



Frequently Asked Questions about Vanguard's Charter Renewal

What is academic status of Vanguard Classical School?

Fortunately, the academic performance and services to our students is not in question in this renewal process. Vanguard is providing a safe, inclusive and rigorous academic environment to our students. And that shows in our results, with Vanguard students performing above the Aurora Public School averages. Our success, like the success of most any school, has to do with the quality of the curriculum and instruction, along with our deep organizational commitment to every child. VCS, in accord with its unique design, its high expectations of staff and administration, and its fidelity to a mission to serve a unique population, has been highly effective in meeting its purpose and goals.

What is the relationship between VCS and Aurora Public Schools?

The VCS board is fully committed to building a productive working relationship with APS to continue to provide children, parents and staff members with a safe, inclusive and healthy school. VCS appreciates the supports it has received from APS and recognizes that accountability and transparency are hallmarks of a good relationship. For those reasons, VCS looks forward to managing renewal conditions that result in good governance and strong finance. The fundamental purpose and goal of VCS is to support students in their education and growth.

Does VCS have proper financial transparency and accountability?

First and foremost, every dollar of taxpayer resources are accounted for and tracked by VCS. That has been verified by the school's independent auditor, and those reports are available to the public and provided to APS and the State of Colorado.

The Clifton Larson Allen (CLA) independent audit results from September 24, 2018, found that no taxpayer funds were unaccounted, and as such, any statement that there is missing money is inaccurate. All VCS funding inflows and outflows are tracked, and all taxpayer funds are accounted.

Has VCS made any changes to its financial accountability?

If the independent auditor makes recommendation, VCS takes immediate and appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence. Without question, the VCS board intends to adhere to the CLA auditors' recommendations. The VCS board has already put policies and procedures into place to better track payable and receivable items on the books of both entities.

What services does ACCO provide to Vanguard?

First and foremost, Vanguard Classical School would not exist without the long-term commitment of the Ability Connections Colorado board of directors and their leadership team. Specifically, the ACCO service agreement includes support for:

- Human resources and payroll
- Accounts payable
- Development and fundraising
- Risk management
- Facilities management
- School safety
- Insurance management
- Nutrition and health assistance
- Emergency services
- IT and technical support

What role does ACCO provide in Vanguard's financial management?

ACCO has historically guaranteed our school's financial success. The end-result of that support is that VCS has a strong history of balanced budgets. VCS is committed to conservative, realistic revenue and expenditures assumptions, including service agreement and facility costs.

ACCO's commitment to VCS is the primary reason VCS is in great financial shape. Historically, the relationship has operated as a collaboration for shared services between our two closely-aligned organizations.

Is Vanguard in good financial health?

Yes. VCS currently has a fund balance in excess of \$1.5 million, and the school is in excellent financial condition.

What is ACCO's compensation for its services?

ACCO has charged a modest rate that has averaged 3% of PPR (per pupil funding) for administrative services provided by its employees in non-educational support of VCS administration, governance and operations. That fee is based on the actual costs of services, and it results in economic advantages to VCS. If this were a traditional management services contract, the fees would be much higher (about 11% of PPR) for the management company to have a profitable arrangement. This partnership has allowed VCS to become financially stable and direct more resources to students in the classroom over the past 12 years.

How will the Vanguard board oversee the ACCO contract?

The VCS Board intends to administer traditional RFP processes that seek responses from a variety of entities (not exclusively ACCO). When reviewing existing contractual arrangements with ACCO or initiating new arrangements, the VCS Board intends to use an RFP process to identify the best such arrangement(s) for VCS. In the event an independent entity provides a better bid than ACCO, VCS will carefully consider the entity for relevant services.

What are the governance changes moving forward for VCS?

The Vanguard Board is grateful that the Aurora Public Schools has recommended renewal of the VCS charter for two additional years, and we are fully committed to abiding by APS recommendations regarding renewal of the charter for VCS, including a realignment of the board.

VCS will amend its Bylaws to adhere to the renewal condition from APS; therefore, there will be 5 community members and 2 parents—one from East and one from West. As result, there will be no ACCO representatives serving on the VCS Board.

The VCS community should know that in reconfiguring our VCS board membership, we will ensure that the board is comprised of highly qualified and deeply committed professionals, including current board members as well as parent representatives from each school. The VCS board currently includes exemplary professionals who have expertise in community building, finance, leadership, law, organizational improvement, regulation, special education and technology. Our West parent representative was elected by the community, and the three other directors are volunteers who had no prior relationship with ACCO or VCS.

What will be the legacy of ACCO on VCS and its board?

Our VCS board is committed to the vision and mission first established in partnership with ACCO, namely that we provide excellent academics without excluding children with disabilities. The VCS board is wholly committed to maintaining the school's unique identity and vision, including full inclusion.