February 4, 2015

TO: Santa Clara County Board of Education

FROM: Toni Cordova
Chief Strategy Officer

VIA: Jon R. Gundry
County Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on the Material Revision to Discovery Charter School II Petition

Associated Goals
Goal 1: Improve student equity and reduce access discrepancies to high quality education
Goal 2: Provide support to districts, communities, schools, and students

Background
On January 9, 2015, the Santa Clara County Board of Education received a letter from Discovery Charter School requesting a material revision to the charter currently authorized by the Santa Clara County Board of Education. This item will be placed on the March 4, 2015, board agenda for a decision.

The complete revised petition is available for review at http://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/innovative-schools/Pending/Discovery%20Charter%20School%20Revision%20-%20(Public%20Hearing%2002-04-15).pdf. The section of the revised petition describing the proposed program is included with this transmittal.

Attachments
Superintendent Jon R. Gundry  
Santa Clara County Office of Education  
1290 Ridder Park Drive  
San Jose, CA 95131

Dear Superintendent Gundry,

Discovery Charter School II is submitting a request for a material revision of our charter. It is our hope to add one classroom to support families who are seeking a "blended" home schooling option. This program would serve up to 25 students and involve them attending school for one or two days each week and being home schooled, or on Independent Study, for the remainder of each week.

As you know, one of the reasons that California passed legislation creating charter schools in our state was to provide more options for parents. This blended home schooling option was specifically requested by parents in our community, some who currently attend Discovery, and others who are currently driving out of the County for their home school support programs.

As a parent participation program, we feel that we are in a unique position to provide this program to families in Santa Clara County. We understand that adding a home school support program requires a material revision to our charter. We look forward to working with you, your staff, and the Santa Clara County Board of Education in implementing this program.

We have also included an update to the charter to reflect any new legal requirements enacted since the charter was submitted in accordance with Education Code section 47605(a)(2).

Sincerely,

Dale Jones  
Executive Director  
Discovery Charter Schools  
4021 Teale Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95117  
(408) 243-9800
J. Independent Study / Home School Support

Discovery Charter Schools may offer independent study / home school support to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the charter school. Independent study is an alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. Discovery Charter School shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study successfully.

Discovery plans to provide a “blended” independent study / home school support program (Home School Class), with students attending class on the Discovery II campus for one or two days each week and on independent study or “home schooling” for the remainder of the week. The students in this program would meet together on the same days, with a teacher assigned to teach these students. The Home School Class would also go on field trips together, and attend school assemblies and enrichment classes, including after school classes.

All of the programs and services offered by Discovery Charter School would be available to students in the Home School Class, including GATE, special education, “RTI” interventions, and ELL classes.

Discovery Charter Schools seeks to establish a home school support program located at Discovery II. Current and prospective families have encouraged us to start this program, and as a parent participation school we feel this will support our mission of parent involvement in education, and provide a unique alternative to parents exploring this option.

Program Outline:

• Discovery would support up to 25 home-schooled students in the “Home School Program”. This would be a “blended program” with a mix of on-site instruction and home-based instruction at Discovery II.

• Parents in the program at Discovery II would be invited to aide in the classroom on the days when the students are at school, for one to two hours each week.

• A teacher at Discovery II would provide direct services to these students and their parents.

• As written above, students enrolled in this program at Discovery II would attend school one or two days each week, and complete their school week with independent educational experiences off campus.
• On the days when they're not attending class onsite, students enrolled in this program would continue to have access to site-based programs and events, including elective and enrichment classes, assemblies, field trips, after school classes, GATE activities, social events, middle school dances, and after school sports.

• Parents in this program would be invited to all parent education and trainings, including Positive Discipline classes. Parents will also have access to the teachers' professional library.

• Parents would also be invited to attend professional development for teachers, including training in Thinking Maps, Reggio Emilia, Readers and Writers Workshop, Positive Discipline in the Classroom, and any other relevant trainings.

• The teacher overseeing this program would work with parents to provide the Discovery philosophy in a home school environment, including Project Based Learning, integrating fields trips with instruction, Whole Child approaches, and thematic instruction.

• This program would be available to students in grades 1st through 8th.

• The teachers and site directors (principals) would ensure that all contracts and program requirements are met.

• Students and families in the home school program would be afforded all of the services and supports (i.e. ELL and Special Education) given to all of our students.

Board Approved Policy

The following written policies have been adopted by the Board for implementation at the Charter School:

1. Students who wish to enroll in this program would apply through the regular lotteries at each school, with the spaces allocated as if it was a separate grade level. Parents would apply specifically for the home school program and be granted admission on a space available basis, following the same admission priority criteria as we use for all other students (i.e. priority for San Jose Unified residents). If more than 25 students apply, one lottery for all students in grades TK through eighth will be held to determine enrollment.

2. For pupils in all grade levels offered by the School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be 30 school days.

3. When any pupil fails to complete five or more assignments during any period of 60 school days, the Director or his or her designee, along with the Home School Class teacher, shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to
this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. This record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

4. A current written agreement shall be maintained and on file for each independent study pupil, including but not limited to, all of the following:

♦ The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.

