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**DR. HILDA MALDONADO**  
Superintendent

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## **SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT REGARDING REVIEW OF OLIVE GROVE CHARTER SCHOOL - SANTA BARBARA RENEWAL PETITION**

Posted October 13, 2025

### **PROCEDURAL STATUS**

The Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) received a renewal charter petition (Renewal Petition or Charter) from Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara (OGCS-SB) on July 30, 2025. OGCS-SB is operated and governed by Olive Grove Charter Schools, Inc., a California nonprofit public benefit corporation that also operates additional Olive Grove campuses authorized by the California State Board of Education.

Education Code (EC) Sections 47607 and 47607.2 determine the length of charter renewal based on a charter school's placement in the high, middle, or low performance categories established under Assembly Bill (AB) 1505. Pursuant to the criteria set forth in these sections, Olive Grove Charter – Santa Barbara is designated as a middle-performing school by the California Department of Education (CDE).

In accordance with Education Code §§47607, 47607.2, and 47605, SBUSD held a public hearing on September 24, 2025, within the 60-day requirement following receipt of the Renewal Petition. On September 30, 2025, the District's team conducted a renewal site visit at Olive Grove's Santa Barbara campus, which included classroom observations, leadership and staff interviews, and a review of instructional and compliance documentation. Pursuant to statute, the District has 90 days from receipt of the petition to act, which may be extended by mutual agreement for an additional 30 days. SBUSD will consider and take action on the Olive Grove Charter School Renewal Petition at the Board meeting on October 28, 2025.

### **CRITERIA FOR RENEWAL OF A CHARTER PETITION**

The California Department of Education annually ranks charter schools using Dashboard academic performance indicators and classifies them as high, middle, or low performing. As defined in EC Section 47607.2, "middle-performing" charter schools are those that are not identified as high or low performing and are eligible for a five-year renewal term, provided they demonstrate measurable academic progress and positive postsecondary outcomes.

In determining whether to renew a middle-performing charter school, the authorizing district must consider the following:

1. Schoolwide and subgroup performance on state and local indicators on the California School Dashboard, giving greater weight to academic performance.
2. Clear and convincing evidence, based on verified data, showing either:
  - a. measurable increases in academic achievement (defined as at least one year's growth for each year of attendance), or
  - b. strong postsecondary outcomes, such as college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates comparable to similar peers.

A chartering authority may deny renewal of a middle-performing school only upon making written factual findings supported by evidence that:

1. The school failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to students; AND
2. Closure of the school is in the best interest of students; AND
3. The decision gives greater weight to academic performance.

Additionally, a renewal may be denied in any performance category if the authorizing district finds the school is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement its program due to substantial fiscal or governance concerns or failure to serve all pupils who wish to attend.

#### DETERMINATION CRITERIA FOR RENEWAL OF OLIVE GROVE CHARTER SCHOOL

As stated above, the California Department of Education (CDE) has designated Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara (OGCS-SB) as a school in the middle performance category for purposes of this renewal under Education Code Sections 47607 and 47607.2. In its Renewal Petition, Olive Grove asserts that it meets the minimum academic performance standards required for renewal and presents data in support of that claim. To assess its academic performance against the criteria for middle-performing charter schools, Olive Grove submitted California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) data for 2023 through 2025, as well as comparative information for Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) and statewide results. The school contends that this data demonstrates measurable growth and supports eligibility for a five-year renewal term.

District staff reviewed all data provided by Olive Grove, as well as publicly available California School Dashboard indicators, graduation and College/Career outcomes, and subgroup performance data. Staff also conducted an independent analysis of the CAASPP results, chronic absenteeism, and Emergent Multilingual Learner progress indicators to evaluate the school's claims and verify accuracy.

The data summarized in this report represents key verified information provided by Olive Grove and available to SBUSD through the California Department of Education and the Santa Barbara County Education Office, and serves as the basis for the District's evaluation of the school's academic performance and determination of renewal eligibility.

Santa Barbara Unified School District Staff      accs-feb26item03  
 Report and Findings, Olive Grove Charter—Santa Barbara   Attachment 4  
 Response to Staff report and Findings      Page 3 of 20

**School Enrollment**

OGCS Santa Barbara Enrollment			Multi-Year Summary by Grade				
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
TK	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
K	1	2	0	0	2	2	2
Grade 1	2	0	7	1	0	1	0
Grade 2	1	1	2	3	1	0	1
Grade 3	2	1	2	1	0	1	0
Grade 4	3	1	2	4	1	4	1
Grade 5	3	2	3	0	2	0	1
Grade 6	0	3	4	2	2	4	2
Grade 7	4	0	12	5	1	7	5
Grade 8	13	9	5	13	7	8	5
Grade 9	15	11	13	7	9	4	5
Grade 10	23	35	36	13	8	12	14
Grade 11	60	37	32	35	15	14	24
Grade 12	53	68	41	25	30	25	14
Total Enrolled	180	170	159	109	80	82	74

