Dear SCCOE,

On several occasions SCCOE has stated that it does not approve of the geographic preference at Bullis Charter School ("BCS"), which gives priority to students from Los Altos Hills. I am writing to ask that you act upon your words tonight and vote to immediately remove the geographic preference from BCS rather than allow it to extend for another five years.

This issue is coming before you because of BCS has preliminarily agreed with LASD to remove the geographic preference over five years. I ask that you do not let this preliminary agreement affect your stance on removal of the geographic preference. SCCOE should act in a principled manner that is independent of agreements between separate parties. In fact, the parties recognized that your board may not approve the five year extension of the geographic “preference” and they drafted the term sheet to Paragraph 4A to be severed from the term sheet while all other terms, including dismissal of existing litigation remain in effect. Extension of the geographic preference for another five years is not in the best interests of students, nor is acquiescence with an agreement between separate parties consistent with SCCOE’s responsibility for oversight of charter schools. Thus, SCCOE should do what it has repeatedly said is proper and SCCOE should require that BCS immediately remove the geographic preference.

If SCCOE votes to continue to the geographic preference at BCS for another five years, I ask that SCCOE take action to administer the BCS admission process and lottery in a manner that does not discriminate against prospective students. There are two facets of discrimination against prospective students that SCCOE needs to address. The first is a selective admission process - one for students and siblings from the “preferred” geography, and one for everyone else. The second is BCS’s continued requests for driver’s licenses and passports that would “likely deter, if not prohibit” students from participating in the lottery to attend BCS. Even today, after receiving a Notice of Violation from SCCOE, BCS does not make its school application publicly available and parents that do not have driver’s licenses or passports are requested to contact the office “to discuss your situation.” http://www.bullischarterschool.com/registrationchecklist. This “discussion” with BCS occurs prior to entry into the lottery and a deterrent effect occurs even if the actual documentation is not collected until after successful admission. The result is an admission and process that is not open to the public and a lottery that cannot be verified as “public and random” (with or without at geographic preference). I request that SCCOE address this deterrent affect by requiring BCS to makes its admission process, including its application forms and requirements open to the public. I further request that SCCOE adopt policies to require that all charter schools approved by SCCOE use an accredited third party to operate their lottery in a manner that can be verified as “public and
random." SCCOE may further wish to select the third party to instill public confidence in its oversight and to avoid discrimination against prospective students in charter schools within its county.

Tonight SCCOE has the opportunity to take a leadership role and restore faith in its oversight of charter schools in the county. Please vote tonight to immediately remove the geographic preference from BCS. Please also take action to administer admissions processes and lotteries for charter schools to avoid discrimination against prospective students within Santa Clara County.

Thank you,

Deborah Tolomeo

LASD Parent

Santa Clara County Resident