

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
August 30, 2019

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

September 2: Labor Day Holiday
September 4: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM
September 5: Minimum Day & Elementary Back to School Night
September 7: Stewart School Annual Picnic, Fernandez Park, 4:00 PM
September 10: Agenda Setting, Superintendent’s Office, 4:30 PM
September 11: Ubisoft Discovery Tour Launch, Kennedy High School Fab Lab, 3:30 PM
September 11: Board Joint CBOC Meeting, FOC, 6:00 PM
September 12: Wilson Groundbreaking, Wilson construction site, 10:00 AM
September 12: Middle School Back to School Night
September 13: Middle School Minimum Day
September 15: El Sobrante Stroll and Parade, 11:00 AM
September 18: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM

Upcoming Agenda Items September 4 - Matthew Duffy
2020 Bond / Ballot Discussion

Next Week’s Board Meeting - Matt Duffy

Closed Session for the September 4 meeting will begin at 4:00 PM for the Superintendent Goal Setting Conference and regular Closed Session items at 5:30 PM.

Calendar of Charter Renewal Petitions - Matthew Duffy

The attached schedule prepared by Dr. Linda Delgado for charter renewals coordinates with the Board’s meeting schedule. Of note, there are two charter renewal actions to take place November 16, 2019. The Amethod organization has refused to work with us on this process, and indicated that they will submit sooner rather than later.

Media Stories of Note - Marcus Walton

The following articles might be of interest to the Board and community:

<https://richmondstandard.com/sports/2019/08/26/soulful-softball-sunday-honors-pumpsie-green/> - Soulful Softball Sunday honors legacy of Pumpsie Green

<https://edsource.org/2019/governor-lawmakers-agree-on-new-controls-on-california-charter-schools/616877> - Governor, lawmakers agree on new controls on California charter schools

School	Presentation & Charter Due	INITIAL HEARING Date	WCCUSD Materials & Recom. Due to DH	DECISION HEARING	Principal Charter Contact Name
Aspire Cal Prep	9/16/2019	10/16/2019	10/23/2019	11/6/2019	Anne Okahara
Richmond College Prep	10/23/2019	11/6/2019	11/20/2019	12/4/2019	Cedric Jones/Diana Ramirez
Manzanita	11/6/2019	11/20/2019	12/4/2019	12/18/2019	
Aspire RTA	1/15/2020	1/29/2020	2/5/2020	2/26/2020	
JHHS					

options for JHHS

1	1/3/2020	1/15/2020	1/31/2020	2/12/2020
2	2/28/2020	3/11/2020	3/20/2020	4/1/2020
3	2/7/2020	2/26/2020	3/6/2020	3/18/2020
4	3/6/2020	3/18/2020	4/10/2020	4/22/2020
5	4/10/2020	4/22/2020	5/8/2020	5/20/2020

Governor, lawmakers agree on new controls on California charter schools

Districts will get to consider financial impact; charters will maintain a right of appeal.

AUGUST 29, 2019 | JOHN FENSTERWALD

Ending months of difficult negotiations, Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders announced Wednesday they had reached a final deal on the most extensive changes to California's charter school law since it was adopted nearly three decades ago.

The agreement would create a truce in the years-long battles in Sacramento over charter schools and resolve the most contentious education issue facing Newsom in his first year in office.

"A lot of hard work has gone into this, and all that matters to me is the result," Newsom said Tuesday on a visit to Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, the Los Angeles Times reported. "If we can pull something off, it's a significant thing and it's not easy. A lot of people have strong opinions on both sides."

School districts for the first time would be able to consider the financial and academic impact on the district or neighborhood of a new charter school or a charter school that wants to expand. Districts like Oakland Unified that could show they are under fiscal distress will be able to deny any proposed charter from opening. "The presumption in those districts will be that new charters will not open," said a statement from the governor's office.

