September 22, 2014

Mr. Leon Beauchman, Board of Education President
Santa Clara County Office of Education
1290 Ridder Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95131-2304

Re: Response to County Staff’s Concerns Regarding Spark’s Cash Flow

Dear Chair Beauchman and Members of the Board of Education,

When County staff met with Spark board members on September 12, staff acknowledged that the Board was impressed by Spark’s educational plan. However, staff questioned whether Spark would be able to deliver on its vision given that, at present, it has limited funds in the bank. Staff was concerned that Spark would not have the funds on hand to pay for expenses it would need incur prior to its receipt of state ADA funds. Staff indicated it would recommend denial to avoid the risk that the charter might fail for financial reasons, and urged Spark to raise at least $250,000 and preferably $1 million, and try again next year.

The petitioners respect Staff’s desire to ensure that charters have an adequate financial foundation. However, we believe our existing budget meets that test. A $250,000 to $1 million cushion in the bank is not necessary for Spark to succeed, and a requirement to raise such a sum before approval would threaten to extinguish Spark. Here’s why:

1. **Spark has excellent prospects for a Public Charter Schools Grant Program (PCSGP) award.** Spark applied for this grant in 2013 and received a score of 51, five points lower than the highest score possible. Before Spark’s petition was denied by the Sunnyvale School District, the California Department of Education (CDE) notified Spark that it was eligible to receive the grant. Although the CDE indicated initially that Spark could roll over its grant in its appeal to the County, we received notice after our appeal was filed that we would need to reapply. Spark has done so. If anything, Spark’s application is even stronger this time around. The CDE will give Spark its score on October 27, and will notify Spark if it was awarded the grant one to three weeks later. These funds must be used for one-time, startup costs incurred before the school opens, such as for books, instructional materials, teacher training, curriculum preparation, etc. The grant funds would be made available to the school quarterly on a prospective basis.

2. **There would be sufficient time for fundraising.** If its petition is approved by the Board on October 1, Spark will have ten months before its doors open-- three before it hires its principal and curriculum director, five before it enrolls students, and ten months before it begins paying teachers, purchasing supplies and equipment, and paying rent.
3. Approval would enable fundraising; denial would make it much more difficult to raise the sums County staff specified. An approved petition would empower Spark to raise funds from individuals and foundations. Would-be donors would have more confidence to invest in Spark. Several Spark founders approached their employers about donating to the charter school. The firms expressed a willingness to do so per their Corporate Matching policies or programs that support innovative K12 science, technology, engineering and math education programs, but only once the charter is approved and has 501(c)(3) status. Spark would file for 501(c)(3) status as soon as its petition is approved. Without approval, Spark is merely a concept. A denial, and the delay of yet another year, would diminish Spark’s credibility in the community.

4. Even if Spark is not awarded a PCSGP grant, the charter school can still move forward. In addition to raising funds, Spark has two avenues to borrow against its anticipated attendance-based money from the state to pay for costs incurred before those funds are received. It can apply for a California charter school revolving loan, or take advantage of a $800,000 line of credit proffered by from the Charter Asset Management Company.

If adopted by the Board, staff’s position would set a precedent. Few grassroots charters initiated by parents and educators of moderate means would be able to meet such a high financial bar before submitting a petition. Such a policy contravenes a major aim of the California legislature in establishing charter schools.

We acknowledge that public agencies must exercise reasonable caution as stewards of taxpayer resources. But, a primary purpose for the establishment of charters was to encourage innovation. Innovation does not come without risk. We think the real question before the Board is whether the benefits offered by Spark outweigh the risks.

In Spark’s case, the risks are minimal. Unlike two of the charters that the County staff pointed to that folded due to insufficient enrollment, Spark has demonstrated through the nearly 300 applications it received for the current school year, 2014-2015, that there is a clear demand for this type of educational choice in our community. Spark has a strong educational plan, as well as a credible, multi-prong financial strategy to address the cash-flow issues that County staff has raised.

If Spark is approved, Sunnyvale will gain an attractive educational choice for all students, including those whose parents cannot afford private schools or move to a higher-performing district. Approval would also provide Sunnyvale its first public K-8 school, a laboratory for innovation, and an incentive for improvement in a complacent school district.

For all these reasons, we urge the Board of Education to approve Spark’s charter.

Thank you for your consideration,

Spark Board of Directors
Alexandra Zdravkovic
Jane Lii
Christine Hernandez
Alyson Abrego
Laura Stuchinsky
Dear Members of the Board,

Despite what you may be thinking, I am NOT writing to you today to express gratitude for Spark's approval. What I want to say is independent of last night's outcome.

As a Spark founder, regardless of your vote last night, I want to express my tremendous respect for all seven of you for your impressive diligence, sophisticated insight, and your fundamental commitment to making a sound decision for all of the children in our community, whether that resulted in a "yes" or "no" vote. I really can't express how impressed I am. I have never been to any board our counsel meeting in which the members embarked on such a thoughtful decision process.

In sum, thank you for your quality service to our community.

As a parent and citizen, I want to thank all seven of you for restoring some faith in the system. Even if Spark had been denied, it was clear to our parents that your board regards its power as a privilege. Some of our parents grew up in communistic societies and have been rattled by what they've observed over the last few years. As a very welcome change to the tone of desperation and defeat, today we got an email from a parent who said "Now I feel like I'm living in America again!"

This sentiment expressed by this parent is NOT about winning approval for our charter. This is about due process, democracy, and even civil rights. If citizens can't affect change in their own communities, especially for the sake of their children, what's left?? Your board's integrity is the quality which has begun to heal the feeling of victimization for some of our families. So on behalf of them, I thank you—not for approval, but for your integrity.

Most sincerely,

Christine

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." —Mahatma Gandhi

Christine Hernandez

Oct 2
sent to the board. grace

On Tuesday, October 14, 2014 1:53 AM, Estevan Santiago <esantiag@stanford.edu> wrote:

Dear Santa Clara County School Board of Trustees,

My name is Estevan Santiago and I am a current senior at Stanford University. I am an alumnus of MHUSD public schools and wrote a letter to the Santa Clara County School Board of Trustees in regards to the introduction of new two new charter schools in Morgan Hill. Unfortunately, I am not able to voice my opinions at the Board meeting on October 15th, but my sentiments and viewpoints on the issue, as a hispanic, first-generation college student, who went through these public schools, are included in the attached letter. I hope that you and the Board have an opportunity to take some of these viewpoints into consideration in your discussion of the topic.

Best,
Estevan Santiago

--
Stanford University '15
B.A. Candidate I Human Biology
Candidate I Notation in Science Communication
esantiag@stanford.edu
408-205-4156
October 12, 2014

Dear Santa Clara County School Board of Trustees,

My name is Estevan Santiago and I am currently a senior at Stanford University. I am a former student of Paradise Valley Elementary, Barrett Elementary, Britton Middle School and Ann Sobrato High School – four extremely great public schools in the Morgan Hill Unified School District. I am writing in support of MHUSD public schools and to detail some of the incredible opportunities that it offers all students – regardless of race, income, or language barriers.

I am in my final year at Stanford, majoring in Human Biology and looking forward to attending medical school in two years. Stanford has been a rigorous and definite change from high school coursework; however, I believe that my education within MHUSD schools provided me with an excellent foundation upon which to build during my time in college. The teachers that I was enlightened by, the incredible student networks that I became a part of and the rich life experiences that I gained in these schools is something that I could not have received elsewhere.

