

Philosophy, Goals, Objectives and Comprehensive Plans

BP 0420.4 (a)

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION

The Governing Board recognizes that charter schools may assist the district in offering diverse learning opportunities for district students. In considering any petition to establish a charter school within the district, the Board shall give careful consideration to the potential of the charter school to provide students with a high-quality education that enables them to achieve to their fullest potential. These schools shall operate under the provisions of their charters, federal laws, specified state laws, and general oversight of the Board.

The Governing Board also may create a start-up charter school. A start-up or conversion charter school that is created by the Board and operates in a close relationship with the district is often described as a "dependent" charter school, although that term does not appear in law. A dependent charter school is subject to the same petition requirements and approval process as an "independent" charter school, which is typically formed by parents/guardians, teachers, community members, or a charter management organization.

One or more persons may submit a petition for a start-up charter school to be established within the district. In addition, an existing district school may be converted to a charter school when deemed beneficial by the district and community or when state or federal law requires restructuring of the school because of low performance.

(cf. 0520.2 - Title I Program Improvement Schools)

Any petition for a start-up charter school or conversion charter school shall include all components and signatures required by law and shall be submitted to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee may work with charter school petitioners prior to the formal submission of the petition in order to gather information about the proposal and suggest components that would align the petition with the district's vision and goals for student learning. As needed, he/she may work with the petitioners to establish workable plans for technical assistance or contracted services which the district may provide to the proposed charter school.

Within 30 days of receiving a petition to establish a charter school, the Board shall hold a public hearing to determine the level of support for the petition by teachers, other employees of the district, and parents/guardians. (Education Code 47605)

(cf. 9320 - Meetings and Notices)

Within 60 days of receiving a petition, or within 90 days with mutual consent of the petitioners and the Board, the Board shall either approve or deny the request to establish the charter school. (Education Code 47605)

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION (Continued)

The approval or denial of a charter petition shall not be controlled by collective bargaining agreements nor subject to review or regulation by the Public Employment Relations Board. (Education Code 47611.5)

At his/her discretion, the Superintendent or designee may establish a staff advisory committee to review a submitted petition and the supporting documentation. Such a committee may be used to evaluate the completeness of the proposal, the merits of the proposed educational program, the level of community support, and any concerns that should be addressed by the petitioners. The Superintendent or designee shall also consult with legal counsel as appropriate regarding compliance of the proposal with legal requirements.

(cf. [1220](#) - *Citizen Advisory Committees*)

In determining whether to grant or deny a charter, the Board shall carefully review the proposed charter and any supplementary information, consider public and staff input, and determine whether the charter petition adequately addresses all the provisions required by law. The Board shall not deny a charter school petition unless specific written factual findings are made pursuant to law and administrative regulation.

The Board shall ensure that any charter granted by the Board contains adequate processes and measures for holding the school accountable for fulfilling the terms of its charter. These shall include, but not be limited to, fiscal accountability systems, multiple measures for evaluating the educational program, and regular reports to the Board.

(cf. [0500](#) - *Accountability*)

Approval of Petition

The Board shall approve the charter petition if doing so is consistent with sound educational practice. In granting charters, the Board shall give preference to schools best able to provide comprehensive learning experiences for academically low-achieving students according to standards established by the California Department of Education (CDE) under Education Code 54032. (Education Code 47605)

The Board may initially grant a charter for a specified term not to exceed five years. (Education Code 47607)

(cf. [0420.42](#) - *Charter School Renewal*)

(cf. [0420.43](#) - *Charter School Revocation*)

The Board shall ensure that any approved charter contains adequate processes and measures for holding the school accountable for fulfilling the terms of its charter. These shall include, but not

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION (Continued)

be limited to, fiscal accountability systems, multiple measures for evaluating the educational program, and regular reports to the Board.

(cf. 0420.41 - Charter School Oversight)

The district shall not require any district student to attend the charter school nor shall it require any district employee to work at the charter school. (Education Code 47605)

The Board may approve one or more memoranda of understanding to clarify the financial and operational agreements between the district and the charter school. Although not required by law, CSBA's publication *Charter Schools: A Guide for Governance Teams* recommends one or more memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to address matters that are related to the charter petition but are not included in the petition, and to establish expectations for which the charter school can be held accountable. CSBA's manual provides examples of issues pertaining to business operations, administrative and support services, special education, and student assessment that might be addressed in an MOU. Any such memorandum of understanding shall be annually reviewed by the Board and charter school and adjusted as necessary.

