

**ALASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION
ON APPEAL BY FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
DEED COMMISSIONER'S DECISION REGARDING PEARL CREEK STEAM
CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

The Academic Policy Committee for Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School (Pearl Creek) filed a charter school application with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Board of Education (District), which was denied by the District in a decision signed on November 4, 2025. On November 11, 2025, Pearl Creek filed an appeal of the application denial with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) Commissioner Deena Bishop pursuant to AS 14.03.250(d). On January 29, 2026, DEED issued a decision pursuant to AS 14.03.253(a) that approved the charter school application from Pearl Creek. Pursuant to the requirements of AS 14.03.250(e), the DEED decision to approve the charter school application was forwarded to the state Board of Education and Early Development (Board) for review. On review of DEED's approval of the charter school application, the Board has a statutory duty to exercise independent judgment in evaluating the application. In evaluating the application, the Board reviewed the Pearl Creek charter school application, the administrative record, and written statements submitted to the Board by both Pearl Creek and the District.

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On February 4, 2025, the District voted to close Pearl Creek Elementary School, located at 700 Auburn Drive in Fairbanks, Alaska, at the end of that school year.¹ On February 10, 2025, submitted a Notice of Intent to open the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.² The notice identified the existing Pearl Creek Elementary School building as the intended location for operating the charter school.³

On February 18, 2025, Pearl Creek submitted its initial charter school application to the District.⁴ Pursuant to AS 14.03.250(b), a local school board has sixty (60) days from receipt of a charter school application to approve or deny the application and issue a decision. The District failed to address the application filed by Pearl Creek within the 60-day statutory deadline. Instead, the District sent a letter to Pearl Creek on April 10, 2025 informing it that the school board would not be putting its charter school application to a vote.⁵ Despite the application having never been considered or voted on by the District, the letter detailed reasons why the application should be denied.⁶

¹ Administrative Record (AR) at 6.

² AR at 13-21.

³ Id.

⁴ AR at 7.

⁵ AR at 24-31.

⁶ Id.

On April 21, 2025, Pearl Creek filed an appeal to the Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, pursuant to AS 14.03.250(d).⁷ This statutory provision allows for an applicant for a charter school to appeal a denial of its application to the DEED commissioner. In this case, the commissioner determined that the April 10, 2025 letter from the District to Pearl Creek did not constitute an appealable decision on the charter school application.⁸ The commissioner noted concerns that proper procedures had not been followed and remanded the case to the District for consideration of the Pearl Creek application and directed the District to fulfill its statutory duty under AS 14.03.250(b) to consider the application and issue a written decision approving or denying the application and including all relevant findings of fact and conclusions of law.⁹ In response to the remand from the DEED commissioner, Pearl Creek requested that the District consider its initial charter school application at its next board meeting scheduled for May 20, 2025.¹⁰ The District responded that it accepted the request to process the application, but the application would not be considered until the next school year.¹¹

On June 27, 2025, Pearl Creek submitted a new Notice of Intent to open the Pearl Creek STEAM Charter School.¹² On July 1, 2025, Pearl Creek filed a new initial charter school application.¹³ The District and Pearl Creek communicated regarding possible dates and times to meet to discuss the notice of intent and the application.¹⁴ On July 15, 2025, the District notified Pearl Creek that it had scheduled three hearing dates to address the charter school application.¹⁵ The District indicated that it intended for the first hearing to be a work session for Pearl Creek to present the application, the second meeting to allow the District administration to present its recommendations, and for the board to take official action on Pearl Creek's application at the third hearing.¹⁶ The parties participated in hearings and began communicating regarding outstanding issues related to the application. Pearl Creek requested a sample budget spreadsheet, which the District did not provide.¹⁷ Because it had not received requested information from the District, Pearl Creek emailed the District on July 29, 2025 to request additional time to respond to feedback from the District and asked to reschedule the next meeting.¹⁸ The District rejected Pearl Creek's request to reschedule and instead suggested that Pearl Creek withdraw its

⁷ AR at 7-12.

⁸ AR at 45-46.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ AR at 47-48.

¹¹ Id.

¹² AR at 49-50.

¹³ AR at 51.

¹⁴ AR at 52-55.

