

**VALLEJO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
STAFF REPORT ON VALLEJO CHARTER SCHOOL  
CHARTER RENEWAL PETITION**

**Date Posted: May 6, 2025**

The following provides a summary of the Vallejo City Unified School District’s (“District”) staff report of its proposed findings of fact and recommendation (“Staff Report”) concerning Vallejo Charter School’s (“VCS” or “Charter School”) charter renewal petition (“Renewal Petition”).

**Introduction and Procedural Background**

VCS has operated as a dependent, classroom-based charter school under the authorization of the District since 2007. VCS offers experiential, thematic, and project-based learning opportunities to students that are designed to engage diverse learners. VCS’s approach nurtures diverse learners in a child-centered, dynamic environment. Academic achievement and character development are foundational elements of our programming, which is guided by ten key design principles and reflects the educational philosophy, core values and practices of the Expeditionary Learning education model selected by the charter school’s original founding team.

VCS serves a student population of approximately 386 students spanning transitional kindergarten (“TK”) through eighth grade. The composition of the student population is comprised of approximately 22% African American, 10% Filipino, 3.9% Asian, 48% Hispanic/Latino, 9% White, 1.4% Pacific Islander, and 3% two or more races. In addition, 73% are identified as socioeconomically-disadvantaged and are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, 17% are classified as English Learners, and 13.7% are identified as students with disabilities.

VCS’s current charter term expires on June 30, 2025, and it is seeking a two-year renewal term commencing on July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2027. Because VCS was placed in the low-performing tier by the California Department of Education based on its student academic achievement and performance on the California School Dashboard (“Dashboard”), it does not qualify for a five-year charter term.

On February 20th, 2025, VCS’s Renewal Petition was officially submitted to the District, along with a signed certification deeming the Renewal Petition to be complete. Therefore, the District commenced the timelines under Education Code section 47605(b) based on this date.

On April 23, 2025, the District’s Board of Trustees (“Board”) held a public hearing to determine the level of support for the Renewal Petition by teachers, other District employees, and parents/guardians.

On May 21, 2025, the District’s Board will hold a second public hearing during which the Board will consider the admissions preferences included in the Renewal Petition and take action to either grant or deny the Renewal Petition.

As discussed in further detail below, District staff, in consultation with legal counsel, have conducted a comprehensive review of the Renewal Petition and the performance of VCS utilizing the charter renewal criteria under Assembly Bill 1505 and codified in Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2. Based on that review, District staff finds that VCS qualifies for renewal for its proposed two-year charter term from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027.

**Charter Renewal Criteria and Findings of Fact**

The consideration of a renewal petition requires the District to (1) determine whether the charter school meets applicable eligibility requirements using the accountability criteria under Assembly Bill 1505 (codified in Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2) and reflected in the Dashboard, and (2) evaluate whether the renewal petition meets the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code section 47605. An analysis of these two components of the charter renewal process are addressed in detail below and include District staff’s corresponding findings of fact.

**1. VCS’s Eligibility for Renewal Under New Accountability Criteria / Findings of Fact**

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

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

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

VCS qualifies as a low-performing charter school. Low-performing charter schools have a presumption of denial under the law. However, charter schools may receive a maximum two-year renewal based on a "second look" in which the District conducts a deeper evaluation of the charter school's academic achievement and determines whether:

- VCS is taking meaningful steps to address the underlying cause or causes of its low performance, and those steps are or will be, reflected in a written plan adopted by the Board.
- There is clear and convincing evidence, as demonstrated by verified data, which shows that VCS has either (1) achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement, as defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school, or (2) shown strong post-secondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers.

By satisfying the above criteria, the District’s Board may grant a renewal term of two years.

**b. Findings of Fact**

The following include District staff’s findings of fact concerning VCS’s designation as a low-performing charter school:

**Finding of Fact No. 1: VCS’s performance on the state and local indicators demonstrate overall that it is generally showing improvements schoolwide and among subgroup populations.**

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

District staff has determined that VCS meets the minimum requirements to qualify for a two-year renewal term as a low-performing charter school. Overall, while VCS’s schoolwide performance in English-Language Arts (“ELA”) and Mathematics falls below the state averages and the 2024 Dashboard results indicate stagnant growth, there are improvements in student outcomes on local assessments this school year that show promising gains. The Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Performance (“NWEA MAP”) data indicate improvements in ELA and Mathematics both schoolwide and among VCS’ student subgroups during the 2024-25 school year. The NWEA MAP assessment is highly predictive of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) outcomes. The projected proficiency for students overall in ELA is anticipated to be 32% and 15% in Math on the 2025 CAASPP assessment.