The changes mark a victory for school districts and the teachers' unions that have been clamoring for tighter restrictions and more local control. They argued that legislators who approved the 1992 charter school envisioned a small number of taxpayer-funded charter schools created by teachers and parents, not a sector that has grown to more than 1,300 schools — the most in the nation — often run by nonprofit management organizations with additional funding from wealthy donors. Charter schools serve more than 10 percent of California's 6.2 million public school students.

Leading charter school advocates have expressed fears that allowing school districts to take financial impact into account would give districts an excuse to reject a charter petition — and bring charter

school growth to a halt.

The new version of [Assembly Bill 1505](#) builds on an [initial compromise](#) that Newsom's aides presented in July. It includes revisions to all key aspects of the charter law: the approval and renewal of charter schools, the appeals process for charter denials and the credentialing requirements for charter school teachers.

The language of the final version may not be in print until after the Senate Appropriations Committee votes on Friday to forward the bill to the Senate for approval. It will then be sent back to the Assembly with the final amendments. The Legislature must pass all bills before Sept. 13.

The California Charter Schools Association, which had vigorously opposed the original bill, [Assembly Bill 1505](#), said in a statement that it is taking a neutral position, having succeeded in tempering the language and gaining some concessions. Among these is preserving a full right of appeal to a county office of education. "Collective action" by the charter school community "was able to secure significant protections for charter school students and schools," it said.

In its statement, the California Teachers Association, which strongly backed AB 1505, said it "profoundly" appreciated the "hard work" by the bill's author, Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell, D-Long Beach, and Newsom's leadership and commitment "to fixing the flawed" charter school law. "The groundswell of action and support for this bill over the last several months underscores the sense of urgency in our communities to enact these much-needed changes," it said in a joint statement with other school employee unions.

Jeff Freitas, president of the California Federation of Teachers, representing 120,000 educational employees, said he was "excited" by the bill's affirmation of local control by allowing districts to take financial impact into account. He said his union would have preferred that charter schools be denied the right to appeal to the county or state after they had been turned down by a district.

O'Donnell called the new version of his bill "a step in the right direction" while adding in a statement there is "more work to be done to ensure bad (charter school) actors are held accountable." He too thanked Newsom for finding "a solution that strengthens local control and gives local school boards and administrators the ability to determine how charters can best serve their community's interests."

The latest version includes a compromise on a previously unresolved issue: preparation and credentialing requirements for charter school teachers.

Charter schools currently must hire teachers with a state-approved credential in all core academic subjects, including English language arts, math, science and social studies but not in other “non-core” subjects like music, foreign languages and art.

O’Donnell sought to require all charter school teachers to have a credential. Under the compromise, all teachers hired after July 1, 2020 must have the appropriate credential for whatever class they’re teaching. All current charter school teachers without a credential will have until July 2025 to obtain one. And, by next July, uncredentialed teachers must get a Certificate of Clearance showing they’ve undergone a fingerprint and background check. Under current law, all staff at both traditional public schools and charter schools must have a background check. But those working at charter schools without credentials or permits have not been required to record the results with the state.

Pending final wording changes, here are the other significant changes to the law:

Approval process

The current charter school law says that a school board shall approve a charter school if it satisfies several criteria, including providing evidence of financial viability and documentation of a sound academic program.

Newsom sought to balance students’ access to a better performing or different program and a district’s ability to avoid duplicating what it provides and ensure its financial stability.

A charter operator would have to justify the basis for a new school, particularly if similar programs exist. An applicant could point to low-performing district-run schools to justify the need for an additional school.

Appeals process

Charter schools currently have two opportunities to appeal a denial for a new school or a revocation of an existing charter — first before the local county office of education, then before the State Board of Education. O’Donnell’s original bill would have restricted grounds for a county appeal and eliminated an appeal to the state board. The amended version would basically keep the county-level appeal as is and allow an appeal to the state board only when a county or district “abused its discretion” — and acted arbitrarily. Oversight of the 29 charter schools that the state board has approved would revert to the districts where the schools are located.

