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September 30, 2025

Via U.S. Mail and E-Mail:
amy.podratz@springscs.org

Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Superintendent
Amy Podratz, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Operations
Members of the Board of Directors
Vista Springs Charter School
27740 Jefferson Avenue
Temecula, CA 92590

Re: Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure Pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e)

Dear Dr. Hermsmeyer, Ms. Podratz, and Members of the Board of Directors:

This letter serves as the Vista Unified School District's ("District") Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure ("Notice") to Vista Springs Charter School ("Vista Springs") pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e).

On August 28, 2025, Vista Springs submitted a petition to renew its charter for a term of five years, beginning on July 1, 2026 and ending on June 30, 2031 ("Renewal Petition"). Education Code section 47607(e) provides that a chartering authority¹ may deny the renewal of a charter school upon a finding that the school is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition due to substantial fiscal or governance factors after the chartering authority has provided at least 30 days' notice to the charter school of the alleged violation(s) and has provided the charter school with a reasonable opportunity to cure the violation(s), including a corrective action plan proposed by the charter school.

Please be advised that the contents of this letter are limited to a preliminary review of fiscal and governance issues identified in the Renewal Petition. It does not constitute, nor shall it be construed as, a predetermination of whether the Renewal Petition should be granted or denied. That decision remains solely within the purview of the District's Board of Education following the petition review process and convening of the required public hearings.

¹ Following the approval of Vista Springs' original establishment petition on appeal by the State Board of Education ("SBE"), Section 47605.9 was added to the Education Code pursuant to Assembly Bill 1505. Section 47605.9 provides that a charter school authorized under an SBE-approved charter on appeal may continue to operate under such authority until the date in which the charter school's term expires. If the charter school desires to be renewed for an additional term, it "shall submit a petition for renewal to the governing board of the school district within the boundaries of which the charter school is located. (Educ. Code § 47605.9(b).) Although the District does not currently authorize Vista Springs, it is issuing this notice pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e) because Vista Springs submitted its Renewal Petition to the District in accordance with Education Code section 47605.9. If approved, the District would become the chartering authority for Vista Springs.

Pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e), the District shall give Vista Springs a reasonable period of time to remedy or refute the fiscal and governance factors and concerns below. The District has determined that the factors/concerns identified below need to be remedied or refuted on or before **Friday, October 31, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Thereafter, as set forth in Education Code section 47607(e), the District's Board of Education may take action to deny the Renewal Petition if (1) the corrective action(s) proposed by Vista Springs have been unsuccessful, or (2) the concerns/violation(s) are sufficiently severe and pervasive as to render a corrective action plan unviable.

1. Fiscal Factors and Concerns

The District conducted a preliminary review of the financial documents submitted with the Renewal Petition, including Vista Springs' budget and multi-year projections, funding assumptions and calculations, enrollment and average daily attendance ("ADA") assumptions, and projected monthly cash flow statements.

Generally, a review of the multi-year financial projections reflects conservative assumptions regarding ADA growth, aligning with historical patterns. However, for the 2025-26 fiscal year, Vista Springs' projected funded ADA appears to be elevated, which could result in a decrease in per-pupil funding as the year develops. Additionally, due to limited transparency regarding the projected expenditure reductions through the 2027-28 fiscal year, the District is unable to assess whether those reductions appropriately account for the expiration of one-time funding sources, along with anticipated increases in salaries, benefits, and other payroll-related costs.

The Standardized Account Code Structure ("SACS") report indicates that Vista Springs currently leases its facility at an annual cost of approximately \$500,000. However, there are no additional details regarding the lease agreement provided for review, such as the term length, cost escalation clauses, or lease renewal conditions.

The District is also unable to evaluate the appropriateness of certain expenditures because neither the assumptions nor the multi-year financial projections provide sufficient detail by object code/line item reflecting Vista Springs' expenditures. The multi-year projection detail (schoolwide totals) identifies various costs grouped by series which do not provide the level of specificity needed to meaningfully evaluate the propriety of the particular expenditures. For example, object series 5800 (professional services and operating costs) indicates a total projected expenditure of \$544,231 in FY 2026-27, which jumps to \$673,529 in FY 2027-28, to \$793,321 in FY 2028-29, to \$899,979 in FY 2029-30, and to \$982,473 in FY 2030-31. However, there is no explanation as to whether such professional services and operating costs include fees to Springs Charter Schools, Inc. (as the sole statutory member), authorizer oversight fees, or other related anticipated expenditures. This lack of detail across the financial documents severely restricts the District's ability to determine whether the expenditures are reasonable and based on realistic assumptions.

Overall, the District cannot perform a comprehensive financial analysis without significant additional documentation, including, but not limited to, independent audited financial statements,

detailed revenue projections, lease agreement(s), a breakdown of restricted versus unrestricted resources, more detailed staffing information, and expenditures broken down by applicable object code/line item. In the absence of this information, the District does not believe that Vista Springs meets charter school financial reporting standards or has presented accurate projections that are based upon responsible assumptions.

2. Governance Factors and Concerns

The District has significant concerns regarding Vista Springs' governance structure, as described in its Renewal Petition and accompanying documents.

Prior District Findings Supporting Denial of Original Petition Due to Governance Concerns

As the petitioners for Vista Springs will recall, on August 30, 2017, the District's Board of Education took action to deny the petition submitted to establish Vista Springs. In addition to the District's concerns regarding the soundness of the proposed educational program, the District's Board made lengthy written factual findings to support a denial due to the failure to provide a reasonably comprehensive description of the governance structure of the charter school. The findings concerning the governance structure stated the following:

- i. As presented, the Petition describes a governance structure that is complicated, vague, and lacks organizational transparency. The Petition states that the Charter School will be operated by Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc., a California non-profit public benefit corporation. However, Springs Charter Schools, Inc., a separate entity, would continue to serve as the "sole statutory member" to the Charter School's governing board.
- ii. Although Petitioners downplay or minimize the role of the sole statutory member in the overall governance of the Charter School, the sole statutory member possesses significant power over the Charter School. This authority would include the right to:
 - Fill vacancies on the governing board of Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc. (as well as the other charter school governing boards within the network);
 - Remove Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc. directors;
 - In the event of closure of the Charter School, vote on the disposition of all or substantially all of the corporation's assets;
 - Approve any merger and its principal terms, including any amendment of those terms;
 - Elect to dissolve Harbor Springs Charter Schools, Inc.;
 - Approve, repeal, or amend the Charter School's corporate bylaws; and

- Seek a material amendment to the charters of the schools operated by Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc.

Petitioners reason that the inclusion of a sole statutory member creates a “checks and balances” system to “ensure that each network 501(c)(3) board is professional, balanced and mission-driven. Without this structure, the board would be self-appointing and could devolve into cronyism and/or stray from the mission of Springs Charter Schools to provide high-quality educational options for students.” However, the same risks are present by having a sole statutory member who has the power to seat and remove board members to ensure that its vision is effectuated, which may not necessarily be reflective of the vision, mission, or concerns of the Vista community where the Charter School would operate.

- iii. Springs Charter Schools, Inc. also serves as the sole statutory member for other charter schools within the Springs network, including Empire Springs Charter School, Citrus Springs Charter School, and the existing Harbor Springs Charter School. Notably, however, River Springs Charter School, which is authorized by the Riverside County Office of Education and is part of the Springs network of charter schools, does not have a sole statutory member and is not affiliated with the Springs Charter Schools, Inc. entity. Thus, this begs the question as to why Petitioners believe it is critical for the Charter School to have a sole statutory member if River Springs Charter School functions without one. The District has no oversight authority over the sole statutory member, which is an entirely separate entity from the Charter School, and therefore cannot recognize or accept the role of a sole statutory member in the governance structure of the Charter School.
- iv. Petitioners include language in the Petition that, in order to ensure transparency in the operations of Springs Charter Schools, Inc., Springs Charter Schools, Inc. “voluntarily agrees to comply with the legal requirements of the Brown Act, Government Code Section 1090, Public Records Act, and the Political Reform Act prospectively beginning July 1, 2017.” The Petition further states that the Springs Charter Schools, Inc. Board contains no employees or interested parties of any of the charter schools that it supports. While the District appreciates Petitioners’ attempts to infuse more transparency and accountability into the operations of the Charter School and its sole statutory member, it still does not eliminate the dual layer of governance or the concerns raised in the findings above.

Moreover, it is highly questionable whether Petitioners could subject the sole statutory member to these legal requirements, especially considering the sole statutory member is a separate and legally-distinct entity and there is no evidence in the Petition indicating its intent to be bound by such laws. Notwithstanding the above, there would be no way for the District to enforce the sole statutory member’s compliance with these laws.

