an individual entrance meeting with members of the committee to confirm interest and compatibility with the mission, goals, and objectives of the school.

#### Enrollment Provisions<sup>4</sup>

1. If the number of otherwise eligible applicants to the charter school from within the school district exceeds the 10% limitation for the school district, then a separate lottery for that town will be held, unless the school district shall allow those students to enroll at the charter school.
2. As a family oriented school with required parent involvement, we will encourage siblings to attend school together. For this reason, siblings of enrolled students will be given preference in admission.
3. If the number of otherwise eligible applicants from outside the school district exceeds the school's maximum published number of enrollment, then the school shall conduct lottery selections as a basis for admission. In both lotteries, sibling applicants will be included as a single lot with space preference to siblings.
4. Students enrolled at the Charter School automatically are re-enrolled for the following school year, provided they are in good standing at the school. A letter of intent will be required from families prior to the end of each school year. This will classify the number of possible spaces for the following school year.
5. Students who are not chosen in the lottery will be ranked in lottery order and placed on a waiting list according to grade or program. If a Seacoast Charter student withdraws from the school, the first person on the waiting list for this grade will be contacted. If that student is no longer interested in enrolling, the Head of School will continue to contact students/parents in the order listed until a student is found to fill the opening.

#### **(p) Philosophy of student governance and discipline, and age-appropriate due process procedures to be used for disciplinary matters including suspension and expulsion.**

The charter school is committed to providing a respectful and safe environment for students and all members of the school community. The school will establish clear and

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<sup>4</sup> See Seacoast Charter School Admissions Guidelines for more details.

fair expectations for behavior through written guidelines, known as Seacoast Charter School Standards. These guidelines will be established by the Board of Trustees and published with an ending contract page signed by the school administrator, parent and child to be incorporated as part of each child's acceptance folder. These Standards will be distributed to students and parents as part of the enrollment process. As teachers and parents working together, the expectation that each child refrains from behaviors that can waste valuable instruction time and cause distraction or concern to other students is paramount. Our joint efforts will promote academic and social success within the team-oriented atmosphere at school and beyond.

Disrespectful or continual disruptive behaviors will not be accepted. Interventions can include: verbal warning; student conferences; teaching successful behavior strategies; loss of privileges; restitution; makeup time; in school or home suspension; and under extreme circumstances, expulsion.<sup>5</sup>

The charter school will provide fair and age appropriate due process in administering student discipline and will comply with current suspension and expulsion provisions in RSA 193:13 (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) and RSA 194-B: 9, III.

**(q) Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting, including a provision requiring fiscal audits and reports to be performed by an independent certified public accountant.**

Seacoast Charter School will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. Seacoast Charter School will maintain accurate financial record in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations. An annual financial report will be provided with audit by an independent, certified public accountant. The Seacoast Charter School Board of Trustees will appoint a Treasurer to provide oversight necessary for monitoring financial status of the School. The Board of Trustees shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the school, including policies on Conflict of Interest for Board members and faculty.

A general account will be set up for the administration of funds, and the Treasurer will be the only person with check-writing authority. In addition, a discretionary account will be set up. The school's Head of School as well as the Treasurer will have check writing authority for this account. The Board of Trustees will establish a maximum cap for discretionary expenditures.

Except for emergency purchases cleared with the school's assigned coordinator, all expenditures and contracts will be handled through an encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and status of account balances. Each individual with check writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with guidelines of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the bi-weekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due vendors of the school. The Seacoast Charter School shall comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B: 101-V). This list includes: annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process.

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<sup>5</sup> See Seacoast Charter School Student Discipline Procedure Summary for more details.

Pursuant to Ed 318.07, the Seacoast Charter School will produce an annual report, which will comply with the format established by the Department of Education.

The Seacoast Charter School's Finance Committee will oversee selection of an independent auditor and the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs. The audit will address accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school.

It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year. The Board will review and respond to the audit report, if needed, and include the audit results in its annual report.

#### **(r) Annual Budget, including Sources of Funding**

The financial plan included estimates Seacoast Charter School's expenditure budget over the five-year life its charter. It is necessary to meet with sending districts and Department of Education personnel to discuss the conditions under which they may provide an equitable tuition per student.

From the beginning of the charter school design effort, founders have been aware that financial sustainability of any small, independent school relies, in part, on efforts of the school to plan for an endowed contingency fund.

*See Appendix B for Five-Year Budget Plan*

#### **(s) School calendar arrangement and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served pursuant to RSA 194-B.8. II.**

In accordance with RSA 194-B:8, the Seacoast Charter School will follow a 180-day school calendar. It is intended to follow the 180-day school calendar of the district in which the school is located to best coordinate transportation services. Innovative scheduling is anticipated with selected days for extended hours; however, the school will assure the required number of attendance hours is met.

The start and end hours will be based on the existing host district's bus route transportation schedule.

#### **(t) Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage**

The Seacoast Charter School, pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, III, will be a public school subject to the same protections as any public school under RSA 507 (b) which provides for Limited General Liability for the charter school and its agents.

The school has secured the necessary insurance for operation of a school.

The school will maintain a business file of important documents including insurance policies, evidence of continuing insurance.

**(u) Identity of consultants to be used for various services, if known.**

We have contracted with an attorney. We have a business manager on staff and the Finance Committee of the Board oversees the selection of an independent auditor.

**(v) Philosophy of parent involvement and related plans and procedures.**

Parents as Learning Partners is a key focus of this charter school for young students. The overarching goal is 100% parent involvement in meaningful ways that support the school development, student learning, and community learning.