♦ The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.

♦ The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the pupil.

♦ A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.

♦ The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.

♦ Measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.

♦ The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

♦ Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.

5. Discovery Charter Schools shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter School's Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.
6. The Executive Director shall establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

Narrative Description of Home School / Independent Study Program

Traditionally, homeschool programs, use district textbooks and hire a dedicated homeschool teacher to meet monthly with participating families at which time work is checked, questions are answered and learning targets are made for the month to come. In some larger districts when students reach middle school they are given the option of signing up for elective classes at one of the schools in the district. If there is space they are also invited to take classes that parents don’t feel equipped to teach or that require lab materials. In smaller schools parents often hire teachers to work with their students. In these situations classes are small and students have an opportunity to both get help and interact with other homeschool students. Our program is designed to blend the benefits of the unique environment of home study with the opportunity for students to participate in a group learning experience as well as take advantage of the school’s extracurricular activities. This will provide a strong educational program in line with our unique educational philosophy.

The Discovery philosophy relies heavily on the idea that students should have an active role in determining the curriculum through which they will learn the skills needed to be both critical thinkers and develop into lifelong learners. We encourage them to remain creative in their thinking and curious about the world around them. We provide them with multiple opportunities to express their learning both orally and in writing with the goal of having them grow into active members of a democratic society. In keeping with our philosophy students participating in our homeschool program will also determine the content of their learning. Some topics will be decided on an individual basis and some as a homeschool learning community. We will likewise present them with opportunities to share their learning with others. Parents will be trained in strategies for providing the skills needed for their children to be successful.

Materials

How will this all come about? As with traditional programs, each participating family will be required to meet with the homeschool teacher on a monthly basis at which time they will together outline the coming month’s assignments. This time will also be used for parents, and where appropriate children, to have an opportunity to talk about any concerns that came up during the month, any questions they might have, any exciting discoveries they would like to share and in general reflect on the month’s activities. The teacher will provide parents with curriculum materials and teaching strategies needed for them to help students successfully complete their agreed upon assignments. This can be in the form of textbooks, websites, tradebooks, and manipulatives. We use TERC Investigations and CPM (College Preparatory Math) for math, History Alive for social studies, literature study books for language arts and Gems science books. Although our teachers have access to content-specific materials, it is our goal to have the majority of student learning be both integrated and project-based.

Assessment
Assessment, in addition to the state test that students will take at school, will be by portfolio. Portfolios will contain benchmark assessments used by our school in reading, writing and math (provided by textbook companies or teacher created) as well as projects selected by the students that they feel represent their best efforts. The projects will involve the integration of multiple subject areas and will be collected over the course of the year. Four times a year students will review their portfolios, reflect on their growth, and set goals for themselves.

**Time At School**

In addition to the homeschool component children will be invited to spend one to two days each week at school working together on projects of their choice. Two levels will be offered: one for first through fourth grade students, the second for fifth through eighth grade students. During this time students will participate in a regular school day including a PE period, and recess and lunch breaks with the other students. Specific curriculum will be determined by the students in conjunction with the homeschool teacher and will focus on giving students an opportunity to work in groups on projects of interest to them as well as having an opportunity to share what they are learning at home.

**Parent Involvement**

There are three particularly exciting aspects of our plan: involving parents, involving children and having a consistent teacher who works as a “co-teacher” with parents and students. For parents, one of the most difficult aspects of teaching at home is having a collection of strategies and materials that will work most effectively to meet their child’s intended goals. The program we are proposing offers parents help with this in multiple ways. First it provides parents with an opportunity to meet on a monthly basis, for an extended period of time, directly with a teacher familiar with their child. Second, as a parent participation school, parents will be given the opportunity to work a shift during the day(s) their children are in school, providing them with an opportunity to observe a variety of teaching techniques they might use at home. Third, they will be invited to attend monthly evening parent meetings where there will be instruction in teaching strategies reflective of our philosophy, as well as an opportunity to meet and work with other families in the program. Lastly, parents will be invited to attend all professional development for the Discovery staff, or Discovery’s parent education group. Following along with our philosophy parents would be key in selecting those areas where they would most appreciate guidance.

**Opportunities For Students**

A second exciting area involves the opportunities that would be available to homeschooled students. In addition to the activities they would be planning at their weekly meetings, they would be invited to participate in afterschool classes offered at Discovery 2, they will be invited to attend field trips including overnights planned at their grade level. When the school has guest performers or special programs they will likewise be invited to participate. These will include all parent-planned events for families as well as all school events such as author events, “Box City”, “Laps for Learning” and the Harvest Festival.

**Opportunities For Teachers**

Lastly, the idea of a blended homeschool program presents a unique opportunity for teachers. In most homeschool programs the teacher experiences the child only through the eyes of the parents. Our blended homeschool idea offers the teacher an opportunity to work closely with each family as well as being able to
develop relationships with their students. Having an opportunity to work with our homeschoolers allows us to become a more knowledgeable and potentially helpful participant in their education.

Master Agreement for Independent Study

Student Name: ___________________________ Grade: _____ Age: _____ D.O.B.: _____________________________

Street: _____________________________ City: __________________ Zip: _____________________________

Parent(s) Name: ___________________________ Email Address: _____________________________

Phone: ______________________ Quarter: ______ Entry Date: ___________ Exit Date: ___________

Objective: This agreement is to enable the student to successfully reach the objectives and complete the assignments identified on the Assignment Form that will be a part of this Agreement. The student will complete assignments as they are assigned by the Discovery Charter School teacher.

Methods of Study will be hands-on activities, projects, textbooks, online resources, field trips, manipulatives or others listed on the Assignment form that are developmentally appropriate to the student’s understanding. The student will also be provided with teacher support, supplemental curriculum, computer programs or other resources appropriate for successful completion of the assignments. Non-consumables will be returned to the school at the end of the year. Home school students may choose to participate in electives and other Discovery community activities.

Assignments and reporting: Parents and students must participate in regular meetings with the teacher in person, at least once every 20 school days, at the time and place indicated on the Assignment form or as otherwise arranged. This meeting is in addition to the student’s attendance at school, but may be arranged before or after school on days the student attends class at Discovery II. Assignments will be presented at each meeting. Assignments must be completed unless changes are arranged with the teacher. Passing is based on mastery of learning as determined by evaluating the completed assignments.

Other policies and procedures: The Discovery Charter Home School program is a team effort between parent, student, and teacher working together toward a successful learning process. Each has a distinct role:

- The parent serves as the instructor, teaching, overseeing and documenting daily progress.
- The parent must be available for helping the student to achieve the learning objectives.
- The student is responsible to do the work and to communicate with the team.
- The teacher serves to support, guide, keep records, and assure the integrity of the work.

School equipment and materials must be properly cared for and returned when requested.

The parent is responsible for Daily Attendance Records for the days the student is home schooled, including review of student work and initialing the day’s activities on the Attendance Record. Only list days indicated on the Academic Calendar (reverse side of attendance record), and circle each subject in which work was
completed for each day. Work turned in must match the subjects and dates indicated. Assignment Forms will be completed at the meetings.

Honesty and a sense of trust are essential between all members of the team. The teacher will assume that all work is a student’s own, not that of a parent, other person, or resource. If such sources are used, written acknowledgement must be given.

**Causes of dismissal/probation:** Evaluation regarding continued enrollment will be made by the Discovery Director or Executive Director if any of the following are found:

- Two missed meetings or failure to reschedule appointments within the 20 day period.
- Student fails to complete 95% of assignments for two (2) months.
- Failing to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

**Voluntary Statement:** Participating in the Discovery Charter Home School program is a continuously voluntary educational alternative. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, an alternative classroom has been offered and is available at all times.

**Signatures:** Parent/guardian signature confers permission for independent study as specified in this agreement.

I have read both pages of this agreement and hereby agree to the conditions set forth within.

Parent/Guardian signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________
Student signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________
Teacher signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

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**Certification:**

Possible I.S. attendance days: ______
Earned I.S. attendance days: ______
Total attendance days: __________

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<td>Math</td>
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<td>Social Studies</td>
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Science

Overall work has been assessed as ________________.

Key: 5-Superior, 4-strong progress, 3-expected progress, 2-slow progress, 1-no progress

Home School Attendance Sheet
2015-16

Student Name: ____________________ Grade: _____

Directions: Please complete this form daily. Circle any and all subjects the student worked on during that day and initial in the box provided. Please use comment line for any notes, if desired. If no schoolwork was completed, please check the appropriate box.

NOTE: Please do not include holidays or weekends on this record sheet. Only schoolwork completed on official school days, shown on the Academic Calendar on the reverse side of this sheet, will count toward student attendance.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Parent Initials</th>
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V. Educational Philosophy and Program - 30 - Discovery Charter School II
# Home School Assignment Form

**2015-16**

Today’s date: 

Student Name: 

Grade: 

This Assignment Form is in addition to the Master Agreement. Turn in this form with completed assignments as requested on the next appointment date.

**NEXT APPOINTMENT:** Date: 

Time: 

Location:

Projected home school days this period: 

Teacher Signature: 

Date:

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<td>SOCIAL STUDIES</td>
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<td>SCIENCE</td>
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<td>P.E.</td>
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<td>LANGUAGE ARTS</td>
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</table>

Parent/Guardian signature: 

Date: 

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V. Educational Philosophy and Program

- 31 -

Discovery Charter School II
I certify that the assigned work was completed by my child on the dates listed above or on the attached Record Sheet.

Parent Signature: ___________________________ Date: _______________________ 

Teacher Certification: My signature and the date on the work product are evidence that I, as the assigned supervising teacher, have personally evaluated the pupil’s work for both academic and apportionment credit.

I.S. days earned _____ Teacher signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

The school work attached represents independent study attendance credit for the period indicated.