Item #12
Spark Charter School
State Board of Education
May 9, 2018
Timeline

- January 17, 2018 – Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) denied the renewal petition of Spark Charter School (Spark)
  - Vote of four to one with one absentee

- January 29, 2018 – Spark submitted a petition on appeal to the State Board of Education (SBE)
CDE Recommendation (1)

The CDE recommends that the SBE hold a public hearing to deny the request to establish Spark Charter School, a K–8 charter school, under the oversight of the SBE.

Recommendation based on:

Unsound Educational Program

- Significant decline in year-over-year pupil performance
- Fall 2017 Dashboard results
CDE Recommendation (2)

Demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program

• Fiscal Viability
  o Expenditures continue to exceed revenues
  o Over reliance on parent/community fundraising
  o Short-term emergency loans
CDE Recommendation (3)

Deficiencies in Charter Elements

- Admission Requirements
- Race and Ethnic Balance
- Method for Measuring Pupil Progress
Advisory Commission on Charter Schools

- April 10, 2018 meeting
- Advisory Commission on Charter Schools (ACCS) moved to recommend approval of the petition to the SBE
- Motion passed with five to two vote
Background (1)

- Authorized by the SSCOE through June 2018
- Currently serving 248 pupils
  - Shares a campus with Columbia Middle School in the Sunnyvale School District
- Plans to grow to over 400 pupils by 2021–22
- Spark stated that for the 2018–19 school year, the school has 290 students enrolled and 250 on the waitlist.
Background (2)

- On November 21, 2013, the Sunnyvale School District Board of Education (SSDBOE) granted conditional approval of Spark, subject to compliance of conditions by April 1, 2014.

- On April 29, 2014, the SSDBOE took action to rescind its conditional approval of the petition based upon Spark’s failure to comply with the conditions set forth in resolution.

Background (3)

- Soon after opening, the school was temporarily closed when a teacher's aide was charged with molesting an 8-year old student.

- The Santa Clara county office found the school did not have records of staff background checks and fingerprint clearances and ordered school officials to complete them.
CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (1)

CAASPP Results reflect a significant decline in year-over-year pupil performance

(Chart to be Described)
CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (2)

The Fall 2017 Dashboard report states:

(Chart to be Described)
CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (3)

The Fall 2017 Dashboard report
• Suspension Rates

(Chart to be Described)
CDE Findings – Fiscal (1)

CDE Reviewed:

- Sparks’ projected budget
- Multi-year financial plan
- First and Second Interim Reports
  - For 2018–19, Spark has a minimal reserve of .1 percent and minimal positive ending fund balance.
  - Only positive due to reliance on over $100,000 in fundraising
CDE Findings – Fiscal (2)

Spark is NOT fiscally viable
• Expenditures exceed revenues
• Over-reliance on parent/community fundraising
• Short-term loans
  o Including loans from board members
• Outstanding payables not included in budget projections
Deficiencies in Charter Elements (1)

Admissions Requirements

• Parent Agreement requires weekly volunteer parent hours

• Deterrent to Admissions
Deficiencies in Charter Elements (2)

Race and Ethnic Balance

• Demographic information does not match that of the district, surrounding schools and the county. Chart provided by Spark.
Deficiencies in Charter Elements (3)

Race and Ethnic Balance
(Chart to be Described from Spark Petition)
Deficiencies in Charter Elements (4)

Race and Ethnic Balance
(Chart to be Described)

Spark has added those eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Meals to their lottery procedures.
Summary

• Academic performance
• Fiscal viability
• Admission requirements
• Race and Ethnic balance