

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 15, 2013

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 917

Introduced by Assembly Member Bradford

February 22, 2013

An act to amend Section 47605 of the Education Code, relating to charter schools.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 917, as amended, Bradford. Charter schools: authorization: petition: signatures.

(1) The Charter Schools Act of 1992 allows one or more persons seeking to establish a charter school within a school district to circulate a petition to that effect. The act allows a charter petition to be submitted to the governing board of a school district for review after the petition is signed by a number of parents or legal guardians of pupils that is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the number of pupils that the charter school estimates will enroll in the charter school for its first year of operation or is signed by a number of teachers that is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the number of teachers that the charter school estimates will be employed at the charter school during its first year of operation.

This bill, with respect to charter petitions signed by teachers, would require instead that the petition be signed by a number of nonsupervisory certified staff and classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total number of nonsupervisory certified staff and classified employees that the charter school estimates will be employed at the school during its first year of operation.

(2) The act allows a petition that proposes to convert an existing public school to a charter school that would not be eligible for a loan, as specified, to be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the charter school. The act allows such a petition to be submitted to the governing board of a school district for review after the petition is signed by not less than 50% of the permanent status teachers currently employed at the public school to be converted.

This bill, instead, would require the petition to be signed by a number of permanent status nonsupervisory certificated staff and permanent classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least ½ of the total number of permanent status nonsupervisory certificated staff and permanent classified employees currently employed at the public school to be converted to a charter school.

(3) The bill also would make conforming changes and other nonsubstantive changes.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
 State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 47605 of the Education Code is amended
 2 to read:
 3 47605. (a) (1) Except as set forth in paragraph (2), a petition
 4 for the establishment of a charter school within a school district
 5 may be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the
 6 charter school. A petition for the establishment of a charter school
 7 shall identify a single charter school that will operate within the
 8 geographic boundaries of that school district. A charter school
 9 may propose to operate at multiple sites within the school district,
 10 as long as each location is identified in the charter school petition.
 11 The petition may be submitted to the governing board of the school
 12 district for review after either of the following conditions is met:
 13 (A) The petition is signed by a number of parents or legal
 14 guardians of pupils that is equivalent to at least one-half of the
 15 number of pupils that the charter school estimates will enroll in
 16 the school for its first year of operation.
 17 (B) The petition is signed by a number of ~~teachers that~~
 18 *nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees that*
 19 *combined* is equivalent to at least one-half of the *total* number of
 20 ~~teachers~~ *nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees*

1 that the charter school estimates will be employed at the school
2 during its first year of operation.

3 (2) A petition that proposes to convert an existing public school
4 to a charter school that would not be eligible for a loan pursuant
5 to subdivision (b) of Section 41365 may be circulated by one or
6 more persons seeking to establish the charter school. The petition
7 may be submitted to the governing board of the school district for
8 review after the petition is signed by ~~not less than 50 percent of~~
9 ~~the permanent status teachers~~ *a number of permanent status*
10 *nonsupervisory certified staff and permanent classified*
11 *employees that combined is equivalent to at least one-half of the*
12 *total number of permanent status nonsupervisory certified*
13 *staff and permanent classified employees currently employed at*
14 *the public school to be converted.* ~~converted to a charter school.~~

15 (3) (A) A petition shall include a prominent statement that a
16 signature on the petition has one of the following meanings:

17 ~~(3) A petition shall include a prominent statement that a~~
18 ~~signature on the petition means that~~

19 (i) *In the case of a parent's or legal guardian's signature, that*
20 *the parent or legal guardian is meaningfully interested in having*
21 *his or her child or ward attend the charter school,* ~~or in the case of~~
22 ~~a teacher's signature, means that the teacher is meaningfully~~
23 ~~interested in teaching at the charter school. The proposed charter~~
24 ~~shall be attached to the petition.~~

25 (ii) *In the case of a teacher's signature, that the teacher is*
26 *meaningfully interested in teaching at the charter school.*

27 (iii) *In the case of a classified employee's signature, that the*
28 *classified employee is meaningfully interested in working at the*
29 *charter school.*

30 (B) The proposed charter shall be attached to the petition.

