

Narrative of Changes to the Olive Grove Charter School Charter Petition If Authorized by the  
California State Board of Education

Olive Grove Charter School's petition was drafted with an expectation of local approval, therefore, this narrative supplements the petition to clarify issues that have arisen and provide content that may be desired based on the CDE's specific standards. Information pertaining to the CDE rubric may be found in other documentation submitted as part of this appeal, including documents provided to the SBCOE (Narrative of Changes under SBCOE; SBCOE Checklist; Responses to SBCOE's Findings).

To clarify why local approval was expected, the charter petition had the support of the Superintendent of Cuyama Joint Unified School District (Cuyama) up until the day of the vote. This is evidenced by the following documentation provided as part of this appeals process:

- Cuyama Superintendent Paul Chounet's initial staff report gave a recommendation to approve the petition (see appeal documentation). The approval recommendation was provided to our team with the agenda prior to the vote. This recommendation had changed when we arrived at the meeting. The explanation for the change is given in the email sent by Dr. Chounet the morning of the vote, where he forwards an email from the Superintendent of the Santa Barbara Unified School District threatening legal action.
- The statement read on Dr. Chounet's behalf at the SBCOE's appeal hearing.

**Facilities.** We would first like to address changes to the petition based on controversy surrounding facilities. This is the only concern mentioned by board members of the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO), by Superintendent William Cirone, and by SBCEO's attorney during the hearing/vote meeting on April 2, 2015. They held a position that they could not make modifications to the petition and they would not consider an approval with conditions. (To provide context, this was not a surprising given previous communications with Dr. Cirone. First, during summer 2014, former Los Olivos Elementary School District Superintendent Marsha Filbin approached 11 districts in Santa Barbara County as well as Dr. Cirone to solicit an interested authorizer. Only Cuyama indicated willingness to move forward the authorization. Dr. Filbin stated that Dr. Cirone stated that SBCOE's position was "to support the districts in the County" and was not inclined to authorize a charter school. In addition, during the fall, Dr. Chounet indicated that Dr. Cirone contacted him to discourage him from authorizing the charter school. The facilities issue was not given as a reason; this concern only gained traction after the threat of legal action from Santa Barbara Unified School District resulted in a change to Cuyama's recommendation on the day of the vote on February 19, 2015.)

As shown in this appeal documentation, Cuyama had posted a recommendation to approve Olive Grove Charter School, Dr. Chounet forwarded to OGCS an email from Santa Barbara Unified School District Superintendent David Cash stating the following:

“[We] believe, based on legal counsel's advice that Cuyama can not authorize a charter school outside of your attendance area. If you do, we will be following up with legal action by our district.”

Cuyama’s Superintendent and Board indicated that their legal counsel (Sarah Sutherland, counsel for *San Diego* in *San Diego v. Alpine*) had indicated that Cuyama and Olive Grove were on the right side of the legal question and that she expected Cuyama to prevail in a lawsuit, however, Dr. Chounet and four of the Cuyama board members indicated that the lawsuit presented too great a threat to their 240-student district.

Dr. Cash restated this same position at the SBCOE meeting on April 2. We wish to reiterate here that (1) his statement reflects an inaccurate view of the petition and (2) we wish to clarify how Olive Grove proposes to address this issue to avoid further controversy.

First, we agree that the petition must identify a single charter school to operate within the school district. The law does not state that this means operating through *physical facilities*. SBCOE’s staff report confounds the legal issues in ways that cause numerous misrepresentations; for example, SBCOE uses the word “locate” where the law uses the word “operate.” Many independent study schools have operated their programs without physical school sites for several decades, in accordance with the prevailing interpretation of the law in California over the past 20 years.

SBCOE referenced the *San Diego v. Alpine* case, however in the case of Endeavor, the Alpine charter school, the instructional program proposed in the petition, *could not have operated without a physical school site*. In *SDUSD v. Alpine USD* the court’s ruling stated “the evidence in the case thus far indicates the facilities are in fact classroom-based. Endeavor advertises blended learning facilities and concedes that classroom instruction is an option.”