¹⁵ AR at 54.

¹⁶ Id.

¹⁷ AR at 58-59.

¹⁸ AR at 60-61.

application and refile it at a later date.¹⁹ On July 30, 2025, Pearl Creek formally withdrew its pending charter school application.²⁰

On August 22, 2025, Pearl Creek filed a new initial application for a charter school.²¹ A new series of hearings was scheduled to address the new application.²² During this review process, Pearl Creek modified sections of its application in response to recommendations made by the District, but made clear through email correspondence that this was part of the ongoing application process and not intended to be a new application.²³

At a meeting on October 21, 2025, the District took official action on the Pearl Creek application. At the meeting, there was a unanimous vote to deny the application.²⁴ The District issued its written decision denying the application on November 4, 2025.²⁵

On November 11, 2025, Pearl Creek filed an appeal of the District's decision to the DEED commissioner pursuant to AS 14.03.250(d).²⁶ The DEED commissioner delegated the authority to review the charter school appeal to ESEA Administrator Courtney Preziosi, as permitted by AS 44.17.010.²⁷ In reviewing the District's decision denying the charter school application, the commissioner's designee was tasked with determining whether the District's findings of fact are supported by substantial evidence and whether the decision is contrary to law.²⁸ The commissioner's designee determined that the concerns raised by the District in its decision "do not as a matter of law justify a decision by the commissioner or her designee to uphold the board's decision."²⁹ Accordingly, the commissioner's designee approved Pearl Creek's application to establish a charter school pursuant to AS 14.03.255(a)(2).³⁰

Pursuant to AS 14.03.250(e), Pearl Creek's application was forwarded to the State Board of Education and Early Development for review and approval. This statutory provision requires that the board "exercise independent judgment in evaluating the application." AS 14.03.250(e).

¹⁹ AR at 61-62.

²⁰ AR at 62.

²¹ AR at 65-67.

²² AR at 70.

²³ AR at 74, 80.

²⁴ AR at 254.

²⁵ AR at 82, 251-302.

²⁶ AR at 209-224.

²⁷ DEED decision, page 1.

²⁸ AS 14.03.250(d).

²⁹ DEED decision, page 28.

³⁰ Id.

REVIEW OF PEARL CREEK'S INITIAL CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

The Board is required to exercise independent judgment in its evaluation of the charter school application filed by Pearl Creek.³¹ As an initial matter, the Board determined that it had sufficient information to determine the application's compliance with applicable law. 4 AAC 33.110 (j).

The Board's evaluation of the charter school application follows the Charter School Application - Initial and the related Rating Template developed by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and applicable state law.

Section 1: Establishment of the Charter School at the local level

- i. **Provide the primary purpose of the charter, how it will specifically differ from other educational options available in the community and the student population the charter hopes to attract.**³²

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its primary purpose is to provide a K-6 elementary school with "an emphasis on the integration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) through an interdisciplinary and inquiry-based approach." The application states that it differs from other educational options because there are "currently no schools focusing on STEAM education in the district." The application states that it plans to open as a K-6 elementary school with 352 students and plans to expand.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information regarding the primary purpose of the charter school, how it will differ from other educational options, and the student population the charter school hopes to attract. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

- ii. **Provide evidence of the local school board's approval of the new charter school marked as Appendix A.**³³

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that evidence of the local school board approval of the new charter school will be "included after approval." An initial charter school application would not be expected to have the approval of the local school board at the time the initial application is filed. In this case, the local school board has not approved the charter school after its review of the application. However, if this Board approves the initial charter school application after completing its review pursuant to AS 14.03.250(e), the

³¹ AS 14.03.250(e)

³² AR at 307.

³³ AR at 307, 338-339.

local school board will be required to operate the charter school as provided in AS 14.03.255-AS 14.03.290. AS 14.03.250(f).