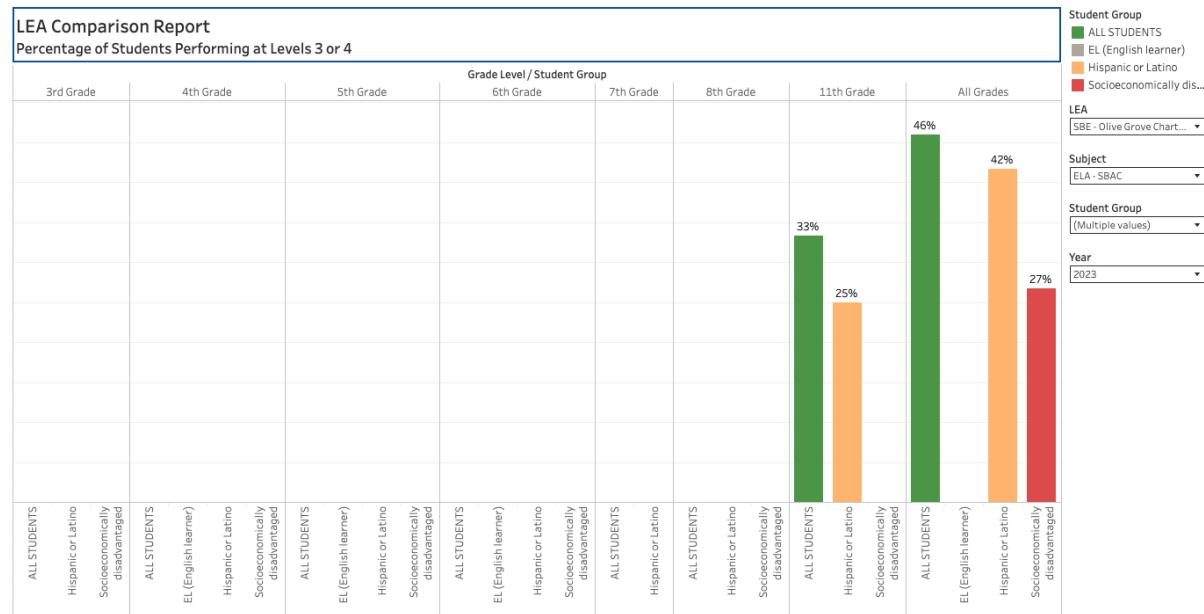
- Source: CDE DataQuest, Olive Grove - Santa Barbara ["Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Grade"](#) reports for 2018 through 2025.

**2023-2025 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ("CAASPP")**

Olive Grove - SB

2022-23 English Language Arts

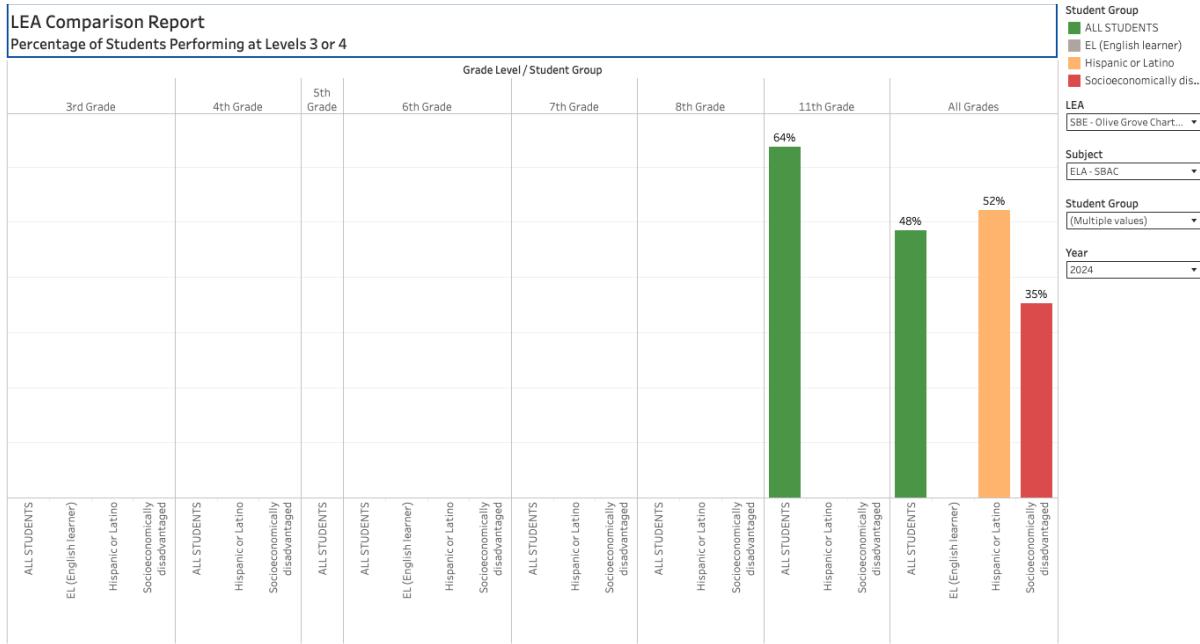
46% Met or Exceeded



(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)

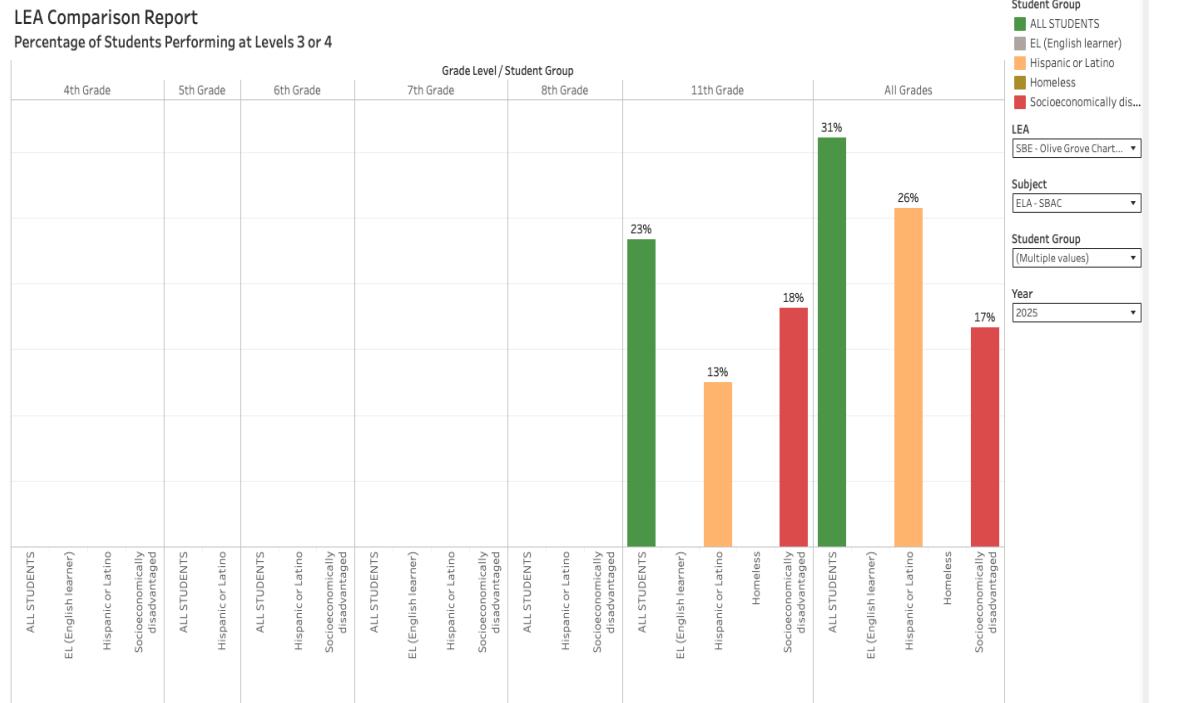
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Olive Grove - SB  
2023-24 English Language Arts  
**48% Met or Exceeded**



