



CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION REVIEW EXECUTIVE REPORT

FOR

Tassajara Preparatory High School

Charter Petition on Appeal - E.C. 47605 (j) (1)

**Prepared by Teresa Kapellas
Manager, Business Administration**

Charter School Review Team:

Educational Services:

Naomi Eason
Avi Black
Bill Conrad
Robert Curtis
Drew Kravin
Nathalie Longree-Guevara
Craig McKinley
Cynthia Medina
Louise Music

Business Services:

Teresa Kapellas
Spencer Mead
Roland Tom
Bert Padua
Darrel Jeung

Human Resources:

Movetia Salter

Special Education:

Robert Crose

Legal Counsel:

Janna Lambert

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alameda County Office of Education's Charter Review Team recommends that the Alameda County Board of Education (Board) deny the Tassajara Preparatory Charter High School Petition, as several key areas of the Petition failed to meet the required standard under the charter school law. The Review Team found that the Petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of several requirements, and does not present a sound educational program. The Review Team also believes that the Petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the Petition as written. A copy of this report has been provided to the Petitioners, Tri-Valley Learning Corporation.

BACKGROUND

The Alameda County Office of Education received a petition appeal from the Tri-Valley Learning Corporation (TVLC) for consideration of authorizing its charter school petition for Tassajara Preparatory High School. TVLC petitioned the Dublin Unified School District (District) to open a 9-12 school with approximately 864 students at full enrollment. This Petition was denied by the district on March 9, 2010. Petitioners submitted an appeal to the Alameda County Board of Education (Board) on April 5, 2010, which is within the 180 day statutory deadline for appealing a charter school to the County. A public hearing was held in this matter on May 25, 2010.

Alameda Board of Education's Role

When considering an appeal, it is the role of the Board under Education Code Section 47605(b) & (h) to:

- 1) hold a public hearing on the provisions of the charter and “shall consider the level of support for the petition by teachers employed by the district, other employees of the district, and parents.”
- 2) “give preference to petitions that demonstrate the capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to pupils identified by the petitioner or petitioners as academically low achieving pursuant to the standards established by the department under Section 54032 as it read prior to July 19, 2006.”
- 3) determine whether the petition document that has been denied by the District demonstrates a strong potential for establishing and operating a high quality charter school. “The governing board of the school district shall not deny a petition for the establishment of a charter school unless it makes written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:
 - (1) *The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.*
 - (2) *The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.*
 - (3) *The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a).*

- (4) *The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in subdivision (d).*
- (5) *The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the A-P Requirements.”*

Review Process

It is our expectation that when a petitioner submits a petition on appeal, that they have submitted a plan they believe can be successfully implemented. Education Code Section 47605(b) clearly outlines the requirements necessary to create a sustainable school. The appeal process as established by law is one that allows staff to evaluate the substance of the petition document in order to determine whether the petition stands on its own merit.

The Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) believes that quality authorizing includes a rigorous, comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and clear criteria. Our evaluation process includes staff members with expertise in various areas in order to provide a thorough review. This review is conducted in a systematic, unbiased approach through a comprehensive checklist which provides uniformity in charter petition evaluations. Staff discusses their results and determines whether the petition document demonstrates a strong potential for establishing and operating a high quality charter school.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY FINDINGS

The Review Team found the Petition to be deficient in several areas under Education Code Section 47605(b). Below is a summary of the key findings that is the basis for the recommendation to deny the Petition.

The Petition does not present a sound educational program for the students to be enrolled in the school.