*The Seacoast Charter School will create a learning community that actively engages parents in significant and substantial ways so that they become learning partners with students and teachers.*

<b>Program Goal:</b> • Create a learning community which includes parents, students and teachers	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Achievement Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear expectations of parent/guardian involvement which is shared/discussed prior to student enrollment</li> <li>• Offer orientation materials that define the philosophy of a shared teaching community between staff, parents, and students</li> <li>• Provide a variety of options to parents for meeting this involvement expectation, thereby accommodating different parent needs and situations</li> <li>• Develop after school learning opportunities for parents and students</li> </ul>	Parent Survey  Data analysis of parent involvement

<b>Program Goal:</b> • Assure parents are informed about the school and program.	
<i>Goals</i>	<i>Accountability Measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of annual and periodic reports required in this charter shall be made available to parent/guardians</li> <li>• The school will maintain regular communication with parents via newsletter and email.</li> </ul>	Newsletters, emails and reports

**(w) Plan to Disseminate Information to Parents and Pupils**

A thorough marketing plan is being developed to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about the Seacoast Charter School program and their decision as to whether or not their child is apt to thrive in this choice school. Information provided about the

program, curriculum, and expectations for students and parents will include:

- Brochure distributed to prospective families
- Informational meetings marketed through schools and civic organizations
- An interactive website
- Flyers
- Public speaking
- Head of School to provide interview for families to attempt to assure questions are answered and the parent/child understand the charter's program elements.

**(x) Global Hold Harmless**

The Seacoast Charter School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless any sending district which sends students to the charter school, and their officers, directors, board members, agents, and employees (the "Indemnified Parties") from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of action at law or in equity, and all damages costs, losses, and expenses resulting from any act of omission by the charter school, its agents, employees or staff, relating to the operation of the charter school. The charter school shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties' own acts and omissions.

The Seacoast Charter School, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless the Host School District, any other school district which sends its students to the charter school, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successor and assigns, (the "indemnified parties") from any and all claims, demands, actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including, but not limited to, reasonable attorney's fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter school, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils.

**(y) Severability provisions and statement of assurance**

If the provision of the charter agreement is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter agreement shall remain in effect unless otherwise terminated by one or both of the parties in accordance with the terms contained herein.

**(z) Provision of dissolution**

In the event the charter school should cease operations for whatever reason, including the non-renewal or revocation of its Charter, the Board of Trustees shall consult with its attorney and also the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met and that technical assistance is sought.

The planned sale and distribution of any assets shall assure first that any financial obligations of the academy are met and that the public schools are offered any remaining property in proportion to their financial support of the academy over the history of the school.

**(aa)** [not applicable]

**(bb) Plan should the school cease operation**

In the event that the school shall cease operation for any reason, the school's administrator will develop a student transfer process and advise all parents and personnel of the process to be followed. The parent committee will assist in exploring options for students. Each child's parent/guardian shall provide a statement of intent for their student's file. The charter school will obtain a parent/guardian release of information and, notify the school to which the student will be returning. New schools will be advised that charter school personnel are available for consultation. The student's record, including the last Personal Learning Plan will be forwarded to the student's next school.

Information to each parent will be mailed to each home, informing families of the dissolution of the charter school. This will include a copy of their signed enrollment contract and alternative education programs and opportunity to meet with members and staff.

In the event of dissolution, we will provide accurate information to all parents in a timely manner and to ensure that there is a plan for every family to know their options and ensure that the receiving school has information to plan for the student's transition success.

**(cc) Ed 318.05 Additional Requirements**

(1) Admissions

- a. non-discrimination in admissions is addressed on page 21
- b. method for conducting lottery is addressed on pages 21-22
- c. method of providing for special education, coordinating with school district, is addressed on pages 17-20; the charter school will have a special education liaison to assure coordination between the charter school and host school district and will cooperate with individual programs

(2) Contracting under RSA 194-B: 8, VII, and RSA 194-B: 5, V

It shall be the policy of the charter school to enter into mutually advantageous contractual relationships with the host community or school district, or sending communities or school districts, that result in the wise and judicious use of resources, including but not limited to sharing transportation, instructional services, athletics, maintenance, and other services and facilities. Further, the charter school will consider contracting for services with other private or public entities, as permitted by law, as it plans and develops the overall operation of school.

(3) N/A

(4) Information Dissemination

Upon approval of the charter application and award of planning funding, the A.P.A.S.T. board will develop information about its curriculum and policies and disseminate these to all persons, and parents and pupils considering enrollment in that school. A.P.A.S.T. already has a web site available. Upon approval of the charter, information will be available through this medium, as well. Until that time, this charter document will be available and posted and will provide all information about curriculum and policies of the school.

## Appendix A: Seacoast Charter School Board of Trustees

### Seacoast Charter School Board of Trustees 2008

**Mark Aimone, Chair (Jan 07-Jul 10)**

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603.580.5228 home  
603.501.8121 cell  
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**Stephanie Riggillo (Jan 08-Dec 10)**

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**Julie Wiggin, Vice-Chair (Jul 06-Jun 09)**

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**The Rev. Susan Garrity, Secretary  
(Jan 07-Dec 10)**

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**Steve Liponis, Treasurer (Jan 07-Jul 09)**

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**Sue Milovina (Jan 07-Dec 09)**

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**Susan Canada (Nov 07-Nov 10)**

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