*(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)*

Olive Grove - SB  
2024-25 English Language Arts  
**31% Met or Exceeded**



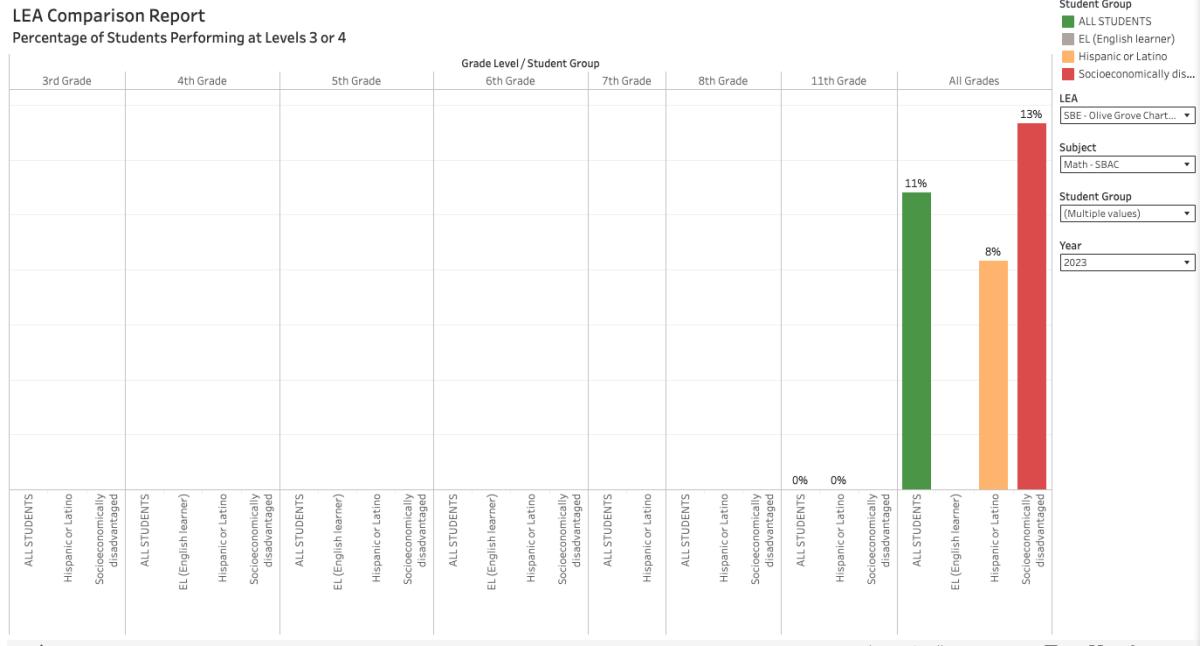
*(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)*

**Santa Barbara Unified School District Staff Report and Findings, Olive Grove Charter—Santa Barbara Attachment 4 Response to Staff report and Findings**

accs-feb26item03  
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**Olive Grove - SB  
2022-23 Mathematics  
11% Met or Exceeded**

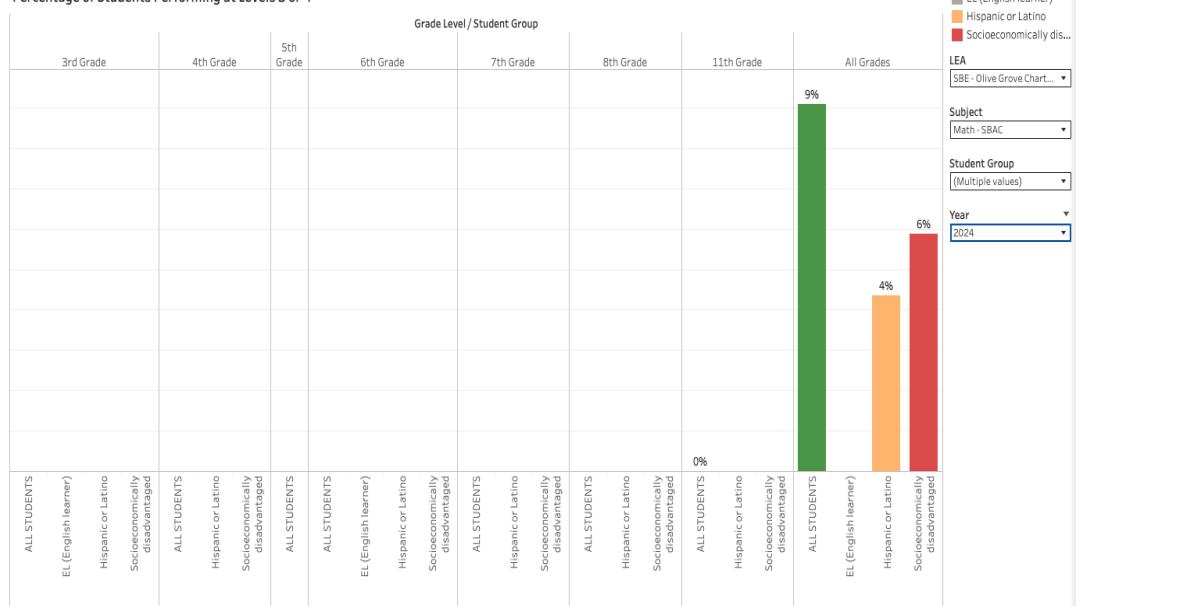
**LEA Comparison Report**  
Percentage of Students Performing at Levels 3 or 4