In contrast, Olive Grove’s program can be operated from student’s homes *and/or* through resource center sites. The “predecessor” Olive Grove Home Study Charter School initially operated with *no* locations and served students entirely via telephone, Internet and/or home visits. This is still an option for families. Cuyama students who enroll in Olive Grove may be spread out and will likely have disparate needs (i.e., only one Cuyama student taking a particular course at a given time). The context is simply different from that of more populous areas. Families may be best served not through a learning center based facility but rather through home visits, telephone and Internet-based connections to educational supports. Therefore, it did not make sense to promise a specific mode of operation in the petition. The resource center sites in the four out-of-district areas were promised because those are populous areas where the families’ needs are known. In these areas we are able to offer some support sessions for groups of students with similar needs. We preferred to assess the needs and preferences of Cuyama students once they are enrolled and then determine facilities needs based on the best solution for students, rather than making arbitrary promises.

To further clarify, Olive Grove's petition assumes operations in Cuyama; the question left open was *how*. As provided in Affirmation #14 in the petition, "The Charter School shall comply with any jurisdictional limitations to locations of its facilities. (Ed. Code § 47605-47605.1)." As we clarified in the county appeal, our plan was that for its operations within Cuyama, OGCS would assess its facilities needs based on actual enrollment of students. We indicated that if SBCOE wished that specific addresses of proposed resource center sites be included in the petition, based on its interpretation of Ed Code, OGCS could make a technical amendment to clarify that in the petition accordingly.

Seeing how this controversy has barred our petition from consideration twice already, to avoid further difficulty, at this point, we wish to confirm that we desire to make a technical amendment to the petition. We wish that the technical amendment affirm that we will lease facilities space in Cuyama for our operations in Cuyama, as office space and to provide instructional supports according to the needs of individual students. Dr. Chounet indicated that the District has some unused space, including space that was previously used to operate a Continuation Program that is no longer in operation. He indicates that he feels the District would be able to lease to Olive Grove for its operations. We would also take this opportunity to note that, in the discussion about these facilities, he also reiterated that he has several students in mind who would benefit from a program like Olive Grove's. These and other proposed collaborations were discussed again on April 14, 2015. The school's budget for facilities provides for the Cuyama space.

**Other changes.** To the best of our knowledge, the following changes in charter document language would need to be made to the charter petition of the Olive Grove Charter School to reflect authorization by the State Board of Education (SBCOE):

- Revisions throughout the petition to reflect authorization by the State Board of Education, with oversight from the Cuyama Joint Unified School District.
- Regarding special education, the El Dorado County Charter School SELPA approved Olive Grove Charter School's application to become as a Local Education Agency member, participating as a member of the North State Joint Powers Authority. However, due to the denials, the timeline may preclude Olive Grove's participation in the SELPA for the 2015-16 school year. The charter petition, however, anticipated that OGCS would be an arm of the district for special education. We believe that Cuyama's preference would be to not provide service directly but rather to pass through funding for OGCS to contract for services directly. Our responses to SBCOE's questions regarding special education in the attached documentation are still accurate, with the possible exception of the participation in EDCOE.
- OGCS anticipates entering into contracts for special education services by soliciting proposals from potential providers, compare estimated fees from each provider, contact current clients of top providers for their feedback, and discuss findings with respect to

the Board's criteria for selection. The Board's criteria for selection will include current client satisfaction, quality of services, and favorable cost comparison.

- The petition states that OGCS intends to purchase administrative services from the District. Dr. Chounet has indicated that Cuyama is still amenable to this arrangement. Those terms can be defined in an MOU. If for some reason an MOU were not reached, OGCS would contract a charter schools business back office services provider to assist with start-up and training and to provide a full range of ongoing business back office services including budget development and monitoring, accounting, compliance reporting, payroll, and personnel functions working in conjunction with OGCS's Office Manager.
- If OGCS enters into a contract for business services by creating an RFP identifying the services desired and distributing it to a range of business service providers, comparing estimated fees from each provider, contacting current clients of top providers for their feedback, and discussing findings with respect to the Board's criteria for selection. The Board's criteria will include current client satisfaction, accuracy of work, quality of financial and compliance oversight, ease of use of systems, and ability to support school personnel on an ongoing basis.

