

This information in this document was provided, as is, to the California Department of Education (CDE) for the **February 2021 ACCS Agenda Item 3**. This document is posted to the CDE website to meet the legal requirements of California *Education Code* Section 33009.5.

For more information regarding the content of this material, please contact the Charter Schools Division by phone at 916-322-6029 or by email at charters@cde.ca.gov.

Emails and Letters Submitted as Written Public Comment for Item 3

The information on the subsequent pages represents emails and letters submitted through February 8 as written public comment for Item 3.

This information is displayed as:

Name

Comment:

Kevin Morris

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Same comment as above also submitted by the following:

Name
Jon Lapine
Walter Beach
Robin McKillop
Ivan Stroganov
Heidi Weller
Jenn Gross
Steve Morreale
Rose Molloy
Kathleen Welsh
Kim Lewis
Craig & Cathy Dow
Craig Dow
klymer keeham Baylo
Dina Jade Wood
SANDY NEUMANN
Zach Martinez
Polly James
Jeannie Shaw
Heather Bennett
Lenore Alford
Anne De Souza
Megan Brown
Jennifer Radcliffe
Chris Whitby
Bob Lawson
Scott Lafranchi
William Wayland

Name
Michelle Dunsing
Catherine Loudis
Jennifer Caleshu
Allison Waugh
Meryl Sundove
Garrett Plante
Lisa Kemp
Tara Arenas
Chris Strempek
Trista Macaulay
Fernanda Etura
Paula Connelly
Jennifer Holden
Serena Howeth
Joelle Connolly
Sarah Franklin
Sharon Connelly
Erin Heath
Jim
Brad Bauer

Amy Bayly

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Connie Siegenthaler

Comment: To Whom It May Concern, I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be

ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district. This charter school and board has continued to display arrogance and a flagrant disregard for the greater good of local schools and children in the district. To make the RVSD assume the debt of this grossly mismanaged charter school would only add insult to the injury this charter has already inflicted on the local schools and children. I urge you in the strongest terms to deny this appeal by the RVC and force the charter board to assume and manage their own debt!

Todd Barbee

Comment: To Whom It May Concern, I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district. ps: RVC needs to be closed, it makes me so angry these guys get anything from my taxes. They have proven to be a constant burden, and will continue to adversely affect my property value. My excellent neighborhood school, Brookside Elementary, deserves our support.

Will Burke

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition.

As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored.

Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

The RVSD cannot afford to take on the debt the RVC nor should they be required given that the charter was rejected by RVSD from the very beginning. This charter was not needed and cost the RVSD many millions of dollars to date that could have been better used to actually support the students and teachers of the RVSD.

It is time to let the local school district do what is right and proper for the community and leave the responsibility of debt to those that incurred it. The RVSD and community have suffered enough.

Danielle Diaz

Comment: Good Morning and Happy New Year,

I taught in Chicago public schools, and charters, and I know from personal experience the necessary role that charters can have when public school systems are either corrupted or abused. There is no need for the RVC school, and it is allowed to continue putting a burden on our community. We have wonderful public schools here, it's why we pay the insane cost of living here. This school doesn't seem to value their mission or hold themselves accountable as they free fall into deeper and deeper debt. These parents, who just want the best for their kids, are in a significant minority when it comes to trusting the leaders of the RVC. Covid has hit all of our schools and students hard and saddling RVSD with this debt now, or inevitably in the future, is NOT in the interest of serving our students.

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Teresa DiPerna

Comment: Dear CDE Representatives

I wanted you to know that our Ross Valley School District has gone through intensive hours and district attorney hours That led to the denial of the Ross Valley Charter petition.

Ross Valley Charter has caused so much conflict within our community. Over the past many years they have demonstrated that they can not sustain themselves financially without the assistance of loans from current and past board members, RVC teachers, RVC families and outside organizations. They were denied the first time by the district and the county due to needing an enrollment number that would make their school financially solvent. These enrollment numbers never came to fruition. They have had sufficient time to get this enrollment, and without it they operate on the edge of disaster. Who will end up paying back all these loans that are \$90,000? Do they even have an intention to pay any of these loans back? This can not be put on the back of our school district.

Our district is already financially strapped when it comes to providing for our current student population at its 4 elementary schools and one middle school. It can not possibly be equipped to take on the financial burdens of a charter school and further time to oversee a charter school which has a history of Brown Act Violations, currently

being investigated, charter teacher and charter families that have a history of vandalism and confrontation and questionable tactics for its methods of operation. How can anyone focus on the needs of students with so much static and issues?

I hope that you will not put this charter school authorization on the Ross Valley School District. The district can not possibly financially take on the brunt of this extremely mismanaged school. Please keep the best interest of our neighborhood public schools in the forefront of your decisions. Thank you for your time.

Lauren Gelber

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

RVC's student body is made up of more than 40% of students who do not reside in the RVSD school district. In the horrible event that the State approves the renewal of RVC despite its out of control debt, and the fact that it has survived only based on the closure of two local private and charter schools, I am demanding that you put the Marin County Office of Education as the oversight entity. It is unfair to force the oversight of the charter school, which has ALWAYS had an acrimonious relation with RVSD, onto the school district. As nearly half of the student body are residents of the County, yet not of RVSD boundaries, it is only fair to assign the County as the the oversight entity.

However, it is my primary demand that you DENY this charter due to its overwhelming debt, unsustainable budget, and inability to meet its enrollment goals in the future (as there are no more local schools that are in danger of closing).

Heather Murphy

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

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kathy o'sullivan

Comment: First, I am a long-time resident of San Anselmo, California, a voter, homeowner, taxpayer, and most importantly mom to a student who attended Ross Valley School District's (RVSD) excellent public schools - in the days before the ill-advised charter school started draining RVSD's resources.

I am horrified to learn that RVSD — and therefore our local taxpaying community — could possibly be forced to assume the debt of a charter school that RVSD — and by far the majority of its residents — always opposed, and that RVSD knew — and warned — was fiscally and otherwise mismanaged from the outset.

Please respect the carefully analyzed decision by RVSD, our locally elected school board. Deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. This charter school can't stand on its own feet despite ample opportunity, above and beyond what was legally imposed on this small community. It is long past time for RVC to close.

I strongly oppose forcing the oversight, and/or shockingly high accumulated debt, of RVC onto RVSD. RVSD is a small district, and under-funded as it is. Please don't make it worse.

This failing charter school needs to be shut down, and take responsibility for its own debts. Please do the right thing, and don't risk bankrupting our truly public schools. Or forcing still more diversions of everyone's scarce time and energy and resources.

Isn't a pandemic (and wildfire season...) far more than enough for our valiant teachers and administrators - and students and parents - to have to deal with to keep decent public education alive in our area?

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sissel Waage and Steve Pickle

Comment: To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to request that you deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) School to renew their charter petition, which would respect, and uphold, the denial of the RVC petition by the Ross Valley School District (RVSD) as well as our locally elected school board.

In addition, we strongly oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD. It was the State Board of Education that permitted the Ross Valley Charter to operate, in a determination that that overrode local officials' decision-making processes. Simply put, the RVC School permits were passed by state officials against the wishes of the local school district and the locally elected school board. The financial burden for these decisions should be borne by those who voted for the Charter, which is the State Board of Education. As such, the State Board of Education should be responsible to cover costs, including losses / debts, associated with their own decisions to permit the Ross Valley Charter to operate.

We look forward to regaining control of public school decision-making in the Ross Valley, with your decision to deny the appeal of the Ross Valley Charter School.

Margo and Charles James

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sara tewksbury

Comment: CDE-

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be disenfranchised. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district. Our public school district cannot absorb the charter's \$1,000,000 of debt. RVC has never met their enrollment or financial goals. It has proven it cannot sustain itself.

In addition, this charter has very little community support, attracting only 130 local families and has caused enormous upheaval. Thousands of dollars in pro-public education signs have been stolen or vandalized. As recently as October 2020 the wife of the director of this charter was pulling down pro public education flyers.

Please protect our local truly public schools and their ability to deliver quality education to all the children of this community.

Liz and Rufo di Carpegna

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

Why should our financially strapped, but excellent public school district have to bear the burden again of a poorly managed Charter school's debt? The Charter serves children who do not even live in our community, and has been disrespectful of our school district and tax paying community?

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Amy Flynn

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 27-year resident of the Ross Valley and have an intimate knowledge of the history of the origins of the very volatile Ross Valley Charter. I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally ELECTED school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally ELECTED school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore, I vehemently oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

My family has had several students educated through the very-excellent RVSD. I am a taxpayer as well as a volunteer who committed many hours to our local schools as well as the enrichment organization, the YES Foundation. This group (RVC) has consistently (since the '90s) had a history of discrimination, which should be enough of a reason to deny this petition. There has been, to date, zero oversight of this debacle. Enough is enough.

Janet Mercer

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am a parent of two children who have attended public schools that are part of the Ross Valley School District. I am also currently employed as a special education aide and have been part of public schools since receiving my Masters in Social Welfare/Pupil Personnel Services Credential in 1994.

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Kelly Eyler

Comment: To some it may concern:

I am a local public school teacher. I have watched our district funds get siphoned into this school that is watering down the resources in our district. Please give local control to our school district to deny this charter.

Diana Sottile

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of giving authority to local school boards in determining and deciding whether or not a charter's petition for renewal should be approved. I believe local school districts, through a fair and lawful process, should have the final say on whether or not to approve charter schools within their district.

As a teacher in the Ross Valley School District for the last 15 years, I have many concerns about the Ross Valley Charter continuing to exist in our district. My number one concern is that charter schools are not held to the same rules and regulations and are therefore not held accountable for their harmful actions. A charter's ability to avoid being accountable makes them prone to corruption as we have seen countless times in our nation. Even here, in our own small district, the Ross Valley Charter's leaders have been involved in conflicts of interests involving finances and employees on more than one occasion. As recently as this past spring, Ross Valley Charter went as far as to take out a PPP payroll loan designed to help keep our local businesses afloat during the pandemic! How can a charter claim to be a public school and small business at the same time!?! Charter laws are broken and need to be reconstructed.

Furthermore, Ross Valley Charter has been involved in questionable practices around their Special Education students, and their data on student performance is flimsy at best. I also have concerns that the families of ELL students have been taken advantage of by the Charter.

Ross Valley School Board has already denied the Charter's application to renew with a vote of 5 to 0 back in November, 2020.

Our Board is made up of professional, collaborative, and knowledgeable members who are fair and thorough in their processes and should be allowed to determine if a charter is helpful or harmful in the local community.

I am firmly in support of denying the charter renewal.

Justin Taplin

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

This comment is in regards to Agenda Item 3 for the ACCS Meeting on 2/11/21.

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Additionally, RVC leadership routinely present inaccurate information to regulatory agencies and the local community to support their position (see supporting information and rebuttals by RVSD staff relating to renewal). RVC leadership, in their materials submitted in support of their renewal application, have provided false evidence regarding "progress they have made in healing the divisiveness" in our community (see for reference letter submitted by Linda Kepley on 2/2/21).

In summary, RVSD being forced into oversight of RVC would be a huge financial drain on the RVSD district and community, representing a significant risk to students at a time when resources are already strained due to the pandemic. RVC currently carry approx. \$1m in debt. RVSD will be depleted by overseeing RVC, the anticipated lawsuits, and their unsustainable debt and financial management. It will degrade our district quality and put vulnerable students at risk. Secondly, There is no need or community support for RVC. They have proven themselves to be highly litigious and have drained RVSD resources and staff time through constant frivolous lawsuits that have all been concluded in favor of RVSD. RVC offers nothing unique or superior in any quantifiable way in regards to their education methodology or outcomes for students as compared to RVSD schools. RVC has never met financial or enrollment goals and 40% of RVC students reside out of the RVSD district, making it far more defensible and appropriate for oversight to be assigned to MCOE (the county).

Linda Kepley

Comment: To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to write to you to clarify the intent of my email to the Ross Valley School District (RVSD) back on November 10th. You can imagine my surprise when I saw that Ross Valley Charter (RVC) is now providing my email as evidence of “progress they have made in healing the divisiveness” in our community.

