



Determination Hearing for the Charter Renewal of St. HOPE Public School 7 (PS7)

Board Meeting
September 19, 2024
Agenda Item No. 10.1

Presented by:
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Director, Innovative Schools

SCUSD Authorizes Charter Schools in alignment with core beliefs and guiding principles

CORE BELIEF

We recognize that our system is inequitable by design and we vigilantly work to confront and interrupt inequities that exist to level the playing field and provide opportunities for everyone to learn, grow and reach their greatness.

SCUSD GUIDING PRINCIPLE

All students are given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options

Process for Determination Hearing

- **Presentation: Equal Time and Process for District and Charter**
 - High Level Summary (Specifics available in renewal report)
 - 15 minutes split between District (7.5min) and Charter (7.5min)
- **Public Comment (15 min)**
- **Board Questions and Discussion**
- **Board Action**
 - Board has been provided with 3 possible resolutions. The Board will need to approve one of them at the end of this item.

Review of Timeline

Petition Submitted:

→ June 28, 2024

Notice to Cure Issued:

→ July 26, 2024

Initial Public Hearing to Determine Level of Support:

→ August 8, 2024 (41 days)

Corrective Action Plan Received:

→ August 26, 2024

Publication of Staff Renewal Report:

→ September 4, 2024 (68 days)

Determination Hearing / Board Vote:

→ September 19, 2024 (83 days)



The Charter

(A promise or roadmap for serving students)



**Students
at the Center**

The BIG Idea

An Inch
of
Flexibility

A Foot of
Innovation

A Yard of Achievement

Flexibility can be governance,
academic program, pedagogy...
all based on their charter

Flexibility
comes with
Accountability
from
Authorizer

Data and Oversight Records

(Track record of how charter has kept its “promises” over past term)

Reflection and Continuous Improvement Efforts

(Acknowledging that we are not perfect, that we are always improving)

Review Team =
Director of Innovative
Schools with support
from CCAP consultants

3 Tiers for Renewal

Tier is determined based on the previous 2 years of published CA Dashboard Data



High Tier

Blue or Green

on all schoolwide indicators OR Schoolwide indicators are the same / **higher than State** and subgroups are **higher than State**

Middle Tier

All other schools falls in the middle tier

Low Tier

Red or Orange

on all schoolwide indicators OR Schoolwide indicators are the **same or lower than State** and subgroups are **lower than State**

Potential Denial Findings by Tier



- Shall **not** deny for academic reasons
- Can only deny with a finding that school is either
 - (A) unable to implement program due to fiscal/governance concerns OR
 - (B) is not serving all students who wish to attend.
- Can deny for the reasons in High OR can deny if:
 - (A) school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the students AND
 - (B) Closure is in the best interest of students AND
 - (C) Decision provided greater weight to academic performance
- Presumptive denial, but may renew for 2 years if
 - (A) the charter school is taking meaningful steps to address the underlying cause of low performance (with a written plan) AND
 - (B) Verified data shows 1 year progress for students OR strong postsecondary outcomes








PS7 has been placed in the Middle Tier by the California Department of Education

SCUSD Renewal Report for PS7

Published 9/4/2024

Middle Performance Level

-  School has submitted verified data suggesting students made at least 1 year of academic growth (CAASPP Data Spring 2023)
-  School has submitted a comprehensive petition with a necessary affirmations
-  School's petition describes sound educational program
-  School does not appear unlikely to implement their described program (with corrective action)
-  School appears to be serving all students who wish to attend

Executive Summary

Performance Level assigned by CDE (High, Middle, Low)	MIDDLE
Has a notice to cure an alleged violation been issued?	YES
→ If notice was issued, has a response been submitted?	YES

Did the charter petition meet all primary requirements for renewal?		YES
1	Does this charter present an <u>unsound</u> educational program?	NO
2	Are the petitioners demonstrably <u>unlikely</u> to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition?	SEE ANALYSIS
3	Does the petition contain the necessary affirmations and assurances of the Charter Schools Act?	YES
4	Does the petition contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of all of the 15 elements described below?	YES
5	Does the petition contain a declaration of whether the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public employer of the charter school's employees?	YES
Were there any findings that would potentially trigger a notice to cure an alleged violation under either of the following?		YES
6	Is the charter school demonstrably <u>unlikely</u> to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition due to substantial fiscal or governance factors?	SEE ANALYSIS
7	Does the charter school serve the pupils who wish to attend, as documented by E.C. section 47607(d)?	YES