The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application can be considered compliant upon the Board's approval of the application under AS 14.03.250(e).

iii. Provide evidence of the signed contract between the new charter school and the local school board containing all required elements marked as Appendix B.³⁴

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its proposed contract with the local school board was filed as Appendix B to the application. On review, the Board confirmed that Pearl Creek included a proposed contract in accordance with AS 14.03.250(a). As noted by DEED in its decision, the proposed contract filed with an initial charter school application is a starting point for discussion and not a final agreement. A signed contract between the charter school and the local school board would not be expected to be filed with an initial charter school application but would result from discussions between the parties after the submission of the application. In this case, the proposed contract filed by Pearl Creek complied with AS 14.03.250(a) and provided sufficient information on required elements for its initial charter school application.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information in the proposed contract to comply with legal requirements, including AS 14.03.250(a). The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

iv. Provide the charter schools' bylaws marked as Appendix C.³⁵

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its "bylaws are included in Appendix C." On review, the Board confirmed that Pearl Creek included the charter schools' bylaws under Appendix C.

The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

v. Provide evidence of the formation of the Academic Policy Committee (APC) consisting of parents of students attending the school, teachers, and school employees. Evidence includes a list of the members of the APC and their qualifications, as well as the written minutes from meetings where discussions regarding academic policies, bylaws, school administration, and school educational programming occurred. Mark as Appendix D.³⁶

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek included a list of Academic Policy Committee (APC) members, their qualifications (resumes of

³⁴ AR at 307, 340-353.

³⁵ AR at 308, 354-365.

³⁶ AR at 308, 366-400.

members), and the written minutes for all APC meetings, which the Board confirmed were attached as Appendix D.

The Board finds that the application provided sufficient evidence of the formation of the APC. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

Section 2: Organization and Administration

- i. Provide information on how the charter school shall oversee the operation of the charter school to ensure that the terms of the contract required by AS 14.03.255(c) are being met; including who will be responsible and what mechanism(s) they will use.³⁷**

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the APC will provide governance for the charter school and operations of the school will be carried out by the administrative staff (with assistance from the APC and as detailed in the bylaws). The APC will ensure compliance with the terms of the contract required by AS 14.03.255(c). The application also confirms understanding that the APC must comply with policies and provisions of the local school district, the Fairbanks Education Association (FEA), state law relating to charter schools, and the Education Support Staff Association (ESSA). If questions arise regarding any responsibilities or provisions, the APC will consult with the local school district, FEA, ESSA, or the State of Alaska (SOA).

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information on how the charter school will oversee the operation of the school to ensure compliance with contract terms. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

- ii. Provide the written administrative policy manual utilized by the charter marked as Appendix E.³⁸**

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its written administrative policy manual to be utilized by the charter school is included as Appendix E to the application. The written administrative policy manual is also the Parent Handbook. On review, the Board confirmed that a written administrative policy manual was included with Pearl Creek's initial charter school application.

The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

³⁷ AR at 310.

³⁸ AR at 310, 401-407.

- iii. **Provide information on how the charter school will meet regularly with parents and with teachers of the charter school to review, evaluate, and improve operations of the charter school; including who will be responsible, what mechanism(s) they will use and how often contact(s) will take place.**³⁹

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the APC will meet monthly and parents will be “encouraged to attend, participate, and provide feedback.” In addition, the administration and staff of the charter school will “remain in consistent communication with parents and provide avenues for parents to communicate and provide feedback.” The charter school will also use the local school district’s Parent Input Survey and Principal Survey, hold biweekly staff meetings, and utilize AKSTEPP for setting goals and evaluating progress.

The Board finds that the application provided sufficient information regarding how the charter school will meet regularly with parents and teachers to review, evaluate, and improve operations of the school. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

- iv. **Provide information on how the charter school will meet the requirements of conferring with the academic policy committee at least once each year to monitor progress in achieving the committee’s policies and goals; including who will be responsible, what mechanism(s) they will use and if contact(s) will take place more frequently than once a year.**⁴⁰

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the APC “will host an annual All School Meeting for parents and teachers in the first month of each new school years to report on progress toward APC goals.” Parents will also be encouraged to attend the APC’s monthly meetings.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information on how the charter school will meet the requirement to confer with the APC at least once a year to monitor progress in achieving the APC’s policies and goals. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

- v. **Provide a description of the school schedule and calendar.**⁴¹

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the charter school will follow the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) calendar.

The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

³⁹ AR at 310.

⁴⁰ AR at 310-311.

⁴¹ AR at 311.