My email was intended as a plea not to have RVSD selected as the entity to provide oversight should RVC be approved. I stated that “any healing” would be jeopardized greatly by doing so. I did not say that RVC has initiated healing of any sort. In fact, their recent inappropriate use of Paycheck Protection Funds (PPP) once again demonstrated their lack of care for the community. Taking funds that you do not need while local small businesses suffer is appalling.

I am extremely concerned that RVSD will be saddled with RVC’s debt should they have oversight. I am extremely concerned that RVC’s egocentric actions will once again take away from the children of this community, regardless what school they attend. RVSD did not approve RVC’s charter. There are only 130 local kids that attend their program, an extremely low number. This community should not be responsible for a program that is not financially sound or viable. It is our children that will pay the price. The state approved RVC. The state should be responsible for that decision and all that comes with it.

James Cottle

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Our School district is a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district to add anymore burden is both detrimental and short sighted at a time when we face so much uncertainty. Please do the right thing for the sake of our community and deny this charter or if you don’t please have the County of Marin have oversight.

Thank you for your time.

Kelly Bryson Murphy

Comment: Dear valued educational leaders,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District (RVSD), our locally-elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition.

The financial burden of this debt-ridden charter would have massive negative impact on our over 2000 public-school children enrolled in RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

Liz Harges

Comment: Dear California Department of Education,

I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition. As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be disenfranchised. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district. Our public school district cannot absorb the charter's \$1,000,000 of debt. RVC has never met their enrollment or financial goals. It has proven it cannot sustain itself.

James Fair

Comment: hello

I am writing to discourage you from placing the RVC in Fairfax into the Ross Valley School District. I'm not certain of the actual mechanism but i am against the RVC being oversaw or in any way being connected to the charter.

please keep the RVC it's own entity or connected to the marin county office of education.

DORETTA RUZZIER

Comment: To Whom it May Concern,

In November, the Ross Valley Charter applied to renew their charter in my district (Ross Valley School District). They were denied by our school board with a vote of 5 to 0. I am writing to you in support of the denial of the charter renewal.

- RVSD has lost over 250 students this year. That's about 8 teachers worth of classes. We cannot afford to lose any more students. Because our funding model is based on the number of students enrolled, we also get less money from the state in a fiscally challenging time.
- The murky financials associated with the charter, most recent example being that they took out a PPP payroll loan last Spring, designed to help keep our local businesses

afloat during the pandemic. (see pages 7-17 of the RVSD's Findings and Denial of the Ross Valley Charter document)

- Where is the data on student performance? As educators, we know how important formative and summative assessments are, and use them as tools for instruction. Data trends over time can tell us which student populations are being served by our model, and which groups we need to offer more support.
- Concerns about higher than district average rate of student suspension and absenteeism (as reported on the CDE Dashboard). This is especially concerning given the percentage of english language learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students enrolled, and how suspension and poor attendance can have dire consequences in these groups.
- Concerns about special education students, and the charter's ability to deliver services these children have a right to.
- Local school boards understand and know what is happening in local districts. They should be allowed to determine if a charter is helpful or harmful in the local community.

I believe local school districts should have the final say on whether or not to approve charter schools and that public education needs to stay public with community accountability.

Erin Hall

Comment: Hello,

I am writing to support Ross Valley Charter's petition for renewal. I have 2 sons who attend RVC, currently 3rd and 5th grades. This is our 3rd school year at RVC. I chose RVC after attending a typical public school where I felt the school work was worksheet based and only touched on subjects in a cursory manner, which was boring for my kids. There was little room for students' curiosity and related questions about the subjects. I was looking for an educational approach that was more child centered and engaged children's natural curiosity. When I found RVC and discovered their Inquiry Approach to learning, I knew it was going to be a better fit. And it is. Each term students take a deep dive into different subjects and they get to ask questions and learn how to research and write and create projects about their findings at Expos. These Expos have themes like CA history, National Parks, Ocean Pollution Solutions, Wood Wide Web (Plants, Trees, and Fungi), Local Wildlife, Etc. My children get the most learning from these Inquiry Projects. They are wonderful and diverse themes and children get to use their curiosity and discover more about what interests them and present what they have learned. These are valuable skills to develop. And most importantly they are having fun learning in a nurturing educational community.

RVC has been a wonderful educational experience for my family. I fully support the RVC Petition for Renewal, families need this public school option in Marin County.

Jade Raybin

Comment: To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Aurora Jade Raybin and I am a parent at Ross Valley Charter School in Fairfax, CA.

This is in regards to Agenda Item 3.

My son is 5 years old and he is a student at Ross Valley Charter in their kindergarten program. I am amazed at how responsive, communicative, transparent, and flexible the school staff has been amidst this terrible pandemic.

My son loves his teacher and is getting a top quality education under Miss Rebecca Wicker, K/1 teacher. The curriculum is incredible. They integrate arts, music, math, science, and english in a way that keeps my child engaged and accelerating, both online and in person.

They have taken the needed safety precautions at every step of the way, and given our kids a chance to learn despite it all.

Our address would have assigned us to a school with far lower school scores, larger class sizes, and that hasn't even opened its doors during this pandemic.

The happiness and education of our very social, engaged, curious child REDACTED has been fueled and fostered by Ross Valley Charter School.

Please do everything in your power to support this thriving educational institution. My son deserves the best possible education. Ross Valley Charter is creating educational opportunity and equity for low income families like mine in Marin County.

Peter Carnochan

Comment: To the Advisory Commission,

I am writing as a parent to support the renewal of the RVC charter. RVC is a great school for my son, Bodhi Carnochan. It is a close-knit community with excellent teachers, and a true progressive education model. We are clear that RVC is the best fit for Bodhi's academic and social needs.

It is painful to me that the school board seems so dead set on blocking RVC despite the school's clear success on multiple fronts.

I strongly urge the Advisory Commission to rule in Ross Valley Charter's favor at the upcoming meeting. Agenda item number 3.

Jen Ciraldo

Comment: To the State Board of Education Advisory Commission on Charter Schools:

I am writing this letter to voice my gratitude and support for Ross Valley Charter School in Fairfax, California.

My son, REDACTED, is in 5th grade. This school has been an amazing experience for both my son and my family. When you talk to people about this school the word that often comes up is 'community.' The school leadership, staff, and teachers have played a big part in creating a welcoming place for every family.

We were initially drawn to RVC for its inquiry-based approach. Imagine every class has an area for kids to create and build as a path to learning! It creates an interactive and innovative mini design lab. Kids are encouraged to think of new ways of doing things, share their ideas, and collaborate.

This past year, as schools have been more home based, I have had a good opportunity to see the work and projects my son's teacher assigns. I even just pulled one of his reading packets out on immigration to read for myself. The lessons are thoughtful and inclusive and generate incredible discussions.

My son has had an incredible academic experience at Ross Valley Charter. His teachers meet every single student where they are at. We're so happy with his education that we have applied our daughter for next year's kindergarten at Ross Valley Charter.

We appreciate your continued support of this special school.

Annadel Dong

Comment: Please consider renewing our beloved Charter school. Its program and teachers have made a world of difference for my three children, all having varying academic needs. We also appreciate that the Charter allows families from outside our community to enroll, being a family of color we appreciate the added diversity this brings to our school community.

We truly appreciate your support.

Merrell Maschino

Comment: Dear Educators

I'm writing to ask that you support RVC's charter petition. Ross Valley Charter is an engaging, academically inspiring program that is very different from the schools in our District. We joined RVC because our older son was becoming concerningly disengaged from learning at school, and was frequently a troublemaker. At RVC, he really learned to love participating in the classroom. The way RVC teachers value kids' input made an immediate difference for my son's academic performance, and also gave him ways to channel his energy so that he could be himself without being disruptive.

My younger son has had the wonderful benefit of learning from RVC teachers for all of his elementary school years (he's in 5th currently). He has such trust and love for his teachers that he is comfortable bringing his own interests into class and really following his interests. He is able to express his creativity in his assignments and gives a lot of thought into how he will approach opportunities to share his learning. He's very comfortable reaching out to his teachers when he is having trouble, and isn't afraid to ask for help. I am very grateful that he's had such a supportive experience for his entire elementary school time.

The RVC administration also bends over backwards to communicate with families and to have open discussions about school decisions. The staff is also very open to ideas and input from parents. RVC is an asset to our whole community. Please support our school so that all children can have access to this remarkable program.

Charlene Lincoln

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

Our daughter attends Ross Valley Charter and it has been an overwhelmingly positive experience. We started at TK level and have been so impressed with the sense of community, the teachers and the curriculum. We know it is a special place as they always take such care and consideration for all their children. My daughter loves to learn and this immersive curriculum that focuses on the social emotional is an amazing gift. Please renew RVC's Charter. Many happy little ones are counting on it.

Rana Barar

Comment: To whom it may concern:

I will get straight to the point: Please renew Ross Valley Charter's petition for renewal of their charter. I have proudly watched the school grow since we originally submitted the petition years ago. It is a thriving, diverse, much-needed addition to Ross Valley's educational options. In the years since the original petition was approved, the school has found and settled into a permanent, centrally located home, has grown its student body, and has adapted admirably to the incredible challenges of this past year.

As you well know, charter schools are controversial, and that is no different in this case. You will surely hear from people in the community who seek to shutter the doors of

RVC. In my experience, this divisiveness has been stoked, rather than quelled, by local officials. Meanwhile, the students, teachers, administrators and parents at RVC have persevered through it all to build a warm, welcoming, inclusive, successful school and their efforts should be rewarded with a renewal of the charter they have fought so hard for.

Phyllis Kirson

Comment: To Whom it May Concern,

I am the grandmother of a second grader attending RVC and I'm writing in support of this wonderful school. I have been a classroom volunteer (pre-Covid) and I've seen first hand the dedication, creativity, and quality of the community that Director Luke Duchesne, the teachers, the staff, and the families of RVC have created for the students that attend this very special school. Many of the students are from populations which have been overlooked by other educational settings, specifically children of color, as is my grandchild who despite these viral times is thriving with his teacher's "distance learning". I enthusiastically urge you to support their application to continue serving a broad community of families in the Ross Valley. This is the right thing to do.

Bryan and Vita Hewitt

Comment: Hi,

This email is in regards to Agenda Item Number 3. I am the parent of a child who attends Ross Valley Charter School. Before enrolling at RVC, she attended several local public and private schools. None of them were a good fit for her keen interest in scholarship and desire for safe social interaction with like-minded peers. The flexible approach and deep level of experience evidenced by the RVC staff and faculty have created an environment that is a perfect fit for her. As an institution, RVC is also very good at communicating and responding to the needs of students and families. These factors create a local educational opportunity that is of tremendous value to my family.

Thank you for you support.

Sarah Wotherspoon

Comment: Dear State Board of Education Advisory Commission on Charter Schools,

We're Sarah and Bob Wotherspoon, parents of a 3rd grader at Ross Valley Charter School (RVC), and write in support of the school's charter renewal petition (agenda item number 3).

Our daughter started at RVC at the end of January 2021 after spending K-partial 3rd grade at another local public school. When we determined that her former school was

no longer the best fit for her, we worked closely with RVC's faculty and staff to learn how the school's educational and community approach was different as well as how to help her transition effectively. She transferred a week later, and we are delighted with our decision.

Our observations about RVC - albeit brief - include:

- The teachers work very closely together to deliver an effective curriculum that spans each child's full K-5 experience, not just the grade they're in at the moment, and are quick to make changes when they identify a means of improvement
- They are clearly committed to proactive and open communication and collaboration with everyone in the community with things as mundane as pick-up/drop-off and as complex as handling the math portion of the curriculum differently for 3rd grade based on teachers' recent observations
- This is a strong community of committed leadership, staff, faculty, and families.

We're grateful we have this option in our community and appreciate your support of RVC!

Evin Levey

Comment: Commissioners and Board Members,

I am writing in support of the renewal of the charter for Ross Valley Charter School. Having this option for my children has made a huge difference to our family. The progressive nature of the program means that every child is engaged in learning - not just a one-size-fits-all-approach that had failed us in our local school.