1. The Petition does not contain a reasonably comprehensive and cohesive description of the Educational/Instructional Program.
 - The language in the proposal is vague and does not provide nearly enough detail to verify that this proposal meets the requirements for successful implementation of a school program based on California standards. For example:
 - No specific content standards or outcomes are described in math. Additionally, this application has lower standards than the Dublin School District's graduation requirement, which is for students to graduate with Algebra II. This application is vague on what constitutes meeting the stated 3-year mathematics requirement (p. 15).
 - Course descriptions are NOT aligned to state requirements for world or U.S. History-both describe courses that cover the entirety of those histories, when in fact each course at the high school levels the culmination of a three-year sequence in that area and is designed only to address the 20th century up to the present.
 - The educational program was very unclear for Science, making it difficult to assess.

- The Petition does not provide an adequate description related to how learning best occurs (mostly under curriculum and content sections of Petition.) Although the list of activities found on page 12 are laudable, the information following these activities do not sufficiently detail or explain how the curricular program will be implemented. There is no mention of research to back up the program model chosen.
- There is no coherent description of what the instructional program concerning English Language Learner content instruction will be. A series of strategies to be used as part of the instructional program is provided, but the curriculum, materials, and context for inclusion of those strategies is absent. A monitoring system for determining ongoing language development and determination of ongoing program advancement or movement as students increase proficiency is not provided.
- The student identification process is described beginning with the Home Language Survey and the corresponding administration of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). However, the Petition does not show how this information will be used to determine student placement. The program options are not delineated nor are the criteria or considerations for selection of these options. Student placement based on proficiency levels based on the CELDT results is the foundation for English learner's (EL) development of English proficiency and content learning. Yet, there is not a correlation included that shows how this will lead the Petitioner's ELs to the program goal of "college prep with the highest academic standards."

2. The Petition does not sufficiently address Measurable Student Outcomes.

- While the charter provides a table that identifies A-G requirements, it does not back up the list with course descriptions that demonstrate how the courses would prepare students for college-level achievement and success.
- The system used to identify academically at risk students is inadequate. For example, charter states that "at Tassajara Prep, low-achieving students are defined as those who fall at or below the 50th percentile on the adopted standardized tests, fall below a C-average in coursework, and/or fall below the learning behavior, language acquisition, and fine & gross motor skills in comparison with their peer group." It is unclear what standardized test the charter intends on using to identify academically at-risk students. For example, it would be inappropriate to select a standardized test that is not aligned with the California Content Standards. Also, basing the identification of students at academic risk on grades is inappropriate as written in the proposal because it is not clear that the grading process is aligned to grade level and content standards. There is no indication of whether teachers and school administrators have calibrated grading to ensure standards-alignment and fairness in the assignment of grades.
- The student subject matter competencies described in Section 3 are also very broad and not explicitly aligned with specific state of California Content Standards. There is no identification of standards aligned benchmark skills nor specific classroom-level skills.

3. The Petition does not sufficiently address the Method by Which Pupil Progress In Meeting The Pupil Outcomes Will Be Measured.
 - The charter application does not describe a clear protocol nor does it describe the tools that it will use to collect, organize, analyze, and interpret state standardized student achievement data. It fails to describe how it will align curriculum, instruction, and programs to improved opportunities for students to learn and improved student achievement.
4. The Petition does not sufficiently or coherently address Special Education instruction.
 - The information contained in this section is ambiguous and fails to address ACOE's role as the chartering authority. It only references (on page 18) that it, "shall be categorized as a 'public school' within the District." It fails to address ACOE's narrow role in providing special education services. ACOE only has the capacity to provide special education and related services to its students in its court, community school and infant programs. This reveals a lack of investigation and raises significant concerns as to the ability of the Petitioners' to successfully implement a school that can meet its obligations to serve special education students or contract with viable qualified special education service providers to do so.
 - No specific plan is outlined for how students will be identified, referred and/or assessed within the context of the charter school. Further, the Petition does not address with any specificity how students with disabilities will be served in the charter school, and/or how a full continuum of services will be provided to eligible students.
 - The Petition does propose the manner in which it plans to handle due process hearing requests by parents on behalf of charter school students based on alleged denials of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education.) There is no mention of how the Petitioners would bear the costs of defense for any legal issues or claims related to the special education services.

The Petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the Required Elements.

1. The description of the Educational Program is inadequate, lacks cohesiveness and is unclear as set forth above.
2. The description of the ELD program is inadequate, lacks cohesiveness and is unclear as set forth above.
3. The description of the Measurable Student Outcomes is inadequate, lacks cohesiveness and is unclear as set forth above.

4. The description of the Special Educational Program is inadequate, lacks cohesiveness and is unclear as set forth above.
5. The Governance Structure of the school including, but not limited to, parental involvement, is inadequate and fails to meet the required standard. For example:
 - The Petition fails to address its relationship with the ACOE and only allows the District a non-voting slot on the Board.
 - The Petition states that TVLC is a 501(c)(3), yet it is not listed as such on the IRS website and therefore, the Review Team was unable to verify its actual legal status. Further, no Articles of Incorporation were included in the Petition documents.
 - The Parents role is limited to being a volunteer and to elect one school site board member--a position that appears to be advisory at most.
 - The Petition is not consistent with the Bylaws as all duties of Charter's Board could be delegated.
 - The Petition does not address compliance with the Public Records Act or Government Code 1090 conflicts, and the Bylaws appear to permit board members and decision makers to have financial conflicts.
6. The Staff Retirement System section is inadequate and fails to meet the required standard.
 - The Petition is contradictory to the Education Code. It simply recites that full time staff will participate in one of the retirement systems, but doesn't recognize that if one teacher selects STRS, then all must be in SRS (including part time employees.)
7. The Dispute Resolution Process fails to address ACOE's role as the chartering authority, thereby failing to meet the required standard.
 - The Petition only refers to the "District" regarding Employee Rights and Labor Relations.
 - The Petition states internal disputes will be resolved through policies not yet developed. In the least, policies from TVLC's current charter schools could have been included as samples.
8. The Closure Procedures fails to address ACOE's role as the chartering authority, thereby failing to meet the required standard.
 - There is a statement that all assets are to be distributed in accordance with TVLC Articles of Incorporation, but a copy of the document was not included in the Petition.
9. The Annual Financial Audit fails to address ACOE's role as the chartering authority, thereby failing to meet the required standard.

- The Petition only states it will provide its audit report to the “District.”

10. The Means to Achieve a Racial and Ethnic Balance is unclear; therefore it is inadequate.

- The Petition states it plans to have 50% of the Districts free and reduced lunch population. It is unclear how this will be achieved as there is no clear and definable plan. Good faith outreach is not adequate; therefore, the goal appears unrealistic.

Supplemental Financial Plan/Impact Statement

The Financial Plan and Impact Statement did show evidence of financial planning; however, the following are insufficient areas critical to the success of a charter school:

- There is no mention in the Petition of an alternate solution for facilities if the school does not meet the timeline with regards to filing a Prop 39 request. Further, there is no provision in the budget for facilities/capital outlay should Petitioners need to rent a site for the school. Facilities plans must reflect reasonable costs for the acquisition or leasing of facilities to house the charter school per Education Code section 47605(g).
- Revenue projections are based on very optimistic enrollment estimates. If the enrollment projections do not materialize, the school may not be able to maintain its fiscal solvency unless it obtains funding from other sources, or reduces its planned expenditures.
- A positive cash flow for the first year of operation in 2012-13 depends upon the receipt of the Implementation Grant which has not yet been received. If it is not secured, the proposed budget is insufficient.
- It appears Salaries and Benefit expenditures calculated in the Staff Budget Worksheets are not consistent with the Salaries and Benefits projected in the Multi-year Budget Summary. It is unclear which amount the Charter intends to use.
- The Impact Statement fails to address ACOE’s role as the chartering authority, thereby failing to meet the required standard.

