The Sitka School District recognizes that charter schools are a vehicle for implementing innovative approaches to learning, and desires to work cooperatively with parents, teachers, community members and students to develop viable charter schools as an educational alternative for its students. The District also recognizes its responsibility to safeguard the interest of its students and community in considering whether to grant or deny charter school petitions. The Board shall give appropriate consideration whether to any charter school petition in light of its overall effect on the District’s students and the proposed school’s ability to function effectively and meet its goal.

A charter school petition shall be approved if the Board determines that approval of the petition is in the best interests of the District’s students, if approval will not cause the number of charter schools operating within District limits to exceed the maximum number permitted under state law, and if the charter petition complies in all respects with the requirements of state laws, regulations, and District policies and regulations.

A charter petition may not be approved if, among other things:

a) The proposed charter school budget would result in an increase in the level of the District’s per pupil expenses relative to its per pupil financial support.

b) The proposed educational program would discriminate against students based in any protected classification.

Charter school applications for a given school year shall be due by February 1 preceding the school year in which operations are to commence. All charter schools must meet the following requirements, in addition to any other requirements established by law, regulation, or school district policy:

1. A charter school shall comply with all district policies, regulations and procedures other than those pertaining to textbooks, program, curriculum, and scheduling, except to the extent that the charter school is specifically exempted from compliance under its charter school contract. For example, a charter school shall comply in all respects with district discipline policies and the district’s accounting, audit, and other fiscal procedures.

2. A charter school shall operate in compliance with all laws and regulations applicable to district schools.

3. A charter school shall comply with the provisions of collective bargaining agreements applicable to teachers or employees of the school, unless the district and the affected bargaining unit agree to an exemption from the agreement’s requirements.
4. A charter school shall operate under the annual program budget established in the charter school’s contract with the District. The budget shall be no less than the state funding generated by the students enrolled in the school, less administrative costs retained by the District, determined by applying the indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Education for the District. The charter schools program budget shall be used for operating expenses of the school’s educational program, including the purchase of textbooks, classroom materials and instructional aides.

5. A charter school may not be affiliated with a religious organization or promote religion or any particular religious ideology or philosophy.

6. A charter school shall conduct its program in a facility that satisfies all health and safety requirements applicable to other District schools.

7. A charter school shall establish an academic policy committee that shall select the principal for the school and supervise the academic operation of the school. The committee shall consist of parents of students attending the school, teachers and other school employees. The academic policy committee will meet regularly and not less than monthly during the academic year with teachers and staff to monitor progress in achieving the policies and goals established for the school and to review, evaluate and improve its operation. “A charter school is subject to secondary school competency testing as provided in AS 14.03.075 and other competency tests required by the Department of Education and Early Development.”

8. The principal of the charter school shall select, appoint and otherwise supervise employees of the charter school. All hires, retentions, and nonretentions of charter school staff shall be subject to the approval of the District School Board. No staff member may be assigned to the charter school without his or her consent.

9. A charter school shall enroll all eligible students who submit a timely application. In the event it is not possible to accommodate all eligible students who submit a timely application, students shall be accepted for the charter school program by random drawing.

10. Charter school teachers shall be evaluated in a manner equivalent to that used to evaluate all other teachers in the District. In the event that the principal of the charter school lacks an administrative certificate authorizing him or her to approve the evaluations of certificated personnel, another District administrator who possess the appropriate certification shall be assigned by agreement between the charter school and the District School Board to participate in the evaluation of charter school certificated staff.
11. A charter school’s contract may be terminated by the District School Board for the school’s failure to meet educational achievement goals or fiscal management standards, or for other good cause.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES
14.03. 250 - 290 Charter Schools Alaska Administrative Code
4AAC 33.110 Charter Schools

SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Adoption Date: June 4, 1996
Revision Date: April 1, 2002