*(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)*

**Olive Grove - SB  
2022-3-24 Mathematics  
9% Met or Exceeded**

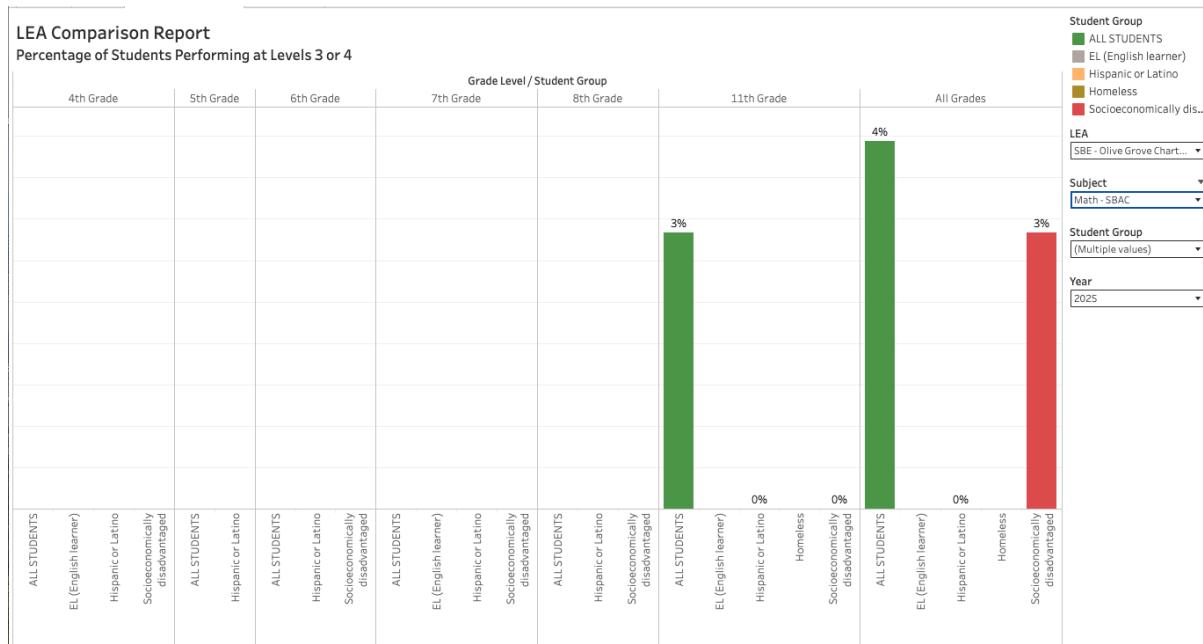
**LEA Comparison Report**  
Percentage of Students Performing at Levels 3 or 4



*(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)*

Olive Grove - SB

2024-25 Mathematics  
 4% Met or Exceeded



(Note: In accordance with CDE reporting standards, data for subgroups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed to protect student privacy.)

2023-2024 California School Dashboard Data

(Note: 2024-25 CA Dashboard Data unavailable as of October 13, 2025)

English Language Arts		
<b>All Students</b> Number of Students: 27	<b>Hispanic</b> Number of Students: 21	<b>SED</b> Number of Students: 15
33.5 points below standard	31.4 points below standard	41.5 points below standard
Declined 15.9 Points  (i.e. 2022-23 = 17.6 points below standard)	Declined 11.3 Points	Maintained -2.9 Points

Mathematics		
All Students Number of Students: 27	Hispanic Number of Students: 21	SED Number of Students: 15
148.3 points below standard	144.4 points below standard	149.4 points below standard
Declined 33.5 Points  (i.e. 2022-23 = 114.8 points below standard)	Declined 26.3 Points	Declined 21.9 Points

Graduation Rate			
All Students Number of Students: 29 Total	Hispanic Number of Students: 13 Total	SED Number of Students: 19 Total	White Number of Students: 12 Total
79.3% graduated	84.6% graduated	84.2% graduated	83.3% graduated
Increased 9.6%	Increased 24.6%	Increased 21.7%	Increased 4.8%

College/Career			
All Students Number of Students: 28 Total	Hispanic Number of Students: 12 Total	SED Number of Students: 18 Total	White Number of Students: 12 Total
Prepared 3.6%	Prepared 0%	Prepared 0%	Prepared 8.3%
Maintained 0.4%	Maintained 0%	Declined 4.2%	Maintained 1.2%

Santa Barbara Unified staff also reviewed additional performance data related to Dashboard indicators, including progress on the Emergent Multilingual Learner Progress Indicator, suspension rates, and chronic absenteeism. The data from the California School Dashboard reflects key performance metrics provided by Olive Grove for consideration in this renewal.