CONCLUSION

It is the intent of the legislature to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- (a) Improve pupil learning.
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- (e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- (f) Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
- (g) Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

In addition to the formal findings described in this report, the review team notes that the Petition does not appear to meet the intent of the law as stated above. Other concerns include:

- Petitioners did not make any of the necessary changes required in an appeal process to show the role of the County Board of Education as the authorizer. The omission of changes made the Petition inadequate in many critical areas where the role and responsibilities of a County Office of Education differ from the role of a School District.
- The Petition did not have any public support at the public hearing by teachers employed by the district, other district employees, parents or the community. The only members of the public who attended the hearing were opponents of the Petition. Without any community support, Petitioners demonstrate that they would not be able to successfully implement the charter school.
- While the budget was adequate as to the time frame in which it was originally submitted, the Petitioners would need to review the recent state reductions to education as reported in the Governor's revised budget and make the appropriate changes.

Based on the totality of the analysis and comments noted above, denial of the Petition is recommended based on the specific findings of facts set forth above and the following conclusions:

1. The Petition presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.
2. Petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the Petition.
3. The Petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the required 16 elements in Education Code Section 47605.

Sources Consulted

Education Code Section 47605(b)

...The governing board of the school district shall not deny a petition for the establishment of a charter school unless it makes written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:

- (1) The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.*
- (2) The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.*
- (3) The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a).*
- (4) The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in subdivision (d).*
- (5) The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the A-P Requirements.*

5 CCR § 11967.5. Review and Approval of Charter School Petitions by the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education shall utilize the criteria set forth in Section 11967.5.1. in reviewing the elements of a charter petition submitted for its approval in accordance with the provisions of Education Code section 47605(b) and (j). The purpose of the criteria is to convey to charter petitioners the State Board of Education's understanding of the meaning of the elements specified in Education Code section 47605(b), or otherwise to convey essential information about the elements. The criteria are intended to require no charter provisions in excess of those that the State Board of Education believes necessary to determine whether each element specified in Education Code section 47605(b) has been satisfactorily addressed. Where the criteria call for judgments to be made, the judgments will be made in such a manner as to be reasonable, rational, and fair to the petitioners and other parties potentially affected by the chartering of the school by the State Board of Education.

5 CCR § 11967.5.1. Criteria for the Review and Approval of Charter School Petitions by the State Board of Education.

(a) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b), a charter petition shall be "consistent with sound educational practice" if, in the State Board of Education's judgment, it is likely to be of educational benefit to pupils who attend. A charter school need not be designed or intended to meet the educational needs of every student who might possibly seek to enroll in order for the charter to be granted by the State Board of Education.

(b) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b)(1), a charter petition shall be "an unsound educational program" if it is either of the following:

- (1) A program that involves activities that the State Board of Education determines would present the likelihood of physical, educational, or psychological harm to the affected pupils.
- (2) A program that the State Board of Education determines not to be likely to be of educational benefit to the pupils who attend.

(c) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b)(2), the State Board of Education shall take the following factors into consideration in determining whether charter petitioners are "demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program."

(1) If the petitioners have a past history of involvement in charter schools or other education agencies (public or private), the history is one that the State Board of Education regards as unsuccessful, e.g., the petitioners have been associated with a charter school of which the charter has been revoked or a private school that has ceased operation for reasons within the petitioners' control.

(2) The petitioners are unfamiliar in the State Board of Education's judgment with the content of the petition or the requirements of law that would apply to the proposed charter school.

(3) The petitioners have presented an unrealistic financial and operational plan for the proposed charter school. An unrealistic financial and operational plan is one to which any or all of the following applies:

(A) In the area of administrative services, the charter or supporting documents do not adequately:

1. Describe the structure for providing administrative services, including, at a minimum, personnel transactions, accounting and payroll that reflects an understanding of school business practices and expertise to carry out the necessary administrative services, or a reasonable plan and time line to develop and assemble such practices and expertise.
2. For any contract services, describe criteria for the selection of a contractor or contractors that demonstrate necessary expertise and the procedure for selection of the contractor or contractors.