Wayne Leighty

Comment: I am writing in support of the RVC petition for renewal.

Having RVC as an option in our community has been essential for our young family as we find the learning environment that works best for our children.

Thank you so much for your support!

Michelle Beare

Comment: Dear Educators, Commissioners, Board Members,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a huge impact on our family. My children have benefited significantly from their unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program. Although my children are very different, the program at RVC gives them ways to express themselves and bring their unique creativity into their assignments. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students.

Our family values inclusivity and community, and our children have been able to learn these values at school. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported. I've talked with teachers who were delivering meals and school kits to families on nights and weekends over the pandemic. The teachers and staff continually impress me with how they put the well-being of each student first.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Donna Brydon

Comment: To:

The State Board of Education Advisory Commission on Charter Schools

As a lifelong educator, grandparent of current students and a volunteer at Ross Valley Charter School, I would like to write to you to express my support for RVC. Having RVC as an option for my family is important in many ways.

The multi-age classes foster a deep relationship between the teacher and the students, allowing an understanding of how best to help students thrive. I saw this first hand while I worked in the classrooms. The emphasis on Project/Inquiry/Integrated-based learning creates an in depth and exciting engagement by students. Learning is fun! Sharing the joy of my grandsons and the other students is a wonderful experience for all! The emphasis at RVC is on educating the whole child and the teachers are very skilled not only in teaching academics, but also in fostering physical and social-emotional development. I can see my grandsons' blossoming confidence as well as their academic growth. They have many opportunities for collaboration with their peers, which has help them socially along with their learning of the curriculum. And, they are empowered with many chances to make choices in their education.

Ross Valley Charter provides a progressive education and I heartily support it. I am so grateful my grandsons are a part of this thriving and joyful learning community.

Eva Polony

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

I am writing to you all because RVC has been more than just a fabulous school. For my son, it has fostered a love of learning, personal growth and responsibility to not just oneself but to the community and to the world in which we live. The teachers support the child's own inquisitive nature with the way they engage them to work together and to challenge themselves.

The opportunity to have the same teacher for two years is perfect. His teachers have all really known and understood him. He has benefited greatly because of this close relationship.

I want more children to be able to get the chance to benefit from RVC 's amazing and dedicated teachers, staff and our phenomenal Director Luke

Katherine Csizmadia

Comment: Dear Educators, Commissioners and Board Members,

I'm writing to support the renewal of the Ross Valley Charter school charter.

Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us.

Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different school approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education.

Our family greatly appreciated the uniquely collaborative and family-inclusive reality at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where families are meaningfully involved as partners in education, not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees.

Ross Valley Charter is a nimble, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens. My children are forever learners because of the self knowledge, inquiry experience, and confidence they gained at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where students know their voices are welcomed, heard and heeded, so they know they matter, as do their actions.

Ross Valley Charter provides a multi-racial experience not easy to find in a county where 89.7% of the population is White. At our local elementary school (Ross Valley

School) district, 77.9% students are White (according to the district's 2019-20 LCAP), and it reports consistently high absenteeism and suspension rates among its Hispanic (the largest local BIPOC student segment) and Socio-economically Disadvantaged student segments and no year-to-year improvements in math and language arts achievement levels for these same segments.

At Ross Valley Charter, only 53.6% of the students are White, according to the California Department of Education 2019-20 Dataquest report. Despite having significantly higher proportions of English Learners and low-income students than our local district, RVC students attained higher academic achievement levels according to the most recent CDE-published CAASPP test results. This school attends to every student to provide equitable support to all, and not leave traditionally marginalized students behind the way our nearby public schools do.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's renewal application.

Noah Logan

Comment: Dear Board Members,

Please renew Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC is worthwhile. This is the public school I longed for as a child. Here I see our two wildly different children both thriving and growing. RVC gives them means to express themselves within the academic rigor of the inquiry-based program with project-based learning that is relevant.

We value the diverse community. Amidst a sea of sameness in Marin, RVC stands out for social, economic and ethnic diversity without compromising performance. The staff at RVC go above and beyond to ensure our children and every student at the school feel welcome and supported. Always.

Of my 12 years of public school, my best two were in a multi-age classroom (4-5, Oak Grove, Graton, CA). Our sons and their peers are thriving in RVC's thoughtful multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented environment. Nothing else like this exists in our area.

Please approve RVC's renewal petition. Allow this school to serve this wonderful group of students.

Thank you.

Jimmy Chavez

Comment: To Whom This May Concern,

My name is James Chavez, and my daughter attends TK at Ross Valley Charter School. My wife and I have been extremely pleased with the quality of education, the openness of teachers and administrators, and the sense of community that pervades the school ever since starting there this academic year.

We are fortunate to live in a district where the local public school just a couple minutes from our home is considered very good by some. However, we believe that making the drive across town 30 minutes to Ross Valley Charter School is well worth the educational benefits our daughter receives. The inquiry-based method of learning and focus on individual responsibility and creativity has brought out the best in our daughter. She is a very gifted student, and we love that she can interact with students in a blended TK-K classroom.

The results are astounding: she is fully reading 50-page chapter books at age 5, she has a good grasp of addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers from 0-1000, and she feels confident expressing her individuality through visual art. Most importantly, we find that the teachers and principal reinforce the values of kindness, respect, and personal reliance that will make her successful in the future. Especially this year when we as parents have had a chance to play a big role in the day-to-day education of our daughter, we have witnessed how her teacher has tested a variety of approaches to learning, so that students get the optimal benefit.

Even with the pandemic, the staff at Ross Valley Charter School has succeeded in including families in the school community and fostering a love of learning among our young ones.

That RVC should have to expend energy defending itself unnecessarily against the selfish interests of teachers unions and "educators" at the Ross Valley School District is a shame. As the great Dr. Thomas Sowell writes in his recent book *Charter Schools and Their Enemies*, "It is a painful irony that people who are promoting the make-believe equality of "inclusion" and "diversity" in schools are attacking charter schools that are producing the real equality of educational achievement." What we find so refreshing about RVC is that the leadership and teachers are so laser-focused on the students' well-being -- not threatened by what other schools nearby are doing.

We sincerely hope you renew Ross Valley Charter School's charter for many years to come, so that they can freely continue offering their unique style of education and achieving excellent outcomes.

Ambar Chavez

Comment: My name is Ambar Chavez. I am a parent of a TK student at Ross Valley Charter School. This letter is in regards to Agenda Item #3, and I write in support of the renewal of the RVC Charter.

Before we found RVC, our family was struggling with nowhere for our intelligent, empathetic, artistic, adventurous 4 year-old daughter to go to school. At the end of May 2020, our local school district cut the TK program in its entirety.

Having RVC as an option was a lifesaver for our family! Our daughter was beyond ready for TK, and probably would have fared very well in K but for the arbitrary birthdate cut off. At RVC, our daughter is thriving and able to perform to her fullest potential in the mixed age classroom. Additionally, it has been so rewarding for her to be exposed to the native Spanish-speaking families attending RVC, as we are a family of Hispanic heritage in a largely white neighborhood in this predominantly white county. RVC truly values diversity.

Additionally, having come from a hands-on, outdoor preschool, the inquiry-based instruction at RVC has been critical to our daughter's education experience. Rather than sit in a rigid classroom setting doing worksheets all day, she has been digging into the lessons about everything from composting and earthworms to the evolution and innovation of tools over time.

Also, the teachers and staff at RVC are incomparable. Director Luke Duchene communicates better than any school director I have seen, while also juggling a family of his own. The teachers are nurturing and caring and deeply thoughtful about each inquiry and the corresponding lessons.

Without RVC, we would have been completely lost this past year. Please renew the charter. Thank you.

Erica Smith

Comment: To Whom It May Concern,

I am a parent of twin kindergarteners who are happily attending their second year at Ross Valley Charter in Fairfax, California. As both a parent of color and a performing arts educator for over 35 years, I was thrilled to find RVC for several reasons. First, I was relieved to find a school with more diversity in the student body than most other Marin County schools. It is extremely important to both my husband and I that our children are educated in a diverse and culturally sensitive environment. Secondly, we love the project based learning, multi-age classrooms and the focus on integrating the arts and Spanish into the classrooms that RVC provides. Finally, we are extremely happy with our children's teacher. She is able to make our young children feel connected and have fun with online learning. She has created a real sense of community with her students and has gone above and beyond with her time and energy. We plan to stay at RVC through fifth grade because we feel like we have found the right educational environment for our children to thrive.

Natalie Long

Comment: TO: Whom It May Concern, re: Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter

My partner and I put a lot of thought into where we'd send our two boys to elementary school. We'd invested in a Montessori Preschool experience and were looking to continue to foster a "student-led" approach in hopes that our boys would take ownership of their own learning, and be encouraged to explore the world through their own curiosity. Our local elementary school has an amazing reputation, but we kept being confronted by what drives reputations and ratings of schools -- and it's always come down to the test scores.

I've been studying up on education for the past ~10 years (even before I had children) because I've considered entering the field professionally. I feel strongly that the system we've inherited from the industrial era is outdated. Our children are showing up on college campuses in droves and having to call their parents for help (per Julie Lythcott-Haims work). Our kids (in general) are not being taught how to think critically and I fully believe this is a byproduct of 'teaching to the test' in our traditional public elementary schools.

When my oldest was ready for kindergarten, Ross Valley Charter was being formed. I attended every informational session and "meet and greet" or picnic they offered. I interviewed every teacher, every Board member and the new Director (Luke Duchene) once he was hired. I was really torn -- because there was a lot of controversy in the community surrounding our charter. We ended up taking the jump when offered a spot from the lottery and we've never regretted it!

Ross Valley Charter starts with the WHOLE CHILD philosophy. I've seen, over several years of being in the community, how the school embodies this core belief. I've met fellow parents whose kid was asked to sit in the corner in "time out" when they couldn't sit still in a classroom. I've heard from parents that interviewed every school in the county and then chose RVC. I've met a parent whose child is so neuro-diverse that he'd been kicked out of 3 schools prior to joining RVC; and he would flee the classroom or hide under the desk for months before the anxiety of being at school diminished (at RVC)... and now he is thriving. It's stories like these (in addition to my own children's experience) that have me convinced that a child-centered approach is critical. RVC meets the child where they're at; and nurtures a child's intrinsic motivation to learn.

I've now had the honor of working with 5 different teachers at RVC and I have never experienced such dedication to the children and the discipline of teaching. Our teachers worked tirelessly over the summer to help plan for distance learning. They showed up on Community calls. My oldest son's teacher (with whom he has a special bond) called my child over the summer to connect and 'check in'. My youngest son wrote letters back and forth to our intervention teacher (when his regular teacher went into retirement due to a health condition) this summer; and she would send him packets of fun games to play, activities to do and even art projects with supplies. I can promise you that my

friends in other local schools were not having this interaction with their children's teachers.

Next, I really admire the vision that our Director Luke and the Board of RVC have for our school. Since we launched almost 5 years ago, we've been on a trajectory to become INQUIRY-BASED. This vision is what originally sold me on the school. Let's the child's curiosity fuel the learning - the curriculum can be weaved in. This is education the way everyone wants to experience it! My oldest was absolutely captivated by the inquiry unit last winter on National Parks. He dove into landforms, science experiments like volcanoes, and reading that all centered around his study of Lassen National Park. He was so interested that when COVID-19 seemed not to be going anywhere, my partner decided to drive the boys to Tennessee to visit my family instead of fly. On the way home, they visited Mt. Rushmore, the Badlands, Yellowstone, the Tetons, and Lassen -- all because my son's passion was fueled by his inquiry study. When the kids are so engaged in what they are learning, I've noticed that their passion fuels us parents too! Our RVC art teacher came up with such creative ways to teach art over distance learning, that the kids and I would study the artists and do the activities together. We had a blast and they continue to remind me that "there are no mistakes in art."