## REVIEW OF THE CHARTER PETITION

Santa Barbara Unified School District Staff reviewed the renewal Petition using the criteria established in California Education Code Sections 47605(c), 47607, and 47607.2, consistent with County Board Policy 0420.4 (c) and found the following:

### 1. Sound Education Program

Staff found facts demonstrating that the Petitioner is not successfully implementing a sound or well-defined educational program as described in the Renewal Petition. While Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara identifies goals for individualized instruction through its independent study model, there is limited evidence that the curriculum and instructional delivery align with California state standards or provide students with access to grade-level content. Review of CAASPP data shows persistent and significant underperformance in both English Language Arts and Mathematics over three consecutive years, with the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards declining from 46 percent to 31 percent in ELA and from 11 percent to 4 percent in Mathematics.

The school has not implemented a consistent Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) or structured interventions to address these deficiencies. During the site visit, staff observed limited use of Tier I instructional strategies and little evidence of Tier II supports for students performing below grade level. Although the school asserts that its program is individualized, there is insufficient evidence of systematic progress monitoring or collaborative data analysis to guide instruction. The Emergent Multilingual Learner (English Learner) program lacks a defined framework for Designated and Integrated ELD, and professional development for teachers in ELD strategies has been limited.

Given these findings, District staff conclude that Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara has not demonstrated a sound educational program capable of producing sustained academic growth or equitable access to high-quality instruction for all student groups. Subgroup performance data are further limited because, in accordance with California Department of Education privacy standards, results for student groups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed. However, available aggregate data show that the school's overall academic outcomes remain well below state and district averages.

### 2. Ability to successfully implement the program set forth in the Petition

Staff found facts demonstrating that the Petitioner has limited capacity to successfully implement the educational program set forth in the Renewal Petition. Olive Grove Charter School's enrollment continues to decline steadily to 74 students enrolled in 2024-25. Such limited enrollment restricts access to comprehensive academic offerings, peer collaboration, and specialized support services. The *2024 California Teacher Assignment Monitoring* data indicate that only 36 percent of courses were taught by appropriately credentialed teachers, with the majority taught by out-of-field or provisionally assigned staff.

The school has not demonstrated sufficient instructional or leadership capacity to implement consistent, high-quality teaching practices across content areas. The lack of A–G courses, Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities, or Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways further limits students' postsecondary readiness. Additionally, Olive Grove has provided limited documentation showing effective support for Emergent Multilingual Learners, Students with Disabilities, or Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students in accordance with its charter promises and state accountability requirements..

3. Affirmation of each of the conditions required by statute

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that the Renewal Petition contains all required affirmations pursuant to Education Code Section 47605. The Affirmations section at the beginning of the petition includes the necessary legal assurances, and additional affirmations are embedded within the comprehensive descriptions of program elements in the document.

4. Reasonably comprehensive description of the required elements

For the description of each element to be considered "reasonably comprehensive," it is not enough for the Renewal Petition simply to include a description; rather, the description must be acceptable to Santa Barbara Unified School District and consistent with the District's standards and expectations for charter schools under its oversight.

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that the Olive Grove Charter School Renewal Petition includes reasonably comprehensive descriptions for the majority of required elements, including governance, admissions, employee qualifications, financial operations, and legal assurances. However, while the petition meets the technical requirement of providing a comprehensive description, the District's evaluation of the effectiveness and implementation of certain elements, particularly those addressing the educational program, measurable student outcomes, and methods of assessment, revealed that these components are not being effectively executed in practice.

Accordingly, the District concludes that the Olive Grove Charter School Renewal Petition meets the statutory requirement of containing reasonably comprehensive descriptions of each element, but the program's implementation and results do not demonstrate effectiveness or alignment with SBUSD expectations for student achievement and accountability.

A. Element One: Description of the Educational Program/Plan for Student Academic Achievement

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that while the Olive Grove Charter Renewal Petition includes a description of its educational program, the plan does not demonstrate a sound or effective approach to ensuring student academic achievement. The petition outlines intent but lacks evidence of implementation fidelity, measurable outcomes, and consistent instructional practices aligned to state standards.

B. Element Two: Measurable Student Outcomes

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that although the Olive Grove Charter Renewal Petition includes a description of measurable student outcomes, the school's actual performance data do not demonstrate progress toward those outcomes. The section meets the technical requirement for description but lacks evidence of effective implementation or sustained academic growth aligned with the stated goals.

C. Element Three: Method by Which Pupil Progress in Meeting Outcomes will be Measured

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that while the Olive Grove Charter Renewal Petition describes methods for measuring pupil progress, there is limited evidence that these systems are used systematically to guide instruction or targeted interventions. The section meets the requirement for description but does not demonstrate an effective assessment system in practice.

D. Element Four: Governance Structure

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description

E. Element Five: Employee Qualifications

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description

F. Element Six: Health and Safety

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

G. Element Seven: Racial, Ethnic, Emergent Multilingual Learner, and Special Education Balance

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

H. Element Eight: Admissions Policies and Procedures

Santa Barbara Unified staff found that the Olive Grove Charter School Renewal Petition includes a clear and compliant description of its admissions policies and procedures. The petition affirms that the school is nonsectarian, tuition-free, and open to all students who wish to attend, consistent with Education Code Section 47605. The school outlines its enrollment process, including public random drawing (lottery) procedures to be used if applications exceed available spaces, and ensures that admissions are conducted fairly and transparently without discrimination based on any protected characteristic.

The Renewal Petition also specifies that preference is given to currently enrolled students and their siblings, followed by other applicants residing within Santa Barbara Unified School District boundaries, and then to all other applicants. This priority order aligns with state law and demonstrates adherence to equitable access requirements.

District staff conclude that Olive Grove Charter School's admissions policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and reflect a reasonably comprehensive and compliant description of how the school ensures equal opportunity for enrollment.

I. Element Nine: Independent Financial Audit

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

J. Element Ten: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

K. Element Eleven: Retirement System

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

L. Element Twelve: Attendance Alternatives

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

M. Element Thirteen: Employee Rights to Return

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

N. Element Fourteen: Dispute Resolution

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

O. Element Fifteen: School Closure

The Santa Barbara Unified staff believes this section includes a reasonably comprehensive description.