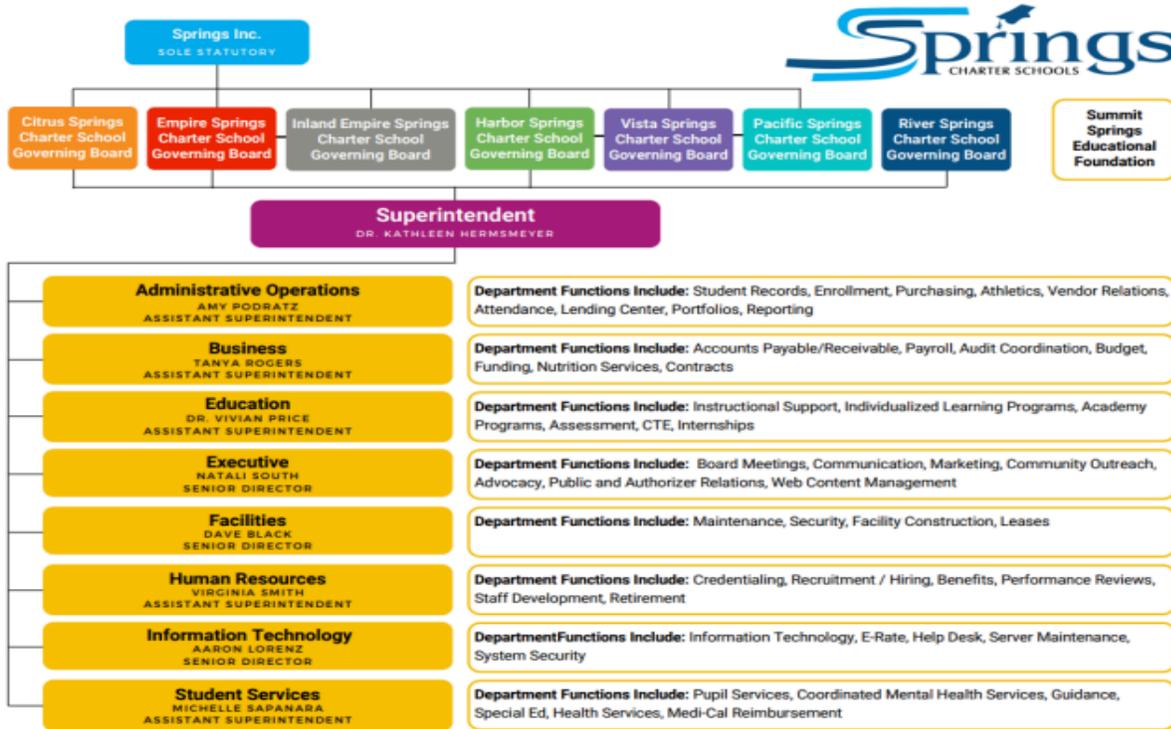
- v. The proposed structure also calls into question whether there would be genuine parent involvement in the governance of the Charter School if the selection of the board members rests entirely with the sole statutory member. Notably, based on a review of the biographies of current members on the Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc. Board of Directors (which would serve as the governing board of the Charter School), there is no indication that any of the members are residents of Vista. Most, if not all, of the individuals reside within Riverside County, where the Springs network's business office is located.

In addition, the Petition states that to qualify to serve as a member of the Board of Directors, the individual must reside in San Diego County or in a contiguous county where students are served. Again, this creates a possibility that no members of the Vista community would serve on the Board. Even though the Charter School would be open to all students who wish to attend, including those living in San Diego and contiguous counties, Petitioners indicate that a majority of the students currently being served in the La Fuente Dual Immersion Program, which is one of the primary programs of the Charter School, reside within Vista. Therefore, the level of meaningful parental involvement in the governance of the Charter School within the Vista community could be extremely limited.

- vi. The Petition states that Board meetings will be bi-located via live teleconference at the Temecula business office address and at the Vista campus. Meaningful participation is difficult via teleconference only and there is no language in the Petition that requires or even suggests that meetings will be held within the Vista community.

Vista Springs' Governance Structure Remains Unaltered with the Inclusion of a Sole Statutory Member

When the District received the Renewal Petition, it reviewed the contents to confirm the completeness of the set of documents submitted for purposes of initiating the timelines under Education Code section 47605. In reviewing Element 4, Governance Structure, the District observed that Vista Springs operates under the same structure that was proposed in the original petition from 2017, as shown in the following organizational chart:



The Renewal Petition expressly states that Springs Charter Schools, Inc. will serve as the sole statutory member and will be responsible for approving the appointment of those individuals who serve on the Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc. (“HSCS”) Board of Directors. As the sole statutory member, Springs Charter Schools also has the power to fill vacancies on the HSCS Board, remove directors from the HSCS Board, vote on the disposition of all or substantially all of the corporation’s assets, approve any merger and its principal terms (including any amendments of those terms), and vote on any election to dissolve the corporation. This language is consistent with Article VI of the HSCS corporate bylaws, which extends such rights to the sole statutory member.

There is no acknowledgement, opt-in language, or other agreement in the Renewal Petition indicating that Springs Charter Schools would comply with the Brown Act, Public Records Act, the prohibition against financial conflicts of interest under Government Code sections 1090 et seq., or the Political Reform Act. Additionally, other than the biographies of members serving on Springs Charter Schools’ Board of Directors and basic agendas (with no meeting minutes available or posted since 2024), there is very little information detailing the specific roles, functions, and actions of this entity on its website. Further, noticeably absent from the Renewal Petition are any details regarding the composition, structure, budget, functions, or operations of Springs Charter Schools.

The District is both concerned and surprised that, prior to submitting a Renewal Petition to the District, no effort was made to modify the governance structure for Vista Springs or to otherwise provide a meaningful description of (a) why Vista Springs believes a sole statutory member is

needed, (b) the safeguards in place to ensure transparency and prevent financial conflicts of interest for those sharing overlapping roles/functions for Springs Charter Schools and Vista Springs—none of which is defined or addressed in the Renewal Petition or on the Springs Charter Schools’ website, or (c) how this structure ensures meaningful parental participation in the governance of Vista Springs.

The District also notes that Springs Charter Schools convenes its meetings in Riverside County, and the HSCS Board likewise convenes its meetings in Riverside County with teleconference locations in Vista and Chula Vista, respectively. As noted in the District’s 2017 findings, this significantly limits active parental involvement in the governance of the charter school. Remote participation can hardly take the place of—or even serve as a functional equivalent to—in-person attendance at a board meeting.

Affiliated River Springs Charter School Does Not Have a Sole Statutory Member

As shared in the prior denial findings detailed above and in the organizational chart, River Springs Charter School does not have a sole statutory member and remains outside of this structure but with the same leadership team intact. Although the petitioners may attempt to assert that River Springs Charter School’s exclusion from this structure is due to the fact that it serves as the flagship charter school and is used as the exemplar or model for the mission, vision, and structure of the other Springs-affiliated charter schools, it still begs the question why any of the now-established charters schools within this network that have been operating for several years would still need to have a sole statutory member to ensure appropriate “checks and balances” so that the charter schools’ respective boards remain professional and mission-driven. Given the fact that River Springs Charter School has been in operation since 2007 and does not operate with a sole statutory member, this alone demonstrates that a charter school within the network can function successfully without a dual layer of governance.

Recommendations Against Sole Statutory Membership by State-Level Entities

In recent years, state-level organizations and agencies have expressed serious concerns regarding the sole statutory member structure. Specifically, in the recent report issued by the California Charter Authorizing Professionals (“CCAP”) entitled *Protecting California Public Schools Against Fraud—The Charter School Sector and Beyond*, a task force comprised of various charter school, authorizer, and fiscal experts and leaders drew attention to the critical need of examining charter school relationships with any entity that serves as the charter school’s sole statutory member or any similar entity that may exert a material amount of influence or control and have a material economic interest in the charter school. The report notes that some “charter operators, in order to ensure fidelity of individual schools in their network to their school model, have **secured unilateral power** to replace any member of the school’s governing board at any time, with or without cause.” (CCAP Report, p. 20.) Although the full exploration of this issue was beyond the capacity and scope of the task force’s work in generating the report, the task force concluded:

While this arrangement may expedite administrative processes and be motivated by ensuring fidelity to the school model, it **raises concerns regarding**

concentrated power and conflicts of interest. Board decision-making may lack independence, capacity, and diversity in perspectives, potentially neglecting the broader interests of students, parents, and the community. In California, **an absence of robust checks and balances** has resulted in instances of serious conflicts of interest and self-dealing, eroding the trust of legislators and the public in charter schools.

Likewise, the Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team (“FCMAT”)’s *California Charter School Accounting and Best Practices Manual* (revised 2022) addresses serious concerns involving charter schools that operate under a governance structure with a sole statutory member. The manual, which was developed to help charter schools follow legal requirements as well as FCMAT recommendations, unequivocally states that “[g]overnance structures that reference a sole statutory member or sole member **should always be avoided.**” (Manual, p. 20; emphasis added.) The manual lists the types of authority that a sole statutory member may possess, as defined in the articles of incorporation or corporate bylaws, and expresses:

This type of authority gives the sole statutory member complete control over the charter school. Sole statutory members by themselves may be able to exert significant influence over the charter school and are often founders, family members, or other related parties who are not known to the charter authorizer and/or independent auditor. (Manual, p. 21)

Therefore, FCMAT opposes charter school governance structures that contain a sole statutory member because they place nearly unfettered authority in the hands of a separate entity that can exert significant influence and control over the charter school. Even if the sole statutory member is not comprised of founders, family members, or related parties, the structure itself remains problematic and severely restricts transparency and accountability in charter school governance.

In fact, Senate Bill 126 was specifically introduced and enacted into law to hold charter schools to heightened transparency and accountability standards by requiring charter schools and entities managing charter schools to comply with the requirements of the Brown Act, Public Records Act, Government Code sections 1090 et seq., and the Political Reform Act. (*See* Educ. Code § 47604.1.) Here, Springs Charter Schools is not constituted as an “entity managing a charter school” (e.g., a charter management organization) due to the fact that it does not “operate” the charter school on paper. Consequently, it is able to circumvent these important public transparency and accountability laws by instead functioning as a sole statutory member.

It is not lost on the District that the selection, appointment, and removal of a charter school’s board members effectively allows Springs Charter Schools to control all governance, programmatic, fiscal, and operational aspects of the charter school. This is because if the sole statutory member does not agree with a particular board member’s commentary, decision/vote, or position on a topic or matter before the charter school’s board, that individual can be quickly silenced, removed, and replaced with an individual whose viewpoints and actions reflect the position, goals, and/or vision of the sole statutory member. This arrangement obviates the purpose and need for a charter school board of directors and is contrary to the legislative intent

of recently-enacted laws designed to increase transparency and eliminate conflicts of interest in charter school operations.

The District would not agree to authorize a charter school with a sole statutory member in 2017—one which would never be accountable to the District since it would operate outside of the District’s authorization and oversight. Now, eight years later, neither Vista Springs nor Springs Charter Schools has made any substantive changes to this problematic structure to infuse greater accountability and transparency in the governance and operations of the charter school. This is unacceptable to the District and does not align with FCMAT recommendations or the advice of other charter-authorizing experts to avoid the approval of sole statutory membership structures.

For these reasons, the District cannot recommend that its Board of Education approve the Renewal Petition with the current structure in place. Therefore, the District expects Vista Springs to make meaningful, substantive changes to its governance structure that comport with the law and best practices to ensure full transparency and accountability.