(B) In the area of financial administration, the charter or supporting documents do not adequately:

1. Include, at a minimum, the first-year operational budget, start-up costs, and cash flow, and financial projections for the first three years.
2. Include in the operational budget reasonable estimates of all anticipated revenues and expenditures necessary to operate the school, including, but not limited to, special education, based, when possible, on historical data from schools or school districts of similar type, size, and location.
3. Include budget notes that clearly describe assumptions on revenue estimates, including, but not limited to, the basis for average daily attendance estimates and staffing levels.
4. Present a budget that in its totality appears viable and over a period of no less than two years of operations provides for the amassing of a reserve equivalent to that required by law for a school district of similar size to the proposed charter school.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the timing of the receipt of various revenues and their relative relationship to timing of expenditures that are within reasonable parameters, based, when possible, on historical data from schools or school districts of similar type, size, and location.

(C) In the area of insurance, the charter and supporting documents do not adequately provide for the acquisition of and budgeting for general liability, workers compensations, and other necessary insurance of the type and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance.

(D) In the area of facilities, the charter and supporting documents do not adequately:

1. Describe the types and potential location of facilities needed to operate the size and scope of educational program proposed in the charter.
2. In the event a specific facility has not been secured, provide evidence of the type and projected cost of the facilities that may be available in the location of the proposed charter school.
3. Reflect reasonable costs for the acquisition or leasing of facilities to house the charter school, taking into account the facilities the charter school may be allocated under the provisions of Education Code section 47614.

(4) The petitioners personally lack the necessary background in the following areas critical to the charter school's success, and the petitioners do not have plan to secure the services of individuals who have the necessary background in these areas:

(A) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

(B) Finance and business management.

(d) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b)(3), a charter petition that "does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a)" of Education Code section 47605 shall be a petition that did not contain the requisite number of signatures at the time of its submission to a school district pursuant to Education Code section 47605(a). The State Board of Education shall not disregard signatures that may be purported to have been withdrawn or to have been determined to be invalid after the petition was denied by the school district.

(e) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b)(4), a charter petition that “does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in subdivision (d)” of Education Code section 47605 shall be a petition that fails to include a clear, unequivocal affirmation of each such condition, not a general statement of intention to comply. Neither the charter nor any of the supporting documents shall include any evidence that the charter will fail to comply with the conditions described in Education Code section 47605(d).

(f) For purposes of Education Code section 47605(b)(5), the State Board of Education shall take the following factors into consideration in determining whether a charter petition does not contain a “reasonably comprehensive” description of each of the specified elements.

(1) The description of the educational program of the school, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(A), at a minimum:

(A) Indicates the proposed charter school's target student population, including, at a minimum, grade levels, approximate numbers of pupils, and specific educational interests, backgrounds, or challenges.

(B) Specifies a clear, concise school mission statement with which all elements and programs of the school are in alignment and which conveys the petitioners' definition of an “educated person in the 21st century, belief of how learning best occurs, and a goals consistent with enabling pupils to become or remain self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.

(C) Includes a framework for instructional design that is aligned with the needs of the pupils that the charter school has identified as its target student population.

(D) Indicates the basic learning environment or environments (e.g., site-based matriculation, independent study, community-based education, technology-based education).

(E) Indicates the instructional approach or approaches the charter school will utilize, including, but not limited to, the curriculum and teaching methods (or a process for developing the curriculum and teaching methods) that will enable the school's pupils to master the content standards for the four core curriculum areas adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Education Code section 60605 and to achieve the objectives specified in the charter.

(F) Indicates how the charter school will identify and respond to the needs of pupils who are not achieving at or above expected levels.

(G) Indicates how the charter school will meet the needs of students with disabilities, English learners, students achieving substantially above or below grade level expectations, and other special student populations.

