

The Museum School of Avondale Estates 2017 Charter Renewal FAQ

Q. Why does The Museum School of Avondale Estates have a charter?

The founders of the Museum School of Avondale Estates – a group of dedicated parents and community members – wanted to build a school with the flexibility to implement an innovative curriculum model – The Museum Model. In order to achieve this goal, the school entered into a charter agreement with the DeKalb County Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The contract between these entities – our charter – outlines our autonomy, accountability and agreements.

Q. How often does the charter need to be renewed?

Every five years.

Q. What is the current status of our charter?

As a charter school, we must be approved by a local authorizer AND the state Board of Education. On Nov. 7, 2016 the DeKalb Board of Education voted to approve our charter for another five-year term. On March 30, 2017 the State Board of Education also approved our charter for another five-year term. With these two votes, our charter has been renewed through June 30, 2022.

Q. How did the TMS Board of Directors work to meet all the charter renewal requirements?

The Board placed the highest priority possible in gaining the school's charter renewal. The Board and its Charter Renewal Committee spent two years completing all the necessary requirements by the district and the state to ensure that our charter would be renewed. More than 1500 pages of required information and supporting documentation were prepared and submitted.

Q. What is not changing in the new charter petition?

The majority of the school's academic, organizational and financial goals will remain the same – including our proven and successful museum school and project-based academic model.

As long as we meet our new organizational goals (discussed below), our attendance zone will also remain in tact. The Peachcrest and Avondale Elementary school zones (as defined by DeKalb County School District for the 2016-17 school year) will remain our primary attendance zone, and the remainder of DeKalb County School District will be our secondary zone.

We will also continue to honor sibling, staff and board member preferences in future student lotteries.

If we fail to meet our organizational goal around student diversity, the county would have the option to implement a district-wide primary attendance zone.

Q. What are the three new organizational goals in the charter?

The three new organizational goals involve a greater commitment to increasing diversity across our student, board and staff populations. These charter goals read:

Board of Directors Composition: The Charter School’s board of directors will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the community it serves. To achieve this, the board will elect at least two new socio-demographically diverse members by the end of the charter term.

School Faculty and Staff Composition: The Charter School’s faculty and staff will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the community it serves. To achieve this, during each year of the charter term, at least 30% of the charter school’s newly hired staff will have experience working within the school’s defined community or a community with similar socio-demographic diversity.

Student Composition: The charter school will reflect the socio-demographic diversity of the local District with a targeted focus on economically disadvantaged students as defined by the Georgia Department of Education.*

During each year of the charter term (or until the school is within 10% of the DeKalb County School District average), the school will increase the total percentage of economically disadvantaged students by at least 4%.

The school will continue to offer first preference to the enrollment categories of siblings, children of employees and governing board members.

The Museum School is legally allowed to give an extra weight in the admissions lottery to students who are economically disadvantaged, as defined by law. The Georgia Department of Education defines economically disadvantaged as a student whose family lives below the poverty line, qualifies for free or reduced lunch, or whose family qualifies for federal benefits, including SNAP, TANF, WIC, Medicaid or PINS.

Q. Why is a weighted lottery necessary?

A weighted lottery is one tool the school can use to achieve its student diversity goals and provide an increased chance of admission to economically disadvantaged students.

Q. How would a weighted lottery be implemented?

In accordance with OCGA 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), the school will utilize a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission to economically disadvantaged students. To facilitate the weighted lottery, applicants can indicate their “economically disadvantaged” status on the admissions application and such status will be verified as part of the registration process. The weight for economically disadvantaged students will be calculated annually by The Museum School Board of Directors using a formula established in the charter contract..

Q. What happens if the school does not meet its student diversity composition goals?

If the school does not meet its student diversity goals, that will be reported to the DeKalb County School District and the State Department of Education.

According to our charter contract, the district can change our primary attendance zone the following school year to expand to include the entire DeKalb County School District for the remaining years of the charter contract.

The school will be offered the opportunity to discuss any reasons for missing the goal with the district before such action is taken.

Q. Are there any exceptions for the student diversity composition goals?

Yes, the school would be allowed to admit less than that 4 percent target if the federally allowed enrollment priorities for siblings and children of employees and board members has made the 4 percent target mathematically impossible.

Q. Where can the full charter petition be viewed?

A copy of the current petition is available [HERE](#).

Q. Who can I contact for more information about The Museum School’s charter?

Questions can be directed to Andy Huff, Chair, Board of Directors, The Museum School of Avondale Estates at: andy.huff@themuseumschool.org or 706.372.3629

#