The Charter
(A promise or roadmap
for serving students)



**Students
at the Center**

✓
Charter Petition is
Comprehensive and Meets
Requirements

✓
Middle Tier;
historically strong
outcomes; recent
declines

**Data and Oversight
Records**
(Track record of how
charter has kept its
“promises” over past
term)

**Reflection and
Continuous
Improvement Efforts**
(Acknowledging that we are
not perfect, that we are
always improving)

✓
Corrective Action
Plan submitted
to SCUSD
responds to fiscal
and governance
concerns

Based on the above findings of fact and **St. HOPE Public School 7's** designation as a **MIDDLE-PERFORMING** charter school, the District's review team has concluded that the renewal petition, coupled with the corrective action plan submitted in response to the Notice to Cure, **collectively meet the minimum legal standards** under the Education Code **to qualify for approval for the requested five-year term, beginning July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030.**

If the District's Board takes action to approve the renewal petition, District staff will oversee PS7's full satisfaction of the corrective actions described in the plan and any other conditions or oversight items that the Board may direct

Next Steps / Suggestions

Should the board vote to renew, district staff suggests the following conditions:

- PS7 will enter into an operational MOU to be signed no later than May 1, 2025
- Full implementation of corrective action plan proposed by PS7
- Submission of aligned fiscal documents
- Plan to reduce suspension rates
- Plan to improve academic performance, especially among students with disabilities



PS7 Determination Hearing St. HOPE Public Schools Presentation

September 19, 2024

Introduction & Highlights



- PS7, operated by St. HOPE Public Schools (SHPS), opened in the 2003-04 school year with grades K-4; we now serve scholars in grades TK-8.
- The school was initially authorized by SCUSD in 2002 and is in its 22nd year of operation as a charter school. This is PS7's fourth charter renewal.
- We are renovating our Elementary School on Strawberry Lane - a historic \$35 million investment is transforming the campus located in the high needs community of Oak Park.



PS7 Meets Renewal Criteria

PS7 is a MIDDLE-PERFORMING charter school, as determined by state law and the 2022 and 2023 Dashboard results, and PS7 qualifies for approval of five-year term from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2030.

SCUSD's staff report says: "The design and description of the educational program at PS7 are sound and meet renewal criteria."

SHPS and PS7 appreciate SCUSD's partnership and look forward to continuing to work with the District to serve students and families in Oak Park and South Sacramento.



SCUSD Staff Report Findings

“PS7 serves a historically underserved community and for many years has had notably strong academic outcomes, particularly for African American and socio-economically disadvantaged student groups.”

“The African American student group at PS7 outperformed the African American student group statewide in English-Language Arts and Mathematics. The socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) student group outperformed the SED student group statewide in English-Language Arts and Mathematics.”

“A review of the renewal petition identified all of the necessary elements...as well as optional elements regarding staff recruitment and development.”

“Based on the school’s academic track record...it is likely that it will continue to successfully implement that program and produce successful student outcomes.”

Looking Ahead: Our Areas of Focus

SHPS will work with SCUSD to build deeper public trust, create greater transparency in our processes, and drive excellence in all aspects of our operations.

SHPS, on behalf of both PS7 and Sac High, is committed to:

- ✓ Focusing on reducing suspensions and chronic absenteeism, especially for students with disabilities.
- ✓ Continuing robust professional development and teacher support, while investing in commercially-developed curriculum.
- ✓ Continuing to ensure all teachers maintain appropriate credentials or documents required to teach while monitoring credential agreements and providing teachers with support to attain effective and, ultimately, clear credentials.
- ✓ Implementing the corrective action plan submitted to SCUSD on August 26.
- ✓ Providing SCUSD staff with opportunities to review progress on implementation of SHPS' action plans.