## CONCLUSION

After a comprehensive review of the Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara Renewal Petition, supporting documentation, and verified performance data, Santa Barbara Unified School District staff conclude that the school has not demonstrated sufficient academic progress, programmatic capacity, or measurable benefit to students to warrant renewal. While the petition contains the required statutory elements and affirmations, the evidence shows that the educational program has not resulted in sustained student achievement, equitable outcomes, or implementation of effective instructional practices aligned to state standards.

CAASPP and California School Dashboard data show multi-year declines in English Language Arts and Mathematics, coupled with high rates of chronic absenteeism and limited postsecondary readiness. Site visit findings indicate uneven Tier I instruction, limited intervention systems, and minimal structured support for Emergent Multilingual Learners. Although the school's fiscal operations remain compliant, academic performance remains far below district and state averages, particularly for historically underserved student groups.

For these reasons, District staff recommend that the Board of Education deny the Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara Renewal Petition based on the following findings:

- “The school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to students;”
- “Closure is in the best interest of students; and”
- “The decision gives greater weight to academic performance as the primary factor.”

## STUDENT IMPACT

If the Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara does not continue, students will have access to alternative education programs operated by the Santa Barbara Unified School District. The District's Alta Vista High School provides an independent study structure similar to Olive Grove's model and is designed to support students who benefit from flexible scheduling, individualized pacing, and smaller learning environments.

Alta Vista High School currently serves approximately 130 students through four programs, Independent Study, FLEX, Quetzal, and Middle College, and offers both seat-based and remote instructional options. The school provides weekly teacher-student meetings, targeted academic support, and access to social-emotional and wellness services. Through its Middle College program, students may also enroll in dual-enrollment courses at Santa Barbara City College.

Based on the alignment between Olive Grove's independent study model and Alta Vista's existing programs, SBUSD has the capacity to accommodate and support students currently enrolled at Olive Grove Charter School. This transition would allow students to continue their education within the District, with access to credentialed teachers, established intervention systems, and districtwide academic and wellness resources.



Olive Grove Charter Schools, Inc.  
Office  
5075 Bradley Road, Suite 119  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

(805) 623-1111 Phone  
(805) 623-1175 Fax  
www.olivegrovecharter.org

October 27, 2025

Sent Via Email  
Dist\_board@sbunified.org

Board of Education  
Santa Barbara Unified School District  
720 Santa Barbara St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: Response to Staff Report and Proposed Findings for Denial of Olive Grove Charter - Santa Barbara**

Dear Board Members:

We write in response to Santa Barbara Unified School District's ("SBUSD" or the "District") Staff Analysis, Recommendations, and Proposed Findings of Fact ("Staff Report") regarding Olive Grove Charter - Santa Barbara's ("OGCS-SB" or the "Charter School") charter renewal petition ("Charter Petition").

The Staff Report and its conclusions do not present an accurate review of OGCS-SB's charter petition. The Staff Report is ultimately founded on speculation, erroneous conclusions without factual basis, and positions inconsistent with state law supporting the approval of charter petitions. Significantly, the Staff Report fails to provide citation to verifiable facts specific to this petition that could support the denial of the Charter Petition. We clearly demonstrate that the Staff Report is based on inaccurate facts, improper context, inaccurate legal interpretation, and goes beyond the requirements set forth in law in search of a contrived basis for denial.

**LIMITED REASONS TO NONRENEW A MIDDLE-PERFORMING CHARTER SCHOOL**

Assembly Bill 1505 (2019) substantially changed the standards and criteria for charter renewal. Among them, a middle-performing charter school, like OGCS-SB, may be denied with a finding, among other things, that closure is in the best interest of OGCS-SB students. First, Education Code<sup>1</sup> Section 47607(e) permits a denied renewal following notice and an opportunity to cure allegations from the chartering authority of substantial fiscal or governance factors, or of not serving all students who wish to attend. SBUSD never provided such notice to OGCS-SB, so this reason for denial is unavailable.

Second, Section 47607.2(b)(6), which is not cited in the Staff Report, permits denial of a renewal charter only after specific factual findings are made. It states:

<sup>1</sup> All statutory citations herein are to the Education Code, unless otherwise identified.

The chartering authority may deny a charter renewal pursuant to this subdivision only upon making written findings, setting forth specific facts to support the findings, that the charter school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the pupils of the school, that closure of the charter school is in the best interest of its pupils and, if applicable pursuant to paragraph (2) and (3), that its decision provided greater weight to performance on measures of academic performance.

(Emphasis added.)

Section 47607.2(b)(6) creates an extraordinarily high bar for chartering authorities to deny a charter renewal petition for a middle-performing charter school, because it interrupts the otherwise default path to renewal. Therefore, the Legislature would create extraordinary steps for the chartering authority to follow if implementing this option.

Section 47607.2(b)(6) requires: (1) the chartering authority, meaning, here, the SBUSD Board of Education; to (2) make; (3) written findings; that (4) set forth specific facts to support the findings; (5) specifically tailored to the points that; (6) the charter school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the pupils of the school; and (7) that closure of the charter school is in the best interest of pupils; and (8) that its decision provided greater weight to performance on measurements of academic performance. This is a challenging exercise for any chartering authority to undertake in order to deny a middle-performing charter school. All of the steps must be completed

The District's findings fall far short of the legal standard and cannot be relied upon here to lawfully deny the Charter Petition. The District Board can only deny by finding that closure is in the best interest of OGCS-SB students. Because that is demonstrably untrue, as evidenced below, the Board cannot lawfully deny renewal of this charter.