As a first generation college student from a Hispanic background, getting to college wasn’t easy. It isn’t easy for anyone, regardless of where you come from. However, it is a fallacy that one needs to come from a charter or private school in order to be accepted into a university and succeed once there. However, this fallacy is widely believed as truth. Growing up, I heard from countless parents and peers that attending a private or charter school is really the only way to gain acceptance into college and prepare for the academic rigor that will be encountered once there. After having excellent experiences in both elementary school and middle school in MHUSD schools, I submitted an application to Valley Christian High School in San Jose, giving in to what others told me to do. However, after gaining a full scholarship to the school, I decided not to attend, instead opting to attend Ann Sobrato High School because I loved the diverse environment and opportunities for growth that it provides its students. I still think that this is amongst the best decisions I have ever made.

Throughout my time in MHUSD schools, I had incredible teachers that allowed me to develop an ability to think critically, analytically and creatively. My AP Biology teacher, Mrs. Rottenborn, instilled a love of biology within me through her creative teaching methods, my first grade teacher, Mrs. Sullivan, made the classroom a warm and comfortable place when I was terrified of going to school, my eighth grade history teacher, Mr. Bremis, made history come alive and gave it importance, my ASB teacher, Mrs. Carroll, helped me come out of my shell and inspired me to become the ASB President in my senior year – I could have an endless conversation about the great experiences that I had in the classroom. These skills that I gained really helped me once I
got to Stanford. I was able to come in focused, ask questions and readily face adversity. The teachers that I had were able to inspire me to challenge myself to become the best student and person that I can be.

I also think that public schooling afforded me the incredible opportunity of interacting with a population that is reminiscent of the highly diverse society that we reside in today. There were students whose parents were highly regarded doctors, bankers and lawyers, whilst others had parents that were unemployed or didn’t even graduate high school. There were students from all ethnic and religious backgrounds. Despite these differences, we all went to school together and found a way to look past these differences to get to know each other as individuals with varying, accepting viewpoints. I am not saying that this was easy – but it is a skill that everyone needs to develop in his or her lifetime. I learned how to integrate different viewpoints into a happy medium and provide experiences that appeal to a wide range of backgrounds and interests. These experiences were able to provide me with the appropriate skills needed to encounter diversity whilst in my work with a non-profit in South Africa this summer.

I believe in education for all students. Those who feel the need to attend a private or charter school to get a “leg up” are not taking the time or the effort to look around at the great opportunities and life skills that can be gained in public schooling. In the diverse society that we live in today, one cannot consistently surround themselves in a homogenous populace who shares their own backgrounds, language or viewpoints. Exposing oneself to different people and situations is the best way to learn about oneself and others. I truly believe that the experiences that I received at MHUSD schools led me to the place that I am today and I will always stand by this viewpoint.

In conclusion, I urge you all, the Santa Clara Board of Trustees, to rethink your viewpoints on MHUSD schools and the possibility of bringing in new charter schools to Morgan Hill. There are many other students, not just those who attend four-year universities, who would also say that the Morgan Hill public schools taught them the skills necessary to succeed in whatever they are now doing. As a Hispanic, middle-income, first generation college student, if MHUSD schools could help get me to Stanford, they can help many others accomplish their dreams as well, so long as one is willing to put in their fair-share of effort.

Thank you for reading.

Best,
Estevan Santiago
Senior, Stanford University
MHUSD Alumnus
This was sent to the board. Grace

On Thursday, October 16, 2014 7:22 PM, Nora Deeg <ndeeg@voicescharterschool.com> wrote:

To the members of the County Board of Education:

My name is Nora Deeg, and this is my third year teaching kindergarten at Voices. Previously I taught at an elementary school in San Jose Unified, so I have some perspective into both charter and traditional public schools. As was mentioned at Tuesday night's hearing, I hope we can avoid framing this as a debate of our teachers versus theirs, or charter school versus district schools. I simply want to call to your attention some structures at Voices that are unique to our school and that allow us to serve students with very high quality instruction:

We are a data-driven school. We measure students' mastery of state standards, and based on their performance, we analyze precisely what they still need to learn and use that information to plan lessons, small groups, and individual instruction. It just makes sense for teachers to adjust their teaching based on what students know and don't know. But not all schools are set up to allow teachers to utilize data so analytically. At Voices, teachers have hour-long data meetings, during the school day, three times every week. And three times a year, all teachers engage in a Result-Oriented Cycle of Inquiry, a three-day period of data analysis, reflection, and adjustment of upcoming instruction to best meet students' needs. We have a culture of data at our school: No excuses are made for outside factors or specific students. Our school not only allows, but encourages, us to be highly responsive to our individual students' needs.

As you consider your decision, I urge you to keep in mind the unique culture and systems at Voices that support teachers in leading our students to success.

Thank you.

--

Nora Deeg
Kindergarten teacher
Voices College-Bound Language Academy
Dear County Board Trustees,

Thank you for your time at the public hearing and your deliberations as you continue to wrestle with the decisions for the Voices and Navigator petitions in Morgan Hill.

Attached you will find two letters including data in support of the Morgan Hill Trustees decision to deny the petitions.

I understand that your decision is a difficult one. As a site principal, I thoroughly understand and even appreciate the urgency and pressure for school improvement and welcome any opportunity to show you the many ways that we are using that pressure productively. But I am also acutely aware that the structure, programs, and achievement of the petitioning charters are absolutely a step in the wrong direction.

Corporate charters are driven by a profit motive that has found a way to exploit the current system and hide behind the illusion of higher student achievement. Following the money from donors to petitioners, to campaign contributions, to profiteers is extremely revealing. The tens of thousands of dollars being poured into County and local School Board campaigns to support charter approvals speaks for itself.

The corporate model is not the future of public education and it will require the strength of committed leaders such as yourselves to ensure that our public schools remain the place where we all come together with a common purpose—Public education will cease to be equitable when it devolves into a series of "gated communities" all claiming to do a better job in a competitive business market place. Instead of community, we will have fear, anxiety, and the type of reactive parental maneuvering for perceived advantage that tears communities apart. I beg you not to do that to our community.

Sincerely,

Glen Webb, Educator and parent

here are a couple of excerpts from the attached. I encourage you to read them in their entirety.
There is no justifiable claim that the charters offer a stronger educational program. And perhaps more importantly, there is no evidence that segregation of high performing students makes them academically stronger, or that high performing students enrolled with the general student population are hampered by the presence of lower performing students. In fact, the data supports just the opposite...that we all do better together. Those conclusions may be surprising in the face of strongly held opinions, personal perceptions or marketing claims, but they are actually quite reassuring to our future as a community. We are not only dependent on each other, but the data demonstrates that we are indeed stronger together.

More so than spurring school improvement, the net result of the State’s accountability system has been to fuel a massive business venture that is redistributing wealth and property values by playing on parental fears—the rich get richer through quasi privatization at the expense of our poorest and most easily swayed. And even more distasteful, once opened, such schools demonstrate a trend toward increasingly exclusive enrollment abandoning the needy students they claimed to serve. Disadvantaged students are not being better served by these reforms; our students and communities are being segregated and used for political and monetary ends.

Glen Webb
Principal, Britton Middle School
80 W. Central, Morgan Hill CA 95037
(408) 201-6160  Fax: (408) 201-6175
webbgl@mhusd.org
Innovate Schools is a school reform organization staffed and directed primarily by non-educator career political activists. This month, they will release their annual report of the 30 most persistently low-performing Bay Area schools. The purpose of this report is to identify neighborhood markets to target for charter school expansion campaigns, a strategy which they claim will lead to higher student achievement. In fact, a growing body of data shows that charter school chains do not promote higher student achievement; instead, they produce higher school scores by enrolling already high performing students skimmed from the wider public school audience—and often at the expense of these students who then actually experience lower individual achievement than their counterparts who remain in comprehensive public schools. Such self-labeled school innovators are positioned to make millions and maneuver for political power as they continue to fuel misperceptions and market their programs based on inherently unreliable API data reported by the State.