Charter renewals

The current law has imprecise and outdated language for renewing charter schools; it includes evaluating student performance on standardized tests and a school rating system (the Academic Performance Index) that the state replaced, along with with a new testing system.

The new version would create a tiered system that, according to the governor's office, would reward effective charters — those that have been successful in narrowing achievement gaps — with a renewal, while making it easier to close down poorly performing charters. Charter schools would be evaluated with the same criteria as other public schools: the multiple measures of performance on the color-coded [California School Dashboard](#). These measures include standardized test scores, suspension rates and students' readiness for college and careers.

Those charter schools that have received blue and green ratings — the top two colors demonstrating excellent performance — could receive a renewal for as long as seven years. Currently the maximum is five years. Charter schools that have consistently received red and orange ratings — the bottom two colors — would be subject to closure, unless they could make a case showing why their charter should be renewed.

Districts could close a charter school that is financially unsound or if it is not serving all student populations.

The bulk of charters seeking renewal would fall in the middle, with a mix of dashboard colors and be eligible for a 5-year renewal. Under the July compromise, alternative charter schools, serving primarily dropouts, expelled students and students substantially behind academically, would be evaluated by other criteria.

The compromise also will place a two-year moratorium on online charter schools; one of the goals of school employee unions had been a moratorium on all charter schools.

Comments


Comments Policy

We welcome your comments. All comments are moderated for civility, relevance and other considerations.

[Click here for EdSource's Comments Policy.](#)



I worked in "local county school district" in California and retired out of said district. My 30 years of experience leads me to believe that "business as usual" districts leave students behind. They are top-heavy with administration costs and students are paying the cost. Charter schools are so far superior and it's not even close. I can't tell you the number of teachers, protected by their unions, who don't really "teach" but are ...
[Read More](#)

Kevin 
15 hours ago

Of course the unions love this law. Their bought and paid for lapdog Newsom does as ordered. The children pay the price, as do the taxpayers, as always.

▶ **tom** 
11 hours ago

There are about 330,000 members of CTA paying about \$1,000/yr in union dues. Do the math and that is a heck of a lot of money to buy influence. And influence they do. At my district, the union rep is passed a microphone whenever she wants it and given unlimited time to talk at board meetings. Meanwhile, "the public" is limited to 3 minutes. We have lost our way folks, as I can ... [Read More](#)

Brenda 
17 hours ago

The model of some charter schools allows all students to access learning at their level, above or below their current grade level. If students are advancing and growing from their current abilities, then how can that school be deemed red or orange? Why aren't brick and mortar district schools held to the same standards? When do those underperforming schools get shut down?

JudiAU 
17 hours ago

Well...sure. How about we apply these standards to all public schools. In my district at last half would close and almost every single school serving primarily African-American and Latino students.

The real problem is impotent schools boards, too many administrators, wasteful bureaucracy, underused school sites, and wasted urban land.

▶ **Michelle Yezbick** 
18 hours ago

Follow the money. The CTA has given a fortune to these politicians, and this is what the CTA wanted. It is sad that at a time when significant change is needed for California's public education system, the CTA has chosen to abandon complexity in favor of low-hanging fruit: attack on charters. We owe safe working spaces, overtime compensation, weekends, and abolition of child labor to the work of union leaders and members who put their ... [Read More](#)

▶ **tom**

19 hours ago



It should be apparent that this is a terrible decision for kids in poorly performing school districts (mostly kids of color) who are now more than ever forced to stay in traditional public schools churning out unprepared kids. How are they going to get a good paying job to support themselves and their families? Outrageous. If they were my kids, I would be working to march on Sacramento in protest. Of course there is a ... [Read More](#)

Alvina Arutyunyan

20 hours ago



I see that charter schools currently even before AB 1505 have a high level accountability from just the fact that they are up for periodic evaluation for performance. What kind of accountability exists for districts that are continuously performing low: can we close them as well?