OGCS will modify the petition to reflect the SBE's preferences as the authorizer.

**Education Program.** Stated above, Olive Grove had not received any concerns about the petition and had received from Cuyama a recommendation to approve the petition the day before the vote. We would further note that the predecessor Olive Grove Home Study Charter School's strong track record is evident in the predecessor school's API Similar Schools Rank of 9. OGCS proposes to replicate the educational model OGCS will always continue to review and update curriculum and outcomes to reflect current Standards in order to maintain strong student performance. However, we recognize that there may be a desire for additional detail in the petition, so we have drafted the following text, which may be added to the petition as a technical amendment:

#### Common Core – ELA

The recent work of ELA faculty for grades K-12 at the predecessor Olive Grove Home Study Charter School informs how we will implement the ELA program in the new school. Most recently, at the "predecessor" Olive Grove Home Study Charter School, teachers have focused on developing new high school courses at Olive Grove or augmented existing courses such as Language Arts Courses, to align daily homework assignments and assessments with the Common Core Standards. Presently, high school English weekly support sessions are focused on increasing textual analysis, improving close reading skills, citing evidence and instilling deeper critical thinking skills. Students from grades 6-12 are reading assigned novels based on

recommendations from the Common Core reading list. They are working on novel review units that include vocabulary builders, character analysis, focused reading responses and assessments with opportunities to demonstrate strong writing techniques. We realize how important these skills are to promote student learning, not just in the student's current grade level, but also in the larger picture of targeting the scaffolding levels of Common Core State Standards over the course of several years.

Next year, Olive Grove will seek out curriculum that is current and relevant to fully address the Common Core State Standards. Like other districts, we have modified existing curriculum to pair up with a large percentage of Common Core State Standards but realize there is a gap in the actual reach of our efforts. Teachers are enthusiastic about adopting new textbook based curriculum and adapting it to the standards. We will continue with our Common Core training and remain alert to evaluating our own progress, including students through benchmark assessments. Providing excellent writing skills will be the English department's priority. We will continue our effort to provide relevant grade level writing assignments such as persuasive writing, textual analysis, comparison essays and research assignments. Our goal is to incorporate technology into these projects such as power point and oral presentations. Although vocabulary-building assignments are presently on board in our existing curriculum, we will facilitate increasing the depth of these assignments. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with Olive Grove students next year in bringing them forward into the full scope of the Common Core State Standards.

Olive Grove Charter School will provide students with weekly support sessions for student engagement and increased Common Core ELA practice including group work and engaging ELA activities. Collaborative performance goals and increased student interaction, as well as focused instructional supports (for example Kate Kinsella strategies) are the goal of the language arts weekly support sessions.

Another key area of work for the ELA faculty will be the alignment of SBE-approved Common Core-aligned English Language Development Standards with Common Core ELA standards. This crosswalk will better enable us to provide each English Learner with a program that address their ELD needs based on updated standards. We will communicate with all teachers serving the student as to how they can support the student's development of English proficiency as well as provide access to the curriculum in each content area.

### Common Core – Math

As with ELA, the recent work of math faculty for grades K-12 at the predecessor Olive Grove Home Study Charter School informs how we will implement the math program in the new school. A key focus has been on how to shift from covering many topics to covering fewer topics, but going deeper into the development and understanding of these topics. We are following the Common Core State Standards to help guide our curriculum content choices. In the K-2 grades, we are focusing on concepts, skills, and problem solving related to addition and subtraction. In grades 3-5, we focus on concepts, skills, and problem solving related to

multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions. In the middle grades, we focus on ratios and proportional relationships, early algebraic expressions and equations, arithmetic of rational numbers, linear algebra, and linear functions.

