



October 4, 2021

Santa Clara County Board of Education
Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D., County Superintendent of Schools
1290 Ridder Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95131

Re: Los Altos School District;
Bullis Charter School

Dear Board Members and Superintendent Dewan:

In May of this year, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) and the Santa Clara County Board of Education (SCCBOE) took the important step of issuing a Notice of Concern (Notice) to Bullis Charter School (BCS) based upon "SCCOE's determination that BCS is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in its expected charter renewal petition" and has not achieved a "balance of racial and ethnic pupils reflective of the general population of the school district in which they are located." You further made clear that if BCS "fail[s] to cure the violations set forth in this Notice ..., the SCCOE may deny BCS's renewal."

The SCCOE's Notice included pages of statistics and evidence, supporting a finding of an "underrepresentation in all four student groups at BCS [of Hispanic students; students who are English learners; students who are socio-economically disadvantaged; and students with disabilities]. As such, "BCS must address this concern, including the creation and implementation of a corrective action plan that will result in increasing the proportions of the BCS student body who are members of each of these student groups."

Los Altos School District (LASD) and the broader community applaud the SCCBOE and SCCOE for the thoughtful work put into this Notice and the direction provided to BCS. Furthermore, LASD supports the SCCBOE's important mission to ensure BCS meets the Legislature's intent that charter schools provide "equal access and nondiscrimination in access to enrollment in charter schools."

Board of Trustees

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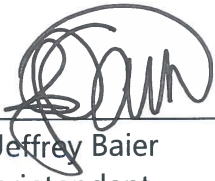
On October 6, 2021, the SCCBOE will consider an admissions preference proposal submitted by BCS (Proposal). BCS's Proposal offers a secondary preference, behind siblings of BCS students who reside in LASD, to "children who qualify for free and reduced priced meals [(FRPM)] and reside within the boundaries of the Los Altos School District, limited to 10% of the total openings at each grade level." After four other preferences, there is a seventh preference for students residing outside the District (but within California) who qualify for FRPM. It is LASD's understanding that the plain language of the Proposal provides a cap of not more than 10% of the total openings at each grade level in any year may be filled by students who qualify for FRPM if they live in the District, and is situated in a list of preferences that otherwise have no caps.

While we understand a more robust corrective action plan may be forthcoming from BCS, LASD is concerned that BCS's Proposal, coupled with the Enrollment Action Plan as detailed in the Board meeting agenda's attachments, will not be enough to comply with the law prior to your consideration of charter renewal. This limited FRPM student preference appears to be a continuation of BCS's longstanding failure to equitably serve all four of the statistically significantly underrepresented student groups identified in the SCCOE's Notice with the three other student groups highlighted in your Notice not even mentioned. Furthermore, it is unlikely BCS will achieve an enrollment mirroring LASD even in the singular FRPM student group considering the vast majority of open spots are in Kindergarten at BCS in a given year. Therefore, the Proposal and the initial Enrollment Action Plan appear to fall very short of the corrective action plan required by the Notice.

LASD supports the SCCOE's determination that "additional action and efforts must continue as outlined in BCS's action plan to address the Notice to increase access to and diversity in enrollment and to better align BCS's demographics with LASD." While the Proposal and the Enrollment Action Plan may help BCS do better, the law still requires BCS to achieve the requisite diversity that mirrors the enrollment demographics of LASD.

As stated in SCCOE's Notice, if BCS does not achieve the requisite diversity and equal access for all, "SCCOE may deny BCS's renewal Charter in accordance with Section 47607(e)." Whichever steps BCS may take, the requisite *results* must be achieved to remedy the violations identified in the Notice. LASD thanks the SCCOE and SCCBOE as BCS's charter authorizers for ensuring BCS meets their legal requirements and ensuring BCS is held accountable for achieving the results required by the Notice before their charter is renewed.

Respectfully,



Mr. Jeffrey Baier
Superintendent
Los Altos School District



Ms. Vaishali Sirkay, President
Los Altos School District



Mr. Steve Taglio, Vice-President
Los Altos School District



Ms. Jessica Speiser, Clerk
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Mr. Bryan Johnson, Board Member
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Mr. Vladimir Ivanovic, Board Member
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