#### **THE STAFF REPORT CANNOT BE RELIED UPON TO LAWFULLY DENY THE CHARTER PETITION**

The Staff Report recommends OGCS-SB be denied for the following findings:

For these reasons, District staff recommend that the Board of Education deny the Olive Grove Charter School – Santa Barbara Renewal Petition based on the following findings:

- "The school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to students;"
- "Closure is in the best interest of students; and"
- "The decision gives greater weight to academic performance as the primary factor."

There are three primary reasons why SBUSD's Staff Report cannot be relied upon to lawfully deny OGCS-SB's Charter Petition. First, the Staff Report does not contain any written findings, let alone written findings that meet the requirements of Section 47607(e), setting forth specific facts, that OGCS-SB has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a

benefit to its students, nor does the Staff Report contain specific factual findings that closure of OGCS-SB is in the best interest of students.

Second, the Staff Report attempts to invent a new legal standard that the Charter School's renewal petition "meets the statutory requirement of containing reasonably comprehensive descriptions of each element, but the program's implementation and results do not demonstrate effectiveness or alignment with SBUSD expectations for student achievement and accountability." That the Charter Petition must contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of required elements **is** a lawful reason for denial. But the notion that the Charter Petition could be denied due to SBUSD's (unpublished, undisclosed, unexplained) "expectations" for student achievement and accountability is a theory made up out of whole cloth, without any basis in law.

Third, District staff claims to have conducted a comprehensive review of the Charter Petition's "verified performance data." However, as discussed further below, District Staff did not use verified data once in its academic data analysis, despite the fact that OGCS-SB included this data, and SBUSD is required to consider it (Section 47607.2(b)(3)).

The District must put in the time and effort to make findings to show that the Charter School has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to its students and that closure is in the best interest of OGCS-SB students. The Staff Report has clearly not done the meticulous work required.

#### REFUTATION OF THE DISTRICT'S FINDINGS FOR DENIAL

We document how SBUSD's "findings" do not amount to the findings that are legally required in order to lawfully deny the Charter School's renewal charter. Below, we reproduce excerpts the District Staff's "findings" in *italics*, followed by the Charter School's responses, in plain text.

##### **District Finding 1: Sound Education Program**

**District finding:** *Review of CAASPP data shows persistent and significant underperformance in both English Language Arts and Mathematics over three consecutive years... Subgroup performance data are further limited, because, in accordance with California Department of Education privacy standards, results for student groups with fewer than 11 tested students are suppressed.*

**Charter School response:** In addition to the review of the Dashboard data, the District must also consider academic achievement and verified data. Education Code Section 47607.2(b) states:

- (2) The chartering authority shall provide **greater weight** to performance on measurements of **academic performance** in determining whether to grant a charter renewal.
- (3) In addition to the state and local indicators, the chartering authority shall consider **clear and convincing evidence** showing either of the following:
  - A. The school achieved measurable increases in academic

achievement, as defined by at least **one year's progress** for each year in school.

B. Strong postsecondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers.

(4) Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) **shall be demonstrated by verified data...** (Emphasis added.)

District Staff seemed to have only used data they could validate from public sources and did not incorporate the Charter School's verified data in their analysis. But this is not the legal standard. Verified data does not mean data that the District independently verifies. Verified data is defined in statute as "data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced." (Section 47606.2(c)(1).) Notably, verified data has already received the "stamp of approval" from the State Board of Education. The District is not the verifying entity.

OGCS-SB clearly demonstrated one year's progress through its use of STAR Renaissance and the Student Growth Percentile ("SGP"). SGP compares a student's growth to that of their academic grade-level peers nationwide. OGCS-SB presented data that evidenced students meeting the growth target of a year's progress in both English language arts and math. (Charter Petition, pgs. 12-15).

The Staff Report's claim of a comprehensive review is sorely lacking as demonstrated by the lack of statutorily required data. The Charter School provided the District with extensive evidence to show student's growth despite the privacy standard on the Dashboard.

There is no finding here, only a limited observation from District Staff. District Staff have not presented a holistic analysis of the required academic and achievement data to show that the decision gives greater weight to academic performance as the primary factor. Therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

**District finding:**

- *There is limited evidence that the curriculum and instructional delivery align with California state standards or provide students with access to grade-level content.*
- *The school has not implemented a consistent Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) or structured interventions to address these deficiencies.*
- *During the site visit, staff observed limited use of Tier 1 instructional strategies and little evidence of Tier II supports for students performing below grade level.*
- *The Emergent Multilingual Learner program lacks a defined framework for Designated and Integrated ELD, and professional development for teachers in ELD strategies has been limited.*

**Charter School response:** The Staff Report provides no evidence to back up any of these claims; as such, they are not factual findings, as required by law. The Charter School clearly outlined the instructional materials that are used in the Charter Petition and each one has been vetted to ensure alignment with the State Standards. While the Staff Report claims the

Charter School has not implemented a consistent MTSS structure, it has not provided any findings to demonstrate the lack of consistency. The only reference made is to a site visit to a learning center that lasted approximately one hour. District Staff make several claims after visiting the Charter School for such a short period of time, yet nothing substantial has been produced to support any of the observations. District Staff have not included facts to support their assertion that the Charter Petition presents an unsound educational program; therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot lawfully be denied under this finding.

**District Finding 2: Ability to Successfully Implement the Program Set Forth in the Petition**

**District finding:** *The Charter School's enrollment continues to decline steadily to 74 students enrolled in 2024-25. Such limited enrollment restricts access to comprehensive academic offerings, peer collaboration, and specialized support services.*

**Charter School response:** Limited enrollment does not equate to restricted access. District Staff have provided no evidence as to how resources are restricted at the Charter School. The Charter Petition clearly lays out the program resources and services provided to **all** students, regardless of the enrollment number. The Staff Report has not made a finding that the Charter School is in any way demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement its educational program; therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

**District finding:** *The 2024 California Teacher Assignment Monitoring data indicate that only 36 percent of courses are taught by appropriately credentialed teachers with the majority taught by out-of-field or provisionally assigned staff.*

**Charter School response:** This “finding” intentionally obfuscates the applicable legal standard for teaching credentials for independent study teachers. First, all teachers at OGCS-SB hold the Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document required for the teacher’s certificated assignment pursuant to Section 47605(l)(1).