The predecessor Olive Grove Charter School is piloting the Go Math Curriculum for the elementary and middle grades. OGCS is utilizing the Common Core-aligned ALEKS program as an online curriculum for students that can and want to use an online source. Khan academy is recommended for additional learning supports. The Dreambox program is a highly engaging computer-based supplemental resource. Dreambox helps students develop conceptual understanding, and it can be particularly helpful in engaging students who have previously “tuned out” to worksheet-driven methods. For all grades and levels, OGCS is using the Mathematics Assessment Project (MAP) to bring grade levels together to work on team tasks and projects that tie together the concepts learned in grade level math content. OGCS is utilizing the assessments from MAP to formatively evaluate student progress. These assessments help us pinpoint gaps in understanding so that we can focus learning resources and interventions strategically according to each student’s individual needs.

Olive Grove Charter School will provide students with twice weekly support sessions for student engagement and increased Common Core mathematical practice including group work and hands on mathematical activities. Collaborative learning expectations and student interaction, as well as focused instructional supports (for example Number Talks), are the goal of the twice weekly support sessions.

Olive Grove Charter School will have the ability to purchase new Common Core aligned textbooks and online resources in all grade levels. Over the summer, we will perform an extensive review of math content from textbook and online publishers to verify that we are utilizing the best Common Core aligned curriculum for Olive Grove Charter School student’s needs. We will continue to fine-tune our onsite and online curriculum support for all grades as a math team to ensure the best possible mathematical Common Core curriculum.

### Next Generation Science Standards

Next Generation Science Standards will be implemented at Olive Grove Charter School across grades K-12. As the science concepts build progressively from K-12, Olive Grove Charter School will ensure students are provided with learning goals that reflect the student performance expectations built upon in the Next Generation Science Standards within the Science and Engineering categories. Students will get to engage in science inquiry activities both at home and in the school setting with a credentialed science teacher, as well as actively collaborating with peers regarding assigned Next Generation Science Standards performance expectations. Peer collaboration may occur in person at resource centers and via Internet-based programs.

In order to achieve these student performance expectations, Olive Grove Charter School will provide students with learning performance tasks that allow students to “do” science, such as Next Generation Science Standards require. This will involve hands-on, inquiry-based science

weekly kits that will be checked out by parents for home use to complete specific performance goals. For example, middle school atomic structure kits will provide students with materials to create three-dimensional atomic structures in at least three different ways, so students can see the relationship between atomic protons, neutrons, and electrons and how they form the atomic structure. The students will be provided with complete instructions to learn how to use the periodic table as a guide to discover the number of protons, neutrons, and electrons for whatever atom they choose to create in a three dimensional form. Students will then showcase performance tasks completed to peers at roundtable discussions weekly where they will collaborate and engage in scientific discussions surrounding Next Generation Science Standards that have been completed during the preceding week.

Students will also participate in weekly science support sessions in which a certificated science teacher works with groups of students to complete hands-on, inquiry-based Next Generation Science Standards performance expectations. These sessions will reinforce performance tasks and student engagement in scientific practices. Labs that need a credentialed science teacher oversight will be done during this class, as well as utilization of supplies not conducive to home use. These weekly sessions will also ensure student comprehension of performance expectations through student interaction and group activities.

#### Academically Low- and High-Achieving Students: Personalization, not Differentiation

The term “differentiation” typically refers to a process for meeting students’ varied needs within a classroom instruction. OGCS meets students’ needs through a process better characterized as “personalization,” a key to our successful track record with a wide range of learners. We start with the educational performance outcomes for each grade level. Then we look at the student’s level of performance. We use diagnostic assessments to determine skill gaps. We interview the parent to find out what works for that child, what his/her interests are. We also learn where he/she turns off to learning. Many times, students experience failure in schools when they experience the same instructional methods year after year, often methods that particular students don’t engage with. At Olive Grove, we don’t pair students with methods that don’t work for them. Often, they stop saying they “hate” that content area and they start succeeding, because they have a new way of engaging with it.