Lastly, I want to mention RVC's commitment to creating a more equitable environment and community. This year, I've joined the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and we are side-by-side Director Luke as he and the school leadership team embrace the structural changes that are required to serve our very diverse student body. I've seen firsthand how the teachers are taking advantage of distance learning to share more voices -- from read-a-loud's to mindfulness and 'warmup' exercises, they are finding ways for each and every student to see faces like theirs throughout their assignments and inquiry missions. We have a way to go like all public schools, but we are making headway and families are noticing. Our team was asked to present our Black History Month Newsletter to the entire County on Tuesday!

I'm extremely proud to be a member of this amazing RVC Community! Thank you for allowing me to share my voice in our Charter renewal process.

Erica Phillipson

Comment: Commissioners and Board Members,

This letter is in reference to the Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter.

When my family and I decided to move to the Bay Area, our first and most pressing concern was our choice of school for our children.

My oldest child (now in 4th grade) had an awful experience with his teacher in his previous school, so it was vital that we find a school with kind teachers who love teaching.

There were a few other factors that were important when choosing a school for our children:

- We needed to find a Charter School as we were still looking for a home and we did not want to be bound to a specific school area in case we could not find a home in that area.

- We noticed how the standard teaching methodology of our childrens' previous school was not conducive to creative thinking and being confident, calm students. Everything was very rushed and standardized, there was barely any space in the day for child-led thinking and inquiry. We wanted a new way of learning for our children.

- We wanted a diverse school community as we feel it is vital for our children to be open to other cultures.

I am glad to say that we found all of this and more at Ross Valley Charter!

Their progressive teaching methodology, combined with passionate teachers, a diverse school community and kind school staff who are always open to listening to concerns and helping in any way they can, has created a wonderful learning environment and school. I would not send my children to any other public school in Marin County.

Our family firmly supports the Petition to renew Ross Valley Charter.

Cathy Nilson

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a huge impact on our family. My child has benefited significantly from the unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program offered.

The program at RVC gave my son the opportunity to bring his uniqueness and creativity into assignments. The inquiry-based programs, project-based learning made learning relevant and engaging for my son. Which continues to benefit him

Our family values inclusivity and community, and my son and students at RVC have been able to learn these values at school. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Robin Goebel

Comment: Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to communicate my own and my family's support for the Ross Valley Charter and the application for renewal of their charter, Agenda item three. We are grateful that children in our community have this opportunity to receive an education that is thoughtful, inclusive and well rounded.

We see the results of the efforts made by the teachers, staff and families at the school. They are like the little red engine that could, a demonstration in perseverance, commitment and care. Kids have successfully been back at school for months.

The consistent efforts in development and modeling by the school as a whole, are well demonstrated by their most recent school newsletter celebrating Black History Month. The Main County Office of Education calls it an "extraordinary resource", distributed the document to all of its' schools and is hosting a webinar using the presentation to "create conversation with one another" and to "hear about how the families, guardians, staff and school community members of Ross Valley Charter came together to design this valuable piece of our collective history."

We are exceptionally proud to have RVC in our community. They are a model of inclusion and acceptance in a very white community where there is a quiet undercurrent of intolerance. Our family is multiracial and differently abled through adoption. We see the ongoing commitment to change how and what information is being provided to accurately share history, literature and science while honoring the emotional, creative and different abilities of each child.

Sam Lueck

Comment: Dear commissioners and Board Members,

I write in favor of renewing the charter of Ross Valley Charter.

I have two kids currently attending RVC. It's been great for them. One started with RVSD's MAP program at Manor and the younger is native to RVC. My oldest child attended Wade Thomas before White Hill and HS 1327. All these schools have been great. We are most fortunate to live in a district with so many great public schools.

Perhaps the greatest aspect of the RVC experience is the school's singular, sincere and compassionate focus on the wellbeing of each and every student in the school.

Ross Valley Charter is a valuable public school option for our community.

John Kirk

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a significant impact on my children's lives. The teaching techniques employed by RVC have allowed my children to flourish beyond the walls of RVC to not only become great learners but become great community members as well. RVC's multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program allowed my children thrive in their own unique ways.

I am very grateful to have been part of this school and now that my children have graduated and moved on I hope to make my community better by sharing this experience with others.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Claire Thuesen

Comment: To whom it may concern,

I, Claire Thuesen, community member in Fairfax, CA am writing this email to support the renewal for Ross Valley charter school to stay in our community. As a community member, I appreciate this inclusive diverse school and its it's project-based , multi-age approach providing education to some of the most marginalized children in our community.

Nina Basker

Comment: My son is currently in 2nd grade at RVC. We have been there since kindergarten. We are immensely grateful for the experience of being part of the RVC community. It is everything we were looking for in a school environment for our child. We have a multi-racial and multi-ethnic, bilingual family and have struggled to find spaces in our area where diversity is celebrated and the work is actually being put in to make BIPOC feel and actually BE safe. RVC and its community of family, teachers, and staff continue to do the work. Even over the course of the last three years, we have seen the school's anti-racist identity grow and evolve to become more aware and intentional with regards to curriculum, materials, family community and support for home cultures and student identities. I am proud to be part of an educational environment which recognizes the necessity of being actively anti-racist, and it is rare, especially in Marin county to find such a space.

My son has thrived at RVC. He is a very active, very curious, tenacious and creative child and the school's curiosity and inquiry led curriculum supports and nurtures his way of being and learning in the world. We adore his current teacher. She is a gem in so many ways, it makes me feel emotional thinking about the beautiful and impressive ways she has shown up for her students and their families throughout every moment of

this incredibly difficult year. She has transformed a traumatic year into a learning adventure for our whole family.

We don't know what we would do or where we would send him if we didn't have RVC. I attended another local elementary in the area as a child and as a similar creative minded out-of-the-box learner like my son, I never felt supported or nurtured, and the experience of navigating homogenous educational and cultural spaces was often painful. I do not want that for my child. I want him to feel seen, nurtured, safe, and excited, and he feels this way at RVC. As parents we deeply value the fact that as a part of this space our input, family culture, and concerns are validated. We are proud to be a part of such a community.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sarah Foxfire

Comment: To whom it may concern,

I wanted to chime in to support Ross Valley Charter since I've had such an incredible experience with this school. I am a child and family therapist and used to work as a school counselor. Before that, I worked as a special ed aid. I've worked in dozens of schools. RVC is one of the most impressive I've ever seen and I am so lucky my daughter goes there! I felt it immediately when I went to the first open house. The teachers seem very connected; so many started the multi-aged classes 25 yrs ago together after all! Luke and the office staff seem to be soaring through this Covid chapter with confidence and thoughtfulness...though it must be terribly difficult.

The diversity is mind blowing; my daughter has students from all over the world in her class. How lucky she is to be in a place where she has so much cultural diversity here in white Fairfax. The influence of different cultures on the curriculum is tangible.

The warmth and energy of the whole place is truly my favorite part though; drop off is always such a treat with the smiles and help.

I recommend RVC for keeping their charter!

Such an amazing place.

david finnane

Comment: Dear ACCS,

I'm writing in strong support of the Ross Valley Charter (RVC). I am a community member in San Anselmo and a former 16 year administrator in the Ross Valley School District (RVSD).

RVC is a terrific option for local kids and families and has thrived despite every attempt by RVSD and its sidekick STAND to destroy the school. I've know the professionals associated with RVC for 20+ years and they are talented and deeply committed to children. The community of RVC parents is also an impressive collection of diverse and children-centered people who simply want choice for their kids' education.

We're lucky to have RVC in our community. Thank you for supporting the approval of their application.

Daniel Dietrich

Comment: To whom it may concern:

I am a parent of 2 children ages 5 and 7 who attend Ross Valley Charter School. Their renewal has been denied by the local school district and this email is sent to ask that the renewal be granted. My children are thriving under the school. The teachers and staff are providing incredible support, learning experiences and social support to my children in a manner surpassing my expectations. How a school of this caliber can be denied their renewal is beyond my comprehension.

Thank you for supporting this opportunity for so many families.

Julie Sullivan

Comment: Hello.

My name is Julie Sullivan. I'm a parent of two alums of the Ross Valley Charter in Fairfax, and I'm writing to you in regards to Agenda item number 3.

As an educator with a doctorate in International and Multicultural education, I'm well aware of the challenges and disparities within the US education system. I'm also aware that not all charters are alike--some have many problems and create additional financial challenges in their communities, others are amazing.

Ross Valley Charter is amazing. In addition to creating a welcoming and caring environment for students and their families, it provides an alternative learning option with true inquiry-based approaches for the types of learners who are not served as effectively in traditional public education settings. And it does this while meeting (and exceeding) state standards.

When I moved my family to Fairfax, I was happy to learn of the various school choices, each with their own focus and personality. After visiting a few schools, I recognized RVC would be the best fit for my ADHD child. My child is not the ADHD student who cannot sit still or follow directions or who blurts out in class, he is the quiet kid who has a hard time focusing and will disappear when no one notices. Ms. Chris at RVC saw this

immediately and spoke his language, allowing him to transition to a new school in a new town nearly seamlessly.

My other child was served well by RVC, as well. He's the loud one in the school yard rallying the troops to recreate the Revolutionary war in teams named after animals. His desire to act out what he's learned was given ample opportunity to thrive, alongside learning skills to temper his tendency to try to teach the class, as well as receiving opportunities to do exactly that (with the support and encouragement of his teacher, Ms. Katie, whose mindfulness practice with her students models what professional adults pay hundreds for).

Each charter has its own style and approach. RVC's approach welcomes all those from the surrounding community who have not found their fit in their local traditional-approach public school and who just want inquiry arcs to guide their child's learning. It's the most diverse school in West Marin with some of the highest testing scores in the county. It's a gem that has been truly a gift for those of us who need it and a wonderful environment for those who just chose the school because they liked it, as well.

As a parent, educator, and community member, I highly encourage you to renew Ross Valley Charter School's charter and keep this amazing school open.

Emmeline Oh

Comment: To whom it may concern.

Hope you are finding this email well.

I am writing this email to request that Ross Valley Charter school in Fairfax stays open. I believe that alternative education is important to maintain mental health and well-being for some children. Sometimes, flexibility of charter schools is needed so that all children can learn comfortably. I also believe that parents and students need to have options.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Meredith Pike-Baky

Comment: I am writing to support renewal of the charter for the Ross Valley Charter School. I am an educator and a community member. I've followed the evolution of the charter school for more than twenty years. The teachers and curriculum offer a student-centered program that develops a love of learning and teaches the skills to pursue individual interests. It is rich in social and emotional support as well, inspiring students to be compassionate and generous.

The Ross Valley Charter School is a unique gift to our community and renewal of its charter is an important validation of its contribution.

Page Hersey

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

I am writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter (RVC) school's charter. As an RVC parent and a professional educator, I urge you to approve RVC's petition and allow the school to continue providing an outstanding learning community for students in our area.

The multi-age classrooms at RVC give our child the opportunity to learn and develop at his own pace. Starting kindergarten through distance learning during a pandemic has been challenging and eye-opening. However, I am consistently impressed at how RVC has stayed true to the philosophies that drew us to the school.

My child's teacher has established a warm, supportive, and inclusive community where the students are excited to learn each day. She has gotten to know each child and their families, has assessed students' academic knowledge and skills, and differentiates instruction based on assessments. The TK/K schedule includes social-emotional check-ins, discussions about feelings, and guided breathing--all much needed support during this challenging year.

RVC has a proven track record of success and renewal will mean the school can continue to provide a valuable school option in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nina Luttinger

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a huge impact on our family. My child has benefited significantly from their unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program. The program at RVC gives children ways to express themselves and bring their unique creativity into their assignments. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students.

Our family values inclusivity and community, and our kid has been able to learn these values at school. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported. I've talked with teachers who were delivering meals and school kits to families on nights and weekends over the pandemic. The teachers and staff continually impress me with how they put the well-being of each student first.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and

family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Susie Brillault Bergen

Comment: Dear Educators,

I am addressing this letter to you in response to Agenda item #3.

My name is Susie Brillault Bergen.

I was a parent at Ross Valley Charter (son has graduated).

Our family greatly appreciated the multi age, collaborative and family-inclusive education at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where families are meaningfully involved as partners in education, not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees. Also, the Inquiry Based Learning approach is a breath of fresh air - my son thrived! He loves learning, as a result of his years at this amazing school.

Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us.

Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different school approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education.

Ross Valley Charter is a nimble, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens. My children are forever learners because of the self knowledge, inquiry experience, and confidence they gained at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where students know their voices are welcomed, heard and heeded, so they know they matter, as do their actions.

Ross Valley Charter provides a multi-racial experience not easy to find in a county where 89.7% of the population is White. At our local elementary school (Ross Valley School) district, 77.9% students are White (according to the district's 2019-20 LCAP), and it reports consistently high absenteeism and suspension rates among its Hispanic (the largest local BIPOC student segment) and Socio-economically Disadvantaged

student segments and no year-to-year improvements in math and language arts achievement levels for these same segments.

At Ross Valley Charter, only 53.6% of the students are White, according to the California Department of Education 2019-20 Dataquest report. Despite having significantly higher proportions of English Learners and low-income students than our local district, RVC students attained higher academic achievement levels according to the most recent CDE-published CAASPP test results. This school attends to every student to provide equitable support to all, and not leave traditionally marginalized students behind the way our nearby public schools do.

Families need options, especially in this day and age. Many of us have been saying that for a long long time, and in this Covid era it has never been more true. Ross Valley Charter is a gem, and our community needs it desperately.

Thank you.

Lorna Kirk

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members:

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter. Ross Valley Charter provides a multi-racial experience not easy to find in a county where 89.7% of the population is White. At our local elementary school (Ross Valley School) district, 77.9% students are White (according to the district's 2019-20 LCAP), and it reports consistently high absenteeism and suspension rates among its Hispanic (the largest local BIPOC student segment) and Socio-economically Disadvantaged student segments and no year-to-year improvements in math and language arts achievement levels for these same segments.

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Personally, RVC has made a huge impact on our family. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students. It is a place where families are meaningfully involved as partners in education, not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees.

Our family values inclusivity and community, and our children have been able to learn these values at school. Ross Valley Charter is a supportive, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all

teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens. My children are inquisitive, supportive learners because of the self knowledge, inquiry experience, and confidence they gained at Ross Valley Charter.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school. It is such a strong contrast to the cold, non-student focus, non-community oriented rote teaching middle school in Ross Valley. I only wish RVC had grades 6-8 at well!

Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us. Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different school approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Nicole Bellefeuille Tommy O'Hare

Comment: Good morning Educators,

I am writing this letter in support of the renewal of Ross Valley Charter School's charter.

We are a new family to RVC, having moved and attended schools in Southern Marin, Madrid Spain and New York. During the pandemic, our oldest daughter (5th grade) was subjected to another move. We started her in a public school near our home (100% zoom) but quickly realized she needed more from her classroom and school. We sought more individualized attention, more nurturing, a more supportive environment, more time spent harnessing her creativity and more time keeping her young - we feel lucky to have found that RVC meets every one of her needs. While COVID has been tough, it has allowed many of us to peer into our children's classrooms and understand how they are learning. As a parent, I am so pleased to have an option for my child that loved school but struggled on zoom, and frankly before, in a traditional classroom. The unique aspect of mixed grade learning for us has changed her from a child that felt little confidence going into certain subjects to someone that felt like she was not alone.

Charter Schools are an amazing gift to communities and I am thankful to have found RVC. By providing tuition free educational options to all, your renewal of RVC's charter will allow this school to continue to serve those students and families that call it home,

as well as future students and families that have yet to experience the wonderment of Ross Valley Charter School.

Stefanie Stranczek

Comment: Dear Educators,

"Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us.

Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different school approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education.

Our family greatly appreciated the uniquely collaborative and family-inclusive reality at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where families are meaningfully involved as partners in education, not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees.

Ross Valley Charter is a nimble, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens. My children are forever learners because of the self knowledge, inquiry experience, and confidence they gained at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where students know their voices are welcomed, heard and heeded, so they know they matter, as do their actions.

Ross Valley Charter provides a multi-racial experience not easy to find in a county where 89.7% of the population is White. At our local elementary school (Ross Valley School) district, 77.9% students are White (according to the district's 2019-20 LCAP), and it reports consistently high absenteeism and suspension rates among its Hispanic (the largest local BIPOC student segment) and Socio-economically Disadvantaged student segments and no year-to-year improvements in math and language arts achievement levels for these same segments.

At Ross Valley Charter, only 53.6% of the students are White, according to the California Department of Education 2019-20 Dataquest report. Despite having significantly higher proportions of English Learners and low-income students than our local district, RVC students attained higher academic achievement levels according to the most recent CDE-published CAASPP test results. This school attends to every student to provide equitable support to all, and not leave traditionally marginalized students behind the way our nearby public schools do."

Rebekkah LaDyne

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a great impact on my family. My children have benefited significantly from their unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported. The teachers and staff continually impress me with how they prioritize the well-being of each student.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Ross Valley School District would be poorly served by discontinuing RVC's great education offering!

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Rebecca Harris

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

I am writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter (RVC) school's charter.

RVC has made a huge impact on our family, especially during the pandemic. RVC's thoughtful and inclusive approach to reopening during the pandemic has brought families, teachers and staff together to create solutions to education during this unprecedented time that are reflective of our community values and balance the needs of the individual families, teachers and staff. School leadership has been transparent and provided frequent, inclusive and thoughtful communication throughout a period where there were more questions than answers and emotions were running high. My son's teacher and all the teachers and leadership at RVC have worked tirelessly to make the best of this situation. They constantly strive to be flexible and work to meet the unique needs of each child and family.

Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us.

Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different educational approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education. Because of RVC's commitment to the arts and inquiry-based learning, it has attracted and retained some of the best enrichment teachers around. It is truly a special place. But perhaps most importantly, this school is a community. If the charter is not renewed, it will be a great loss to a community bound by its values of diversity, inclusion and curiosity.

I urge you to please approve the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school.

Lesly Perez Pacajojpacajoj

Comment: Hola Mi nombre es Alba Perez yo tengo a mis dos niñas en Roos valley charter school y me gustaría que nos apoyaran para la renovación de la escuela que seria de bien para nuestros niñas que necesitan nuevas instalaciones para poder seguir estudiando y sentirse seguros les agradezco mucho por recibir esta carta me despido sabiendo que tomaran la mejor decisión...

GRACIAS

Gregory Dicum

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has made a huge impact on our family. My child has benefited significantly from their unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program. The program at RVC gives children ways to express themselves and bring their unique creativity into their assignments. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students.

Our family values inclusivity and community, and our kid has been able to learn these values at school. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported. I've talked with teachers who were delivering meals and school kits to families on nights and weekends over the pandemic. The teachers and staff continually impress me with how they put the well-being of each student first.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Stephanie Pool

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

The Ross Valley Charter provides an invaluable educational option for so many

students. The Ross Valley School District elementary schools, while highly ranked, don't offer the kind of experiential learning that some students need. This approach allows students to express their curiosities for subjects which then allows teachers take a path of learning based on that. Students feel heard as opposed to "taught to".

My son is now a Junior in high school. Many of the teachers at RVC were my son's teachers in the previous lottery based Multi Age Program located at Manor School. We've experienced the excellent teaching staff first hand as a family. We supported them in their move to an independent school and location as we felt fortunate to have been in that program and hoped for more families to be able to experience that as well.

Ross Valley Charter has created a uniquely diverse school in a district of limited racial diversity.

Ross Valley School district is 77.9% white students while Ross Valley Charter is only 53.6% white. Ross Valley Charter has a higher number of both English Learners and low income students yet

consistently has attained higher academic achievements levels according to the most recent CDE-published CAASPP test results.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition. Our district is only elevated by their presence.

Marie Henrio

Comment: Dear ACCS Members,

I write to urge you to vote 'no' on the appeal to renew Ross Valley Charter (RVC).

Amongst the many good reasons why Ross Valley School District (RVSD) denied RVC's renewal, I am calling out my one personal show stopper: the inability of RVC to demonstrate they are providing a sound and successful educational program. Period.

After carefully reviewing the key aspects of the Education Code Section 47607.2, I was expecting RVC to follow the plan outlined by CDE:

- Focus on California School Dashboard

- Or, in absence of sufficient or conclusive findings from the Dashboard, provide additional clear and convincing academic achievement data.

Being a new school, RVC knew all along that they would not have enough strong State data to prove that their educational program is successful:

- As a small school, RVC will experience their performance indicators scores being more volatile as opposed to a larger entity. All experienced districts with some small schools can attest to the fact that variations for one single year for those schools are in general not an indicator of specific success or failures in any given year. For such schools, looking into average over the last 3 years are a stronger indicator of their strength – for any given indicator. One year up or down is not a trend.
- As a small school, none of the student groups RVC is claiming to serve so well are large enough to be reported in the Dashboard (“Performance levels will be reported for all students and any student group that has at least 30 students in both the current and prior year.”).
- As a new school, RVC cannot provide enough longitudinal data to be granted “colors” in the Dashboard itself. Two years of State data is not a strong compelling story. Certain indicators like the English Learners Progress Indicator require multiple years of data to be computed.

RVC could have produced their own local data set (such as: Reading Inventory scores, Fountas & Pinnell assessments, report card grades distribution, or build their own local benchmark) to get themselves ready for the renewal petition ahead of them. We have seen no evidence of that.

Instead RVC presented some very weak data tables with no story about their education program.

What RVC did is exactly what CDE advises against: “Caution should be used in interpreting overall achievement level percentages for a school or district. The achievement level percentages in one grade from one school or district may be compared with the achievement level percentages in that same grade from another school or district.”

RVC (K-5) compared themselves in all their academic indicators with RVSD District (K-8) and California (K-12), without narrowing it down to the K-5 grades they serve. Between DataQuest and CAASPP websites, the data is available to re-compute K-5 indicators and avoid comparing apples with oranges.

One indicator that I would like to hear more about is the Chronic Absenteeism rate. RVC reported 14.9% in 2018-2019, 3 times higher than RVSD K-5 rate of 5.5%. Ironically, if the students are doing so well (which has not been demonstrated, one way or the other), then how can they do so while not attending school?

Please uphold RVSD's denial of RVC's charter, and if you disagree with me and are absolutely convinced about the honesty of RVC petition, please assign the oversight of that sinking ship to the Marin County Office of Education.

RVSD cannot afford 5 more years of RVC saga that is taking time and resources away from RVSD educators who want to focus their full attention on all RVSD students.

Respect AB 1505.

Arielle Sumits

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

RVC has been wonderful for my daughter, especially during this challenging year. From the outset, the school has sought the input of families and worked incredibly hard to accommodate different needs. For us, this means striking a balance between hours spent online and hours of independent work. I appreciate that the school community remains strong and that the school has put in place outreach to vulnerable families who are not able to manage remote schooling. I also appreciate that teachers were given a choice whether to return in-person, and all opted to return, once a plan was in place to maximize safety.

It is during challenging times that the true strength of an organization shows itself, and RVC has been a remarkable resource. RVC continues to recognize and respect student differences just as they always have in the classroom. Just as students need to be met where they are in order to learn a subject, so students need to be met where they are in terms of the way they are best able to learn remotely.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Lauren Duchene

Comment: Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

I am writing to share our families deep appreciation of the Ross Valley Charter School.

Our family struggled to find an appropriate school for our children upon moving to the Ross Valley area. We had a very negative first year in the Ross Valley School District.

Enrolling our sons at Ross Valley Charter changed their relationship with their educational journey. We are not alone in this experience. The teachers and administrators go above and beyond to create meaningful connections and top notch curriculum for their students. Our boys LOVE going to school and are very invested in their learning since attending school here. This school truly is an essential option for the Ross Valley Community.

We will be forever grateful that our children have had this choice and advocate that children continue to have this option in our community. Thanks so much.

Gayle Ravenscroft

Comment: I am writing to ask that you please respect the carefully analyzed decision by Ross Valley School District, (RVSD), our locally elected school board, and deny the appeal by Ross Valley Charter (RVC) to renew their charter petition.

As an appointed body, the State Board of Education should not have the ability to overrule our locally elected school board, nor should the will of local taxpayers be ignored. Furthermore I oppose forcing the oversight and accumulated debt of RVC onto RVSD, a high-performing but underfunded and under-resourced district.

