

## **Contra Costa County Grand Jury Findings For the Contra Costa County Superintendent/Office of Education**

- F1. The Office of Education's oversight of charter school governance appears to be consistent with its oversight duties under the Education Code.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education agrees with the finding. In accordance with Board Policy, Office of Education staff attend Charter Authorizer Resource and Support Network (CARNet) training and workshops, and state-level authorizer meetings and trainings provided by law firms with expertise in charter law.

- F4. Clayton Valley has an inadequate memorandum of understanding with the Office of Education, and Making Waves - Richmond has none.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education agrees with the finding. As charter schools come forward for renewal they are required to include a standardized memorandum of understanding based on the most current law and charter practice.

- F5. The Office of Education does not currently meet with charter schools as a group to facilitate best practices in governance.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent/Office of Education agrees with the finding. Charter schools are required to present an annual report and update to the County Board during which time they share their successes and areas for improvement. Charter schools are encouraged to meet together to discuss best practices.

- F6. Summit, with its offices outside of Contra Costa County, and Clayton Valley, with only its Parent Faculty Club, do not promote parental engagement.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education agrees with the finding. Since its charter renewal, Summit K2 has made improvements to the engagement and involvement of parents. The K2 site has hired a Community Engagement Manager and is conducting Town Hall meetings at least annually.

The County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education has encouraged Clayton Valley to materially revise its governance structure for the purpose of significantly increasing parent and community participation in meaningful and transparent governance.

- F7. Clayton Valley has a Board of Directors structure that has too many members who have potential conflicts of interest.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education agrees with the finding. The Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education has expressed serious concerns about the governance of Clayton Valley Charter High School and has suggested CVCHS make material and meaningful changes to address these concerns.

- F8. Making Waves Academy has a Board of Directors structure that gives undue influence to the Making Waves Foundation to appoint the Academy Board of Directors.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education partially agrees with the finding. The current board structure creates a potential for undue influence. Making Waves has committed to having more parent and community member representation on their board. Making Waves is evaluating how the Waves Foundation, a materially significant donor to the charter, holds the charter accountable for funds distributed for the operation of the school including graduate scholarships and financial support for graduates to attend college.

- F9. The County Office of Education website provides information that is comparable to the information found on the websites of other county offices of education.

*Response:* The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education agrees with the finding. Website information is dynamic and ever unfolding as legal compliance, regulations, forms and procedures change from year-to-year.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. As a condition of approving charter petitions at the next petition renewal hearing, the Office of Education should consider requiring all charter schools that are under its chartering authority to have a standardized and detailed MOU using a modified version of the CARNet format.

*Response:* The recommendation has been implemented. As charter schools come forward for renewal they are required to include a standardized memorandum of understanding based on the most current law and charter practice.

- R2. As a condition of approving charter petitions at the next petition renewal hearing, the Office of Education should consider including provisions for parent-teacher organizations in its MOU for all charter schools.

*Response:* The recommendation has been implemented. The revised charter MOU includes language that requires charters to include engagement of parents and teachers.

- R3. As a condition of approving Making Waves Academy and Clayton Valley Charter High School charter petitions at the next petition renewal hearing, the Office of Education should consider requiring these schools to enter into an MOU whereby they agree to update their board of director structures.

*Response:* The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future; The County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education is closely monitoring proposed changes to charter law now under consideration by the state legislature. As these new laws come forward, the County Office of Education will communicate to charter schools all new governance requirements, including but not limited to, compliance with conflict of interest laws.

These requirements will be included as part of the charter renewal petition or the MOU required as a condition of approval.

- R4. The Office of Education should consider developing a plan to communicate with charter schools about how it will conduct oversight by December 31, 2019.

*Response:* The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future; The Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools/Office of Education is closely monitoring proposed changes to charter law now under consideration by the state legislature. As these new laws come forward, the Contra Costa County Office of Education will communicate with charter schools about how future oversight will be conducted. This communication is anticipated for late fall of 2019.