As we learn more about what helps each child connect to learning, we plan out the best educational program for that particular child based on what really helps that child connect to his/her educational plan. We do a lot to engage the student’s interests, and we refine the plan over time as we learn more about what methods produce the most growth in learning for that child.

Over the years, our team has developed extensive supports to help students and parents succeed. Students with greater needs tend to get a lot more of one-to-one support. Over the years, we have learned what it takes to help students with very different needs to thrive in this setting.

When a student is capable of a higher level of challenge, we provide options for educational outcomes to stimulate excitement in learning. For example, we have a sophomore who is currently taking Math 150: Calculus with Analytic Geometry at Santa Barbara City College. This student took Pre-Calculus as a freshman, and he's planning on going on to take advanced Physics next year. The parent noted that this accelerated learning was not possible under the student's home high school.

Olive Grove Charter School encourages high achieving students to enroll in SCOUT (University of California courses) and to enroll in AP and/or Honors level courses. High achieving students may also work at a faster pace if they are so motivated. Each resource center will have at least one teacher who has attended the counselor workshop at their local community college. High achieving students will be given guidance for appropriate placement and enrollment procedures at the community college level. A college and career program will be in place to help guide the students into career choices which will ensure that appropriate learning sessions are completed in order to complete college or technical/trade school requirements.

Gifted and Talented students of all ages sometimes excel when allowed to pursue outside interests more intensely because they can finish their daily work in a concentrated amount of time. Other GATE students like to push themselves to finish school at a faster rate or take higher end college courses to fulfill their higher level educational needs. Sometimes, however students that are GATE qualified have other special needs that are sometimes inherent to GATE students and their personalities. These students sometimes need IEPs to closely monitor their special needs associated with GATE signifiers. These will then be identified and monitored through the Special Education department. Students are always reviewed on a single case basis, so each student is given an individualized plan for student success.

When a student needs a particular learning intervention, we provide it by finding what works best for that particular student. There is an 8th grade student at our Santa Barbara resource center who has High-Functioning Autism. She latches on to things that interest her, such as Greek Mythology, but subjects that are outside of her comfort zone are a struggle for her. We've found ways to role-play historical events by using analogies to reference historical figures to Greek Gods and Goddesses. She is currently writing a historical fiction novel and has increased dramatically in her reading and writing skills.

Access in targeted intervention support sessions will be utilized in addition to regular core learning support sessions. Students who are performing below grade level will attend additional support sessions addressing the student's areas of concern, as well as receive intervention performance tasks. For instance, if a student is not achieving at grade level in math, they will have two support sessions of math per week in which one will focus on fundamentals that the student is lacking, while the other session will focus on grade relevant support. If a student's reading level is low, in addition to their grade level English session, they will also take a Reading Improvement Session. A college and career program will be in place to help guide the student with options for a career or additional education post high school.

Interest and career inventories will be given to lower achieving students to help “spark” a buy-in for increased academic engagement.

Other strategies utilized for low-achieving students include personalized instruction, access to adaptive learning software and other computer based learning programs, presentation options, homework checklists, individual and group support sessions, sample/practice tests, academic contracts, positive reinforcement, problem solving sessions, etc. Regular communication with parents is a requirement of enrollment in Olive Grove Charter School. Elementary students must have parents at every teacher meeting. Junior high school and high school students’ parents must attend one meeting a month of the scheduled weekly meetings.

If intervention performance tasks, supplemental learning sessions or other strategies do not show marked improvement, an SST will be called for. The student, parents, certificated teachers, and administration will work together as a team to identify the student’s strengths and assets so that a workable improvement action plan can be created from these strengths. Follow up meetings will be scheduled and the support strategies outlined in the improvement action plan will be reviewed and updated as needed.

One size does not fit all. By working with students as individuals – building on their strengths, leveraging interests to engage students in challenging learning experiences, and using strategic interventions to address specific areas of need, we see tremendous growth on students. Olive Grove Charter School effectively personalizes educational needs of all students.