Lack of Transparency Related to Financial Obligations to Sole Statutory Member

The District also observed that there were no contracts or other written agreements included with the Renewal Petition detailing the legal, financial, or operational relationship between Springs Charter Schools and Vista Springs. The District would have expected to see a detailed, comprehensive summary of the roles, responsibilities, and services (if any) provided by Springs Charter Schools to Vista Springs, including any corresponding fees/costs associated with such functions, within the governance section or under the “administrative services” section of the Renewal Petition. Instead, the Renewal Petition is devoid of this information. In fact, the Renewal Petition states on page 161 that Vista Springs “will contract with River Springs Charter Schools for back office services per the draft [memorandum of understanding],” noting that a copy of the MOU will be “provided to the District promptly following its execution.” This statement is confounding to the District, considering that Vista Springs is already established and operating as a charter school. At a minimum, a copy of the MOU, even in draft form, should have been included with the Renewal Petition.

The District is equally concerned about the lack of inclusion of an MOU or contract between Vista Springs and Springs Charter Schools in the Renewal Petition. Based on an observation of Springs Charter Schools’ meeting agenda from February 11, 2025, there is an action item to approve an “Updated Memorandum of Understanding between SCS and Charters.” Presumably, this MOU included Vista Springs; yet a copy of the MOU was not provided. This demonstrates a lack of transparency and further solidifies the District’s concerns regarding the relationship between the two entities. It is also worth noting that there is an additional action item on the same agenda concerning the approval of a contract with Pechanga for a summer staff development conference. Considering that Springs Charter Schools would be potentially contracting with a third party for use of conference space, that indicates that Springs Charter Schools has a budget and has received revenue to support such expenditures. In fact, Springs Charter Schools’ June 3, 2025 meeting agenda includes an agenda item for approval of its 2025-26 budget. However, it remains unknown how Springs Charter Schools draws its income

and whether it comes from the Springs-affiliated charter schools via a fee for service arrangement, percentage of total ADA, or other methodology. To the extent that Vista Springs makes any form of payment or financial contribution to Springs Charter Schools, the District would have expected to see the details in an executed written agreement and clearly delineated in the financial documents submitted with the Renewal Petition. The omission of this information calls into question the fidelity of the relationship between Vista Springs and Springs Charter Schools.

OPPORTUNITY TO CURE

The substantial fiscal and governance factors and concerns identified above must be remedied or refuted by Vista Springs on or before **Friday, October 31, 2025**. Please provide a detailed, written response addressing each of the identified factors/concerns. Vista Springs may also enclose a corrective action plan and supporting documentation evidencing any remedial actions it has taken to address and/or to refute the issues raised above. Please submit Vista Springs' response to the following:

Vista Unified School District
Attn: Matthew Doyle, Ed.D., Superintendent
1234 Arcadia Avenue
Vista, CA 92084
mattdoyle@vistausd.org

After the conclusion of the reasonable opportunity to cure, the District will evaluate Vista Springs' response to the Notice and supporting evidence, if submitted. If Vista Springs does not successfully correct, establish a viable plan to correct, or refute the issues and concerns described herein, then the District's Board of Education may use this information to support one or more denial findings that Vista Springs is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the charter school program set forth in the Renewal Petition.

The District appreciates Vista Springs' attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Matthew Doyle, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Board of Trustees, Vista Unified School District
Eric Chagala, EdD, Assistant Superintendent

**VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT AND PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT
CONCERNING VISTA SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL PETITION**

Date Posted: November 4, 2025

The following provides a summary of the Vista Unified School District’s (“District”) staff report and proposed findings of fact (“Staff Report”) concerning Vista Springs Charter School’s (“Vista Springs”) renewal petition (“Renewal Petition”).

Introduction and Procedural Background

Vista Springs Charter School has been operating as a nonclassroom-based, independent study charter school under the authorization of the State Board of Education (“SBE”) since its petition—originally denied by the District—was approved on appeal in 2017. Since that time, the law was amended to remove the ability of the SBE to continue authorizing and overseeing charter schools. Charter schools authorized pursuant to an SBE-approved charter on appeal may continue to operate under such authority until the date in which the charter school’s term expires. If a charter school desires to be renewed, it must submit its renewal petition to the public school district in whose boundaries it is located pursuant to Education Code section 47605.9. Consequently, Vista Springs has returned to the District for approval of its Renewal Petition. If approved, the District would become the chartering authority for Vista Springs.

Vista Springs offers a flexible, personalized learning model via its Mosaic program and home-based TK-12 program, as well as an in-person dual language immersion program called La Fuente. Vista Springs currently serves a population of approximately 250 students in transitional kindergarten (“TK”) through twelfth grade. According to the most recent data available on the California School Dashboard (“Dashboard”), Vista Springs’ student population consists of 72.5% socioeconomically disadvantaged students, 21.5% English learners, 0.8% foster youth, and 14.2% students with disabilities.

Vista Springs’ current charter term expires on June 30, 2026, and it is seeking a five-year renewal term beginning on July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2031.

On August 28, 2025, the District received a copy of Vista Springs’ Renewal Petition. Dr. Kathleen Hermsmeyer, Lead Petitioner and Superintendent of Spring Charter Schools, also provided a signed certification to the District deeming the Renewal Petition to be complete.

On September 30, 2025, after conducting a preliminary review of the governance structure and financial information included as part of Vista Springs’ Renewal Petition, the District provided Vista Springs with a detailed Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure, pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e) (“Notice”). The District requested a response from Vista Springs by no later than October 31, 2025. A copy of the Notice is included as Attachment 1 to this Staff Report and incorporated herein by reference.

On October 16, 2025, the District’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) held a public hearing to determine the level of support for the Renewal Petition by teachers, other District employees, and parents/guardians.

On October 31, 2025, Vista Springs submitted a written response to the District’s Notice (“Response”). The Notice acknowledged the District’s fiscal and governance concerns and included some explanation and supporting documentation. However, the Response was largely dismissive of the District’s concerns—particularly with respect to the dual layer of governance resulting from the sole statutory membership of Springs Charter Schools, Inc. A copy of the Response is included as Attachment 2 to this Staff Report and incorporated herein by reference.

On November 19, 2025, the District’s Board will hold a second public hearing on the Renewal Petition during which the Board will consider the admissions preferences of the charter school and take action to either grant or deny the Renewal Petition.

As discussed in further detail below, District staff, in consultation with legal counsel, has conducted a comprehensive review of the Renewal Petition and the academic performance of Vista Springs utilizing the charter renewal criteria set forth in Education Code sections 47607 *et seq.* In addition, the District has evaluated Vista Springs’ Response to the District’s Notice. Based on that analysis, District staff recommends that the Board **deny** Vista Springs’ Renewal Petition.

Charter Renewal Criteria and Findings of Fact

The consideration of a renewal petition requires the District to: (1) determine whether the charter school meets applicable eligibility requirements using the new accountability criteria and reflected in the Dashboard, and (2) evaluate whether the Renewal Petition meets the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code section 47605. An analysis of these two components of the charter renewal process is addressed in detail below and includes District staff’s corresponding findings of fact.

1. Vista Springs Charter School’s Eligibility for Renewal Under Accountability Criteria/ Findings of Fact

Education Code section 47607 provides that a “chartering authority may grant one or more subsequent renewals pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) and Section 47607.2.” These provisions detail a three-tiered system that categorizes a charter school as a high-performing, middle-performing, or low-performing charter school. The designation of a charter school in a particular tier determines the level of review that the chartering authority must conduct to evaluate whether the charter school is eligible for renewal of its charter.

The California Department of Education provides access on its website to a list of California public charter schools and the respective performance tier to which they have been assigned based on the criteria set forth in Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2. This list is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ch/performcategory.asp>.

a. **Eligibility for Charter Renewal as a “Middle-Performing” Charter School**

Vista Springs qualifies as a “middle-performing” charter school. Placement in this tier requires the District to evaluate the following:

- Vista Springs’ performance on the state and local indicators on the Dashboard, both on a schoolwide basis and for all student groups served by the charter school. The District must give greater weight to Vista Springs’ performance on measurements of academic performance.
- Clear and convincing evidence, as demonstrated by verified data, which shows that Vista Springs has either (1) achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement, as defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school, or (2) strong post-secondary outcomes (e.g., college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers).

By satisfying the above criteria, the District’s Board must grant a renewal term of five years, except as specified below.

The District’s Board may deny renewal of a charter school in the middle-performing tier only upon making the following specific written findings:

1. The charter school has failed to make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the school’s students;
2. Closure of the charter school is in the students’ best interests; and
3. The decision provided greater weight to performance on “measurements of academic performance”—the test-based indicators in English Language Arts and Mathematics, the English Learner Progress Indicator, and the Career and College Indicator (if applicable).¹

b. **Findings of Fact**

The following include District staff’s findings of fact concerning Vista Springs’ designation as a middle-performing charter school.

Finding of Fact No. 1: Vista Springs received the designation of a “middle-performing” charter school based upon its performance on state and local indicators reflected on the Dashboard; however, Vista Springs has shown across-the-board declines in student performance in ELA, some modest improvements in Math, and declines in English learner progress.

¹ The Science Indicator has been introduced on the Dashboard. However, a color has not yet been assigned for Vista Springs, since two years of data are not yet available. The Dashboard results for this indicator are for informational purposes only.

The District has considered Vista Springs’ performance on a schoolwide basis and among all student groups served by the charter school as identified on the Dashboard, giving greater weight to the charter school’s performance on measurements of academic performance. The District’s evaluation includes the data detailed in the Renewal Petition and the results on the Dashboard, including the most recent release of the results for the 2023-2024 school year.

District staff has determined that Vista Springs thinly meets the minimum requirements to qualify for renewal as a middle-performing charter school based upon the academic indicators on the Dashboard, given its modest improvement in Mathematics (“Math”) and despite a decline in English Language Arts (“ELA”) and on the English Learner Progress Indicator. Overall, Vista Springs’ schoolwide performance in ELA, Math, and on the English Learner Progress Indicator continue to fall below the state averages. However, Vista Springs’ suspension and chronic absenteeism rates are at or near the state average.