In addition, it has now come to light that the test scores for English Language Learners in the Charter fall short of achieving the same results as those children enrolled in the RSVD. This Charter is not meeting the needs of these students who would be better served within the successful and established program for ELL in the RSVD. They will rejoin our District classes in 6th grade at a distinct disadvantage to their non-Charter peers.

This Charter was never viable. Despite our RSVD School Board and The Marin County Office of Education originally determining that the Charter was not viable (which has proved to be accurate!) the State overruled them and granted the Charter. Our School District CANNOT now be financially penalized because of the State's dereliction in the first place. This would be an insult to every taxpayer in the Ross Valley - of which I am one.

Jason Winship

Comment: To Whom it May Concern,

My wife and I have lived within the boundaries of the Ross Valley School District for ten years, and we are parents of three young children (the older two are at Hidden Valley Elementary now and will be joined by their younger sister in the Fall). Though we are entirely supportive of the Ross Valley School District and do not believe local conditions warrant a charter school alternative, we have largely watched the debate surrounding the Ross Valley Charter from a distance because it has tended to be somewhat uncivil. At this point, however, it is very clear that the voices of local residents, taxpayers, and

RVSD parents must be elevated in opposition to Ross Valley Charter's application for renewal. Several years in, we have enough information to determine that A) Ross Valley Charter proposes to address problems that simply do not exist in this community, and B) it has failed at every turn to perform against enrollment projections, financial projections, and student performance benchmarks.

It is my view that the Ross Valley School District has always operated in good faith with respect to the conversation surrounding Ross Valley Charter. RVSD conducted a thorough, expert-led review of the situation in the latter half of 2020 and made the fair and reasonable decision to deny RVC's renewal petition. RVSD's decision should stand, and I look to you to make the right decision. Please deny RVC's appeal.

Mark Krajan

Comment: To Whom it May Concern:

The RVC school should NOT be renewed for many reasons listed below, but above all because it has hurt our community and local schools for years with no clear benefits, and exists solely for a handful of students and families.

RVSD has lost over 250 students this year. That's about 8 teachers worth of classes. We cannot afford to lose any more students. Because our funding model is based on the number of students enrolled, we also get less money from the state in a fiscally challenging time.

The murky financials associated with the charter, most recent example being that they took out a PPP payroll loan last Spring, designed to help keep our local businesses afloat during the pandemic. (see pages 7-17 of the RVSD's Findings and Denial of the Ross Valley Charter document)

Where is the data on student performance? As educators, we know how important formative and summative assessments are, and use them as tools for instruction. Data trends over time can tell us which student populations are being served by our model, and which groups we need to offer more support.

Concerns about higher than district average rate of student suspension and absenteeism (as reported on the CDE Dashboard). This is especially concerning given the percentage of english language learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students enrolled, and how suspension and poor attendance can have dire consequences in these groups.

Concerns about special education students, and the charter's ability to deliver services these children have a right to.

Local school boards understand and know what is happening in local districts. They should be allowed to determine if a charter is helpful or harmful in the local community.

Sara Dorman

Comment: Dear Educators,

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter.

My daughter has a sensory processing disorder that makes speech and fine motor coordination extremely difficult. Upon moving to Fairfax we initially sent her to Manor for her first year of first grade. That year proved extremely difficult as it became clear her special needs were not being fully met plus she encountered issues with bullying. We made the decision to switch her to RVC and she has flourished since then. The classroom environment offered by RVC is a much better match for her. She has even been able to make friends and strengthen her peer-to-peer interactions while an entire year at Manor saw her with not a single friend. Her entire team (speech, OT, Special Ed, etc.) at RVC have been incredibly caring, patient, and attentive and I enormously appreciate their timely and consistent communication around her progress/challenges.

I am so grateful that RVC exists to help support my daughter's unique needs in an extremely warm and caring environment. Even during these very challenging times, RVC has managed to create an incredibly supportive at-home structure with a consistent schedule, teacher check-ins, music, art, and PE zooms, and a great balance of work and fun.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition so that children with different and unique challenges like my daughter can continue to thrive in a learning environment that supports their needs.

Thank you for your attention to RVC's application.

Meghan Sheedy

Comment: Dear Educators,

My name is Meghan Sheedy. I'm a parent of two students at Ross Valley Charter School. I'm writing to express my enthusiastic support for the renewal of RVC's charter.

Our family is new to RVC this year. My children are in 4th and 5th grade and are in a combined 4th/5th class. While it has been an unusual school transition, due to Covid-19 and remote learning, my children are much happier and more engaged than were at their previous public school. I was immediately impressed with RVC's approach to distance learning. They managed to create a collaborative and dynamic learning experience in contrast to the rote learning we were experiencing at our last school. My children were bored and frustrated— it was a struggle to get them to do their assignments.

Prior to moving to Marin County a year and a half ago, our children attended a public charter school in San Francisco, also focused on inquiry-based learning. They loved school and were highly engaged students. When we enrolled at our well-regarded public school in Marin, the difference in the approach to learning was immediately

apparent. While our kids were successful in making new friends, they both complained about the schoolwork. They missed the deeper learning that is at the core of inquiry. As parents, we were concerned and wondered how we could re-ignite that love of learning.

We started looking for alternatives. The Marin schools committed to inquiry or project-based learning are predominantly expensive private schools. We were thrilled to discover a public option with Ross Valley Charter School. To my knowledge, RVC is the only public school in Marin offering inquiry-based learning and a multi-age program.

The unique 21st century challenges facing this generation require a highly collaborative, resilient, problem-solving mindset. I firmly believe that RVC's program is helping prepare its students to meet these challenges. In addition, the school strives to deliver an equitable and inclusive learning environment. RVC's efforts are demonstrably successful. On the most recent CAASP test RVC significantly improved academic performance for both English Language Learners and low-income students.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to provide an alternative for students who thrive in a multi-age, inquiry-based, performing arts-oriented school.

From: [Katie Frame](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 3 - Ross Valley Charter Renewal Petition
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 3:40:33 PM
Attachments: [Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter_1st Grader.docx](#)
[Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter_Family.docx](#)

Commenter's first and last name: Katrina Frame
Organization affiliation: Parent
Agenda item number 3

Hello,

Please see attached for our letters of recommendation in regards to the renewal of Ross Valley Charter.

Many thanks,
Katrina Frame

February 8th, 2021

Re: Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter

To whom it may concern,

I am a first grader at Ross Valley Charter. I love my music class and my friends. I am excited to go back to school. I want to be in the classroom with my friends. Ms. Leah is my teacher and she is nice.

I want to keep going to my school please.

Sincerely,

First Grader at RVC

February 8th, 2021

Re: Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter

To whom it may concern,

We are the parents of 2 children in Fairfax, CA and we, like so many parents in Marin County support Ross Valley Charter.

Just 6 months ago we were driving along Sir Francis Drake Blvd on our way home from visiting family in Gualala, CA when we passed through the town of Fairfax. Upon our return home I started researching the area along with the local schools. Our son had been attending a Dublin Unified School District elementary school and was enrolled in alternative program called Pathways, which featured mixed-age classes along with parent-participation. Although we loved the program, we were looking to move our family to a location more immersed in nature. While researching Fairfax we came across Ross Valley Charter and were so excited to see that a program similar to Pathways existed in another city. At RVC our son, who would be entering 1st grade, would be surrounded by an entire school and administration that followed multi-age and inquiry-based learning. After enrolling at RVC and moving to Fairfax, we feel so incredibly lucky to not only live in such a beautiful place full of nature and wonder, but to be enrolled in a school that our family can grow with. There is a strong sense of community at this school and we can't wait to continue to build relationships and watch our children grow and thrive in this environment.

Our brief background story tells you how important this school is to the community. The reason we moved to Marin County was because of our son's acceptance into RVC. There is so much I can say about how amazing RVC is but our main priority was enrolling our son in a school that we knew would have support, flexibility, community and passionate educators which I can say we've found at RVC. Even though we are so new to the community they have welcomed us with open arms. My husband has been involved with being a groundskeeper and I've taken on the role of room parent for our son's class.

For all these reasons I strongly support and urge you to renew the Ross Valley Charter.

Sincerely,

Matthew and Katrina Frame

From: [Christopher Wahlgren](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item Number 3, Ross Valley Charter renewal
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 8:14:30 AM
Attachments: [RVC Renewal.pdf](#)

Please see attached letter of support for Ross Valley Charter.
Thank you,
Christopher Wahlgren

Christopher Wahlgren

Phone: [REDACTED]

Monday, February 8, 2021

Parent of [REDACTED], Kindergarten

Agenda Item 3

Our family greatly appreciated the uniquely collaborative and family-inclusive reality at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where families are meaningfully involved as partners in education, not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees.

Ross Valley Charter is a nimble, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens.

We look forward to also sending our 3 year old daughter to this school too as we are grateful for the education we are receiving.

Sincerely, Christopher Wahlgren



From: [Lisa Canin](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] For ACCS 2/11/2021 meeting Agenda Item #3 : in support of RVC renewal
Date: Saturday, February 6, 2021 10:00:10 PM

Memo to: Advisory Commission on Charter Schools
From: Community member/psychologist Lisa Canin, PhD
Re: Review of Ross Valley Charter School petition, Agenda item #3, 2/11/2021 meeting
Date: 2/7/2021

I am writing in support of the Ross Valley Charter's (RVC) renewal process.

I am a long-term supporter of local public schools, including decades of volunteer work on behalf of the Ross Valley School District (RVSD). I ran school bond and parcel tax campaigns for RVSD and co-founded YES, the Ross Valley Schools Foundation. In addition, I have served on boards of a diverse non-profit pre-school, the Novato School District's public program of choice – The Marin School of the Arts, and the Venetia Valley Schools Foundation, designed to support a primarily Latinx school population in the San Rafael School District. I have been involved in the Marin County Office of Education's continuation school (County Community School), Tamiscal High School (an alternative independent study program in the Tamalpais Unified High School District), have been a classroom volunteer at Bayside MLK in the Marin City/Sausalito School District and have co-facilitated leadership/political education groups for Latinx adolescents from across a number of high school districts.

As such, my purview of school districts is somewhat wider than might be typical for a community member and, as such, I have grave concerns regarding significant barriers that local students of color and their families have in accessing the education they need and deserve. While families with means freely access private education, or have the knowledge to game the system and figure out challenging inter-district transfer protocols (sometimes going so far as to rent rooms or offices to proffer the requisite address), the families of students of color have very few options to cross zip code barriers. They rarely have the privilege of choice between alternatives.

RVC is helping to break down the very significant zip code barriers present in Marin County for students of color, offering an effective educational program of choice while providing a culturally and economically diverse program that is rare in this County. Marin has 17 school districts, and these boundaries and district enrollment policies work to maintain segregation, particularly in areas which historically have been segregated through real estate redlining and other barriers. All students benefit from this kind of early experience in diverse classrooms, where each student and family is valued, and all students learn in settings that prepare them for settings that are not homogenous and segregated.

RVC has shown commitment to building and improving educational practice for diverse learners. When I was on the Venetia Valley School Foundation, administrators and teachers reached out to the principal there and to the Venetia Valley Family Center to understand best practices, both educationally and socially, to better serve students and families. In my many years of engagement in RVSD, despite flagging sub-group test scores and performance, I have not seen this kind of outreach and curiosity and thinking outside

the box about how to better serve diverse students.

During the pandemic, RVC staff have gone above and beyond to reach out to families to assess needs for technology (Chromebooks, headphones, mobile hotspots), make home deliveries of school work or food when needed, provide additional tutoring for EL students, meet students in community hubs and develop and sustain relationships with other agencies to wrap support and communication when helpful, necessary or desired.

This work and RVC's building enrollment have occurred in the context of an organized opposition by members of STAND, a group that has engaged in relentless harassment, targeted campaigns of untruth and attack, efforts to discourage enrollment by shaming neighbors, picketing the school entrance and leafletting car windows, making false accusations in public forums and disrespectful public attacks questioning the integrity and motives of teachers, the principal, and volunteers. Despite this, RVC staff have maintained their focus where it is critical: on students and their families. And despite this, families from diverse backgrounds have demonstrated with their feet where it is they want their students to be taught and nurtured.