VCS's suspension and chronic absenteeism rates remain high and exceed the state averages. However, outcomes so far for the 2024-25 school year indicate that the suspension rate is anticipated to decline significantly to lower than 5% of students. The chronic absenteeism rate, while still high, has improved this year and is estimated at 25.7% so far for the 2024-25 school year. These leading indicators show positive trends for VCS.

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

- ELA: **RED** (71.1 points below standard, decline of 8.1 points)
- Mathematics: **RED** (100.1 points below standard, declined 5.9 points)
- English Learner Progress: **YELLOW** (42.2% making progress toward English language proficiency, representing an increase of 10.7% from the prior Dashboard)
- Chronic Absenteeism: **YELLOW** (35.6% chronically absent with a decline of 6.9%)
- Suspension Rate: **RED** (12.7% suspended at least once, with an increase of 0.6%)

### ***English Language Arts***

Although VCS continues to perform below the state average in ELA, it has shown gains across student subgroups over the past year. Per the NWEA MAP winter outcomes, African American students are projected to be proficient on the 2025 CAASPP administration at a rate of 26% in ELA. This would represent a growth of more than 10% when compared to the 2024 CAASPP administration. Hispanic/Latino students are projected to be proficient at a rate of 29%, representing a growth of about 10% when compared to this group's performance in 2024.

The ELA outcomes on the California Dashboard and on local assessments have been flat for the past 3 years for all student groups. However, there is a renewed commitment outlined in the charter petition to address students' needs through a Multi-Tiered System of Support driven by data to address learning needs. With a focus on phonemic awareness

### ***Mathematics***

On the Mathematics indicator, 10% of African American students are projected to be proficient compared to 8.45% of students on the 2024 CAASPP Administration. Hispanic/Latino students are projected to be proficient at a rate of 15% which reflects about the same performance status as last year's CAASPP outcomes.

The outcomes for mathematics have been flat for the past three years for all student groups. Similar to ELA, new leadership has provided an opportunity for improvement

and commitment to implementation of the instructional priorities and better engagement in professional learning for staff.

***English Learner Progress Indicator***

On the English Learner Progress Indicator (“ELPI”), the California Dashboard reports that 42.2% of students are making progress. This is an increase of 10.7% over the previous year.

***Suspension Rate***

The current suspension rate for 2024-25 is an improvement over the Dashboard results for 2023-24. These improvements are the result of new administrative leadership that has prioritized the implementation of PBIS, CREW and campus-wide procedures. Additionally, VCS is implementing the District’s Positive Behavior Intervention and Support: A response to Behavior Handbook as a guide to progressive discipline with a focus on alternatives to suspension.

***Chronic Absenteeism***

The improvements for the 2024-25 school year indicate that VCS is implementing the District-wide strategies for attendance improvement by participating in attendance campaigns as well as setting growth targets for reduction in chronic absenteeism and improvements in average daily attendance. The current average attendance rate is estimated at 92%. This would be a 0.5% increase compared to the 2023-24 school year.

***Local Indicators***

According to the 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024 Dashboard results, VCS met all standards on the local indicators each year, including Basics: Teachers, Instructional Materials and Facilities; Implementation of Academic Standards; Parent and Family Engagement; Local Climate Survey; and Access to a Broad Course of Study.

**Finding of Fact No. 2: There is clear and convincing evidence, as demonstrated by verified data, which shows that VCS has achieved measurable increases in student academic achievement as defined by at least one year’s progress for each year in school.**

Improvements in projected student proficiency on the NWEA MAP Assessment is an indication that students at Vallejo Charter are on a positive trajectory toward meeting grade-level standards in ELA and Mathematics, with a focus on growth rather than just proficiency. It shows that, through the targeted interventions and data-driven instructional strategies in place, students will continue to steadily progress.

Furthermore, the increase in the percentage of students projected to be proficient signals that the interventions and adjustments made based on prior year data are having a positive impact. For example, increased access to small group instruction, personalized

learning plans, and targeted support have contributed to stronger outcomes for students who were previously behind.

Again, while the overall growth is modest, it still represents the critical first steps toward broader academic improvement. As VCS continues to refine its instructional strategies and interventions, the District anticipates this trend of steady improvement will accelerate, with a stronger emphasis on ensuring all student groups make the equivalent of at least one year's progress or more, as required by the Education Code.