On the most recent 2024 Dashboard, data shows that Vista Springs received the following performance levels on a schoolwide basis:

- English-Language Arts (“ELA”): **Orange** (44.8 points below standard, declining 9 points.)
- Mathematics: **Yellow** (72.2 points below standard, with an increase of 4.5 points.)
- English Learner Progress: **Red** (28.2 making progress, declining 25.8%.)
- Chronic Absenteeism: **Yellow** (15.5% chronically absent, improving by 0.6%.)
- Suspension Rate: **Green** (3.4% suspended at least one day, declined by 0.9%.)
- Graduation Rate: **No Color** (fewer than 11 students; data not displayed for privacy.)
- College/Career Indicator: **No Color** (fewer than 11 students; data not displayed for privacy.)

English Language Arts.

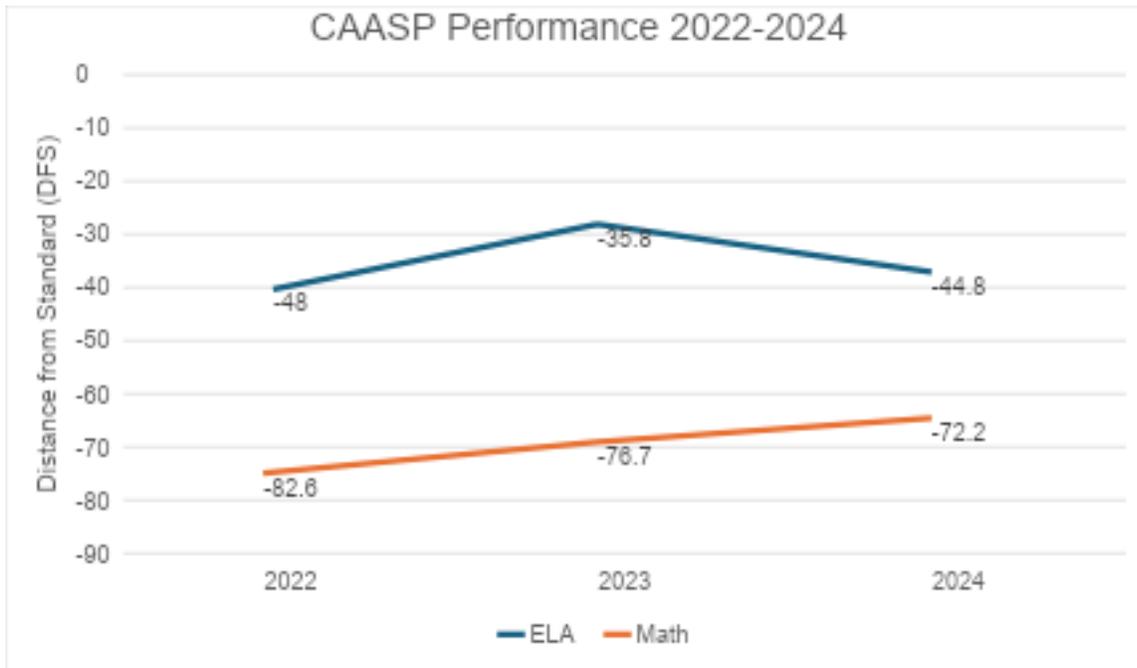
Vista Springs has shown declines among its student population on a schoolwide basis in ELA proficiency. When compared to its scores on the 2022 Dashboard—which did not receive performance colors due to the suspension of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) and the lack of performance data for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years—Vista Springs experienced some improvements in student academic achievement and performance in 2023 but then declined in all student groups in 2024 that received a performance color, except for the Students with Disabilities student group. The following chart shows Vista Springs’ performance on the 2022, 2023, and 2024 Dashboards in ELA, respectively, both schoolwide and among its significant student group populations, utilizing the “distance from standard” (or “DFS”) metric. This metric evaluates how far, on average, students are from the lowest possible score for meeting standards.

Student Group	2022 DFS ELA	2023 DFS ELA	2024 DFS ELA
All Students	-48 (Low)	-35.8	-44.8
Hispanic	-62.5 (Low)	-50.8	-62.4

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-68.3 (Low)	-50.3	-64.3
English Learners	-74.9 (Very Low)	-65.3	- 88
Students with Disabilities	-140.8	-116.2	-108.4
White	-25.2	15.1	19.1
Long-Term English Learners ²	N/A	N/A	-122.2

As reflected above, student performance showed some improvement across the board between the 2022 and 2023 administrations of the ELA portion of the CAASPP for all reported student groups. However, between the 2023 and 2024 administrations of the ELA portion of the CAASPP, all students, with the exception of Students with Disabilities and White student groups, declined significantly, moving from Yellow to Orange, or in the case of English learners, down to Red. Additionally, a new student group, Long-Term English Learners, emerged in 2024, and while not assigned a performance color, demonstrated significantly low performance.

The following chart provides an additional snapshot of Vista Springs’ ELA CAASPP performance from 2022 to 2024. As noted above, Vista Springs experienced an increase in scores from 2022 to 2023, only to see those gains almost completely lost during the 2024 ELA administrations of the CAASPP.



² On the 2024 Dashboard, Long-Term English Learners emerged as a significant subgroup at Vista Springs. Though not given a performance color, this subgroup scored significantly below the standard.

When comparing Vista Springs’ performance against the state averages on the 2024 ELA portion of the CAASPP, Vista Springs fell below the state average by about 32 points on a schoolwide basis. Additionally, Vista Springs scored below the state average in all groups by approximately 10 to 20 points or more, except for the White student group, which received a similar score as the state. The following chart provides a comparison of Vista Springs’ performance against the statewide average:

Student Group	2024 DFS ELA (State)	2024 DFS ELA (Vista Springs)
All Students	-13.2	-44.8
Hispanic	-39.3	-62.4
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-40.9	-64.3
English Learners	-67.6	- 88
Students with Disabilities	-95.6	-108.4
White	19.2	19.1
Long-Term English Learners	-109.6	-122.2

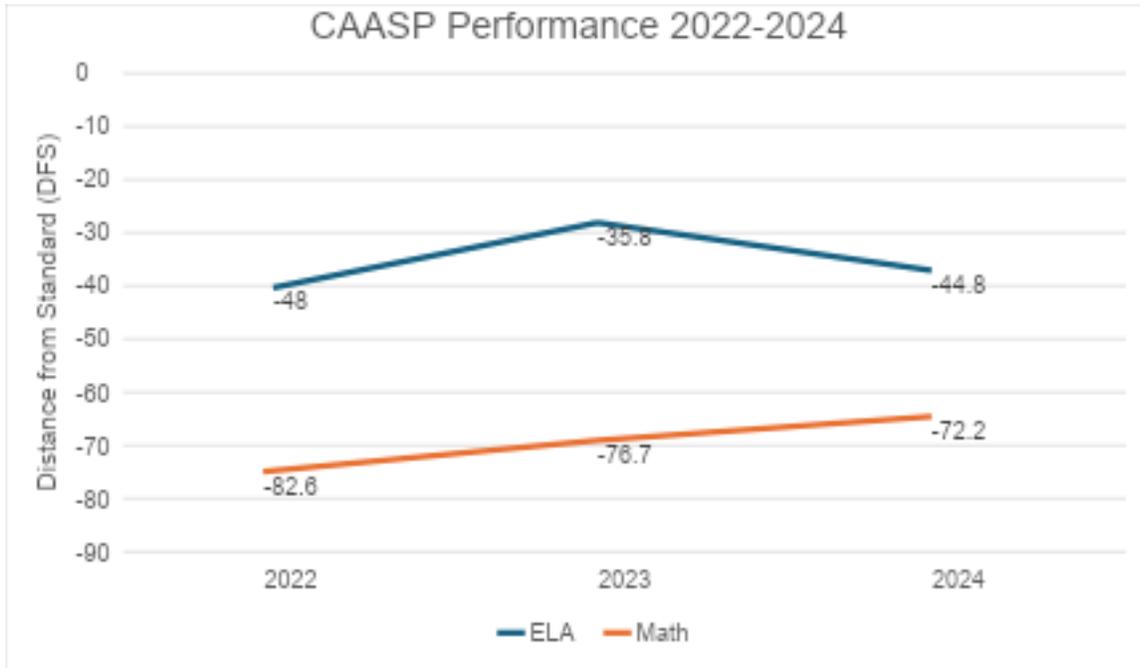
Not only did Vista Springs perform below the state average in ELA on a schoolwide basis, it has not shown gains across most student groups over the past year but rather has decreased significantly.

Mathematics

Vista Springs has shown some modest improvements among its student population on a schoolwide basis in Mathematics. Additionally, almost all student groups experienced increases between the 2023 and 2024 administrations of the Mathematics portion of the CAASPP, with the exception of the English learners group, which maintained, and White student group, which did not receive a performance color and declined by 10 points. Although the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged student group increased 3 points, it dropped from a Yellow to an Orange performance color.

Student Group	2022 DFS Math	2023 DFS Math	2024 DFS Math
All Students	-82.6 (Low)	-76.7	-72.2
Hispanic	-97.5 (Low)	-93.9	-82.8
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-100.6 (Very Low)	-91	-88
English Learners	-104.6 (Very Low)	-105.6	-105.7
Students with Disabilities	-163.6	-169	-156.1
White	-66.9	-7.3	-17.3
Long-Term English Learners	N/A	N/A	-164.9

The following chart provides an additional snapshot of Vista Springs’ performance on the Mathematics portion of the CAASPP from 2022 to 2024. As demonstrated above, Vista Springs has seen a slight improvement based on a comparison of the 2023 and 2024 administrations of the Math portion of the CAASPP.



When comparing Vista Springs’ performance against the state averages on the 2024 Mathematics portion of the CAASPP, Vista Springs similarly ranked below the state average by approximately 25 points on a schoolwide basis, although it was assigned the higher performance color of Yellow. Otherwise, Vista Springs performed similarly to the state for Hispanic, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, White, and Long-Term English Learner groups. Vista Springs’ English Learners and Students with Disabilities performed significantly below the state average.