(H) Specifies the charter school's special education plan, including, but not limited to, the means by which the charter school will comply with the provisions of Education Code section 47641, the process to be used to identify students who qualify for special education programs and services, how the school will provide or access special education programs and services, the school's understanding of its responsibilities under law for special education pupils, and how the school intends to meet those responsibilities.

(2) Measurable pupil outcomes, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(B), at a minimum:

(A) Specify skills, knowledge, and attitudes that reflect the school's educational objectives and can be assessed, at a minimum, by objective means that are frequent and sufficiently detailed enough to determine whether pupils are making satisfactory progress. It is intended that the frequency of objective means of measuring pupil outcomes vary according to such factors as grade level, subject matter, the outcome of previous objective measurements, and information that may be collected from anecdotal sources. To be sufficiently detailed, objective means of measuring pupil outcomes must be capable of being used readily to evaluate the effectiveness of and to modify instruction for individual students and for groups of students.

(B) Include the school's Academic Performance Index growth target, if applicable.

(3) The method by which pupil progress is to be measured, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(C), at a minimum:

- (A) Utilizes a variety of assessment tools that are appropriate to the skills, knowledge, or attitudes being assessed, including, at a minimum, tools that employ objective means of assessment consistent with paragraph (2)(A) of subdivision (f) of this section.
- (B) Includes the annual assessment results from the Statewide Testing and Reporting (STAR) program.
- (C) Outlines a plan for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on pupil achievement to school staff and to pupils' parents and guardians, and for utilizing the data continuously to monitor and improve the charter school's educational program.

(4) The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement in supporting the school's effort on behalf of the school's pupils, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(D), at a minimum:

- (A) Includes evidence of the charter school's incorporation as a non-profit public benefit corporation, if applicable.
- (B) Includes evidence that the organizational and technical designs of the governance structure reflect a seriousness of purpose necessary to ensure that:

1. The charter school will become and remain a viable enterprise.
2. There will be active and effective representation of interested parties, including, but not limited to parents (guardians).
3. The educational program will be successful.

(5) The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(E), at a minimum:

- (A) Identify general qualifications for the various categories of employees the school anticipates (e.g., administrative, instructional, instructional support, non-instructional support). The qualifications shall be sufficient to ensure the health, and safety of the school's faculty, staff, and pupils.
- (B) Identify those positions that the charter school regards as key in each category and specify the additional qualifications expected of individuals assigned to those positions.
- (C) Specify that the all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law will be met, including, but not limited to credentials as necessary.

(6) The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(F), at a minimum:

- (A) Require that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in Education Code section 44237.
- (B) Include the examination of faculty and staff for tuberculosis as described in Education Code section 49406.
- (C) Require immunization of pupils as a condition of school attendance to the same extent as would apply if the pupils attended a non-charter public school.
- (D) Provide for the screening of pupils' vision and hearing and the screening of pupils for scoliosis to the same extent as would be required if the pupils attended a non-charter public school.

(7) Recognizing the limitations on admissions to charter schools imposed by Education Code section 47605(d), the means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(G), shall be presumed to have been met, absent specific information to the contrary.

(8) To the extent admission requirements are included in keeping with Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(H), the requirements shall be in compliance with the requirements of Education Code section 47605(d) and any other applicable provision of law.

(9) The manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(I), at a minimum:

- (A) Specify who is responsible for contracting and overseeing the independent audit.
- (B) Specify that the auditor will have experience in education finance.
- (C) Outline the process of providing audit reports to the State Board of Education, California Department of Education, or other agency as the State Board of Education may direct, and specifying the time line in which audit exceptions will typically be addressed.
- (D) Indicate the process that the charter school will follow to address any audit findings and/or resolve any audit exceptions.