RVC has demonstrated its commitment to serving diverse students and families. Please renew their petition and enable them the opportunity to serve students and families with oversight from a non-hostile entity supportive of their efforts to serve a diverse and vibrant community of learners.

Lisa Canin, PhD
San Anselmo, CA

From: [Laura Mans](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support for Ross Valley Charter School
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 12:59:16 PM
Attachments: [RVC letter of support.pdf](#)

Please find enclosed a letter of support to Ross Valley Charter School.

Laura Mans
Parent at RVC
Agenda item number 3

02.04.2021

Laura Mans
Ross Valley Charter School Parent

Agenda Item Number 3
Re: Renewal Petition of Ross Valley Charter

To Whom It May Concern,

I am the parent of a current 2nd grader at Ross Valley Charter School and two older sons who also attended the school for their 4th and 5th grade years. My kids' experience at school has been wonderful.

I strongly support the Ross Valley Charter School and I hope you will consider their Charter Renewal. Our family values their multi age classrooms, the experiential learning, the diverse student backgrounds and their emphasis on teaching the WHOLE child (academically, emotionally, artistically and physically). The school, administration, and teachers do truly care about the children and families. As a parent I feel listened to and I appreciate the school's effort to keep families engaged and connected. I especially respect the school's push for inclusion, to make sure no families are left behind, which I have witnessed many times in our community, room parent and diversity group meetings.

The renewal of our school will allow RVC to continue to serve and provide a great education, in community, to all our families.

Sincerely,

Laura Mans

From: [Moses Sedler](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter of support Ross Valley Charter
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 8:32:31 AM
Attachments: [RVC Letter of support.pdf](#)

To whom it may concern:
Please find the attached letter of support.
Agenda item #3
Moses Sedler - Parent

--

Moses Sedler
Dolce Violins
1115 Irwin Street Suite 100 San Rafael, CA 94901
www.dolceviolins.net
moses@dolceviolins.net
415-453-1517

Moses Sedler
Astrid Mackwitz-Sedler
Parents
Agenda item #3
2/1/2021

To Whom It May Concern:
Re: Renewal petition of Ross Valley Charter

I am writing this letter in support of the Ross Valley Charter School.
We enrolled our son when he was in second grade after we learned that our son had some learning differences which were not being addressed at the school he was attending.

As part of our search for a new school we met with some of the staff at RVC. The meeting included the special education staff, the 2nd grade teacher and the principal. In this meeting we discussed a plan for helping our son get the support he needed. We were so greatly impressed with the dedication and commitment shown by all of the staff at RVC that we immediately knew this was the right school for our son.

In addition to having all of the support services our son needs we see that he thrives in the project based learning environment. The children take pride in showing their work to friends and family at the end of semester "expo" where all of the writing, art, and multimedia creations of the class are displayed.

We are grateful to have the choice of this public charter in our area. We support the renewal of the charter 100 percent.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Moses Sedler' and the signature on the right is 'Astrid Mackwitz'. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Moses Sedler and Astrid Mackwitz

From: [You Glow Girl Wellness w/Kristine](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Our Family Supports Ross Valley Charter School
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 2:39:31 PM

Commissioners and Board Members:

Thank you for taking the time to address the renewal of Ross Valley Charter School (RVC). My family has two young boys (1st and TK) that started there in the Fall of 2020. We are beyond grateful for the school community, administration and teachers.

Our family struggled to find a school for our oldest son. He is on the ASD, has SPD, ADD and anxiety. It's a lot. He is one smart little human but finding a school that supported his learning style is not easy. We just wanted him to be in a school where he felt supported and his confidence in learning would be able to flourish.

RVC is the first school he has been at where he has shined. Prior to this we were paying for a private Waldorf school here in Marin County (which exhausted our resources in tuition costs) and our own neighborhood school (which increased his anxiety and created an unsafe learning environment for him and his classmates. He was bullied, had meltdowns and tried to run away from his school). I spent an entire year searching for charter schools in Marin and Sonoma Counties as well as looking at district transfers to other public schools here in Marin. The latter proved impossible with a child who "may need services" they didn't want him and made it clear (sigh).

When I pick up my boys and ask them, "Did you have a good day at school?" They respond with, "It wasn't just a good day but a GREAT day!" I asked my youngest if he liked school (coming from Waldorf I was worried of the transition) and said, "I don't like school I LOVE IT!" I asked them what they liked and loved about their school and this is what they said:

1. Their teachers, Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Natalie love them.
2. They like the art projects they do in class.
3. They like learning to read.
4. Outdoor classrooms.
5. Their friends are nice.
6. All the different projects they do to learn new things.
7. Their monthly themed workbooks (they've covered worms, the sky, and are on tools now). **The workbooks are amazing. They are compiled by the teachers and consist of math, language arts, spanish, art and history lessons that are centered on the theme.*
8. Their school director, Director Luke. They like how he is always present to help them to class.
9. PE with Coach Mike, Art with Ms. Wilcox and Music with Mr. Josh.
10. Learning with friends.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my family's experiences with RVC. I can't express how grateful I am for the learning environment and the supportive families as well as the school administration/teaching staff. It is a top notch learning experience for children and we can't wait to see them grow here.

Best,

Kristine Love

--

M.A. Kinesiology, Sonoma State University

From: [Wilderness Reflections](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Agenda Item 3 - Ross Valley Charter Renewal Petition
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 6:01:34 PM

David Talamo
Ross Valley Charter School Parent
RE: Agenda item number 3

Dear Commissioners and Board Members,

Thank you for reading my letter regarding the renewal of the Charter for Ross Valley Charter School.

I'm writing to support the renewal of Ross Valley Charter school's charter. RVC has made a huge impact on our family. My children have benefited significantly from their unique, multi-age, inquiry-based, arts-integrated program. Although my children are very different, the program at RVC gives them ways to express themselves and bring their unique creativity into their assignments. The inquiry-based program incorporates design thinking and project-based learning to make learning relevant and engaging to students.

Our family values inclusivity and community, and our children have been able to learn these values at school. The staff and teachers at RVC work to make sure each child feels included and supported. I've talked with teachers who were delivering meals and school kits to families on nights and weekends over the pandemic. The teachers and staff continually impress me with how they put the well-being of each student first.

I urge you to approve RVC's renewal petition, to allow this school to continue to serve some of our community's most vulnerable students who have found their home and family at RVC, and to serve all students who thrive in a multi-age, project-based, performing arts-oriented, community-building, warm and loving school.

I am so grateful for the existence of this school in our community for our daughter. Our child is happier and loves learning thanks to this school. Our community needs this TK-5 public school option. The local school district has indicated its intention to deny all charter school petitions within its geographic boundaries. Families who want an alternative to their closest district school have no other public school option, causing a significant portion to opt for private school. This is neither an affordable nor desirable option for many of us.

Our local public high school district provides options, different schools to accommodate different school approaches. Our K-8 school district does not, and in our experience, expects all to conform to a single conventional, uniform approach to education.

Our family greatly appreciates the uniquely collaborative and family-inclusive reality at Ross Valley Charter. As parents, we wanted to be involved in our daughter's school

and classroom and not expected to stay on the sidelines and "contribute" merely through fundraising and party-planning committees. As a result of this parent involvement, there is SO much more community and connection around the school. This parental involvement is also great modeling of adult activism in education and of how our community is strongest when many are involved.

Ross Valley Charter is a nimble, flexible organization that builds lasting connections with families and walks the talk of growth mindset for all teaching and administrative staff as well as children. The inquiry-based learning that happens there engages and supports the students' natural curiosity, making learning relevant to their lives and encouraging their development as engaged, aware citizens. My child will be a 'forever learner' because of the self knowledge, inquiry experience, and confidence gained at Ross Valley Charter. It is a place where students know their voices are welcomed, heard and heeded, so they know they matter, as do their actions.

The teachers, staff and director have been and continue to be exceptional, not just in their success in academics but in their dedication to the mission of the school, its students and to modeling how to continue to think, learn and grow as people- even when smoky air, pandemic or other obstacles seem to block their path. It's clear that this staff have been drawn together for the purposes of their shared mission and that such a cohort would not be available to the students were it not for the mission of the charter.

On another important note, Ross Valley Charter provides a multi-racial experience not easy to find in a county where 89.7% of the population is White. At our local elementary school (Ross Valley School) district, 77.9% students are White (according to the district's 2019-20 LCAP), and it reports consistently high absenteeism and suspension rates among its Hispanic (the largest local BIPOC student segment) and Socio-economically Disadvantaged student segments and no year-to-year improvements in math and language arts achievement levels for these same segments.

At Ross Valley Charter, only 53.6% of the students are White, according to the California Department of Education 2019-20 Dataquest report. Despite having significantly higher proportions of English Learners and low-income students than our local district, RVC students attained higher academic achievement levels according to the most recent CDE-published CAASPP test results. This school attends to every student to provide equitable support to all, and not leave traditionally marginalized students behind the way our nearby public schools do.

Sincerely,
David Talamo (parent of current 4th grader)

--

David Talamo, MFT, CHT, Ecotherapist
Wilderness Reflections
P.O. Box 311

Fairfax, CA 94978
www.WildernessReflections.com
www.DavidTalamoMFT.com
<https://zoom.us/j/4304828854>

From: [Rev. Dr. Kenneth Weare](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ross Valley Charter School
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 9:49:31 AM
Attachments: [RVC.PDF](#)

Dear Dr. Server:
See attached letter.

Sincerely,
Dr. Weare

--

“The pandemic has taught us how to pray. Closing churches forced us to find God in places that are more difficult and complicated than the quiet of a church: to discover God in the loneliness of the poor, the desperation of the homeless, the fears of the vulnerable and the hungry”.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Weare
100 Marinda Drive
Fairfax, CA 94930
USA Tel: 1-415-456-4876
EU Cell: 32-470-326-639
kweare@strita.edu



St. Rita Church

100 Marinda Drive, Fairfax, California 94930

(415) 456-4815

Fax (415) 456-3677

saintritaairfax@att.net

7 February 2021

Dr. Wesley Sever
ACCS

Dear Dr. Sever:

Good morning on Sunday. This letter is written to you regarding the Ross Valley Charter School.

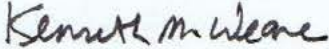
The school utilizes the classrooms and other facilities of the former St. Rita Catholic School, located here at St. Rita Catholic Church. I have served as Pastor for the past seventeen years. Previously over the past forty years I have been a university professor. I have taught graduate and undergraduate students at universities in Los Angeles, New York, and the Midwest.

The parishioners of our parish, and I particularly, have experienced excellent relations with the Director, Mr. Luke Duchene, and the teaching staff, and the young students and their families as well. As a lifelong educator, I am especially impressed with the academic program and the teaching methodology. It reminds me of the historic excellence and creativity of the finest Catholic schools.

Most importantly, I have found Mr. Duchene to be a leader of fine character. He is honest, forthright, trustworthy, and reliable. He is courteous, fair, and understanding. He is insightful, perceptive, and articulate. He has continuously evidenced an extraordinary and enthusiastic yet mature and balanced commitment of purpose. He has good native intelligence, particularly in the areas of analytical powers, reasoning ability, and critical facility. He was well chosen for his significantly relevant leadership role.

In brief, the students are most fortunate to have such an outstanding educational opportunity. We wish them the best of life as they progress on.

Sincerely,


Kenneth M. Weare, Ph.D.
Pastor

From: [Sarah hastings mullin](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item number 3
Date: Thursday, February 4, 2021 9:58:51 PM
Attachments: [rvc letter.docx](#)

Agenda item number 3
Sarah Hastings
Parent RVC

Parent of child at RVC
Agenda item number 3

Two years ago I set out to tour several schools for my child to attend a kindergarten program in Marin. Friends who taught at White Hill Middle School mentioned that in their work with incoming 6th graders that the kids from Ross Valley Charter seemed more confident in themselves and more open to learning. As a psychologist and parent, this of course sparked my interest. Despite their suggestion to check out RVC, I first went to my district elementary school for a tour as I wanted to weigh all options.

