TO: Santa Clara County Board of Education
FROM: Toni Cordova
Chief Strategy Officer
VIA: Jon R. Gundry
County Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Revise Spark Charter Term to December 10, 2014 – June 30, 2018

Associated Goal:
Improve student equity and reduce access discrepancies to high quality education

Background:
The Santa Clara County Board of Education (SCCBOE) approved the charter petition for Spark Charter School on October 1, 2014 for a three-year term from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018, with the school opening scheduled for fall 2015.

The petitioners have requested that term begin earlier so that the charter school may receive and expend Public School Charter Grant Program (PSCGP) funds on start-up activities prior to July 1, 2015. This is necessary because the PSCGP funds will no longer be available after June 30, 2015.

The SCCBOE adopted a Resolution Approving the Charter Petition of Spark Charter School with the stipulation that the petitioners meet the following requirements prior to opening the school in fall 2015:

1. Amend the Spark petition by eliminating the “who can benefit” in reference to Special Education Students on page 66 of the petition.

2. By November 1, 2014,
   i. Notify SCCOE whether charter intends to operate as a school of the County Office of Education for Special Education purposes or as an LEA for Special Education purposes
   ii. Add clarifying language to all print and online communication regarding the Spark program that parent participation commitment is not a requirement for application and that no child will be denied enrollment because parents have not participated.
3. By January 1, 2015
   i. Provide assurance that the Petitioner is aware of and understands the responsibility of the charter to serve all students with disabilities who enroll. The petition should be updated to reflect this understanding and to provide assurance of their intent to comply with IDEA.
   ii. Provide a staffing model and outline the credential type designation for teachers who are described in the Petition as dually certified. Document how the Petitioner will ensure that students are served by properly credentialed staff and how they will be staffed to ensure that all aspects of the special education program can be implemented and monitored.
   iii. Provide statements clarifying the Petitioner’s understanding of their fiscal responsibility for students with disabilities including the responsibility for fair share of any costs to be charged to general funds when costs to serve exceed the available special education funds.

4. By January 1, 2015, if charter is LEA within County SELPA, provide evidence of its intent or document that the charter has notified the SELPA Director in writing of intent prior to February 1st of the preceding school year.

5. By January 1, 2015,
   i. Provide a budget and staffing plan and budget for Special Education which demonstrates a clear understanding and commitment to meet the charter school’s Special Education responsibilities.
   ii. Provide a pre-service professional development plan for the preparation of newly hired teachers to implement the “integrated inquiry- and project based learning with social-emotional learning” within the “Helical Model” and in alignment with the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. The plan should include specific timing and duration of the training activities.

6. Upon award provide evidence of the Grant Award Notification (GAN) of the PCSGP grant, with grant budgets, any amendments to the application or budget revisions required by the CDE in their review process.

7. By November 1, 2014, provide evidence of 150 current “intent to enroll” applications for the 2015-16 school year.

8. By June 1, 2015, provide:
   i. Evidence (i.e. bank statement, loan contract) of sufficient cash reserves for payroll expenditures from July 1 - September 30, 2015, or an approved contract through a recognized financial institution for a line of credit or loan.
ii. Clearly outlined health, safety, emergency preparedness plans, and risk management plans or policies.

9. By January 1, 2015, the Charter School must provide the following information:
   i. A “final” copy of the curriculum map for grade 6 (the revised charter includes a “draft”) and curriculum maps for grades 7 and 8.
   ii. A plan for teaching academically low-achieving students, explaining the curriculum and instructional design addressing their needs. The plan should also include professional development, in researched based intervention practices and strategies, to support teachers in meeting the needs of academically low-achieving students.
   iii. Identify State numerically significant subgroups other than English Learners (EL) and include “specific” annual actions for each subgroup to achieve these goals to comply with the State Priorities under LCFF/LCAP. Spark’s subgroups should be similar to the subgroups that reside in Sunnyvale School District./ Adjust State Priority #5 - Student Engagement, to include the metric of the Middle School Dropout Rates and State Priority #8 – Other Student Outcomes to include all grade levels K-8th.]
   iv. An English Language Development (ELD) Plan that is both “integrated and designated” implementing the California ELD Standards in tandem with the California Common Core Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and other content standards in order to provide a comprehensive program for English Learners.

II. Spark Charter School and the County Office of Education shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that will govern the County Office of Education’s oversight of Spark Charter School’s operations (hereinafter “MOU”). Failure to successfully negotiate and execute the Contract by January 1, 2015, shall be considered grounds for revocation of the charter. To the extent that there are any inconsistencies between the MOU and the approved charter, the MOU controls.

To date (December 5, 2014), Spark has met the requirements for numbers one (1), two (2) and seven (7). Per the Petitioners they have indicated that they are on target to meet the deliverables due January 1, 2015.

Recommended Action
The Board may approve or disapprove the revision of Spark Charter School Term to December 10, 2014 – June 30, 2018.