



Item #12

Spark Charter School

State Board of Education
May 9, 2018



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State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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)



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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



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CDE Recommendation (2)

Demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program

- Fiscal Viability
 - Expenditures continue to exceed revenues
 - Over reliance on parent/community fundraising
 - Short-term emergency loans



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CDE Recommendation (3)

Deficiencies in Charter Elements

- Admission Requirements
- Race and Ethnic Balance
- Method for Measuring Pupil Progress



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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



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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.



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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.
- On October 1, 2014, SSCOE approved Spark for a three-year term on appeal to serve K–8.



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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.



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CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (1)

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

(Chart to be Described)



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CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (2)

The Fall 2017 Dashboard report states:

(Chart to be Described)



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CDE Findings – Unsound Educational Program (3)

The Fall 2017 Dashboard report

- Suspension Rates

(Chart to be Described)



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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



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CDE Findings – Fiscal (2)

Spark is NOT fiscally viable

- Expenditures exceed revenues
- Over-reliance on parent/community fundraising
- Short-term loans
 - Including loans from board members
- Outstanding payables not included in budget projections



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Deficiencies in Charter Elements (1)

Admissions Requirements

- Parent Agreement requires weekly volunteer parent hours
- Deterrent to Admissions



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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.



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Deficiencies in Charter Elements (3)

Race and Ethnic Balance

(Chart to be Described from Spark Petition)



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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.



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Summary

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