It shall be the responsibility of the petitioners to provide written notice of the Board's approval and a copy of the charter to the County Superintendent of Schools, the CDE, and the State Board of Education (SBE). (Education Code 47605)

Denial of Petition

The Board shall deny any petition to authorize the conversion of a private school to a charter school or that proposes to serve students in a grade level that is not served by the district, unless the petition proposes to serve students in all the grade levels served by the district. (Education Code 47602, 47605; 5 CCR 11965)

Pursuant to Education Code 47605, a charter petition can be denied only if certain factual findings are made, as specified in items #1-5 below.

5 CCR 11967.5.1, which contains criteria that the SBE must consider in reviewing charter petitions, may be useful to the district in determining how it might evaluate whether a petition meets the conditions specified in items #1-5 below.

Any other charter petition shall be denied only if the Board presents written factual findings specific to the petition that one or more of the following conditions exist: (Education Code 47605)

1. The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the students to be enrolled in the charter school.

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION (Continued)

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.
4. The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in Education Code 47605(d).
5. The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the charter provisions in Education Code 47605(b).
The Board shall not deny a petition based on the actual or potential costs of serving students with disabilities, nor shall it deny a petition solely because the charter school might enroll disabled students who reside outside the special education local plan area in which the district participates. (Education Code 47605.7, 47647)

(cf. 0430 - Comprehensive Local Plan for Special Education)

If the Board denies a petition, the petitioners may choose to submit the petition to the County Board of Education and, if then denied by the County Board, to the SBE. (Education Code 47605)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

17280-17317 Field Act

17365-17374 Field Act, fitness for occupancy

33054 Waivers

41365 Charter school revolving loan fund

42100 Annual statement of receipts and expenditures

42238.51-42238.53 Funding for charter districts

44237 Criminal record summary

44830.1 Certificated employees, conviction of a violent or serious felony

45122.1 Classified employees, conviction of a violent or serious felony

46201 Instructional minutes

47600-47616.7 Charter Schools Act of 1992, as amended

47640-47647 Special education funding for charter schools

47652 Funding of first-year charter schools

48000 Minimum age of admission (kindergarten)

48010 Minimum age of admission (first grade)

48011 Minimum age of admission from kindergarten or other school

51745-51749.3 Independent study

52052 Alternative accountability system

54032 Limited English or low-achieving pupils

56026 Special education

56145-56146 Special education services in charter schools

60600-60649 Assessment of academic achievement, including:

60605 Academic content and performance standards; assessments

60640-60649 Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION (Continued)

Legal Reference: (continued)

60850-60859 *High school exit examination*

GOVERNMENT CODE

3540-3549.3 *Educational Employment Relations Act*

54950-54963 *The Ralph M. Brown Act*

PENAL CODE

667.5 *Definition of violent felony*

1192.7 *Definition of serious felony*

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700.1-11705 *Independent study*

11960-11969 *Charter schools*

4800-4808 *Parent Empowerment Act*

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 24

101 et seq. *California Building Code*

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

6311 *Adequate yearly progress*

6319 *Qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals*

7223-7225 *Charter schools*

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

200.1-200.78 *Accountability*

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

80 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 52 (1997)*

78 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 297 (1995)*

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Charter Schools: A Manual for Governance Teams, rev. 2005

CSBA ADVISORIES

Charter School Facilities and Proposition 39: Legal Implications for School Districts, September 2005

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Special Education and Charter Schools: Questions and Answers, September 10, 2002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE

Charter Schools Program, July 2004

The Impact of the New Title I Requirements on Charter Schools, July 2004

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

California Building Standards Commission: <http://www.bsc.ca.gov>

California Charter Schools Association: <http://www.charterassociation.org>

California Department of Education, Charter Schools: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cs>

Education Commission of the States: <http://www.ecs.org>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers: <http://www.charterauthorizers.org>

National School Boards Association: <http://www.nsba.org>

U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov>

Policy

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VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vacaville, California