- vi. **If applicable: Provide information on alternative educational options for students not wishing to attend the charter if the charter school is the only school in the community.**⁴²

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that students who “do not wish to attend [Pearl Creek] may attend their neighborhood school or another school of choice.”

The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

Section 3: Educational Program and Student Achievement

- i. **Provide a description of the educational program to be offered at the charter school. Information in this section should explicitly detail if the program is designed to meet the needs of students in a particular age group or grade level and/or meet the needs of students who will benefit from a particular teaching method or curriculum.**⁴³

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its students “will engage in interdisciplinary project- and place-based learning” and deliver a “high standard of core reading, writing, and math content areas and weave STEAM throughout these subject areas.” The application provides details regarding the planned curriculum for specific subject areas including English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Arts, Technology and Engineering, and explains how STEAM principles will be incorporated into educational program. The application included a proposed school day structure that explains how STEAM will be embedded in the schedule. The application details its plan to offer “capstone experiences and projects for students to participate in at the end of the academic year” and explains how these experiences may differ by grade level.

Pearl Creek plans to provide after-school programming through various “clubs” that will change quarterly to match the season and instructor availability. Examples of after-school clubs include a Nature Art Club, Battle of the Books, LEGO club, and an Arts and Crafts Club. A sample yearly after-school enrichment schedule is included in the application.

Pearl Creek’s application provides details for additional programming including plans for family engagement, community partnerships, and community STEAM programming. The application also details a plan for diversity and equity across race, socioeconomic status, gender, culture, and ability. Pearl Creek states its commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive education environment,

⁴² AR at 311.

⁴³ AR at 312-321.

including those with special needs. Students with Individualized Education Program (IEPs) or 504 plans will be admitted in accordance with applicable laws.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient description of the educational program to be offered at the charter school. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

ii. Provide a written plan that addresses the teacher-to-student ratio, including projected enrollment figures.⁴⁴

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that it will maintain a pupil-teacher ratio of 18:1 for kindergarten, 22:1 for 1st-3rd grade, and 24:1 for 4th-6th grade, unless the APC and principal approve a new ratio. The application states that enrollment at the charter school will be a minimum of 150 students and a maximum of 468 students, with an initial target of 352 students for the first year.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information regarding its plan for teacher-to student ratio, including projected enrollment. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

iii. Provide evidence of a written instructional program that addresses state content standards under 4 AAC 04 and aligns with the content on the statewide assessment system under 4 AAC 06.710 – 4 AAC 06.790 marked as Appendix F.⁴⁵

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that its written instructional program is included at Appendix F. On review, the Board confirmed that a written instructional program addressing state content standards and in alignment with the content on the statewide assessment system was included with the application and marked as Appendix F. The written instructional program appears consistent with the educational program detailed in subsection i. of this Section. The application also describes specific instructional materials the charter school will use including Open Up Resource materials and details specific class plans for different grade levels.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient evidence of a written instructional program that addresses state content standards and aligns with the content on the statewide assessment system. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

⁴⁴ AR at 321,

⁴⁵ AR at 321-322, 408-456.

iv. Provide a description of plans for serving special education, vocational education, gifted, and bilingual students.⁴⁶

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek includes plans for serving special education, Extended Learning Program (ELP), and Multilingual Learner (ML) students. The application states a commitment to inclusiveness for students with special needs and affirms that students with IEPs or 504 plans will be admitted in accordance with state and federal law. Students in the ML program will have their needs addressed based on their ACCESS and WIDA scores.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient description of plans for serving special education, vocational education, gifted, and bilingual students. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

v. Provide written objectives for program achievement desired by the charter.⁴⁷

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek provides detailed written objectives for program achievement. These program objectives include foundational STEAM proficiency, meeting state and federal benchmarks in math, reading, writing, and science, and meeting all state and federal assessment requirements associated with federal guidelines and Alaska READS. The application also includes written objectives related to STEAM activities and incorporating family and community engagement into the educational program. The application also sets objectives for stable enrollment, including a voluntary re-enrollment rate of 80% after the first year and 90% in subsequent years.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient written objectives for program achievement and that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

vi. Provide a description of the mechanisms for student assessment to be utilized in addition to those required by state law.⁴⁸

The initial charter school application for Pearl Creek states that the charter school will administer all state-mandated assessments, performance-based assessments, assessments of students' learning portfolios to document growth, and competency-based assessments. Required state-mandated assessments will include Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR), Alaska Science Assessment, English Language Proficiency Assessment (ACCESS for ELLs), and Alaska Development Profile (ADP). The application also details additional methods of assessment including performance-based assessments, portfolio assessments, competency-based assessments, exhibition and demonstration of

⁴⁶ AR at 322.