To understand how this can be, it is necessary to understand student achievement data. Innovate Schools, and other school ranking groups, have all based their conclusions upon the State-produced and published Academic Performance Index and Similar Schools reports. Those accountability measures have often been criticized and are in fact currently suspended by the State. Yet myriad organizations such as “Great Schools,” “Zillow”, “School Digger” and certainly Innovate Schools continue to use the API’s to justify their far reaching conclusions.

Students are recruited, public schools labeled, property values influenced, jobs shuffled, charter chains marketed, educational funding diverted, innovative school developers enriched, and students segregated under the attractive banner of choice—all of this as a result of the mass misconception that a school’s API score is a reliable measure of its educational program and success at educating students. The magnitude of this travesty of fairness has escaped the general public, partly out of naïve trust and partly out of the aura of objectivity that numerical statistics seem to have.
And therein lays the problem. The API is a single number that represents a school and becomes the basis for rankings and public perceptions. And yet the API does not meet even the most lenient criteria required to demonstrate statistical reliability. If the API were itself presented for publishing, even the most desperate professional journals would refuse it an audience. And that is not just a strongly held opinion, here are the facts:

Public schools are assigned and API score and ranked 1 to 10 on a list of similar schools. When a typical list of 100 similar schools is analyzed, a school’s overall API rank will differ from the API of any of the school’s subgroups. But one would hope that the subgroup scores would mirror the overall API as the subgroup scores more closely represent actual students. That is not to say that subgroup scores will be the same, but rather the relative range and distribution of subgroup scores should be similar to overall API’s if the overall API is to have reliability. The statistical measure is “correlation” and the standards for correlation values (which run from zero to one) are a value of 0.6 to demonstrate a possible relationship and 0.8 to show a relationship strong enough to support research or decision making. So, here are some actual correlation values determined from a list of 100 similar schools taken directly from the State’s API website:

Correlation Values for:
- School API to Black student API: .64
- School API to American Indian: .35
- School API to Asian: .53
- School API to Filipino: .51
- School API to Hispanic: .78
- School API to Pacific Islanders: .42
- School API to White Students: .58
- Average: .56

The aggregate school API does not reliably reflect the actual achievement, distribution, or range of any of the major subgroups of students which make it up. In fact, when all
possible combinations of correlations between reported API and any subgroup API's are examined, the highest value is:

School API to SED student API: 0.85
(SED is Socio-Economically Disadvantaged)

The conclusion is undeniable: **The API is not a reliable measure of student achievement. It is instead a reliable measure of the socio-economic status of the students in a school.**

And yet there are example schools, as groups such as “Innovate Schools” will be anxious to highlight in their report, that have had success at increasing the achievement level of students from struggling subgroups: mainly Latino, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged, and English Learners. Or have they? Here is where the API gamesmanship becomes even more sophisticated and hidden from public view.

The California Department of Education site does not disaggregate data to student level data. Data is reported only by major subgroups and typically only one subgroup identifier at a time. This hides the facts that within every low performing subgroup there are still many high performing individuals and that those individuals when grouped together into a single school would produce a very high school score. For example a researcher could determine the number of Latino students in a school and could determine the number of SED students in a school, but could not directly learn the number of Latino students who are themselves also SED and who are also English Learners, and who are English learners with various initial fluency levels, and have parents with college degrees and so on. And yet, those detailed variables have extremely strong predictive values for student achievement. So strong in fact, that if a school was formed out of Latino English Learners who were socio-economically disadvantaged but had initial English fluency CELDT scores of 4 or 5 and college-educated parents, the school would be statistically predisposed to have an API over 900 before they even held a class.
And that is exactly what shows in the data of the petitioning charter schools. Because of their small size and homogenous make-up of students, it is possible to determine the multi-variable composition of their demographics. For a researcher with access to student level data within the Morgan Hill Unified School District, it is possible to match demographics to groups of similar students from the much more diverse district audience for fair comparisons—something that the public or Innovate Schools cannot do.

Fairly matched comparisons yield startling results which directly contradict the strong perceptions promoted by the State API reports. For example: the exclusive group of initially nearly fluent English Language Learners at Navigator have an API of 948 while the diverse group of English Language Learners in the Morgan Hill Unified School District have an API of 713. But when English Learners in Morgan Hill Unified are compared to Navigator on the basis of similar initial fluency levels, Morgan Hill scores a 959. Likewise, when highly regarded Morgan Hill Charter School is compared to other Morgan Hill elementary schools on the basis of matched demographics, it drops from first place to last and is below all district program improvement schools in similar student achievement even though their school API shows it as highest.

And yet, the public does not get to see that comparison, the State does not report it, and charter schools don’t want anybody to know it. Instead, self-labeled school innovators seeking to make millions or maneuver for political power continue to fuel the misperceptions and market their programs based on the inherently unreliable API data reported by the State. More so than spurring school improvement, the net result of the State’s accountability system has been to fuel a massive business venture that is redistributing wealth and property values by playing on parental fears—the rich get richer through quasi privatization at the expense of our poorest and most easily swayed. And even more distasteful, once opened, such schools demonstrate a trend toward increasingly exclusive enrollment abandoning the needy students they claimed to serve. Disadvantaged students are not being better served by these reforms; our students and communities are being segregated and used for political and monetary ends.
At the very least, we should keep all of this in mind when groups with a vested interest such as “Innovate Schools” release reports that are in reality marketing tools. We should also remember this when we evaluate candidates for School Boards or when we ourselves gain office and participate in school decision making opportunities regarding Charter Schools.

If all of this angers you just a bit, perhaps you would like to write to your representatives to demand fair changes in the way the State reports school achievement data—such as reporting only disaggregated data rather than trying to represent a school with a single misleading and fear inducing score.

Morgan Hill Educational Leaders.

(See supporting data below)
Charter School Achievement Data

Section 1: Navigator Gilroy Prep English Language Learner Data

Overall Subgroup API: Navigator: 948  
Morgan Hill Unified: 713

ELL student enrollment percentages by INITIAL (Before substantial instruction) CELDT level (CA English Language Development Test—5 is advanced, 1 is beginner). As you can see, Navigator enrolls ELL students who are already near fluent in English and does not enroll any beginners (levels 1 or 2) in grades 1 and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial CELDT</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nav</td>
<td>MHU</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic performance index of Morgan Hill Unified students by CELDT level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CELDT Level</th>
<th>MHUSD API</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grades 2-3 to match Nav. similar students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, CELDT levels 4 and 5 are already high performing students in the Morgan Hill Unified School District.

Comparison of similar students—similar proportions of students based on initial CELDT scores produces a totally different picture:

Similar Student API: Navigator: 948  
Morgan Hill Unified: 959

Annual reclassification rates of English Language Learners to English Fluent—Leaving students classified as ELL after reaching fluency will artificially inflate a subgroup score.

State of California 12.2%
County of Santa Clara 14.8%
Morgan Hill Unified School District 22%
Navigator Gilroy Prep 0
Section 2: Voices Academy Enrollment Trends

Voices Enrollment percentages:

Students with parents who did not graduate from high school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students with parents who are college graduates or have a post-grad degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Female Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Special Education Enrollment (Disabled CST, and CMA test takers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>14.3 Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.4 MHUSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voices does not enroll any severely disabled students who take the CAPA.