Student Group	2024 DFS Math (State)	2024 DFS Math (Vista Springs)
All Students	-47.6	-72.2
Hispanic	-79.2	-82.8
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-78.2	-88
English Learners	-93.4	-105.7
Students with Disabilities	-124.3	-156.1
White	-10.3	-17.3
Long-Term English Learners	-163.5	-164.9

Although Vista Springs continues to perform below the state average in Mathematics overall, it has shown small but measurable gains across some student groups over the past year while demonstrating declines in others.

Notably, Vista Springs shared in its presentation during the first public hearing on the Renewal Petition at the District's October 16, 2025 Board meeting that it had increased 10 points in the 2025 administration of the ELA portion of the CAASPP; however, this increase only returns Vista Springs to its 2023 level. Similarly, Vista Springs' increase of one point in Math demonstrates maintenance, not growth. Additionally, no data was provided for the significant student groups served by the charter school. Consequently, the District cannot assess whether those student populations demonstrated any meaningful growth in ELA or Math.

District staff noted that Vista Springs failed to include data in its Renewal Petition regarding the performance of its Students with Disabilities group for its analysis of the results of the 2022, 2023, and 2024 CAASPP administrations. As depicted in the charts above, the Students with Disabilities group has performed, and continues to perform, significantly below its peer student groups in both ELA and Math. Students with Disabilities demonstrated minimal progress over the 2022, 2023, and 2024 years in Math while making modest progress in ELA. Although this group was not assigned a performance color, the District would have expected to see some analysis in the Renewal Petition regarding achievement and growth for this important student population.

English Learner Progress Indicator.

According to the English Learner Progress indicator on the 2024 Dashboard, Vista Springs received a performance color designation of Red due to only 28.2% of English learners making progress toward English language proficiency. This represents a substantial decline of 25.8% from the prior 2023 Dashboard score. Vista Springs fell below the state average of 45.7% of English learners making progress toward English language proficiency in the same year. Vista Springs' performance on the English Learner Progress Indicator is especially concerning given that its Dual Language Immersion ("DLI") program is specifically designed to support both English and Spanish language acquisition. Although Vista Springs states in its Renewal Petition that it is effectively addressing poor performance on this indicator, as well as other challenges, through the use of intentional strategies, the Renewal Petition lacks evidence supporting a clear, cohesive, measurable, and outcomes-driven plan to meaningfully improve student performance in this critical area.

Science.

The Science Indicator was introduced as part of the Dashboard in 2024 and draws data from student performance on either the California Science Test ("CAST") or the California Alternate Assessment for Science. These assessments are administered annually to students in grades 5 and 8, as well as once during high school. The Science Indicator is currently only identified on the Dashboard for informational purposes, since a performance color cannot be assigned until there are two years' worth of data. Vista Springs scored 19.3 points below the standard and was outperformed by the state at 13.5 points below the standard (again using the DFS metric).

Chronic Absenteeism.

Vista Springs was designated in the Yellow category for chronic absenteeism with 15.5% of students reported as chronically absent. Vista Springs experienced a decline from the prior year (16.2%), moving up one color from the Orange performance category in 2023. Vista Springs performed similarly to the state average, which reported 18.6% of students as chronically absent.

Suspension Rate.

Vista Springs was assigned a Green performance designation due to a suspension rate of 3.4%, which is commensurate with the state's suspension rate of 3.2%.

College/Career and Graduation Rate

Vista Springs has stated in its Renewal Petition that it offers a home-based learning program serving students in grades TK through 12. The Dashboard includes a Graduation Rate category for Vista Springs as far back as 2022 and a College/Career category was included on the 2023 Dashboard. However, because Vista Springs has so few highschool students, no data was available nor was a performance color assigned to either the Graduation Rate or College/Career Indicator. Therefore, the District could not evaluate the efficacy of Vista Springs' high school program and whether students are both meeting graduation requirements and leaving school prepared with college/career readiness. The Renewal Petition included no information regarding these metrics.

Local Indicators

According to the 2022, 2023, and 2024 Dashboard results, Vista Springs met all standards on the local indicators, including teachers, instructional materials and facilities; implementation of academic standards; parent and family engagement; local climate survey; and access to a broad course of study.

Based on an analysis of the above data and other information, the District has significant concerns regarding Vista Springs' student academic achievement and performance in both ELA and Mathematics, in which there were demonstrated declines in scores in ELA both schoolwide and among all reported student groups, while in Math, English learners made no progress and White students declined.

Overall, the District has determined that while Vista Springs qualifies as a middle-performing charter school, its performance on the most recent Dashboard both schoolwide and among reported student groups is not reflecting meaningful year-over-year growth—especially in light of the across-the-board declines in ELA and significant drop in performance on the English Learner Progress Indicator. Therefore, while Vista Springs may technically qualify as a middle-performing charter school, the District questions the fidelity of the educational program and measures being implemented to support student academic growth and achievement in ELA

and Math across its student groups, as well as English Language Development (“ELD”) for students classified as English learners.

Finding of Fact No. 2: The Renewal Petition lacks clear and convincing evidence, demonstrated by verified data, to show that Vista Springs has achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement as defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school.

District staff has determined that the Renewal Petition does not include clear and convincing evidence to demonstrate that Vista Springs has achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement, defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school, based on the verified data submitted with the Renewal Petition.

In addition to the CAASPP assessment data described above, Vista Springs provided minimal local assessment data to support its eligibility for renewal as a middle-performing charter school. Vista Springs included a limited data set reflecting student performance in Reading and Math on the i-Ready for students in grades 3-8. Although the Renewal Petition states that Vista Springs uses i-Ready as a key diagnostic measure for students in grade 3 and above, no local assessment data was provided for students in grades TK-2 or 9-12. Consequently, the District has no way to evaluate student performance and progress among the remainder of its student population. In addition, the data provided for students in grades 3-8 is not disaggregated by grade level, program type (of which there are three), or student group; thus, there is no means to evaluate whether students are making measurable progress.

The Renewal Petition states that the percentages listed below are based on “vendor provided guidance” in which i-Ready defines student “growth progress as, ‘the aggregation of students [who] would have a median percent progress toward typical growth of 100 percent or greater to show that students have, on average, experienced a full year’s worth of typical growth. ” (Renewal Petition, p. 26.) The Renewal Petition includes a single chart to reflect student performance on the i-Ready:

VSCS i-Ready Reading and Math Performance (Typical Growth)

Domain	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Reading	135%	171%	183%
Math	111%	117%	109%

*3rd-8th grade i-Ready results (i-Ready)

As demonstrated above, the Renewal Petition includes one conclusory chart that presents “typical growth” and suggests that students made significant progress. But, again, the data is not disaggregated by grade level, program, or significant student groups, which entirely restricts the District from analyzing whether and how students are actually progressing. Further, there is no comparative data included in the Renewal Petition to interpret the significance of the data listed

above. This chart, therefore, is wholly insufficient for use as verified data to support the conclusion that Vista Springs' students are making at least one year's progress for each year in school.

The District's review team is surprised that Vista Springs failed to provide any meaningful data points or analysis to support student growth based upon verified data—especially when considering its performance declines on the most recent publication of the Dashboard's academic indicators. The District would have expected a robust description reflecting how students enrolled in Vista Springs are making progress, including distinct, supportable data sets to back such assertions. Simply including a chart of student performance schoolwide in Reading and Math hardly demonstrates clear and convincing evidence that Vista Springs has achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school.

2. Charter Petition Renewal Criteria Under Education Code Section 47605 / Findings of Fact

Education Code section 47607 provides that charter renewals are governed by the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code section 47605 and must include, but not be limited to, a reasonable comprehensive description of any new requirement of charter schools enacted into law after the charter was originally granted or last renewed.

a. Grounds for Denial

The governing board of a school district shall not deny a petition unless it makes written factual findings specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:

1. The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the students to be enrolled in the charter school.
2. The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.
3. The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a) of Education Code section 47605. (*The signature requirement is **not** applicable to a renewal petition.*)
4. The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the required conditions.
5. The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of all required elements.
6. The petition does not contain a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

7. The charter school is demonstrably unlikely to serve the interests of the entire community in which the school is proposing to locate. *(This finding is **not** applicable to a renewal petition.)*
8. The school district is not positioned to absorb the fiscal impact of the proposed charter school. *(This finding is **not** applicable to a renewal petition.)*

b. Findings of Fact

The District conducted a comprehensive review of Vista Springs' Renewal Petition, which included a detailed analysis of its educational program, measurable student outcomes and methods for measuring student progress, fiscal and governance structures, student admissions and discipline, labor and personnel issues, facilities and operations, and legal issues. Overall, as detailed below, the Renewal Petition included reasonably comprehensive descriptions of many required legal elements. However, District staff identified significant concerns with respect to Vista Springs' governance structure and practices, such as a lack of organizational transparency and a dual layer of governance due to the role of Springs Charter Schools, Inc. as the "sole statutory member" of Vista Springs' governing board—a role over which the District has no meaningful oversight authority. In addition, District staff continues to have concerns with respect to Vista Springs' fiscal transparency, including a lack of detail regarding its student enrollment projections, anticipated revenues based upon those projections, and certain expenditures that were not fully addressed in Vista Springs' Response to the District's Notice. There also remains a lack of clarity around Vista Springs' procurement of back-office services from River Springs Charter School. Finally, the District found deficiencies with respect to Vista Springs' description of its educational program, health and safety procedures, and other aspects of its operations.

Below, District staff presents its findings of fact addressing the general categories of review.

Finding of Fact No. 3: While the Renewal Petition generally appears to present a sound educational program for the students enrolled in the charter school, the District questions the fidelity and effectiveness of the offered instructional models given Vista Springs' poor student performance on the Dashboard's academic indicators.

Vista Springs' Renewal Petition generally includes a comprehensive description of the educational programs and offerings for the students enrolled in its charter school. Vista Springs operates three separate programs: a fully seat-based dual language immersion ("DLI") program (i.e., La Fuente), a hybrid program providing three days of classroom-based learning with two days of supported home study (i.e., Mosaic), and a TK-12th grade home-based program. However, for the reasons addressed in Findings of Fact Nos. 1 and 2 above, the District questions the effectiveness and overall soundness of these programs in delivering a quality, outcomes-driven educational model that is designed to foster student learning, progress, and success.