⁴⁷ AR at 322-325.

⁴⁸ AR at 326-327.

learning through STEAM showcases, and teacher-developed formative assessments.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient description of the mechanisms for student assessment. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

Section 4: Professional Development

i. Provide a description of and schedule for staff development activities.⁴⁹

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the school will adhere to “all state and district mandatory training” in addition to including specific professional development centered around STEAM practices. The school’s yearly development program will train teachers and staff “with the next generation’s science standards.” The school will host three professional development days to collaborate with STEAM partners. All applicable collective bargaining agreements will apply to staff at Pearl Creek. Decisions regarding professional development will be made in conjunction with the APC, the school’s principal, and staff members.

The Board finds that the application provides a description of and schedule for staff development activities. This section of Pearl Creek’s application is compliant.

Section 5: Facility

i. Provide information on the location for the charter school, description of the facility and lease information. Information in this section should include a description of the process used by the school and district to comply with the right of first refusal for a lease of space in an existing school district facility within the school district that is not currently being used as public school.⁵⁰

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek proposes leasing the former-Pearl Creek Elementary School building located at 700 Auburn Drive in Fairbanks, AK. The application provides a written description of the school building and the available amenities, including 22 full-sized classrooms, three half-sized classrooms, administrative offices, a gym, a multipurpose room, arts and music rooms, a kitchen, staff rooms, and storage.

The application does not include a description of the process used to comply with the right of first refusal for a lease of space in an existing school district facility. An agreement to lease an existing school district facility would not be expected to

⁴⁹ AR at 328-329.

⁵⁰ AR at 329-330.

be filed with an initial charter school application but would result from discussions between the parties after the submission of the application.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information on the proposed location for the charter school and its desire to lease space in an existing school district facility within the school district. The specific location will need to be identified and negotiated by the parties. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

ii. Describe the plans for the charter school's facility and any plans for projected growth.⁵¹

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek included floor plans for the proposed school facility at the former-Pearl Creek Elementary School building located at 700 Auburn Drive in Fairbanks, AK. The application describes plans to use the building to "open as a primary school, offering K-6 level instruction" with plans to explore expanding to 7th grade and 8th grade in the future, depending on community interest and building capacity.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient description of the plans for the charter school's facility and plans for projected growth. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

Section 6: Admission

i. Provide the written admission policies and procedures utilized by the charter. Please include evidence that the school is ensuring equal and bias-free access to all eligible students. Mark as Appendix G.⁵²

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek provides information regarding admission policies and procedures, including information marked as Appendix G. The application includes a written nondiscrimination statement that provides for equal access and opportunities and compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination laws including Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The application provides a written admission process that includes a lottery if more students apply than can be accommodated with a grade level. The application also lists admission criteria that includes a requirement for parents or guardians to review and agree to the Student Handbook and contribute volunteer hours. There is also a plan to develop a volunteer bank of donated hours for families unable to contribute volunteer hours.

⁵¹ AR at 330-333.

⁵² AR at 333-334, 457-459.