Second, the Charter School has no provisionally assigned staff and courses are taught by appropriately credentialed teachers pursuant to Section 44865 which states:

A valid teaching credential issued by the State Board or Commission on Teacher Credentialing, based on a bachelor’s degree, student teaching, and special fitness to perform, shall be deemed qualifying for assignment as a teacher in the following assignments, provided that the assignment of a teacher to a position for which qualifications are prescribed by this section shall be made only with the consent of the teacher:...

(k) Independent study.

In a nonclassroom-based, independent study setting, any individual who holds a current teaching credential is properly credentialed to teach any student. Teaching assignments aligned with credentials are simply not at issue in this educational setting, in the way they would be in a classroom-based school.

The Staff Report has not made a finding that the Charter School is in any way demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement its educational program; therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

**District finding:** *The lack of A-G courses, Advanced Placement opportunities, or Career Technical Education pathways limits students' postsecondary readiness.*

**Charter School response:** This statement is completely unfounded. The Charter School offers A-G courses, AP opportunities, and CTE pathways, as demonstrated by the Charter Petition. This year, three CTE pathways are rolling out, including Cosmetology, Health Science & Medical Technology, and Business Management, in addition to the courses already offered to students. Nearly every course offered to students is A-G approved, and AP courses are offered in every core subject. District Staff's claim that students' postsecondary readiness is limited is concerning, based on the extensive description in the Charter Petition.

The Staff Report has not made a finding that the Charter School is in any way demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement its educational program; therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

**District finding:** *Olive Grove has provided limited documentation showing effective support for Emergent Multilingual Learners, Students with Disabilities, or Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students in accordance with its charter promises and state accountability requirements.*

**Charter School response:** The Charter School provided a reasonably comprehensive description within the Charter Petition of how it supports students meeting these descriptors. The Staff Report does not even bother to offer any musings on what it thinks might be lacking in any of these descriptions.

The Staff Report has not made a finding that the Charter School is in any way demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement its educational program; therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

#### **District Finding 4: Reasonably Comprehensive Description of the Required Elements**

**District finding:** *For the description of each element to be considered "reasonably comprehensive," it is not enough for the Renewal Petition to simply include a description; rather, the description must be acceptable to Santa Barbara Unified School District and consistent with the District's standards and expectations for charter schools under its oversight.*

**Charter School response:** This statement is wildly inaccurate. The only legal standard is whether the Charter Petition contains reasonably comprehensive descriptions of fifteen required elements. There is absolutely no room in law for the District to embellish that requirement by tacking on an impossible to meet additional standard based on a secret

expectation. Indeed, the Staff Report states: “*the Olive Grove Charter School Renewal Petition meets the statutory requirement of containing reasonably comprehensive descriptions of each element.*” [Emphasis added.] District Staff clearly state that the Charter Petition meets the legal requirements. Not only is the statement not a correct legal standard, but it has not been communicated with the Charter School. Furthermore, the District did not communicate any specific standards or expectations to the Charter School during this process. By its own admission, the Staff Report demonstrates that the Charter Petition does provide a reasonably comprehensive description of the required elements. Accordingly, this is an impermissible reason to deny the Charter Petition.

#### Student Impact

**District finding:** *Students will have access to alternative education programs operated by SBUSD. The District’s Alta Vista High School provides an independent study structure similar to Olive Grove’s model and is designed to support students...*

**Charter School response:** In an apparent attempt to argue that closure is in the best interest of OGCS-SB students, the Staff Report alleges that students can simply attend its schools. On the contrary, though, closure would acutely harm students by transferring them to the Alta Vista High School independent study program. Based on 2024 Dashboard data, Alta Vista’s ELA and Math distance from standard (“DFS”) are far lower than OGCS-SB. Closure of the Charter School would sentence its students to shockingly worse options.

#### ELA DFS (2024 CA School Dashboard)

	OGCS-SB	Alta Vista
All Students	-33.5	-229.2
Hispanic	-31.4	-253.7
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-41.5	-237.5

#### Math DFS (2024 CA School Dashboard)

	OGCS-SB	Alta Vista
All Students	-148.3	-272.2
Hispanic	-144.4	-306.8
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	-149.4	-290.1

The Staff Report has not presented a finding that closure is in the best interest of students, therefore, the charter renewal petition cannot be lawfully denied under this finding.

\* \* \*

Santa Barbara Unified School District Staff accs-feb26item03  
Report and Findings, Olive Grove Charter—Santa Barbara Attachment 4  
Response to Staff report and Findings Page 20 of 20

As demonstrated herein, the OGCS-SB charter renewal petition meets or exceeds the legal requirements for approval, and the Staff Report presents findings that are either unsupported or impermissible bases for denial of the charter renewal. We urge the SBUSD Board to **give greater** weight to the academic performance of the Charter School as intended by Section 47607.2(b)(2). SBUSD can only deny the renewal of OGCS-SB with a finding that closure is in the best interest of students. As evidenced above, that is demonstrably not the case here. The Staff Findings do not show a viable reason to close the Charter School and closing would be a disservice to the community.

As discussed above, OGCS-SB respectfully requests approval of a five-year charter term. The academic program and services the Charter School offers are a great benefit to students and families in the District. OGCS-SB looks forward to answering any questions from the District or its Board of Education, and the opportunity for collaboration with the District to continue to serve the students of our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [mrydman@olivegrovecharter.org](mailto:mrydman@olivegrovecharter.org) or 805-260-9148 to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Meg Rydman  
Superintendent