As you can see, the first classes to start at Voices that have now progressed to 6th grade have a higher percentage of students with parents that did not graduate high school, a lower percentage of students with college educated parents, a balanced ratio of females and students with disabilities. Conversely, the more recent classes have moved toward students from subgroups that are higher performing in MHUSD and the State already including an almost 2:1 ratio of females, extremely low numbers of disabled students, and an 18 fold increase in students with college educated parents. This shows a strong trend of increasing exclusivity in Voices enrollment. State and District wide, there is over a 200 point difference in the API between students with college-educated parents compared to non-high school graduates, females outscore males and special education student enrollment can affect a school's API greatly. These shifting enrollment practices would predict a growth in Voices' API independent of their instructional program. For the 5 year interval, the expected growth would be over 170 points due to these enrollment shifts alone. The actual 5 year interval growth is 126 points. Although Voices has experienced growth, they have actually fallen short of the anticipated growth due to shifting enrollment demographics indicating that their actual program is weaker than Morgan Hill Unified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API Growth</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-31</td>
<td>+98</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>+30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 126

Predicted API growth based on similar MHUSD students and actual scores: 170
Section 3: Enrollment demographics and Student Achievement at Morgan Hill Charter School

Morgan Hill Charter School is highly segregated and their enrollment demographics shown below do not represent the demographics in the district at large. Shown below is the percentage enrollment at MH Charter versus the overall district enrollment, as well as the high and low range values among all schools for that demographic group. Morgan Hill Charter is outside of the high to low range in every group shown. This renders achievement comparisons unreliable.

![Bar chart showing enrollment demographics]

However, Morgan Hill Charter School does have 3 statistically significant demographic groups with counterparts in our neighborhood schools that allow for a reliable comparison:

- Non Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED) white students
- Students with parents who have a college or advanced degree
- Latino students who are non SED, Non-ELL and have parents with college degrees.

Group 1: Non-SED White Students
Although MHCS ranks tied for first in overall API, a direct comparison of like students shows that their API ranks last below program improvement schools* for this subgroup.

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<td>943</td>
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Nordstrom (Nord), Paradise (Para), San Martin Gwinn (SMG), El Toro (E.T), P.A.Walsh (PAW), and Morgan Hill Charter (MHCS)

Group 2: Students with parents who have college or advanced degrees
This data shows that Morgan Hill Unified similar students outperform Morgan Hill Charter School on 9 of 14 grade level standardized tests. These test scores yield an API of 983 for Morgan Hill Unified and 946 for Morgan Hill Charter School for this subgroup.

- Students with parents with advanced degrees (CST scaled scores)

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Group 3: Non SED, Non ELL Latino Students with parents with college degrees. Morgan Hill Unified like students outperform MHCS students 6 to 2 on reported CST exams. These test results yield API values of 886 for MHUSD and 862 for MH Charter School for this subgroup.

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*Score not reported as group size not greater than 10
Good evening, Trustees, Superintendent, staff and members of our community. We're here tonight to provide input on the charter petitions for Voices Academy and Navigator Prep as well as to provide background on student achievement data in charter schools in general. As educational leaders, we commend our community for their unwavering commitment to secure the very best in educational opportunities for our children--we are also acutely aware of our role as professional educators to ensure that all choices are truly of the quality that our community deserves.

Although charter petitions address a number of issues from governance to finance, it is really the matter of student achievement that peaks the interest of the public and drives the desire for choice. But to accurately measure and compare student achievement between schools, it is necessary to disaggregate data to a degree which surpasses the access and expertise of the average parent. That leaves our parents in a real dilemma, understandably wanting the very best for their children, but vulnerable to misleading student achievement information.

Having undertaken extensive analysis of student achievement data, as this community's educational leaders, we can report with absolute certainty that the pending charter petitions do not offer a level of student achievement that exceeds what is already available to our students in our neighborhood schools...including those neighborhood schools that have been labeled as "low performing schools" under the State's currently suspended accountability system.
That conclusion may seem unlikely to many who have looked at such general measurements as school ranking and academic performance indexes; however, it is absolutely true. The overall school performance of the petitioning charter schools can be attributed to their exclusive enrollment of already high achieving students from low performing subgroups. Moreover, those high performing students typically do worse in the charter schools on an individual basis even though their combined scores yield a higher overall school score. In effect, charter schools sacrifice individual achievement in return for the valuable marketing label of being high performing schools and accomplish that deceptive status at the cost of segregating students.

That is quite an indictment, but not one that we make lightly or are unprepared to explain. So for the purpose of demonstrating to our community the depth of analysis necessary to obtain fair school performance comparisons as well as to help inform the Board of the actual level of student achievement yielded by the educational programs of the petitioners, we will take you through a few of the highlights of our research.

One of Navigator Prep’s student achievement claims is that they close the achievement gap for English Language learners. However, analysis of the English Language Learner enrollment at Navigator reveals an explanation for high achievement that is independent of Navigator’s instructional program. Navigator’s incoming ELL students are already near fluent in English at the point of enrollment as indicated by their initial CELDT scores. And yet, when similar students are selected from the wider audience of Morgan Hill Unified ELL students for a fair comparison, the Morgan Hill
Unified students outperform Navigator Prep. Further compounding a false appearance of high achievement among their ELL students, Navigator also has an exceptionally low rate of reclassifying their ELL students as Fluent as they would be in Morgan Hill Unified which has a very high reclassification rate. By leaving the high achieving students classified as ELL, it inflates their subgroup score making their comparison claims for closing the achievement gap invalid. (Handout section 1)

Voices Academy displays a trend of increasingly exclusive enrollment over time as well as the impact of other often overlooked but extremely significant subgroup factors. Although Voices claims a high number of disadvantaged students, like Navigator, within those subgroups they have enrolled an increasing number of already high-performing students. Since opening, by class the ratio of students with college educated parents to non-high school graduates has increased 18 fold, female to male enrollment is approaching 2 to 1 and students with disabilities are extremely under-enrolled. Although at first glance, Voices appears to have produced impressive API growth, in reality, their shifts towards more exclusive enrollment demographics should have produced a much larger growth. Voices has fallen short of expected achievement growth as determined by the performance of similar Morgan Hill Unified students. (Handout section 2).

Exclusive enrollment trends leading to outright segregation is one of the major criticisms of charters in general. It is clear that both Navigator and Voices have established trends of selective enrollment, whether through design or self-selection. It is likewise clear that the enrollment process of a
random lottery does little to ensure that charter schools reflect the community's overall student population which in turn skews aggregate student achievement data to the Charter school's advantage. To provide our best glimpse of how these trends can play out in the future of approved charters, we need only look at our existing Morgan Hill Charter School. The enrollment at Morgan Hill Charter School is out of the range of every Morgan Hill Unified school in every major subgroup giving it a grossly inflated advantage in student achievement scores. In fact, so inflated that when similar students in our neighborhood schools are disaggregated for a fair comparison, Morgan Hill Charter School drops from first to last in student achievement among our elementary schools. That means that student for student, Morgan Hill Charter School is being outperformed by even those elementary schools that are in program improvement status and have been labeled as low performing. (Handout section 3).

The examples provided and shown in detail in the handout exemplify the misleading nature of summative school wide achievement data as formerly reported by the State. It is important to remember that achievement scores and API's are currently suspended because the assessment model has changed, and that only by disaggregating data such as has been shown in the examples can fair and reliable comparisons that truly reflect a school's educational program be made. In the quest to have the best for their kids, parents must not be deceived and certainly not fearful that students are somehow being shortchanged in our neighborhood schools. The data shows that Morgan Hill Unified students are outperforming charters and that the diversity in our schools does not hinder achievement.
Conversely, the segregation displayed by our existing charter school is so extreme that it places our district and trustees in a very difficult position fraught with irony between conflicting laws, parent choice, and their responsibility to ensure quality education. Some parents clearly want new charter school options, but as you've seen, they underperform even our program improvement schools. Existing charter laws promote de-facto segregation, and yet anti-segregation laws forbid the use of public funds to support that practice. To conclude that charter school enrollment is vulnerable to legal challenges based on segregation is not only an understatement; de-facto segregation is certainly not the position that our local Board would like to find itself defending as an unintended consequence of approving charter petitions. And yet, the existing charter school in our community provides the best glimpse into the future for the end game of the decisions facing us now.