The Board finds that the application has provided sufficient written admission policies and procedures to be utilized by the charter school as well as evidence that the school will ensure equal and bias-free access to all eligible students. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

- ii. **Provide a written student recruitment process, including a lottery or random drawing mechanism for enrollment if applicants exceed the school's capacity. Mark as Appendix H.⁵³**

The initial application for a charter school filed by Pearl Creek includes information regarding the student recruitment process in Appendix G and Appendix H. The charter school has plans for an admission lottery program whereby it would strive to enroll all students who admit a timely application. If there are more applicants than available spots, admission will be done by lottery. The provided plan includes a list of admissions criteria and preference categories and a procedure for admission by lottery, if necessary.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient written student recruitment process, including a lottery procedure if applicants exceed the school's capacity. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

Section 7: Fiscal

- i. **Provide a written budget summary and financial plan, including a statement of the charter school's funding allocation from the local school board and costs assignable to the charter school program budget. Information in this section should explicitly detail the amount and sources of the revenue streams; the specific indirect rate (not to exceed 4%) and details of what the indirect rate charges cover; as well as the charter's eligibility to receive additional revenue over the 2.65 mills required in the foundation formula. Projected budget marked as Appendix I.⁵⁴**

The initial charter school application provided by Pearl Creek includes, in Appendix I, a written budget summary, projected budget, and funding estimate, including estimated funds to be allocated to the charter school. The application also details plans to apply for grants to support the charter school, including the Charter School State Grant pursuant to AS 14.03.264, and a federal non-SEA CSP grant. The application also provides descriptions of other possible sources of grants and announces a commitment to continue to identify revenue opportunities to support the charter school. The budget summary and financial plan provided by Pearl Creek in its initial charter school application appears to provide financial

⁵³ AR at 334, 460-463.

⁵⁴ AR at 335-336, 464-466.

and budgetary information to the extent possible given the information available to Pearl Creek. Additional information from the District appears to be necessary in order for Pearl Creek to provide more extensive information related to the budget summary and financial plan.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient written budget summary and financial plan. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

- ii. Provide information on how the charter school will keep financial records, including who will be responsible, what mechanism(s) they will use and how often financial oversight will take place.⁵⁵**

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that all funds "will be allocated for the educational purposes of the school." The APC will have ultimate responsibility for financial oversight with the Treasurer having primary responsibility. The APC will be responsible for "ensuring proper fiscal stewardship, record keeping, strategic fiscal planning and fiscal oversight and management through periodic assessment" to ensure the school's compliance with all policies and procedures. The school will comply with GAAP standards and all legal requirements, including AS 14.17.910.

The Principal will provide monthly financial information to the Treasurer before APC meetings for preparation of the Treasurer's Financial Report. The Principal and Treasurer will work together to prepare the annual budget for the APC and for the District. Pearl Creek intends to work closely with the District to ensure compliance with all requirements.

The Board finds that the application provides sufficient information on how the charter school will keep financial records, including who will be responsible, what mechanism(s) they will use, and how often financial oversight will take place. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

- iii. Provide a description of the method by which the charter school will account for receipts and expenditures.⁵⁶**

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek states that the charter school "will follow all district-approved practices to account for receipts and expenditures."

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient description of the method by which the charter school will account for receipts and expenditures. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

⁵⁵ AR at 336.

⁵⁶ AR at 336.

Section 8: Transportation

- i. **Provide a plan for pupil transportation and the district charter school transportation policy, if proposed or adopted, marked as Appendix J.**⁵⁷

The initial charter school application filed by Pearl Creek included a transportation plan, marked as Appendix J. The proposed transportation plan provides that Pearl Creek will utilize District transportation as described in District policy BP 3540. This policy will offer transportation to charter students along existing bus routes on a space-available basis. Pearl Creek also states that it will work closely with the District to maximize the number of students served by this option. If the District does not have space available or otherwise elects to provide transportation funding instead of transportation, as outlined in AS 14.09.010(e), the APC will delegate transportation planning to a committee.

The Board finds that the application provides a sufficient plan for pupil transportation. The Board finds that this section of Pearl Creek's application is compliant.

CONCLUSION

The Board conducted a thorough evaluation of Pearl Creek's application for a charter school using its independent judgment as required by AS 14.03.250(e). On review, the Board found that Pearl Creek's application is compliant with requirements for an initial charter school application. Accordingly, the application for a charter school filed by Pearl Creek is **APPROVED**.

This constitutes a final decision of the State Board of Education and Early Development and is a final agency action for purposes of appeal to the superior court. 4 AAC 33.110(k).

Approved this 29 day of April, 2026.

State Board of Education and Early Development

By: 
SALLY STOCKHAUSEN,
State Board Chair

⁵⁷ AR at 337, 467-468.