(10) The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(J), at a minimum:

- (A) Identify a preliminary list, subject to later revision pursuant to subparagraph (E), of the offenses for which students in the charter school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended and, separately, the offenses for which students in the charter school must (where non-discretionary) or may (where discretionary) be expelled, providing evidence that the petitioners' reviewed the offenses for which students must or may be suspended or expelled in non-charter public schools.
- (B) Identify the procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.
- (C) Identify the procedures by which parents, guardians, and pupils will be informed about reasons for suspension or expulsion and of their due process rights in regard to suspension or expulsion.
- (D) Provide evidence that in preparing the lists of offenses specified in subparagraph (A) and the procedures specified in subparagraphs (B) and (C), the petitioners reviewed the lists of offenses and procedures that apply to students attending non-charter public schools, and provide evidence that the charter petitioners believe their proposed lists of offenses and procedures provide adequate safety for students, staff, and visitors to the school and serve the best interests the school's pupils and their parents (guardians).
- (E) If not otherwise covered under subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), and (D):
 - 1. Provide for due process for all pupils and demonstrate an understanding of the rights of pupils with disabilities in regard to suspension and expulsion.
 - 2. Outline how detailed policies and procedures regarding suspension and expulsion will be developed and periodically reviewed, including, but not limited to, periodic review and (as necessary) modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

(11) The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(K), at a minimum, specifies the positions to be covered under each system and the staff who will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for that coverage have been made.

(12) The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(L), at a minimum, specify that the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled in the charter school shall be informed that the pupils has no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency (or program of any local education agency) as a consequence of enrollment in the charter school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

(13) The description of the rights of any employees of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(M), at a minimum, specifies that an employee of the charter school shall have the following rights:

- (A) Any rights upon leaving the employment of a local education agency to work in the charter school that the local education agency may specify.
- (B) Any rights of return to employment in a local education agency after employment in the charter school as the local education agency may specify.
- (C) Any other rights upon leaving employment to work in the charter school and any rights to return to a previous employer after working in the charter school that the State Board of Education determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any provisions of law that apply to the charter school or to the employer from which the employee comes to the charter school or to which the employee returns from the charter school.

(14) The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter, as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(N), at a minimum:

- (A) Include any specific provisions relating to dispute resolution that the State Board of Education determines necessary and appropriate in recognition of the fact that the State Board of Education is not a local education agency.
- (B) Describe how the costs of the dispute resolution process, if needed, would be funded.
- (C) Recognize that, because it is not a local education agency, the State Board of Education may choose resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter, provided that if the State Board of Education intends to resolve a dispute directly instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter, it must first hold a public hearing to consider arguments for and against the direct resolution of the dispute instead of pursuing the dispute resolution process specified in the charter.
- (D) Recognize that if the substance of a dispute is a matter that could result in the taking of appropriate action, including, but not limited to, revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code section 47604.5, the matter will be addressed at the State Board of Education's discretion in accordance with that provision of law and any regulations pertaining thereto.

(15) The declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code), as required by Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(O), recognizes that the State Board of Education is not an exclusive public school employer and that, therefore, the charter school must be the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act (Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(g) A “reasonably comprehensive” description, within the meaning subdivision (f) of this section and Education Code section 47605(b)(5) shall include, but not be limited to, information that:

- (1) Is substantive and is not, for example, a listing of topics with little elaboration.
- (2) For elements that have multiple aspects, addresses essentially all aspects the elements, not just selected aspects.
- (3) Is specific to the charter petition being proposed, not to charter schools or charter petitions generally.
- (4) Describes, as applicable among the different elements, how the charter school will:
 - (A) Improve pupil learning.
 - (B) Increase learning opportunities for its pupils, particularly pupils who have been identified as academically low achieving.
 - (C) Provide parents, guardians, and pupils with expanded educational opportunities.
 - (D) Hold itself accountable for measurable, performance-based pupil outcomes.
 - (E) Provide vigorous competition with other public school options available to parents, guardians, and students.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 33031 and 47605(j)(5), Education Code. Reference: Section 47605, Education Code.