Additionally, the Renewal Petition's description of how it will identify, address, and meet the needs of its English learners is not fully developed. This is particularly concerning in light of Vista Springs' performance on the English Learner Progress Indicator on the most recent Dashboard. The Renewal Petition does not describe site-level procedures or responsible

personnel for conducting and monitoring the Home Language Survey, the initial ELPAC administration, or parent notifications. Local accountability systems for oversight and documentation are also not described. Moreover, though the Renewal Petition includes definitions for designated and integrated ELD, it lacks site-specific information such as the amount of minutes dedicated to such instruction, grouping structures, staffing, and systems for monitoring instructional fidelity.

The Renewal Petition references general instructional approaches and frameworks, but it does not explain how ELD strategies are integrated into daily instruction, supported through professional development, or monitored for consistent implementation. District staff also observed that the Renewal Petition states that there may be teachers who are not authorized as Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (“CLAD”) or Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (“BCLAD”), but they will still serve English learner students, in which case they will be given two years to secure appropriate authorization.

District staff also notes concerns with Vista Springs’ La Fuente program, which implements a DLI model. La Fuente is designated as a program where a 50/50 English/Spanish model of dual immersion is implemented in grades TK-5, with a reduction to 15% Spanish in grades 6-8. However, the Renewal Petition does not describe curriculum alignment in both languages (with the exception of the Benchmark Adelante) or include staffing qualifications (although Vista Springs notes that two of its teachers have been recognized for their work in bilingual education). In addition, the overall efficacy of the La Fuente DLI program is in question when considering the 2024 Dashboard scores for English learners and Long-Term English Learners. On its website, Vista Springs claims that La Fuente will have students achieving superior levels of learning (“lograr niveles superiores de aprendizaje”), but its English learners and Long-Term English Learners’ scores fall below the state’s average. While District staff acknowledges Vista Springs’ statement that research shows many English learners may not demonstrate English language proficiency until middle school if enrolled in a DLI program, Vista Springs does not include data to demonstrate that its middle school students are indeed demonstrating this expected level of English proficiency.

Additionally, with respect to the manner in which Vista Springs will address the needs of students with disabilities, the Renewal Petition does not identify or discuss its Section 504 policy or include a link to its Section 504 Handbook. The Renewal Petition also does not adequately describe the continuum of placement options for students with disabilities in circumstances where a student’s individualized education program (“IEP”) team determines that the student’s program at Vista Springs is not appropriate to provide the student with a free and appropriate public education (“FAPE”).

Vista Springs’ instructional programs, if implemented with fidelity and in alignment with the Renewal Petition, otherwise appear to be consistent with sound education practice. The District emphasizes, however, that it is only through focused efforts and a commitment to providing students with a high quality, rigorous instructional program that Vista Springs will experience improvements in student academic outcomes—both schoolwide and among its student groups. In addition, ongoing professional development opportunities and training is critical to ensure teaching staff and those facilitating student instruction and learning are equipped with the

strategies, interventions, and supports needed to foster academic growth. The District recognizes that Vista Springs has included a detailed description of its professional development strategy in the Renewal Petition and has specifically noted its investment in professional development in culturally and linguistically-responsive instructional practices, ELD, and Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (“SDAIE”). While this is laudable, Vista Springs’ investment into professional development must be done strategically to yield measurable improvements in student outcomes.

Finding of Fact No. 4: The Petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the charter school program due to fiscal and governance factors identified by the District.

Vista Springs has been operating as a charter school under the SBE’s authorization since 2017. The District conducted a review of the financial documents submitted with the Renewal Petition, including Vista Springs’ budget and multi-year projections, funding assumptions and calculations, enrollment and average daily attendance (“ADA”) assumptions, and projected monthly cash flow statements. The District also analyzed Vista Springs’ governance structure, as described in its Renewal Petition and accompanying documents.

On September 30, 2025, the District issued a Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure, in which the District identified substantial fiscal and governance factors that raised considerable concerns for the District. The District provided a reasonable opportunity for Vista Springs to respond in writing, with a deadline of October 31, 2025. On the stated deadline, Vista Springs submitted its Response to the District. The District’s evaluation of Vista Springs’ Response is addressed below.

As part of the District’s preliminary review leading up to the issuance of the Notice, the District analyzed financial reports and other documents provided with the Renewal Petition, including Vista Springs’ revenue assumptions, adopted budget, cash flow documentation, and multi-year projections (“MYP”). The MYP includes projections for the 2025-26, 2026-2027, and 2027-2028 school years. The District also evaluated the description of Vista Springs’ governance structure, along with its supporting corporate documents. The details of that analysis and the District’s corresponding fiscal and governance concerns are described in the Notice, included as Attachment 1 to this Staff Report.

As a whole, the District found Vista Springs’ Response to lack sufficient explanation and supporting information or evidence to resolve the District’s concerns related to its fiscal practices and governance structure. The Response was largely dismissive of the District’s concerns and gave a strong impression to the District’s review team that Vista Springs had no intention of altering its practices or structures to infuse greater accountability and transparency in its operations.

The District notes that Vista Springs generally provided adequate responses regarding its facilities lease arrangement, student enrollment projections, and certain expenditures. However, the remainder of its responses failed to provide sufficient details or rationale to address or correct the issues raised in the District’s Notice. With respect to the projected reduction in expenditures in the out-years, the District asked whether they account for the expiration of one-time funding

sources along with anticipated increases in salaries, benefits, and other payroll-related costs. In response, Vista Springs asked for clarification regarding the level of detail the District sought rather than taking the initiative of providing supplemental documentation demonstrating how such expenditure reductions accounted for the items noted above.

Additionally, the Response indicates that Vista Springs' financial reports and other documentation contain expenditures broken down by object code and line item, including line items for oversight fees and back-office services provided by River Springs Charter School; yet, following an additional review of the financial information submitted with the Renewal Petition, District staff could not locate this information. The District also notes that Vista Springs stated that it included a copy of a memorandum of understanding ("MOU") between Vista Springs and River Springs Charter School concerning the provision of back-office services; however, no such MOU was included. Instead, Vista Springs enclosed a copy of an Employee and Personnel Services Sharing MOU among various Springs-affiliated charter schools.

Overall, in light of Vista Springs' limited responses, the District was unable perform a comprehensive financial analysis due to a lack of requested documentation, including, but not limited to, independent audited financial statements, detailed revenue projections and assumptions, detailed staffing information, and a comprehensive set of projected expenditures broken down by applicable object code/line item. In the absence of this information, and as articulated in the Notice, the District does not believe that Vista Springs meets charter school financial reporting standards or has presented accurate projections that are based upon responsible, grounded assumptions.

Governance

As presented, the Petition describes a governance structure that is multi-layered, vague, and lacking in organizational transparency. The Petition states that the Charter School will be operated by Harbor Springs Charter School, Inc., a California non-profit public benefit corporation. However, Springs Charter Schools, Inc., a separate entity, would continue to serve as the "sole statutory member" to the Vista Springs governing board. As explained in the Notice, the sole statutory member possesses significant power over the Vista Springs governing board, including the power to fill vacancies on the board, remove directors from the board, vote on the disposition of all or substantially all of the corporation's assets, approve any merger and its principal terms (including any amendments of those terms), and vote on any election to dissolve the corporation.

In its Response, Vista Springs contends that the District's concerns with this structure, including the powers held by the sole statutory member, are speculative and without warrant. However, the Response fails to provide an adequate rationale that supports the need for this structure. The Response completely avoids any real discussion regarding the extensive rights and powers of Springs Charter Schools relative to the composition of Vista Springs' governing board and its ability to remove and fill board member positions at its sole discretion. Instead, Vista Springs

chalks this function up to being necessary to “ensure board continuity.” It is unclear what that statement means.

The District finds it interesting that the Response includes an affirmative statement that the District has oversight authority over Springs Charter Schools via the public transparency statutes set forth in Senate Bill 126 and codified in Education Code section 47604.1. However, this statement is not grounded in the law. Contrary to Vista Springs’ contention, the District has no oversight authority over a sole statutory member, which is an entirely separate entity from the Charter School. Irrespective of whether, as Vista Springs contends, a sole statutory member is required to comply with the public transparency laws applicable to charter schools, there is absolutely no way for the District to enforce the sole statutory member’s compliance with the Brown Act, Government Code sections 1090 *et seq.*, the California Public Records Act, or the Political Reform Act. The District would not serve as the chartering authority of Springs Charter Schools, nor would it have any oversight rights over that entity. The District could not compel Springs Charter School to comply with the law absent the filing of a complaint in court or with the applicable governmental enforcement agency. Further, the District’s only other recourse would be to initiate revocation proceedings against Vista Springs due to the failure of its sole statutory member’s compliance with the law, which would be both a costly and time-consuming process. Clearly, the sole statutory member would have no obligation to respond to District inquiries regarding its operations, finances, management practices, or other matters applicable to charter oversight. Therefore, it is entirely misplaced and misleading to assert that the District could legally assert its oversight authority over Springs Charter Schools.

The District also notes that the Response includes inconsistent statements regarding the sole statutory member’s compliance with public transparency laws. First, the Response states that “the law could not be more clear that Springs Charter Schools is an ‘entity managing a charter school’ and is, therefore, subject to the public transparency statutes.” Thereafter, the Response states that Springs Charter Schools is not a charter management organization, and it “is not statutorily required to comply with charter-specific transparency laws.” These affirmations are confusing, inconsistent, and further serve to convolute the actual structure and function of the sole statutory member in its “management” of Vista Springs.