In conclusion, you have seen that alleged high student achievement marketed by the petitioning charter schools falls short of what students already attain in our existing neighborhood schools. **There is no justifiable claim that the charters offer a stronger educational program.** And perhaps more importantly, there is no evidence that segregation of high performing students makes them academically stronger, or that high performing students enrolled with the general student population are hampered by the presence of lower performing students. In fact, the data supports just the opposite...that we all do better together.

Those conclusions may be surprising in the face of strongly held opinions, personal perceptions or marketing claims, but they are actually quite
reassuring to our future as a community. We are not only dependent on each other, but the data demonstrates that we are indeed stronger together. The best choice for students as well as for our community is to say "no" to these petitions and "no" to the segregation that they promote and to do so with the clear conscience that our neighborhood schools are in fact already providing our students with a better education, more options, and a commitment to continuing growth for all.

Morgan Hill Educational Leaders

(See supporting Data below)
Charter School Achievement Data

Section 1: Navigator Gilroy Prep English Language Learner Data

Overall Subgroup API: Navigator: 948 Morgan Hill Unified: 713

ELL student enrollment percentages by INITIAL (Before substantial instruction) CELDT level (CA English Language Development Test—5 is advanced, 1 is beginner). As you can see, Navigator enrolls ELL students who are already near fluent in English and does not enroll any beginners (levels 1 or 2) in grades 1 and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial CELDT</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nav MHU State</td>
<td>Nav MHU State</td>
<td>Nav MHU State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 0 2</td>
<td>0 7 12</td>
<td>83 4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 4 7</td>
<td>75 25 24</td>
<td>0 17 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34 16 22</td>
<td>25 44 25</td>
<td>17 43 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38 28 30</td>
<td>0 19 13</td>
<td>0 29 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 52 39</td>
<td>0 5 26</td>
<td>0 6 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic performance index of Morgan Hill Unified students by CELDT level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CELDT Level</th>
<th>MHUSD API</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>770</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, CELDT levels 4 and 5 are already high performing students in the Morgan Hill Unified School District.

Comparison of similar students—similar proportions of students based on initial CELDT scores produces a totally different picture:

Similar Student API: Navigator: 948 Morgan Hill Unified: 959

Annual reclassification rates of English Language Learners to English Fluent—Leaving students classified as ELL after reaching fluency will artificially inflate a subgroup score.

State of California: 12.2%
County of Santa Clara: 14.8%
Morgan Hill Unified School District: 22%
Navigator Gilroy Prep: 0
Section 2: Voices Academy Enrollment Trends

Voices Enrollment percentages:

Students with parents who did not graduate from high school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students with parents who are college graduates or have a post-grad degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Female Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Special Education Enrollment (Disabled CST, and CMA test takers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>14.3 Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.4 MHUSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voices does not enroll any severely disabled students who take the CAPA

As you can see, the first classes to start at Voices that have now progressed to 6th grade have a higher percentage of students with parents that did not graduate high school, a lower percentage of students with college educated parents, a balanced ratio of females and students with disabilities. Conversely, the more recent classes have moved toward students from subgroups that are higher performing in MHUSD and the State already including an almost 2:1 ratio of females, extremely low numbers of disabled students, and an 18 fold increase in students with college educated parents. This shows a strong trend of increasing exclusivity in Voices enrollment. State and District wide, there is over a 200 point difference in the API between students with college-educated parents compared to non-high school graduates, females outscore males and special education student enrollment can affect a school’s API greatly. These shifting enrollment practices would predict a growth in Voices’ API independent of their instructional program. For the 5 year interval, the expected growth would be over 170 points due to these enrollment shifts alone. The actual 5 year interval growth is 126 points. Although Voices has experienced growth, they have actually fallen short of the anticipated growth due to shifting enrollment demographics indicating that their actual program is weaker than Morgan Hill Unified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<td>93</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>235</td>
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<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API Growth</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-31</td>
<td>+98</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>+30</td>
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Total: 126

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Dear Board Members,
I am currently a 5th grade teacher at Voices Bilingual College-Bound Language Academy in San Jose. It is my second year in the classroom and my second year at this school. In this short amount of time, I have been nothing less than impressed by the staff and students and I am truly privileged to work here.
They say that sometimes, there is something that you can't quite name, but you know it's there. I say this because it's difficult to put a name to what I see at Voices, because it's more than just an environment in which student's feel safe, respected and excited to learn. It's more than just an environment where parents feel comfortable asking questions. It's more than just culture and language and joy. It's a mutual understanding that everyone is working towards a greater goal and that together we rise and succeed.
Furthermore, Voices is not just a learning environment for students, but for teachers as well. I've learned an incredible amount in carefully planned professional development sessions designed to constantly challenge teachers to examine their instruction and adapt to students needs. The people who work at Voices are some of the most talented and passionate individuals I have ever had the privilege of working with and when both parents and students can see that, it's impossible not to become invested in the educational experience.
My favorite part about Voices is that students have the ability to think and speak in two language. While I'm sure you are already familiar with the benefits of dual-immersion, it's one thing to read research and another to see it in practice, everyday. It's a beautiful sight and an opportunity that should be extended to all.
Thank you for your time and I hope you consider voting to allow Voices Academy to expand in Morgan Hill.

Yours respectfully,
Elizabeth Garcia
5th Grade Teacher
Voices College Bound Language Academy
egarcia@voicescharterschool.com
(760) 646-5527

"To be a student and not a revolutionary is a contradiction" - Salvador Allende
sent to the board.

On Monday, October 20, 2014 1:46 PM, Melissa Alatorre <malatorre@scusd.net> wrote:

Dear SCCOE Board of Trustees,

Attached is a letter in support of the Morgan Hill Voices College-Bound Language Academy charter petition.
I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Melissa Alator Alnas
Principal
Scott Lane Elementary School
October 20, 2014

Dear Santa Clara County Trustees,

My name is Melissa Alatorre Alnas and I write this letter in support of Voices College-Bound Language Academy being accepted as a Charter school in Morgan Hill.

I am the Principal at Scott Lane Elementary School in Santa Clara Unified School District. I have been chosen by our district’s Superintendent to move our school forward, enhance teaching and learning, and ultimately, increase student achievement. Part of my work is a residency at Voices College-Bound Language Academy in San Jose. The site was chosen for my residency because of the amazing success of the school, the culture of academic rigor and the joyful environment that supports academic and social growth to some of the community’s most underserved students.

Every day of my residency has been filled with learning and making plans to take what Voices has in place back to the students and community of Scott Lane. The systems that are in place at Voices are strategically implemented to allow for maximizing teaching and learning time. Staff are expected to focus on data to drive instruction and are supported through high quality professional development sessions and embedded collaboration time. Every adult on Voices campus BELIEVES in every student...and they stop at nothing to ensure high levels of learning for ALL students.

I know that the Charter School petition that Voices submitted to MHUSD was denied on September 23, 2014. I am not sure of the reasons for the denial...but I urge you to approve the petition at the County level. You see, as a public school educator, I understand the sometimes tense relationships between school districts and public charter schools...but it is time to move beyond that. It is time to recognize that there are groups of educators in this world who come together to make a difference for children...have a very specific vision of what the school will be like and what the outcomes will be...and are very successful in their endeavors. Sometimes the groups come together in a public or private school setting...and sometimes the group comes together in a public charter school setting. Whatever the setting...the important part of this is that the group is coming together to ensure the success of students. Voices can bring a strength to Morgan Hill that is currently missing...academic and social outcomes for underserved students that are unmatched in the state...perhaps the nation.

Morgan Hill Unified School District has some great strengths...and so does Voices College-Bound Language Academy. I urge you to approve the Morgan Hill Voices Charter School petition. Thank you for your time. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Melissa Alatorre Alnas
Principal
Scott Lane Elementary School
Buenos tardes,

Mi nombre es Yolanda Barba-Saavedra soy residente de Morgan Hill tengo dos hijas una de siete y otra de tres años. La de siete va a la escuela de DIME en San Martin Gwin.

Yo fui a la audiencia de Octubre 15 a favor de VOICES y Navigator. Me gustaría aclarar la distancia que tengo entre Morgan Hill a la escuela de San Martin Gwin, manejando es de 20 minutos. Pero hay personas que vienen del sur de San Jose y a ellos les toma mas tiempo. Creo que la distancia si es algo importante para la localidad de una escuela ya que contando tiempo diario son 40 minutos manejando y también es mucho gasto de gasolina semanalmente. Algo que me ha moleestado mucho a mi y otras mamas fue que cuando el distrito inicialmente estaba tratando de abrir el programa nos prometieron que la escuela quedaría en Morgan Hill y que tendríamos nuestro propio edificio y nuestro propio Director. Entonces nos dijeron que estaríamos temporalmente en San Martin Gwin. Así paso el tiempo y nos decian que mas adelante nos cambiaran a Morgan Hill y de un momento a otro nos mandaron e-mails notificandonos que DIME quedaría permanentemente en San Martin Gwin. Lo cual esta noticia nos fue muy desagradable a mi y varios papas ya que nos cambiaron lo que nos habían prometido y nos sentimos engañados.

Soy una mamá muy interesada en la escuela de VOICES ya que tiene un programa de doble inmersión y un excelente nivel académico. Aunque mi hija esta en el programa San Martín DIME yo no estoy contenta con varias cosas que he visto y sabido de la escuela. Si ustedes nos niegan estas escuelas charter estamos considerando mi esposo y yo muy seriamente cambiar a nuestras niñas a escuelas privadas. Esto seria un sacrificio para mi familia económicamente.

Otro punto, hay familias que conozco que están muy interesadas en el programa de doble inmersión
pero no tienen los medios para llegar a la escuela de San Martin, sin embargo si entra VOICES a Morgan Hill a estas familias les fuera posible que sus niños fueran al programa de doble inmersión.

También Morgan Hill esta creciendo y hay casas por todos lados. Se tendrán que abrir más escuelas, y eso es un echo. Entonces porque negar la oportunidad a estas escuelas? Porque cerrarse a nuevos y buenos planes de estudio. Esto es una opción más para nuestros niños, como para los maestros de nuestra comunidad.

Apoyo profundamente a VOICES y Navigator espero nos den la oportunidad de tener estas escuelas en nuestra ciudad.

ATENTAMENTE,

Yolanda Barba-Saavedra
BILLINGUE READ BELOW FOR ENGLISH

Hola muy buenas tardes mi nombre es Elidia Alvarado madre líder de pact con santa catalina tengo 9 años viviendo en morgan hill tengo 2 hijos los cuales llevaba a la escuela jackson math and music en Morgan hill. mi hijo Edward estuvo en la escuela jackson de k-4 todo iba normal bueno al menos eso era lo que yo creía hasta que en el grado cuarto le toco una maestra que solo se quejaba de que no ponía atención y que no participaba en clase pero nunca hizo nada por mejorar ese comportamiento y cada ves que yo hablaba con ella y el estaba presente lo miraba con un coraje que a mi me dio tanta tristeza el ver eso. Yo vi en ella una actitud de racismo hacia el y no entendía porque esa clase de personas estudiaban para ser maestras con ese tipo de sentimientos hacia los demás. Es por eso que cuando vino pact a nuestra comunidad visitamos escuelas charter excelentes no lo pensé mas y tuve miedo que mi esposo se negara a aceptar mover a mi hijo de escuela pero gracias a dios y afortunadamente el estuvo de acuerdo conmigo al yo explicarle el comportamiento de la maestra de 4to y al ver los start test que el iba muy mal académicamente. Es difícil económicamente pero queremos que nuestro hijo Edward llegue a la universidad. Hoy va a la escuela ACE charter en san jose en 5 grado y he notado una gran diferencia. Su maestra es excelente se preocupa por cada uno de los estudiantes los motivan para ir a la universidad y poco a poco el esta progresando académicamente el esta muy feliz en su nueva escuela y eso me hace sentir feliz a mi. Mi otro hijo luis al cual también asistió de k-3 a la escuela jackson math and music su maestra de kinder diario se quejaba de que el no se podía sentar en el piso con los pies cruzados. Diario era lo mismo con ella en 2nd grado la maestra me dijo que lo veía distraído que le mandara hacer un examen de falta de atención e interactividad y decidi llevarlo a su pediatra confirmado el problema decidi ponerlo en medicamento trate tantos medicamentos diferentes y ninguno funcionaba. Hasta que la doctora decidió transferirlo a la psiquiatria para ver cual era el problema. En 3rd grado su maestra me dijo que el era flojo porque el hacia las cosas muy rápidas y que no ponía atención por lo mismo de su problema el estaba far below en los star test a mi eso me preocupaba el ya estaba en 3rd grado y muy mal académicamente al empezar el 4to grado en Jackson le toco con la misma maestra de mi otro hijo le pedí a la secretaria del director que si me podía cambiar a mi hijo con otra maestra porque no quería que mi hijo pasara lo mismo que Edward que lo vieran con aquella mirada de racismo y coraje para ese tiempo luis ya tenia año y medio en lista de espera en VOICES en San Jose. Al oír a la secretaria del director que no podía cambiar a mi hijo de maestra salí de la oficina enojado triste y pidiéndole a dios que me hablaran de la escuela charter al cual yo tenia a Luis en lista de espera. Gracias a Dios el me escucho una hora después recibí la llamada de la escuela voices academy diciéndome que luis tenia lugar para ir a esa escuela. El no quería porque no quería dejar de ver a sus amigos pero yo no quería dejarlo ahí en jackson y menos con esa maestra y con un director que no le importaba el nivel académico del niño latino. Y ahora el esta feliz en su nueva escuela voices academy cursando este año 4to grado y he decidido no darle mas medicamento para el déficit de atención su maestra es excelente lo motiva a echarle ganas lo ayuda a entender las cosas que el no entiende y lo esta ayudando de diferentes maneras para que se concentre en la clase. Sin duda estas escuelas y sus maestros son excelentes y así como mi hijo lo esta logrando yo quiero que ustedes aprobarán estas escuelas excelentes como voices academy y morgan hill prep para morgan hill y así otros niños como mis hijos
Hello good afternoon my name is Elidia Alvarado PACT parent leaders with St. Catherine's. I have been living in Morgan Hill for 9 years. I have 2 sons whom were attending Jackson math and music Academy in Morgan hill. My son Edward was in school Jackson from k-4 everything was normal at least that's what I thought until the fourth grade teacher told that my son was not paying attention and did not participate in class but she never did anything to improve that behavior in my son and every time I talked to her she would look at my son with a mean look and that made me really sad to see that she had a racist attitude towards him. I did not understand why that kind people studied to become teachers with that kind of feelings toward others. That's why when PACT came to our community and we visited excellent charter school I did not think twice and I was afraid that my husband would refuse to accept to move our son but thankfully and luckily he agreed with me when I explained the teacher behavior in his 4th grade class and seeing his start test demonstrated he was very low academically. It is difficult economically but we want our son Edward to go to a university and he now goes to the ACE charter school in san jose where I have noticed a big difference. His teacher is excellent she cares that each student is motivated to go to college and slowly is progressing academically. He is very happy in his new school and that makes me happy too. My other son Luis which also attended k-3 Jackson math and music academy, his kindergarten teacher complained that he could not sit on the floor with legs crossed. Then his 2nd grade teacher said she saw him distracted to send told me to get and exam of inattention and interactivity and I decided to take him to his pediatrician who confirmed the problem. I decided to try so many different medications and none worked. The doctor decided to transfer Luis to the psychiatrist to see what the problem was. In 3rd grade his teacher told me he was lazy because he finished his work really quickly and did not pay attention. He was far below basic in the star test, to me that was a concerned and he was in 3rd grade and doing very poorly academically. In fourth grade he would have started with the same teacher my oldest son had. I talked to the principal's secretary if I could move my child to another teacher because I did not want my son with the same experience Edward had with a that teacher that looked at him with racism. During this same time Luis had been on VOICES' waiting list for a year and a half in San Jose. Upon hearing the principal's secretary that I could not change my son's teacher I left the office angry sad and asking God to help me get my son into the charter school where I had Luis on the waiting list. God heard me and an hour later I received a call from VOICES Academy telling me Luis had been accepted. He didn't want to transfer because he loved his friends but I could not leave him in Jackson and especially with a teacher and a principal who did not care about the academic level of a Latino child. And now he's happy in his new school Voices Academy studying 4th grade and this year I decided not to give him more medication for attention deficit. His teacher is excellent motivates him to not give up helps you understand the things that he does not understand and this is helping him in different ways so that he can concentrate in class. There is no doubt these schools are excellent and I hope you approve both schools - VOICES and Morgan Hill prep so that other children with the same or different academic needs can still be on a pathway to the university.
Correspondence . . .

On Friday, October 17, 2014 3:55 PM, "eaguilar@voicescharterschool.com" <eaguilar@voicescharterschool.com> wrote:

To the members of the Santa Clara County Board of Education:

I spoke on Wednesday night at the Board meeting in favor of approving the Voices Academy petition for Morgan Hill. Our staff is hopeful for the chance to work with MHUSD in order to help all students. Attached is my speech on Voices' current collaboration efforts.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Aguilar

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Elizabeth Aguilar
Instructional Coach
Voices College-Bound Language Academy
Voices Academy embraces the opportunity to work with other schools and districts. Collaboration is key to the success our school, other schools and ultimately, the success of all students.

As educators, we know that we must set the example for lifelong learning. In our field, we especially welcome the opportunity to work with and learn from others. As educators, we must continue to expand our knowledge on pedagogy in order to improve our own practice and the lives of students.

It is with children always in mind that we at Voices continually seek collaboration within and outside our campus. This year, we have made great strides in building partnerships with other schools and districts. I will present 3 examples in which Voices embraces creating relationships with other educators.

We have our middle school teacher, Ms. Perez, in Franklin McKinley and Alum Rock’s REACH program. This is a pilot program where district and charter school teachers share their practices through peer coaching. She attends in-person sessions where she interacts with others and particularly collaborates and shares ideas with a Hellyer Elementary educator.

As an instructional coach, I was invited by FMSD to their Common Core implementation professional development program. As a first-year instructional coach I was excited to work alongside experienced Curriculum Support Specialists. As part of this District/Charter compact, I have joined other CSSs in the implementation of Rigor/Relevance framework, gone on instructional observation rounds, and had problem-solving discussions on establishing PLCs. Not only was I able to share my school’s expertise, but I learned a lot from my peers and brought those ideas back to Voices.

Additionally, we have 2 principal interns from Redwood City School District and Santa Clara Unified who visit our school once a week. They have full access to our classrooms, curriculum and staff protocols. They observe and ask questions in order to go back to their school sites and implement effective practices. I’ve had the opportunity to email back and forth with them, sending them requested materials, and they have even helped me during our PDs. We also have 4 teachers in the Emerging Leaders Program. This is a program that brings together district and charter school educators, from Oakland to San Jose, in order to help each other analyze our instructional leadership, student achievement results and PLC culture.

These are just a few examples of our eagerness to work with others. We look forward to collaborating and learning alongside MHUSD and any other district or school that believes in better student outcomes, including those of the most historically underserved students.
Estimados miembros del condado,

Me llamo Paty Amaya vivo en Morgan Hill desde hace 8 años y tengo cuatro hijos. Tres de ellos asisten a tres diferentes escuelas en Morgan Hill. Soy maestra titulada en Mexico de primaria.

Desde que mis hijos empezaron el Kindergarden por el apellido de mis esposo a mis hijos los pusieron como English Learners. No me dieron la opción de decidir si esa era la opción que yo quería para mis hijos. Cuando yo les preguntaba a mis hijos que era lo que hacían en su clase me decían que ellos jugaban. Fue cuando yo empecé a involucrarme y hacer preguntas y cuando yo visitaba las clases de mis hijos me di cuenta que los segregaban. Entonces empecé a buscar ayuda para que los reclasifícaran.

Con mi hijo mayor cuando estaba en tercer grado me dijeron que para ayudarlo lo iban a poner en un programa donde estaría con poco alumnos. En ese entonces mi habían diagnosticado un tumor benigno en el cerebro así que decidí aceptar la clase pequeña para mi hijo que tenía ADHD y hiperactividad. Fue muy difícil moverlo ya que lo pusieron en un programa del condado con niños abusados, o con problemas emocionales muy fuertes. Cuando llegue a Morgan Hill el cursaba el quinto grado donde a veces llegaba la policía por niños que quebraban ventanas o salían de la clase. Una día visite la clase y se me rompió el corazón, me coraje y tristeza ya que me di cuenta que mi hijo no era como los estudiantes de esa clase. Lo que necesitaba y que yo siempre todo el tiempo me la pasaba pidiendo, era un programa de aprendizaje diseñado para el y aparte yo pedía una ayuda porque no dejaban estar en clase con el. Hasta que no amenace al distrito con una demanda, es que me cambiaron a mi hijo a una clase regular donde el siguió siendo niño de educación especial. Hasta el día de hoy esto afecto a mi hijo porque ahora en el colegio comunitario el esta 3 años atrás en matemáticas. Esto fue una gran injusticia que pudo evitarse.

Cuando fui a visitar Navigator en Gilroy, ve que había varios estudiantes parecidos a mi hijo, pero con una gran
oportunidad porque estaba en el salón con todos los niños aprendiendo al mismo nivel. Quise retroceder el tiempo, y le escribo esto con lagrimas. Y seguimos como padres visitando escuelas. Yo se que mi hijo, llegara a la universidad aunque le tome mas tiempo. Y mientras el distrito de Morgan Hill se aplaude a si mismo de los muchos estudiantes que se gradúan de high school. Lo que ellos no entienden es que para un niño que no es proficiente o avanzado les tomará mas tiempo y dinero llegar a la universidad si no llegan a su nivel académico.

Mi hijo el mas pequeño esta en DIME aunque el programa me gusta me siento que mi hijo no esta a nivel de grado después de haber visitado VOICES. También saque a mi hijo de Jackson Music Academy y ahora esta en Flex Academy y tengo otro hijo en Live Oak. Cuando mi hijo de Live Oak estaba en sexto lloraba mucho, y decía porque “porque no soy inteligente como otros niños blancos?” y yo le ayudaba en lo que podia y deseaba tener dinero para llevarlo a tutorías. Entonces acumule coraje de lo que este sistema le provocaba a mis hijos. Nunca le ofrecieron a mis hijos hacer el examen para GATE solo a los blancos se lo ofrecían. Una vez pedí el examen de GATE para mi hijo y me dijeron que ya era muy tarde. Mis hijos son ciudadanos de este país, yo tuve una excelente educación en Mexico y es horrible y racista pensar que ellos no tengan el éxito. Yo se que se graduaran de la universidad, pero no deberian de tener estas experiencias en sus escuelas y tener que trabajar el triple que un niño blanco si ellos son nacidos aqui con los mismo derechos.

Soy madre líder de PACT porque aquí he aprendido las herramientas para buscar mejores opciones para mis hijos y se mis derechos. Tengo a un hijo en lista de espera en VOICES. Ahora se lo que define a una escuelas excelente, muy aparte de las estadísticas es el ambiente de excelencia, motivador, cultura universitaria. Y también me di cuenta que no fue mi culpa lo que paso con mis hijos. Al aprobar estas escuelas no solamente van a cambiar el sistema educativo en nuestra comunidad pero también la mentalidad de sentido de culpa que siempre no echan a nosotros como padres. Al aprobar estas escuelas en Morgan Hill, la comunidad Latina por primera vez ya no tendrá el mismo temor para expresar sus derecho. Es mas allá que dos escuelas, cuando ustedes aprueben Navigator y VOICES cambiaran el ambiente racista que existe y ese será el dia que este distrito trate a los padres Latinos con respeto y dignidad.

Dear Members of the county,

My name is Paty Amaya I have lived in Morgan Hill for 8 years and have four children. Three of them attend three different schools in Morgan Hill. I was certified as an elementary school teacher in Mexico.

Since my kids started kindergarten due to my husband’s last name my kids were placed as English Learners. I was not given the option to decide if that was we wanted as an option for our children. When I would ask my children what they did in their class they told me that they played. That’s when I started to get involved and asked questions and when I visited the classes of my children I realized that they were segregated. Then I started looking for help for the reclassification.

When my oldest son was in third grade I was told they were going to help me place him in a smaller classroom
with other children. At that time I was diagnosed with a benign tumor in the brain so I decided to accept the small class for my son who had ADHD and hyperactivity. It was very difficult to move him out of this classroom because they placed him in a county program with abused children, or children who had strong emotional problems. When my son was in fifth grade in Morgan hill sometimes the police came by because children would break windows and leave the class. The day I visited his class it broke my heart, I was anger and filled with sadness as I realized that my son was not like the students in that class. What I always needed and all the time I kept asking, was an apprenticeship program designed for him because I was not allowed in the class with him. Until I threatened the district with a lawsuit, they finally moved my son to a regular class where he remained as a special education student. To this day this affected my son because now in his community college he is 3 years behind in math. This was a great injustice and could have been avoided.

When I went to see Navigator, I saw several students like my son, but with a great opportunity because they are not taken out of the classroom and learn with all the children at the same level. I wanted to turn back time, and I am writing this with tears. I know my son, will take longer to complete college. And while the district of Morgan Hill applauds itself for the many students who graduate from high school. What they do not understand is that for a child who is not proficient or advanced it will take more time and money to get through college if they do not reach their academic level.

My smallest son is at DIME. I like the program but I feel that my child is not at grade level after visiting VOICES. I also remove my other son from Jackson Music Academy and is now in Flex Academy and I have another son in Live Oak. When my son at Live Oak was in sixth grade he come home crying, and said that "Why am I not smart as the white kids?" And I tried helping him with what I could and I wished that I had money to pay for tutors. These experiences began to build up resentment of what this system was doing to my children. They never gave my kids the opportunity to take the test for GATE only whites students receive this options. Once I asked for GATE exam for my son and was told it was too late. My children are citizens of this country, I had an excellent education in Mexico and it is horrible to think of the racism and them not having the same success as me. I know they will graduat from college, but they should not have these experiences in their schools and have to work three times as more hard compared to a white students, if they are born here with the same rights.

I am mother PACT leader. I have learned the tools to look for better options for my children and my rights. I have a son on the waiting list in VOICES. Now I know what defines excellent schools, apart from the statistics is the atmosphere of excellence, motivating, university culture. And I realized that it was not my fault what happened to my children. In approving these schools you will not only change the educational system in our community but also the mentality of guilt that one feels as parents. In approving these schools in Morgan Hill, the Latino community for the first time will feel that we do in fact have rights. It is beyond two schools, it is also about to changing the racist environment that exists and when you approve the Navigator and VOICES that is the day that Latino parents we will be treated with respect and dignity.
Correspondence . . .

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Teresa Steengrafe <nenaazul@pacbell.net>
Date: October 27, 2014 at 12:00:27 AM PDT
To: "leon_beachman@sccoe.org" <leon_beachman@sccoe.org>,
"michael_chang@sccoe.org" <michael_chang@sccoe.org>, "josephsd1@aol.com"
<josephsd1@aol.com>, "darcie_green@sccoe.org" <darcie_green@sccoe.org>, "julia_hover-smoot@sccoe.org" <julia_hover-smoot@sccoe.org>, "grace_mah@sccoe.org"
<grace_mah@sccoe.org>, "anna_song@sccoe.org" <anna_song@sccoe.org>
Cc: "lupecazares@pactsj.org" <lupecazares@pactsj.org>, "mrg980@yahoo.com"
<mrg980@yahoo.com>
Subject: My Testimony, San Martin Mother PACT leader!
Reply-To: Teresa Steengrafe <nenaazul@pacbell.net>

Members of the board,

My name is Teresa Steengrafe and I am a PACT mother leader belonging to the community of San Martin and the Morgan Hill School District.

First I want to tell you a little about my history because in the hearing of October 15, due to the limited time, I was unable to finish my testimony.

I have 2 children, a daughter who graduated from Live Oak High School and will be attending the University of Minnesota this upcoming year, and a son currently enrolled in the eighth grade in Flex Academy in Morgan Hill. Both of my children were enrolled in San Martin Gwinn for their primary school.

When my son started first grade, the school sent a form asking about the language spoken at home. I responded that English and Spanish were spoken and they saw my response as a reason to label my son as an "English as a Second Language" student when his first and fluent language was English.

I spoke with the school about removing this label and having my son classified correctly with English as his first language. It was not until the fourth grade that the label was finally removed and in the Fifth grade we realized that it had affected him academically.

My daughter was never classified as an English learner and fortunately never had to pass through this learning difficulty as my son did. If this could happen to my son,
imagine how many other children are classified incorrectly and will be going through the
same situation throughout the district.

When my son left the sixth grade my husband and I had begun to look into private
schools as a last resort. Fortunately we found SV Flex and my son is now in a school
that is helping him improve and progress as he should be.

I also want to share that two years ago I worked as Yard Duty at San Martin Gwinn
where my children were enrolled and saw firsthand the need and lack of support that
many of our children were experiencing. I often took on the responsibility of helping
parents get the help that was needed from their teachers, but unfortunately sometimes
the words were never turned into action. That’s why I decided to help and support the
families in my community.

I want to make it clear that the district has good teachers that have helped our children,
but there are also other teachers who do not meet the needs of their students, giving a
bad image to those who do help.
I’m not here to complain or blame, I’m here to exercise my right as a mother that
belongs to the district of Morgan Hill to demand for a better quality of education.

I’m fighting for the right of every child in this district to be successful, I am acting to
secure your help as Board Members to make the changes that are needed.

My testimony is about an academic system that needs improvement, and I am therefore
asking to give the children in our community the option to attend a school that has
shown excellent results in the cities where they have already opened.

Although my children won’t benefit from these excellent schools, the children starting
out their education in my community would.
I want to see my community children graduate from high school and go to college. They
are our future Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, Attorneys and they just need the proper tool
to succeed: an excellent school.

Right now we are in the situation of David vs. Goliath in our community and we need
you to help us.
Morgan Hill is growing and educational need will not diminish. Please, I ask for your
support to open the doors to Navigator and VOICES.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my email. Blessings.

Teresa Steengrafte,
Mother PACT leader.