Creating a Positive School Culture

- **Family connection:** Quarterly events to facilitate strong relationships with parents/caregivers; several platforms to communicate with families daily about grades, behavior, and important information.
- **Focus on keeping students in class:** Implemented a Social Emotional Learning curriculum and have ongoing training for staff to ensure consistency and reduce the number of students violating school rules.
- **Hired additional staff:** Hired two credentialed Mental Health and Wellness Coordinators; staff focused on supporting students' ability to emotionally regulate themselves and learn problem solving and coping skills.
- **Staff training to support student behavior:** Focus on progressive discipline ladders aimed at keeping students in class by addressing small behavior issues prior to them becoming larger incidents.
- **Expanded incentives for attendance:** All-Stars attendance recognition and other incentives.
- **Support for homeless and other vulnerable students:** Started the Dragon's Closet to provide scholars with basic school and hygiene supplies.
- **Middle School Homeroom model:** Builds a strong school culture and provides students with a consistent set of adults on campus who are highly invested in their success.

Providing Professional Development, Teacher Support & Commercially-Developed Curriculum



- **PS7 and SHPS agree with SCUSD's feedback on the plan for teacher credentials and support:**
 - "The steps described in Action 1...are consistent with best practices"
 - "The steps noted in actions 2-5 appear promising"
- **Improving credentialing status:**
 - Proposing financial assistance to support teachers through the credentialing process.
 - Implementing and monitoring credential agreements to ensure staff are working towards appropriate credentials.
- **Providing standards-aligned curriculum:**
 - Implement commercially-developed curriculum to supplement teacher-developed curriculum to better support teachers and increase retention.
- **Delivering professional development:**
 - 3 additional days of orientation over the summer for new staff.
 - 21 days of professional development over the course of the school year for all staff.
 - Dedicated time during the school year for teachers to create rigorous, aligned lesson plans, analyze student data, and increase department or grade level collaboration.
 - Regular lesson plan feedback and co-planning sessions to support teachers with instruction.

SHPS, PS7 and Sac High's Actions

We have worked incredibly hard to be reflective, transparent and responsive to SCUSD and will continue to do so. Since our charter renewal hearings on August 8 we have made meaningful progress by completing the following actions:

- Amended both PS7 and Sac High LCAPs to connect expenditures to student outcomes.
- Modified current contracts with St. HOPE Academy and St. HOPE Development Corporation to require time-hour accounting.
- Amended SHPS bylaws to prevent any conflicts of interests between SHPS and any current, past or proposed vendor.
- Appointed a new SHPS Board of Director Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson effective October 1, 2024 and upon approval of the charter petitions and terms.
- SHPS' back-office provider retained a new lead financial officer to support and manage SHA staff providing back-office services and is interviewing potential staff with school finance expertise to strengthen their team.
- Engaged audit firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to perform an independent review of our back-office provider's compliance.

Strengthening Financial Reporting

SHPS has submitted the following financial documents to SCUSD, in addition to the renewal petition documentation:

- 2024-25 Budget
- 2024-25 LCAP
- 2023-24 unaudited actuals

SHPS will also provide updated financial projections for the renewal petition as requested in the staff findings.

Further, SHPS is also ensuring financial reporting and accounting is improving and meets or exceeds industry norms.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with SCUSD and review these documents and look forward to any feedback from SCUSD on financial submissions.



PS7's Commitments & Thank You

We agree with SCUSD's proposed next steps and look forward to continuing our partnership with the District. Our commitment to SCUSD includes:

- Entering into an operational MOU.
- Continuing implementation of the action plans provided to SCUSD on August 26.
- Working with SCUSD on monitoring our implementation of the action plans.

We will work tirelessly toward continuous improvement at SHPS so we can continue to help our scholars do and be their best.

We are excited to continue to serve our students and families in partnership with SCUSD and are happy to answer Board member questions.



Three Options for the Board

Approval

The charter is approved for the term July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

The charter and the district will enter into an MOU before the end of the year.

Approval with Conditions

The charter is approved for the term July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

The charter and the district will enter into an MOU before the end of the year.

The board will indicate conditions by which the charter must abide or risk board consideration of revocation due to noncompliance.

Denial

The charter renewal is not approved.

The charter and the district will begin closure proceedings to close the school by June 30, 2025.

The charter may appeal the denial to the County.