### English Learners

Olive Grove will use the new English Language Development Standards, which were developed to align with California Common Core State Standards in English language arts. The CELDT assessment will ultimately be replaced by ELPAC as part of the statewide shift. Although implementation of the new assessment is not expected for several years, Olive Grove will emphasize training and support in the new ELD standards. Professional development will be provided to all teachers, with specialized support for content area teachers to learn how they are expected to support each English Learner’s ELD standards within their content areas. Each English Learner student will receive a personalized program based on his or her ELD level, grade level, and specific learning needs. EL students demonstrating beginning to early intermediate proficiency in English will participate in a formal, sequential ELD program corresponding to their level of performance. EL students performing at higher levels will also participate in a formal program unless their needs are better served through alternative interventions and supports, such as literacy development. Olive Grove will draw on the CDE’s list of supplemental instructional materials that provide a bridge from the CA ELD standards to the CA CCSS ELA/Literacy for K-8 until fully aligned instructional ELD programs are available.

### Special Education Services

As described above, the school has been accepted into the EDCOE Charter SELPA, and the petition will need to be modified to reflect that if the EDCOE Charter SELPA will still permit the school's membership on the delayed timeline.

In addition, we would offer the following edits to the petition if this level of detail is desired in the petition:

To identify students who qualify for special education prior to or following enrollment, all students admitted to Olive Grove will be put through SEIS (Special Education Information System). The school will request students' cumulative folders will be requested promptly and individually looked at for evidence of prior special education services. If cumulative folders are slow to arrive, a phone call will be made to the previous district asking about possible services. Olive Grove will do regular school-wide testing and screenings. The school will have a regular progress monitoring to determine who is learning and who is not. Those identified as not making expected progress will be sent through the SST process. Interventions will be tried and if they are not successful a full assessment will be initiated.

To determine a student's ability to participate in an independent study program, Olive Grove will first meet with all students (special education and general education) prior to enrollment to review expectations. The school will do a 30-day administrative placement for students with IEPs and then consult with the parent, special education staff and IS facilitator to come up with an appropriate program. The school will regularly monitor progress towards the student's goals and objectives and change the program with parent consent if progress is not made. If the student is not attending regularly, not completing the required work or not making progress toward goals and objectives, Olive Grove will hold an IEP to consider a change of placement.

As indicated in the budget and in the petition, Olive Grove will hire a special education teacher. The school's budget also provides for contracted special education services, including an education psychologist, speech pathologist, and other specialists according to the needs of students. Olive Grove anticipates getting supplemental special education services such as mental health through Lotus, at the school's resource center sites at a predetermined time. Lotus is a Non Public Agency certified by the CDE. Lotus offers social skills groups, individual, parent and group counseling and provides a variety of other services. Should a student require more services than the charter school has available, to provide FAPE, the charter school will make contact with a local district, another charter school or a county office to "purchase" a space in a program that serves students with similar needs.

### Measurable Pupil Outcomes

The petition does not establish specific goals for content area proficiency because of the challenge in setting those goals prior to having any CAASSP assessment data available or any information on API. The petition currently states the following:

“OGCS will set goals for proficiency in California Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and content standards in Social Studies as assessment data becomes available for new SBAC assessments. Proficiency in these areas will be indicated by SBAC scores, benchmark test scores, summative assessments (exams, performance assessments, etc.), grades, and teacher observation.”

We hope that the measurable outcomes in the petition are sufficient, however, if additional detail is desired, we would propose a technical amendment to set a goal for measurable outcomes that (1) 75% of students attending Olive Grove for at least two years score proficient or higher in English Language Arts based on CAASSP assessment data and (2) 75% of students attending Olive Grove for at least two years score proficient or higher in English Language Arts based on CAASSP assessment data.

### Method for Measuring Pupil Progress

We would further note that the petition does not list Measures of Academic Progress as our benchmark assessment. While we intended to reassess which benchmark assessment best aligns with new state content standards and informs instruction, if it is desired that we name a benchmark assessment, we have experience with Measures of Academic Progress and would be happy to include it in the petition as a technical amendment.