Additionally, the District takes particular issue with Vista Springs’ position that its “governance structure already comports with the law and best practices, and ensures full transparency and accountability. As such, changes are not needed to simply meet the District’s preferences.” First, this sole statutory membership structure does not comport with best practices and actually runs contrary to the guidance of the Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team (“FCMAT”) and the California Charter Authorizing Professionals (“CCAP”), both of which are a state-level governmental agency and a statewide organization, respectively, that are intimately familiar with and well-versed in charter authorization and oversight. Moreover, while Vista Springs espouses the notion that its governance structure “ensures full transparency and accountability,” there is nothing in the Response—other than its asserted commitment to comply with public transparency laws—that demonstrates full accountability in its operations and management practices. In fact, the District finds its particularly concerning that there is no affirmative statement in the Renewal Petition that Springs Charter Schools will comply with these laws or that it will be accountable to the District if the District were to authorize and oversee Vista

Springs. As stated above, there is no contractual or other legal relationship that would exist as between Springs Charter Schools and the District; therefore, it is unclear how the District could hold Springs Charter Schools accountable for its actions. To reiterate the District's position in the Notice, the sole statutory arrangement obviates the purpose and need for a charter school board of directors and is contrary to the legislative intent of recently enacted laws designed to increase transparency and eliminate conflicts of interest in charter school operations. The District is also not persuaded by Vista Springs' statements that other authorizers have sanctioned this structure. The District does not support this structure, irrespective of what other authorizers might allow.

Therefore, based on a comprehensive review of the Renewal Petition, its supporting exhibits, and the substantial fiscal and governance factors and concerns identified in the District's Notice that were not adequately addressed or resolved by Vista Springs in its Response, District staff believes that Vista Springs is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the charter school program set forth in the Renewal Petition. At the very least, the District expected Vista Springs to show a willingness to make meaningful, substantive changes to its governance structure and supply additional fiscal information to address the District's concerns to demonstrate a commitment to working with the District to ensure full transparency and accountability. Instead, the Response reinforced, rather than resolved, the District's fiscal and governance concerns.

Finding of Fact No. 5: The Renewal Petition contains all of the affirmations of the required conditions.

The Renewal Petition includes the required affirmations and assurances.

Finding of Fact No. 6: The Renewal Petition generally provides reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the required elements set forth in Education Code section 47605, except as noted below.

Based on an analysis of the Renewal Petition by the District's review team, the Renewal Petition generally provides reasonably comprehensive descriptions of many of the required elements set forth in Education Code section 47605. However, the review team has identified some issues/concerns with certain elements described in the Renewal Petition, as detailed below.

1. **Special Education Program Description.** Element 1 of the Renewal Petition includes a reasonably comprehensive description of the manner in which Vista Springs will address the unique needs of students with disabilities. However, the Renewal Petition does not provide a reasonably comprehensive description of its Section 504 policy. Nor does the Renewal Petition include a reasonably comprehensive description of the continuum of placement options available to students with disabilities who cannot receive a FAPE in a Vista Springs program.
2. **Dual Language Immersion Program Description.** As described above, the Renewal Petition does not describe curriculum alignment in both languages (with the exception of the Benchmark Adelante) or include staffing qualifications (although Vista Springs notes that two of its teachers have been recognized for their work in bilingual education).

3. Governance Structure. As described above, the Renewal Petition's description of its governance structure creates significant concerns for the District regarding the role of Springs Charter Schools as a "sole statutory member" of Vista Springs' governing board. The District also questions whether Vista Springs ensures meaningful parental participation in the governance of the charter school in light of this arrangement. Please see Finding of Fact No. 4 and the District's Notice for additional information supporting the District's concerns.
4. Health and Safety Procedures. The Renewal Petition does not include a reasonably comprehensive description of the charter school's health and safety procedures. Specifically, the Renewal Petition omits the following:
 - An assurance of the adoption of a policy on pupil suicide prevention in compliance with Education Code section 215.
 - An assurance of notification to students and parents/guardians regarding how to initiate access to available pupil mental health services, in the manner consistent with the requirements of Education Code section 49428.
 - An assurance that, on or before June 30, 2025, the charter school will comply with Education Code section 53008 regarding assessing students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 for risk of reading difficulties.³
 - An assurance that the charter school will notify parents/guardians of California's child access prevention laws relating to safe storage of firearms, pursuant to Education Code sections 48986(c) and 49392(a).
 - An assurance regarding the immediate reporting to law enforcement of any reasonable threat or perceived threat of homicidal act by a student related to school or a school activity, as defined in Education Code section 49390(e).
 - Affirmation that the charter school will comply with the requirements of Education Code section 221.61 addressing the rights of a student and the public, and the responsibilities of the charter school under Title IX.
5. Admissions and Lottery. While the Renewal Petition overall presents a reasonably comprehensive description of the admissions and lottery procedures, it is lacking a clear description of Vista Springs' enrollment preferences that meet applicable state and federal requirements, specifically that preference shall be extended to students who reside in the school district. Further, the Renewal Petition does not state the timelines for enrollment and lottery procedures or the date and time of the actual lottery. Nor does Vista Springs include in its Renewal Petition a description of the

³ District staff notes that in its Required Assessments document appending the Renewal Petition, Vista Springs includes the CA Early Reading Screener as a required assessment to be given to TK/K and grades 1 and 2.

information that the charter school will collect as part of the orientation and admissions process.

6. Dispute Resolution. The Renewal Petition lacks the acknowledgement that none of the dispute resolution procedures shall interfere with the District's oversight duties, including the right to inspect or observe the charter school at any time.

Finding of Fact No. 7: The Renewal Petition includes a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school.

The Renewal Petition confirms that Harbor Springs Charter School Inc., a nonpublic benefit corporation, shall serve as the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Vista Springs for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

Finding of Fact No. 8: The Renewal Petition satisfies other key areas related to the operations, facilities, and other potential effects of the charter school, except as noted.

Overall, the Renewal Petition satisfies key areas related to the operations, facilities, and other potential effects of Vista Springs. However, the Renewal Petition does not include a copy of its MOU with River Springs Charter School for back-office services. Consequently, the District is unable to evaluate the contractual relationship between Vista Springs and River Springs, including the scope of back-office services, associated fees, and other key details.

District Staff Recommendation

Based on the District review team's analysis of the above-described criteria for renewal and the corresponding Findings of Fact Nos. 1-8, including the concerns and deficiencies noted therein, District staff does not recommend the renewal of Vista Springs' charter for its requested five-year term beginning on July 1, 2026, and ending on June 30, 2031.

Attachment 1

Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Concerns

Attachment 2

**Vista Springs Charter School's Response to
Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Concerns**

APPROVED DISCUSSED/INFORMATIONAL
AMENDED Tabled NOT APPROVED
IN A MEETING OF THE VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL
DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON:



NOV 19 2024
[Signature]
RECORDING SECRETARY

Agenda Item Details

Meeting Nov 19, 2025 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Category 3. DISCUSSION/ACTION

Subject A. PUBLIC HEARING ON VISTA SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL PETITION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #26-14 TO DENY RENEWAL PETITION

Access Public

Type Action, Discussion

Recommended Action Based on District staff's analysis of the criteria for renewal and the corresponding findings of fact included in the Staff Report, the District recommends that the Board take action to deny Vista Springs' Renewal Petition. A draft Resolution #26-14 to deny the Renewal Petition is attached for the Board's consideration.

Public Content

SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Eric Chagala, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Excellence and Innovation

ISSUE/BACKGROUND: On August 28, 2025, the Vista Unified School District ("District") received a petition to renew Vista Springs Charter School's charter ("Renewal Petition"). Vista Springs Charter School is currently authorized by the State Board of Education and its charter expires on June 30, 2026. Pursuant to Education Code section 47605.9, Vista Springs was required to submit its Renewal Petition to the District, as the school district in whose boundaries it operates its educational program.

On September 30, 2025, the District provided Vista Springs with a detailed Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure, pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e) ("Notice").

On October 16, 2025, the District's Board of Trustees ("Board") held a public hearing to determine the level of support for the Renewal Petition by teachers, other District employees, and parents/guardians.

On October 31, 2025, Vista Springs submitted a written response to the District's Notice ("Response").

On November 4, 2025, the District published a staff report on the Renewal Petition, which included its proposed findings of fact and recommendation to deny the renewal of Vista Springs' charter.

On November 19, 2025, the District's Board will hold a second public hearing on the Renewal Petition and take action to either grant or deny the Renewal Petition.

Procedures for Public Hearing: The District's Board will hold a public hearing on the Renewal Petition during which it will consider the Staff Report and Vista Springs' admissions preferences. Representatives of Vista Springs will receive equivalent time and procedures as District staff to present any evidence and/or testimony to respond to the Staff Report. The Board will then deliberate and take action on the Renewal Petition.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

[Resolution to Deny Renewal Petition for Vista Springs Charter School \(11-16-25\).pdf \(210 KB\)](#)

[Exhibit A - VUSD Notice of Fiscal_Governance Concerns \(Vista Springs\) 9-29-25.pdf \(364 KB\)](#)

[Exhibit B - Vista Springs Response to VUSD Notice of Fiscal Governance Concerns \(Vista Springs\) 9.30.25 with attachments.pdf \(6,898 KB\)](#)

[Exhibit C - 2025.11.03 Staff Report on Springs Charter School Renewal Petition \(Final\).docx.pdf \(446 KB\)](#)

Administrative Content

Executive Content

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Resolution No. 26-14

**Resolution to Deny the Renewal Petition for
Vista Springs Charter School**

WHEREAS, the approval of charter schools is governed by the Charter Schools Act of 1992, as subsequently amended, codified in Education Code section 47600 *et seq.*, and the implementing regulations of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (5 C.C.R. § 11960 *et seq.*);

WHEREAS, on August 28, 2025, the Vista Unified School District (“District”) received a renewal petition (“Renewal Petition”) from Vista Springs Charter School (“Charter School”).