During the tour at the elementary we happened to land in a classroom that was focusing on wisdom as part of their curriculum. The tour guide was having different students come up to us to explain aspects of their classroom and also to discuss what they had been learning. The tour guide asked a young girl to help us better understand wisdom. The student said, "wisdom is when you do what your parents and teachers ask you to do." And the staff in the room congratulated this answer. This was a frightening moment for me as I remembered how the direction of a teacher is so influential, especially on such a young mind. For me, wisdom has nothing to do with anyone else but oneself. Wisdom is about one connecting with an inner knowing that is innate. To teach a child about wisdom would be to ask them what they think with their heart and then to help them foster this knowing. To be teaching otherwise feels quite problematic as it is not a topic simply for one portion of a curriculum like, for instance, learning about winter or kangaroos. Instead, wisdom is lived experience that a student could and should have as she traverses her schooling and beyond.

This moment and the subsequent tour at RVC made the decision to begin at RVC and we have been more than happy with the choice. The principal and teachers at RVC clearly want to be there and are passionate teachers. They aren't going through the motions with kids but are present and aware of the responsibility they have as educators in a larger sense. They make a point to notice what each student needs. They make a magical curriculum that is strong in academic content while also engaging and creative. The blend of different aged children together allows for kids to feel better supported with their strengths and areas of improvement and fosters a deeper sense of community. The teachers and the staff are efficient and communicate with parents well.

I have honestly been perplexed by why such a well-functioning and well intentioned school is made to continuously go through these motions to self-advocate. I understand the arguments against charters in general. But in Marin? Can this demographic really not handle supporting a school allowing a portion of kids from other areas to attend? And are the naysayers the same people downtown who hold their signs wanting to promote increased justice and support for the under privileged? The kids who come out of district get a great education and that is a gift us tax payers can all be proud to support. Let's all be more efficient with our time and end this annual conversation. Let's be wise and remember what is important.

Sarah Hastings

From: [Eileen Brown](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#); [Superintendent](#); [SBE](#); [Stephanie Farland](#)
Cc: arturo.salaices@asm.ca.gov; senator.mcguire@senate.ca.gov; [Marci Trahan](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Respect AB 1505, Respect our Democracy, Vote No on RVC
Date: Friday, February 5, 2021 3:38:54 PM

Dear ACCS Members,

I write to urge you to vote ‘no’ on the appeal to renew Ross Valley Charter. Now more than ever, as we witness the fragility of our very democracy, public officials must protect our public schools, defend our democracy and respect the will of the voters and legislators.

In addition to what our district, Ross Valley School District (RVSD), has laid out (the charter’s shaky budget, enrollment, governance and poor performance of subgroups), I write to urge you to respect our democracy, and the spirit and letter of AB 1505.

As you know, AB 1505 was the first law in almost 30 years to attempt to regulate the uncontrolled charter school industry and stop the upending of democracy. Lawmakers, in response to outcry from communities (like ours) and educators, have given democratically-governed public districts the ability to now deny a charter on new grounds, and that is exactly what RVSD has done.

Protect our public schools.

Our community strongly supports our neighborhood public schools and our district, and does not want any charter, which competes with, and draws resources away from our poorly-funded, high-performing district. That support is expressed via elections and activism.

The last time charter supporters put forth a candidate for RVSD board was in 2015. Arguably, their candidate ran the most visible and vigorous campaign. However, of the 5 candidates who ran for three slots, they finished fourth, ahead of someone who barely mounted a campaign. The two incumbents were reelected, as was a new member of the community.

Since then, the pro-charter folks have not put forward a single candidate. Our local, democratically-elected school board has voted nearly unanimously on every issue related to the charter, and every opening on the board has been uncontested as pro-public education candidates have “walked on” to fill vacancies.

Defend our democracy and respect the will of the voters.

Furthermore, this support for our public schools spawned a community effort to voice this in the form of hundreds, if not thousands, of magnets and yard signs proclaiming, “Stand with Ross Valley Schools.” This lack of popular support is part of the reason RVC has struggled to gain enrollment, and specifically, in-district enrollment, at the levels they projected.

Lastly, RVSD has a strong track record educating english language learners and low socioeconomic students, while the same group of folks running RVC have a nearly twenty year track record of discrimination against these same groups in their prior iteration as a district program of choice (MAP). Our neighborhood, public schools welcome and support diverse learners.

Respect AB 1505. Protect our public schools. Defend our democracy. Respect the will of the voters. Vote 'no' on Ross Valley Charter.

Sincerely,

Eileen Brown, Parent to two RVSD graduates

--

Eileen Cohune Brown, LMFT

She/Her/Hers

Psychotherapy for Adults and Youth

www.marintherapyworks.com

(415)887-8539

“

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From: [Leonie Meissner](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RVC's petition of renewal
Date: Friday, February 5, 2021 3:28:55 PM
Attachments: [RVC's petition of renewal.pdf](#)

Leonie Meissner and Thomas Wells
Parents
Agenda item number 3

2/5/21

To whom it may concern

We would very much like RVC's petition of renewal to be approved and remain open.

After attending multiple introduction meetings with the local schools we found that the curriculum and approach to teaching that RVC applies to be the most in line with our values and wishes for our child's education.

For example when it comes time to teach history, in this example, American history, we were heartened to find that it included insights from Howard Zinn's "A People's History of America" as opposed to only the regular version being taught in most of the country.

Another aspect we appreciate, teachers involving the child in the direction of their studies.

We also very much appreciate that art, music and gardening will be included in our child's education along with regular academic studies, as these subjects are either being eliminated or at least reduced in other public schools.

We hope you take this letter into consideration when making the decision of RVC's petition of renewal.

Warm regards,
Leonie and Thomas



1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010
P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921
phone 650.697.1400 // fax 650.552.5007

February 8, 2021

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Mike Patterson

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Eva Ruiz

DeWayne Sheaffer

Telly S. Tse

Executive Director

Joe Boyd

RE: CTA COMMENTS REGARDING Item #3: Petition for the Renewal of a Charter School Under the Oversight of the Local Educational Agency Designated by the State Board of Education Pursuant to California Education Code Section 47605(k)(2)(E): Consideration of Ross Valley Charter, which was denied by the Ross Valley Elementary School District.

Dear ACCS Commissioners:

The California Teachers Association is concerned with the California Department of Education's approach to the Ross Valley Charter appeal review. The CDE's position undermines the authority granted by the state legislature to the chartering authority, Ross Valley Elementary School District.

RVC's charter petition is currently authorized by the SBE. In 2019, AB 1505 repealed Education Code section 47605.8 (which had enabled the SBE to directly grant charter petitions) and replaced it with Section 47605.9, which provides that SBE-authorized charter schools must first submit a petition for renewal to the local district, and then may go to the SBE on appeal.

On November 10, 2020, the board of RVESD voted unanimously to deny RVC's renewal petition. In so doing, it followed the Notice of Violation (NOV) process outlined in Section 47607(e), which states:

[T]he chartering authority may deny 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, or is not serving all pupils who wish to attend, as documented pursuant to subdivision (d). The chartering authority may deny renewal of a charter school under this subdivision only after it has provided at least 30 days' notice to the charter school of the alleged violation and provided the charter school with a reasonable opportunity to cure the violation, including a corrective action plan proposed by the charter school.

The District issued an NOV on September 3 that documented numerous significant governance and fiscal concerns supporting a denial of the charter petition, including RVC's mismanagement of a \$270,653 federal Paycheck Protection Program loan.

On appeal to the SBE, RVC stated (and the CDE repeated without question) that "it did not believe RVESD has legal authority to invoke the NOV procedure as RVESD is not RVC's chartering authority. RVC further asserts that none of the NOV findings may lawfully be relied upon to make a decision to deny the charter's renewal." See ACCS Feb. 2021 Agenda Item #03 at 14.

The CDE's seeming adoption (or failure to repudiate) RVC's misstatement of the law undermines the authority the state legislature intended to deliver to the local school district charged with considering a renewal in the first instance. RVESD is considered the "chartering authority" under Education Code sections 47605.9, 47605(k)(1)(B), and 47605(c). RVC has not challenged any other aspect of RVESD's authority to consider its renewal petition in the first instance—in fact, RVC dutifully submitted its renewal petition to RVESD—yet it now cherry-picks the NOV procedure in Section 47607(e) as an exception to RVESD's authority. This position is untenable, and it disregards the legislative intent of AB 1505 to return chartering authority from the SBE to local educational agencies.

As an example of the CDE's undermining of RVESD's authority and the NOV process, on page 13 of Agenda Item #03, the CDE notes one of the issues raised in RVESD's NOV: the mismanagement of the PPP loan. RVC did not provide a corrective action plan to RVESD, as required by Section 47607(e). The CDE simply ignores the matter and states: "CDE's review of RVC's petition did not support a finding of financial mismanagement." It is unclear if the CDE is making this statement as a rebuttal to the RVESD's substantial finding of fiscal mismanagement regarding the RVC PPP loan or if they are purely stating that RVC's petition as submitted did not support a finding of financial mismanagement. If it is the former, a declarative statement would be appropriate for transparency purpose. If it is the latter, it is extremely troubling that the CDE is not following the clear legislative intent of the new renewal process in Education Code Section 47607(e). As the chartering authority for purposes of the renewal petition, RVESD's finding was well within the legislature's intent in AB1505. Therefore, this finding and the NOV process that preceded it, should be treated with significance by the CDE, ACCS and SBE.

CTA is extremely concerned with the CDE's approach to the first charter appeal under AB 1505 and the apparent disregard for the local district's efforts to conduct strong oversight and authorization as well as intent of the legislature to return chartering authority to local control. We hope that this approach is fixed by the SBE meeting in March so that RVESD's legitimate concerns with Ross Valley Charter are appropriately reviewed and so that the process set forth for future appeals respects the clear intent of the legislature.

Sincerely,



E. Toby Boyd, President
California Teachers Association

db:ETB

C: CTA Executive Officers
Teri Holoman, Associate Executive Director, CTA
Lori Easterling, Manager, CTA Legislative Relations
Commissioners, Advisory Commission on Charter Schools
Stephanie Farland, California Department of Education
CTA Liaison to the Advisory Commission on Charter Schools

From: [Pixeltini Studio](#)
To: [CHARTERS](#); [Superintendent](#); [SBE](#); [Stephanie Farland](#)
Subject: ACCS February 11 meeting Agenda Item 3 - omission
Date: Saturday, February 6, 2021 9:16:09 AM
Attachments: [ACCS Executive Summary Submitted by Ross Valley School District 2.5.2021.pdf](#)

The the members of the ACCS—

I am writing to alert you that there appears to be an oversight in the set of documents you provide for public viewing in advance of your February 11 meeting relating to Item 3 regarding the Ross Valley Charter Renewal.

I notice that the response from the Ross Valley School District that followed RVC's charter appeal is notably missing from the list, and I attach it here so that the **public** can inspect it in preparation for the upcoming meeting, just a few days away. As Ross Valley Charter school was granted the opportunity to submit updated documents in their appeal, the Ross Valley School District should similarly be allowed to present a response for consideration.

I am attaching a copy of the RVSD response, as well as including a link to the online version of the document (in the event that the PDF does not arrive properly as an attachment) for your convenience to include in your agenda

materials: <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/rova/Board.nsf/files/BXY4AX0A9FE8/%24file/ACCS%20Executive%20Summary%20Submitted%20by%20Ross%20Valley%20School%20District%202.5.2021.pdf>

In this time of COVID pandemic when many are working double duty trying to maintain employment and manage home-based schooling for children, it would be extremely helpful to those interested in this agenda item to see the complete set of facts and arguments so as to have time to inspect them thoroughly prior to the meeting.

Surely this omission was an oversight, so for the sake of providing the ACCS members and the public with a more complete picture, I ask that you include the RVSD response in your agenda and deliberations, in the interest of presenting a complete case to the public.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Regards,
Rob Sandusky
Fairfax, CA

Attachment: