
Riversage Charter Petition ***TTUSD Staff Report***

Board of Education Meeting
November 28, 2022

Role of Board

- Consider all available information, including Petition, Staff Report, and information shared at Public Hearings
- Ensure equal time for Petitioner as given to staff to present to the Board at the meeting where the decision is made to grant or deny the petition
- Grant or deny charter petition

Role of Board

While the Board's consideration of petitions for the establishment of charter schools, "shall be guided by the intent of the Legislature that charter schools are and should become an integral part of the California educational system and that the establishment of charter schools should be encouraged," in order to grant a charter petition, the Board must be "satisfied that granting the charter is **consistent with sound educational practice** and **with the interests of the community** in which the school is proposing to locate."

(Ed. Code, 47605(c).)

Petition Review Criteria

Education Code section 47605(c):

1. Unsound educational program.
2. Demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement program.
3. Does not contain number of signatures required.
4. Does not contain required affirmations.
5. Does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of required elements.
6. Does not contain declaration of whether charter school will be exclusive public employer for purposes of Educational Employment Relations Act.
7. Demonstrably unlikely to serve interests of entire community.
8. District is not positioned to absorb the fiscal impact of the proposed charter school.

Staff Recommendation

- Information Considered:
 - Charter petition and attachments
 - Petitioners' presentation at public hearing
 - Public hearing comments
 - Communications from previous charter school operator (Golden Valley - Tahoe)
 - Communications from District families
 - Information from Town of Truckee
 - Publicly available information regarding school operations
- Recommendation: **Deny Petition**
- Key Concerns:
 - Safety and viability of proposed location
 - Prior history of unsuccessful operations
 - Inadequate governance
 - Private school conversion
 - Unreasonable budget
 - Failure to serve all students

Location



- Union Mills Site inadequate to serve 165-240 students.
- Use permit is for 40 students only.
- Additional requirements:
 - Permitting, construction, and reno of 5-7 modular classrooms
 - Widening of entrance road.
 - Addressing VMT
 - Evacuation plan
 - Septic capacity

Golden Valley Tahoe

- Bonnie Rivers (Proposed Principal of Riversage) served as GVT Principal from Sept. 2018-Dec. 2020
- Barbara Linares (on Riversage Advisory Board) served as GVT Principal from Jan. 2021-Mar. 2022
- FOTTW involvement
- Teacher/family “coup”
- Abrupt closure due to \$300K deficit and lack of enrollment
- Exclusion of students with disabilities
- Challenges with Union Mills site
- Failure to match student demographics of district
- Students returning to District without student records and many requiring significant interventions

Demographics

GVT

Subgroup	% 2021-2022	% 2020-2021	% 2019-2020	% 2018-2019
English Learners	1.3%	0.9%	0.0%	
Foster Youth	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Homeless Youth	1.3%	2.8%	0.0%	
Migrant Education	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Students with Disabilities	8.0%	5.6%	6%	2.9%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	22.7%	20.6%	28%	2.9%
Hispanic or Latino	12.0%	12.1%	10.0%	11.8%
All Students	75	107	50	34

District

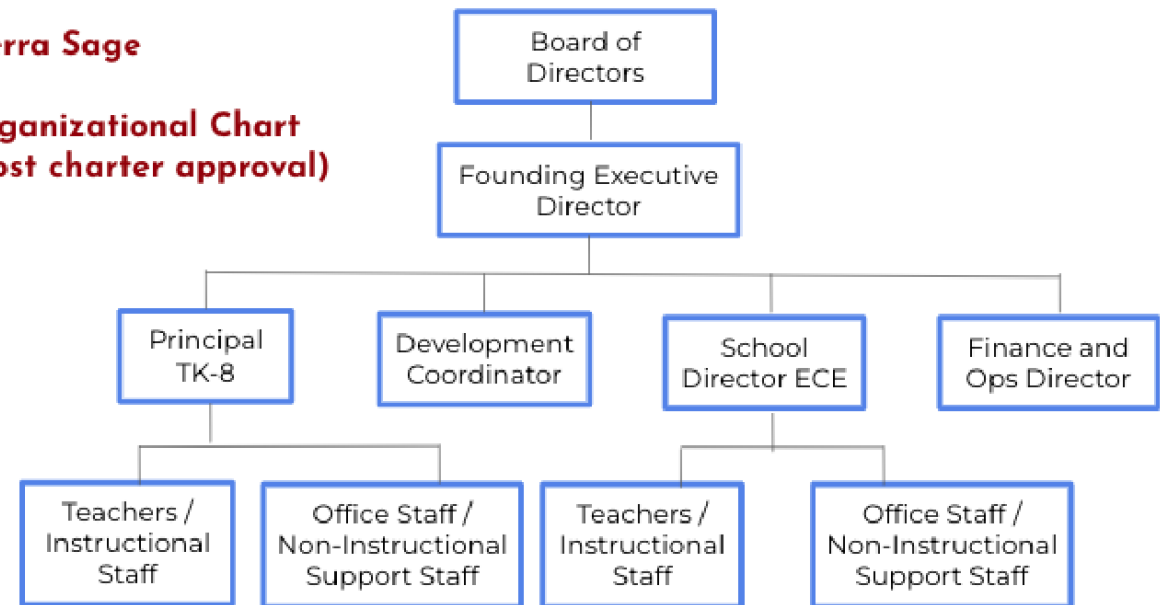
Subgroup	% 2021-2022	% 2020-2021	% 2019-2020	% 2018-2019
English Learners	14.2%	12.7	13.4%	13.2%
Foster Youth	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Homeless Youth	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Migrant Education	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Students with Disabilities	13.1%	12.4%	12.5%	12.1%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	31.4%	41.3%	42.4%	40.3%
Hispanic or Latino	35.1%	36.0%	36.5%	36.6%
All Students	4,165	4,159	4,193	4,168

Governance

- Petition proposes Sierra Sage as charter school board
- Sierra Sage is **not** a registered DBA for Little Gems
- Little Gems is only authorized to “operate early childhood programs.”
- Potential or actual conflicts of interest.

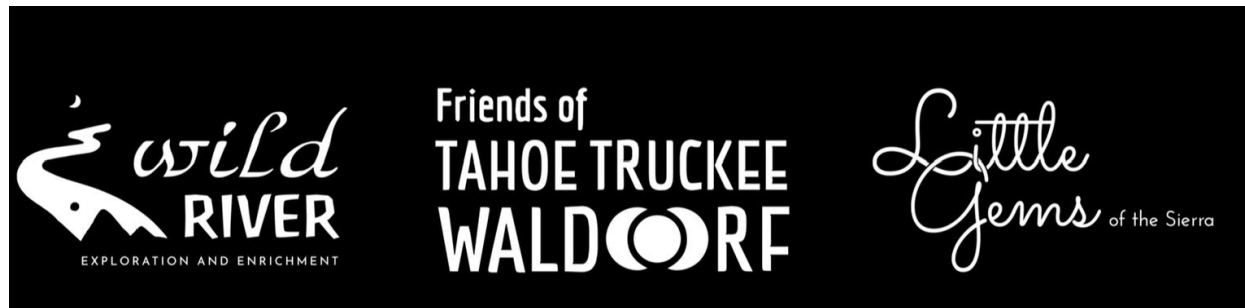
Sierra Sage

Organizational Chart (post charter approval)



Private School Conversion

- Conversion of private school to a charter school is prohibited under Ed. Code 47602(b).
- Crossover between Little Gems/FOTTW School/Wild River:
 - Campus
 - Families
 - Staff



Budget

- Key indicator of charter school success.
- Budget is predicated on enrollment numbers that GVT did not achieve and Petition does not reflect.
- Does not adequately account for:
 - Enrollment projections
 - Instructional materials
 - Legal fees
 - Insurance
 - Utilities
 - Food service
 - Capital outlay
 - Special Education

Serving All Students

- Core District Beliefs:
 - Students are the focus of all decisions.
 - We believe in embracing the diversity embodied within our community and appreciating the richness it adds to life.
- Inadequate instructional time, program development, and staffing for English Learners.
- Failure to serve continuum of students with disabilities.
- Lack of transportation excludes homeless/foster youth, socioeconomic disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

Demonstrably Unlikely to Serve the Interests of the Entire Community

- Ed. Code 47605(c)(7):
- Analysis includes:
 - Consideration of fiscal impact
 - Extent to which proposed charter school would substantially undermine existing services, academic offerings, or programmatic offerings.
 - Duplicative programming.
- Rebuttable presumption of denial.
- Charter school approval would result in substantial deficit for District of:
 - \$1.6 million for first year
 - \$2 million for subsequent two years
 - Resulting in reductions in teachers and support staff, larger classes sizes, less discretionary spending for school sites.
- Duplicative programming

Recommendation

It is staff's recommendation that the Petition be denied as inconsistent with sound educational practice and with the interests of the community. The staff reports sets out the written findings to support the following grounds for denial:

- The Petition presents an unsound educational program.
- Petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement program.
- The Petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of required elements.
- Demonstrably unlikely to serve interests of entire community.

The Board may deny the Petition and adopt the staff report as its written findings in support of the denial.