By the end of the 2024-2025 academic year, we expect to see improvements across grade levels and student groups, putting more students on track to meet or exceed proficiency in ELA and Mathematics. This continued growth will be monitored through the NWEA MAP assessments, along with formative and summative assessments, to ensure all students are provided with the support they need to achieve success.

In addition to the improvements observed on the NWEA assessments, students in grades K-2 are showing strong growth in their foundational literacy skills based upon the outcomes on the CORE Reading Assessments conducted in the 2024-25 school year. The staff has implemented the University of Florida Literacy Institute ("UFLI") strategies and are participating in District-wide coaching related to instructional practices in the classroom. The implementation of these strategies has resulted in 84% of kindergarten students knowing their letter sounds by the middle of the year assessment and more than 50% of kindergarteners meeting the second grade fluency benchmark for the middle of the year. This growth is a positive indicator of the potential for future academic growth.

The District also notes that the Renewal Petition includes a comprehensive action plan under Element 3 that lists substantial academic and behavioral strategies, techniques, and interventions to improve student performance and progress. These are described in greater detail below. The District is optimistic that if the interventions detailed in this plan are administered and carried out effectively and with fidelity by VCS leadership and teaching staff, student outcomes in ELA and Mathematics, as well as on the other state and local indicators, will measurably improve. Further, should the Board of Trustees take action to approve the Renewal Petition for a two-year term, District staff will engage in continuous oversight and monitoring of VCS's implementation of the comprehensive action plan and evaluate its efficacy with respect to improving student performance and progress in these critical areas.

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

Education Code section 47607 provides that charter renewals are governed by the standards and criteria set forth in Education Code section 47605 and must include, but not be limited to, a reasonable comprehensive description of any new requirement of

charter schools enacted into law after the charter was originally granted or last renewed.

**a. Grounds for Denial**

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

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

**b. Findings of Fact**

The District conducted a comprehensive review of VCS's Renewal Petition, which included a detailed analysis of its educational program, measurable student outcomes and methods for measuring student progress, fiscal and governance structures, student admissions and discipline, labor and personnel issues, facilities and operations, and legal

issues. Overall, as detailed below, the Renewal Petition included reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the required legal elements.

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

**Finding of Fact No. 3: The Renewal Petition generally presents a sound educational program for the students enrolled in the charter school.**

In the 2024-25 school year, a new principal was appointed to VCS in direct response to the data that the District observed in the academic program as well as the culture and climate of the charter school. The data highlighted the need for the District to institute strategic leadership changes at the school. The new leadership has since set a path for improvement through the implementation of instructional priorities with a focus on early literacy and the use of the charter school's and District's adopted curriculum at all grade levels. The improvements that the District has observed in student outcomes related to suspension data, as well as attendance and academic benchmarks, show that VCS is on a path toward increased student growth and progress. While there is still work necessary to meet the specific District and VCS goals for our students, the modest improvements shown thus far indicate that VCS is on a positive trajectory. The implementation of key strategies, the more intentional use of instructional coaches, and a more robust approach to the implementation of PBIS, Kimochis, and CREW strategies are all supporting the improvements in student outcomes.

In 2024-2025, Vallejo Charter collaborated with the VCUSD Educational Services team to analyze the current curriculum to determine effectiveness of ELD instruction. It was apparent that the program did not meet California ELD standards. VCS selected an appropriate ELD program approved by the state of California for all grades. Professional development and coaching was provided to classroom staff. English Learners who are struggling with making progress are provided intervention support based on individual need. Supports include but are not limited to content intervention with the teacher, high-dosage tutoring during the school day, and support from the site Bilingual Tutor.

The Site Leadership team has worked with partnering organizations and District leadership to do a series of walkthroughs to monitor implementation of ELD curriculum and identify areas of growth for each teacher. These sessions were followed up with debriefing, action planning and coaching.

VCS has a designated English Learner (EL) Site Contact who monitors progress for all identified English Learners at VCS. The EL Site Contact attends District collaborations with EL Site Contacts across VCUSD to discuss effective strategies for monitoring as well as communicating with site staff and students around improving outcomes for English Learners.

The District also notes that, consistent with the requirements of Education Code section 4760.2(a)(4), VCS is taking meaningful steps to address the causes of low performance of its students both schoolwide and among its student groups. Specifically, as noted above, the Renewal Petition includes a comprehensive action plan in Element 3 that infuses strategic academic and behavioral improvement initiatives into the educational program. This includes: high quality instruction and curriculum, data-driven interventions (e.g., small-group and one-on-one support in ELA and Mathematics through expanded intervention programs), professional development for teachers, expanded learning opportunities (e.g., academic tutoring), behavior support, targeted interventions, focused phonics and fluency practice, reading comprehension connections (e.g., post-reading discussions, reading response activities, retelling and re-reading, vocabulary and context cues, questioning techniques, and cross-curricular connections), and strategies to support English language development. The District will closely monitor VCS during the renewal term to ensure this action plan is implemented with fidelity and adjusted, as needed, to foster student achievement, growth, and progress.