Chris Bertelli

23 hours ago



This line is incorrect, "Charter schools would be evaluated with the same criteria as for other public schools: the multiple measures of performance on the color-coded California School Dashboard." There is no evaluation of district-run school performance. They include that information in dashboards but that information isn't subject to evaluation by anyone.

Mike McMahon

1 day ago



So does this mean that district schools receiving red and orange ratings — the bottom two colors — would be subject to closure, unless they could make a case why their school should remain open?

Michael B

19 hours ago



Excellent point. Sounds like they're creating another significant double standard.

Soulful Softball Sunday honors legacy of Pumpsie Green

August 26, 2019



From left to right, Contra Costa County District Attorney Diana Becton (far left) stands with Keisha Green Joyner, Kennedy High graduate and daughter of Elijah "Pumpsie" Green; Pumpsie's wife Marie; Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia; and Rodney Alamo Brown. (photos by Mike Kinney)

By Mike Kinney

Some called it a record turnout for Soulful Softball Sunday. Organizers estimated roughly 2,500 local community members came to the annual grassroots gathering. For a fifth year at Nicholl Park in Richmond, Soulful Softball Sunday, co-founded by Rodney Alamo Brown and Antwon Cloird, brought locals together for soul food, entertainment, resources, good vibes and a sun-soaked day of softball.

This year's event paid tribute to the recently passed Elijah "Pumpsie" Green, the first African American player in Boston Red Sox history who was raised in Richmond.

Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, joined by Contra Costa County District Attorney Diana Becton, the county's first ever African American district attorney, honored Pumpsie by proclaiming Aug. 25, 2019 as Elijah "Pumpsie" Green day in Contra Costa County.

The Red Sox organization donated gloves to give away at the event in honor of Pumpsie.

Pumpsie's daughter, Keisha Green Joyner, threw the first pitch alongside famed musician and Richmond native Eric EQ Young from the former R&B and funk band Con Funk Shun. Joyner, a Kennedy High graduate, was joined by family members, including Pumpsie's wife, Marie, in honoring the legendary ball player.

"It's important to recognize history," Gioia said. "We all know who Jackie Robinson is, because he was the first African American to play Major League Baseball in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers. But a lot of us don't know it took 12 years for Major League Baseball to fully integrate. It took 12 years before the last team, the Boston Red Sox, integrated. And so today we want to recognize the family of Elijah "Pumpsie" Green, who grew up in Richmond, went to Richmond High School, got his start locally with the Stockton Ports and Oakland Oaks, went on to play for the Red Sox and then came back and continued to serve his community as a teacher and coach at Berkeley High School for 20 years."

Many other community members honored today, including local high school scholarship winners: The Jerrold Hatchett Award went to Jamie Tianero and Jason Varela; Anthony "Rook" Jones received the Khiari Neal Award; the Berth Owens Award went to Charles Modeste and Oraiana Range; Jordan White and Alia Walker-Griffin earned the Minnie Lou Nichols Award; the George Livingston Award went to Joseph Valenzuela and Zsariah Simmons; the Mary P. Head Award went to Ruben Calvario and Camryn Vickers; and Jalaal Dirbas, Tyre Reed and Jomari Robinson were honored with the William "Jake" Randolph Award.

Recent local high school graduates were honored with college scholarships at Soulful Softball Sunday on April 25, 2019.

A number of individuals and organizations were also honored for their community service, including Reisha Graves, William Harris, Le Damien Flowers, More Than A Game, Mark Rayon, Joey Slimmer, Dr. Plik Plok, Nichelle Holmes, Kristin Killian Lobos, George Brown, Evan LG Francis, Naj K. Smith, Doria Robinson, Cashinda Wilson, Carole Johnson and Monique Mc Morris.

“We want to give them love and appreciation of their hard work and due diligence,” Brown said.

The cherry on top? The Richmond Elite won the California Softball Classic against the L.A. All Stars, meaning the trophy has returned to Richmond.