Policy 0420.4: Charter School Authorization

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 04/12/2017 | **Last Revised Date:** 02/26/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 02/26/2025

The Board of Education 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.

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.

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 ensure compliance of the petition with legal requirements. As needed, he/she also may meet 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)

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)

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)

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)

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

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. Any such memorandum of understanding shall be annually reviewed by the Board and charter school governing body and amended 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)

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.

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 affi rmation 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)

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)

Out of District Charters

A charter school that established a site outside the boundaries of its authorizing school district, but within the boundaries of Santa Rosa City Schools, before January 1, 2020, may continue to operate that site until the charter school submits a request for the renewal of its charter petition. To continue operating the site, the charter school shall submit a request for the renewal of the charter petition pursuant to Ed. Code Section 47607 to Santa Rosa City Schools for consideration by the Board. The Board does not authorize approval of charter school renewal within its boundaries by any authorizer other than the Board. [Education Code 47605 (5)(A)]