Thus, based on the above-noted leadership changes and focused efforts on implementing strategies to improve student outcomes, the District finds that the Renewal Petition presents a sound educational program for students enrolled in VCS.

**Finding of Fact No. 4: The Petitioners are demonstrably likely to successfully implement the program.**

As a dependent charter school of the District, both District administration and the Board of Trustees oversee the fiscal condition, staffing, operations, administrative services, and facilities of VCS.

With respect to VCS' fiscal condition, VCS demonstrates financial stability and it maintains a balanced budget. Specifically, VCS' 2024-25 adopted budget reflects a healthy ending fund balance of \$2,555,300. According to the multi-year financial projections for the charter school, this fund balance is anticipated to increase by approximately \$300,000 for the 2025-26 fiscal year, with another slight increase by the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Further, with respect to cash flow, the monthly projections of VCS' receipt of revenues is in alignment with local, state, and federal funding disbursements. In addition, the monthly expenditures correspond with typical schedules. The District also works with VCS staff to ensure alignment of VCS' local control and accountability ("LCAP") fund with its budget for supplemental and concentration grant funds detailed in the local control funding formula ("LCFF") calculator.

For staffing, VCS follows District policies and procedures concerning recruitment, hiring, and supervision of the school principal, teachers, and other staff. Further, the District oversees teacher credentialing, performance evaluations, and compliance with applicable laws. The District collaborates with VCS administration to obtain input on

teacher and non-instructional staff recruitment, professional development, retention strategies, and evaluations to ensure instructional quality and alignment with the charter school's mission.

The District also handles VCS' administrative services including accounting, payroll, purchasing, retirement benefits, special education, professional development/training, maintenance and custodial services, human resources, student assessment and testing, and categorical program support to ensure legal compliance and continuity in its programming and operations.

Currently, VCS is located at 2833 Tennessee Street in Vallejo. However, given recent Districtwide consolidation efforts, beginning with the 2025-26 school year, VCS will move to 400 Rickover Street in Vallejo. This site presently houses the Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy, which will close at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The site is conducive to student learning and housing the VCS student population.

Overall, District staff has determined that VCS has the capacity and means to successfully implement the charter school program if its Renewal Petition is approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Finding of Fact No. 5: The Renewal Petition contains an affirmation of each of the required conditions.**

The Renewal Petition includes all required affirmations and assurances.

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

Based on an analysis of the Renewal Petition by the District's review team, the Renewal Petition generally provides reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the required elements set forth in Education Code section 47605 to support eligibility for the renewal of VCS's charter. Given that VCS operates as a dependent charter school, the District maintains far greater involvement and oversight in the programming of the school. Therefore, the District does not have any specific concerns with respect to the elements required to be included in the Renewal Petition.

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

The Renewal Petition confirms that the District serves as the exclusive public school employer of the employees of VCS for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

**Finding of Fact No. 8: The Renewal Petition satisfies other key areas related to the operations and other potential effects of VCS.**

As described above, the Renewal Petition includes a detailed description of the administrative, operations, programmatic, and financial practices of VCS. Because VCS is a dependent charter school, VCS is covered under the District’s insurance for general liability, property, and workers’ compensation. VCS also affirms in the Renewal Petition that it will implement its educational program and day-to-day operations in a manner that minimizes risk of liability to the District.

Overall, the Renewal Petition adequately addresses the operational and other potential effects of VCS.

**District Staff Recommendation**

Based on the District review team’s analysis of the above-described criteria for renewal and the corresponding Findings of Fact Nos. 1-8, District staff has determined that VCS qualifies for renewal for a five-year term beginning on July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2027. However, the District encourages VCS to take thoughtful, focused measures to address the concerns and items in the Renewal Petition identified herein concerning the need to improve student outcomes schoolwide and among specific student groups in English Language Arts, Mathematics, English Learner progress, and other categories identified on the Dashboard. This shall include implementation of the action items and strategies described in the corrective action plan embedded in the Renewal Petition. It is critical that VCS strive to improve student performance and achievement in these areas to move into a middle-performing status. If the Renewal Petition is approved, these items will continue to be the subject of focused monitoring by the District as part of its oversight role.