WHEREAS, the Charter School currently operates under the authorization of the State Board of Education under a charter that expires on June 30, 2026;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Education Code section 47605.9, charter schools authorized by the State Board of Education may continue to operate under such authority until the date in which the charter school’s charter expires, and if the charter school desires to be renewed for a subsequent term, it must submit its renewal petition to the public school in whose boundaries it is located;

WHEREAS, the Charter School submitted its Renewal Petition to the District in accordance with Education Code section 47605.9;

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2025, the District issued a Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Concerns and Factors and Reasonable Opportunity to Cure (“Notice”) to the Charter School pursuant to Education Code section 47607(e), a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein by reference;

WHEREAS, the District requested a written response from the Charter School addressing the fiscal and governance concerns identified in the Notice no later than October 31, 2025;

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2025, the District’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) held a public hearing to determine the level of support for the Renewal Petition by teachers, other District employees, and parents/guardians;

WHEREAS, on October 31, 2025, the District received a copy of the Charter School’s written response to the Notice (“Response”), a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit B** and incorporated herein by reference;

WHEREAS, the Board published the District's staff report on the Renewal Petition on November 4, 2025, which includes staff's proposed findings of fact based on its evaluation of the Renewal Petition, information from the Charter School's last charter term, available student outcome data, and the Charter Schools's Response to the Notice ("Staff Report"), a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit C** and incorporated herein by reference;

WHEREAS, the Board has convened on November 19, 2025, to consider whether to grant or deny the Renewal Petition;

WHEREAS, renewals of charters are governed by the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code sections 47605, 47607, and 47607.2;

WHEREAS, the consideration of a renewal petition requires the District to (1) determine whether the charter school meets applicable eligibility requirements using the accountability criteria under the law and reflected in the California School Dashboard, and (2) evaluate whether the renewal petition meets the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code section 47605;

WHEREAS, Education Code section 47607 describes a three-tiered system that categorizes a charter school as a high-performing, middle-performing, or low-performing charter school. The designation of a charter school in a particular tier determines the level of review that the chartering authority must conduct to evaluate whether the charter school is eligible for renewal of its charter;

WHEREAS, for charter schools designated as middle-performing, the District must evaluate the following: (1) the charter school's performance on the state and local indicators on the California School Dashboard, both on a schoolwide basis and for all student subgroups served by the charter school, giving greater weight to the charter school's performance on measurements of academic performance, and (2) clear and convincing evidence, as demonstrated by verified data, which shows that the charter school has either (a) achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school, or (b) strong post-secondary outcomes (e.g., college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers). If a charter school satisfies such criteria, the Board may grant a renewal term of five years;

WHEREAS, the governing board of a school district shall not deny a petition unless it makes written factual findings specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:

1. The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the students to be enrolled in the charter school.
2. The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.

3. The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a) of Education Code section 47605. *(The signature requirement is not applicable to a renewal petition.)*
4. The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the required conditions.
5. The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of all required elements.
6. The petition does not contain a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.
7. The charter school is demonstrably unlikely to serve the interests of the entire community in which the school is proposing to locate. *(This finding is not applicable to a renewal petition.)*
8. The school district is not positioned to absorb the fiscal impact of the proposed charter school. *(This finding is not applicable to a renewal petition.)*

WHEREAS, the governing board of a school district may deny renewal of a charter school in the middle-performing tier only upon making the following specific written findings:

1. The school has failed to make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the school's students; and
2. Closure of the school is in the students' best interests; and
3. The decision provided greater weight to performance on "measurements of academic performance"—the test-based indicators in English-Language Arts and mathematics, the English Learner Progress Indicator, and the Career and College Indicator (as applicable).

WHEREAS, the Charter School is designated as a "middle-performing" charter school by the California Department of Education;

WHEREAS, the District has reviewed, evaluated, and considered the academic performance data provided by the Charter School as part of its Renewal Petition; and

WHEREAS, in considering the academic performance of the Charter School's students, in addition to information from the Charter School's most recent charter term and the content of the Renewal Petition, the District has determined that the Charter School's charter should not be renewed due to the deficiencies and concerns described in the findings of fact detailed in the Staff Report published on November 4, 2025, which is attached hereto as **Exhibit C** and incorporated herein by reference.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Vista Unified School District does resolve, determine, and order the following:

1. The foregoing recitals are hereby adopted as true and correct.
2. The Board has considered the Renewal Petition of the Charter School, including its academics, finances, operations, and other components, in addition to the criteria for renewal set out in the Education Code.
3. The Board has considered the Charter School's Response to the Notice.
4. The Board has considered the admissions preferences described in the Renewal Petition.
5. The Board has determined that the specific findings of fact memorialized in the Staff Report support multiple legal grounds to deny the Renewal Petition and are hereby adopted and incorporated herein by reference.
6. The Board hereby denies the Renewal Petition for the Charter School.
7. The Superintendent or his designee is authorized and directed to take such action as may be reasonably necessary to effectuate the purpose and intent of this Resolution.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education on November 19, 2025, at a duly noticed meeting by the following vote:

AYES: 4 NOES: 1 ABSENT: ABSTAIN:


Shawn Loescher, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent


Mike Markov, Clerk of the Board

EXHIBIT A

Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns
Dated September 30, 2025

EXHIBIT B

Vista Springs' Response to Notice of Substantial Fiscal and Governance Factors and Concerns
Dated October 31, 2025

EXHIBIT C

Staff Report posted November 4, 2025

OFFICIAL

**VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025

In Person

District Office Board Room
1234 Arcadia Ave, Vista, CA 92084

Board Members Present

Rena Marrocco, President
Sue Martin, Vice President
Mike Markov, Clerk
Martha Alvarado, Member
Cipriano Vargas, Member

Staff Members Present

Dr. Shawn Loescher, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Rachel D'Ambroso, Assistant Superintendent, Human Relations
Dr. Eric Chagala, Assistant Superintendent, Ed Excellence & Innovation
Christina Lupola, Recording Secretary

1. OPEN SESSION/SPECIAL BOARD MEETING 5:30PM

A. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Marrocco calls the meeting to order at 5:34pm. All five Board members are present: Alvarado, Markov, Marrocco, Martin, and Vargas.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President Marrocco reads the land acknowledgement.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. APPROVE THE AGENDA

Member Alvarado motions to approve the agenda and Member Markov seconds the motion. All in Favor, YES 5 (Alvarado-YES, Markov-YES, Marrocco-YES, Martin-YES, and Vargas-YES).

3. DISCUSSION/ACTION

A. PUBLIC HEARING ON VISTA SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL PETITION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #26-14 TO DENY RENEWAL PETITION

President Marrocco opens the public hearing at 5:37pm and reads step by step information regarding this agenda item.

Dr. Eric Chagala, Assistant Superintendent-Educational Excellence & Innovation, provides a quick overview and introduces our attorney from the F3 law firm, Leslie Lacher. Leslie provides a detailed report including the district's findings and concerns regarding the current governance structure. In closing, Leslie recommends the Board deny the renewal petition.

Vista Springs legal representative presents a detailed report on the charter's stance of the renewal petition.

Public Comments: Kim Bagby, Principal of Vista Springs, discusses the denial of the charter's renewal. She shares how their students and families want a dual language education, and students see themselves and each other as valuable. She acknowledges the dashboard does reflect areas for improvement, but the data doesn't show the successful and personal stories of students. She asks the Board to reject this proposal to deny the renewal petition.

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Member Markov asks attorney Leslie Lacher to explain the issue with the governance structure. Leslie provides details to help answer his question.

Member Vargas asks Leslie to detail the history of the charter legislation and the process of next steps during the process.

Vice President Martin asks questions regarding what the district's fiscal responsibilities are for overseeing charters. Leslie provides details to answer her question.

President Marrocco and Leslie discuss oversight costs to the district at approximately 1% but could go up.

Vice President Martin shares positive feedback about her recent visit to the charter but also shares her concerns about the governance structure.

President Marrocco closes the public hearing at 6:16pm.

Motion by Member Vargas to approve Resolution# 26-14 to Deny Renewal Petition, Seconded by Member Alvarado. Vote was 4-YES and 1-NO (Alvarado-YES, Markov-YES, Marrocco-YES, and Vargas-YES, and Martin-NO).

Break at 6:16pm, Back at 6:33pm

4. BOARD WORKSHOP

A. GOVERNANCE TRAINING SESSION# 3

Mr. Ben Johnson from Bow Tie Consulting returns for the third session of the Board's governance training. He begins with looking at survey results, reviewing board roles and responsibilities, and discussing trust and unity of purpose.

President Marrocco wants to verify when Board goals should be discussed since it's been several years since they've been updated. Mr. Johnson's opinion is they should be discussed annually when thinking about budget building. She would like to see the current goals shift a little bit and provides an example of the Board supporting students reading at grade level at 3rd grade.

Vice President Martin briefly touches on the subject of A-G requirements.

Members Vargas and Alvarado agree it's important to review Board goals but it's also important not to constantly shift year after year when thinking about symmetry and the time needed for staff to implement actions which support the Boards goals.

Mr. Johnson acknowledges members of the Board feel a goal-setting session might be needed. Member Markov recalls discussing the goals earlier this year, but the Board decided at that time not to change anything.

Discussions move on to reviewing the data from Mr. Johnson's survey.

Member Markov referencing question #3 and feels things have improved since these initial results.

Mr. Johnson recalls a few Board members discussing Robert's Rules might be important for their norms/procedures for running meetings.

Vice President Martin discusses question #23.

Member Vargas references questions #29/30 regarding public comment noting five different responses.

President Marrocco points out question #28 noting almost everybody agreed but one person was very unsatisfied.

Mr. Johnson asks the Board to comment regarding question #19 and Board members share their comments.

Mr. Johnson and Board members discuss the Brown Act.

Mr. Johnson discusses question #29. Member Alvarado provides her observation of the rules of decorum at a meeting she attended last night.

Dr. Shawn Loescher provides his perspective and examples of governance models. He emphasizes the importance of finding the right governance model that works for this governance team.

Break at 7:51pm, Back at 8:01pm

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Member Vargas shares feedback on question #13.

Vice President Martin discusses policies that are being adopted by CSBA (California School Board Association), and our team adopts those policies. She feels at this time the Board has so many more pertinent matters to deal with (budget for example).

President Marrocco discusses some parents or community members coming to Board meetings with items that are out of the Boards hands. For example, items that are a Federal or State requirement. Mr. Johnson understands there are many items that are not in the Boards purview.

Member Alvarado discusses the Governance Core book that was very helpful to her.

Mr. Johnson engages Board members to discuss time limits on public comment. He also discusses meeting norms and provides a Robert's Rules cheat sheet.

Member Vargas requests that along with discussing the Board Goals in 2026, he'd like to discuss the "why" of the Boards work.

4. BOARD BUSINESS

A. NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025

B. ADJOURNMENT -

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.



President of the Board of Trustees



Clerk of the Board of Trustees