



## PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### OFFICE OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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**Date:** March 9, 2021

**To:** Members of the Board of Education

**From:** Korinna Wolfe, Area Senior Director, Multiple Pathways to Graduation  
Tara O'Neil, Program Director, Charter Schools

**Subject:** Charter School Renewal Recommendation for Portland Arthur Academy

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### **BACKGROUND**

Portland Arthur Academy Charter School is a k-5 charter school in SE Portland, housed on the Ascension Catholic Church campus, enrolling 175 students. The school uses a research-based, Direct Instruction model that focuses students through a highly organized, incremental curriculum and ensures they master each skill before moving on to the next. Portland Arthur Academy is one of six Arthur Academies in the greater Portland area, which share a common curriculum, a single board of directors, and a central administrative office.

Portland Arthur Academy opened in 2005, and is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year of operation. It successfully applied for charter renewal in 2008 and 2011. The school is currently operating under a five-to-ten-year "flexible" agreement which has been extended annually to reach the statutory 10<sup>th</sup> year limit, and will terminate on June 30, 2021.

Portland Arthur Academy formally submitted an Application for Renewal of its charter with the District on January 2, 2021 per ORS 338.065(5)(b). On February 13, 2021, the Board Charter Schools and Alternative Programs Committee held a public hearing in consideration of Portland Arthur Academy's renewal request, as per ORS 338.065(5)(c). Per ORS 338.065(4)(c), this renewal term "shall be for a minimum of five years but may not exceed 10 years." Portland Arthur Academy has requested a ten-year renewal of its charter.

The staff recommendation is based on information gathered from the annual site visits, the renewal hearing, Portland Arthur Academy's Annual Performance Framework and Report, and other information obtained during the renewal period.

### **RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES**

Charter school renewals are governed by ORS 338.065, OAR 581-026-0400 and Board Policy 6.70.010-P. The sponsor must base the renewal evaluation primarily on a good faith review of the public charter school's annual performance reports, annual audit of accounts, and annual site visit and review. The criteria a school district board must use to determine whether or not to renew a charter school are listed in ORS 338.065(8)(a-e) and are as follows:

Whether the public charter school:

**A. Is in compliance with this chapter and all other state and federal laws:** The criteria are met. Portland Arthur Academy Charter School has not been out of compliance with ORS 338 or any other applicable state or federal laws during the current charter term.

**B. Is in compliance with the charter of the public charter school.** The criteria are met. Portland Arthur Academy is implementing its educational program as described in its charter.

**C. Is meeting or working toward meeting the student performance goals and agreements specified in the charter or any other written agreements between the sponsor and the public charter school governing body.** The criteria are met. Portland Arthur Academy has met or is working toward meeting the student performance goals during the term of its current charter.

**D. Is fiscally stable and has used the sound financial management system described in the proposal submitted under ORS 338.045 and incorporated into the written charter under this section.** The criteria are met. The school has received clean audits every year of the current charter term, is timely with financial deliverables, and has maintained financial stability through the current contract term.

**E. Is in compliance with any renewal criteria specific in the charter of the public charter school.** The criteria are met.

## **ANALYSIS OF SITUATION**

**Implications of approving recommendation to renew charter school:** Staff will begin negotiating new contract per Board Resolution instructions.

**Implications of declining recommendation to renew charter school:** The charter with Portland Arthur Academy will expire on June 30, 2021, and barring further action, the school will close. The charter school may appeal the PPS Board decision to the State Board of Education for review (ORS 338.065(6)(a)).

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

As per ORS 338.155(2)(a), charter schools serving grades K-8 receive a minimum of 80% of the per-student State School Fund allocation. Additional weights to this allocation include those for poverty (based on census data), for students qualifying for ESL services, and for students qualifying for teen parent services.

Portland Arthur Academy is projected to enroll 180 students in grades K-5 in the 2021-22 school year, and is projected to receive \$1,257,660 in State School Funds at current enrollment (assuming statutory minimum 80% pass through amount of current Charter School Rate per-student allocation of \$8,734).

Portland Arthur Academy has requested within their renewal application that the Board of Education consider increasing the pass-through rate from the statutory minimum of 80% to 90% of per-student allocation. Staff recommends that consideration of an increase in the

pass-through rate to charter schools be separated from the decision about charter renewal, which is determined by consideration of statutory criteria in ORS 338.065(8).

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

Portland Arthur Academy Charter School submitted its renewal application according to statutory timelines. District staff completed an annual performance review, and submitted this to Portland Arthur Academy for input and response. District staff has performed multiple school site visits, including meetings with school staff, students, and parents. On February 11, 2021, the Board Charter Schools Committee held the required public hearing where public comment was submitted in support of renewal.

Portland Arthur Academy has been reviewed on an annual basis by staff in three major areas: academic, organizational, and financial. Staff has determined that Portland Arthur Academy is meeting statutory and contractual requirements.

### **TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION**

The Board is scheduled to discuss Portland Arthur Academy's renewal at its meeting on March 9, 2021, with a vote scheduled at the same meeting.

If the renewal request is approved, staff will begin negotiating the new contract with Portland Arthur Academy per instructions of the Board Resolution. The current contract expires on June 30, 2021.

### **BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS**

**Results of a yes vote:** the Board will direct staff to negotiate a ten-year charter agreement per the terms of the Resolution.

**Results of a no vote:** the charter contract will expire effective June 30, 2021, and barring further action the school will close. The charter school may appeal the decision of the PPS Board to the State Board of Education for review (ORS 338.065(6)(a)).

### **CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS**

Board goals for Third Grade Reading growth and Fifth Grade Mathematics growth are connected to achievement standards for K-5 charter schools. Charter schools must meet District average achievement for the same populations, as reported on the Oregon Report Card and the Charter Schools Annual Performance Framework and Report.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the contract with Portland Arthur Academy Charter School be renewed for a ten-year term, to expire on June 30, 2031.

*As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.*

    *KC*     (*Initials*)

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution to Renew Charter Agreement with Portland Arthur Academy Charter School
- B. Portland Arthur Academy 2019-20 Annual Performance Framework and Report
- C. Portland Arthur Academy 2019-20 Oregon School Profile
- D. Portland Arthur Academy Charter Renewal Application