31 (4) After receiving approval of its petition, a charter school that
32 proposes to establish operations at one or more additional sites
33 shall request a material revision to its ~~charter~~ *charter*, and shall
34 notify the authority that granted its charter of those additional
35 locations. The authority that granted its charter shall consider
36 whether to approve those additional locations at an open, public
37 meeting. If the additional locations are approved, they shall be a
38 material revision to the charter school's charter.

39 (5) A charter school that is unable to locate within the
40 jurisdiction of the chartering school district may establish one site

1 outside the boundaries of the school district, but within the county
2 in which that school district is located, if the school district within
3 the jurisdiction of which the charter school proposes to operate is
4 notified in advance of the charter petition approval, the county
5 superintendent of schools and the Superintendent are notified of
6 the location of the charter school before it commences operations,
7 and either of the following circumstances exists:

8 (A) The school has attempted to locate a single site or facility
9 to house the entire program, but a site or facility is unavailable in
10 the area in which the school chooses to locate.

11 (B) The site is needed for temporary use during a construction
12 or expansion project.

13 (6) Commencing January 1, 2003, a petition to establish a charter
14 school ~~may~~ shall not be approved to serve pupils in a grade level
15 that is not served by the school district of the governing board
16 considering the petition, unless the petition proposes to serve pupils
17 in all of the grade levels served by that school district.

18 (b) No later than 30 days after receiving a petition, in accordance
19 with subdivision (a), the governing board of the school district
20 shall hold a public hearing on the provisions of the charter, at
21 which time the governing board of the school district shall consider
22 the level of support for the petition by teachers employed by the
23 district, other employees of the district, and parents. Following
24 review of the petition and the public hearing, the governing board
25 of the school district shall either grant or deny the charter within
26 60 days of receipt of the petition, provided, however, that the date
27 may be extended by an additional 30 days if both parties agree to
28 the extension. In reviewing petitions for the establishment of
29 charter schools pursuant to this section, the chartering authority
30 shall be guided by the intent of the Legislature that charter schools
31 are and should become an integral part of the California educational
32 system and that *the* establishment of charter schools should be
33 encouraged. The governing board of the school district shall grant
34 a charter for the operation of a school under this part if it is satisfied
35 that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational
36 practice. The governing board of the school district shall not deny
37 a petition for the establishment of a charter school unless it makes
38 written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting
39 forth specific facts to support one or more of the following
40 findings:

- 1 (1) The charter school presents an unsound educational program
2 for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.
- 3 (2) The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully
4 implement the program set forth in the petition.
- 5 (3) The petition does not contain the number of signatures
6 required by subdivision (a).
- 7 (4) The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the
8 conditions described in subdivision (d).
- 9 (5) The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive
10 descriptions of all of the following:
- 11 (A) (i) A description of the educational program of the school,
12 designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school
13 is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person”
14 in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals
15 identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling
16 pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.
- 17 (ii) A description, for the charter school, of annual goals, for
18 all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to
19 Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described
20 in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels
21 served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school,
22 and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter
23 petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the
24 school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those
25 goals.
- 26 (iii) If the proposed school will serve high school pupils, a
27 description of the manner in which the charter school will inform
28 parents about the transferability of courses to other public high
29 schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance
30 requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are
31 accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges
32 may be considered transferable and courses approved by the
33 University of California or the California State University as
34 creditable under the “A” to “G” admissions criteria may be
35 considered to meet college entrance requirements.
- 36 (B) The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the
37 charter school. “Pupil outcomes,” for purposes of this part, means
38 the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they
39 have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals
40 in the school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include

1 outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement
2 both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter
3 school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph
4 (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall
5 align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of
6 Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature
7 of the program operated, by the charter school.

8 (C) The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil
9 outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method
10 for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent
11 with the way information is reported on a school accountability
12 report card.

13 (D) The governance structure of the school, including, but not
14 limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure
15 parental involvement.

16 (E) The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed
17 by the school.

18 (F) The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the
19 health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include
20 the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school
21 with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.

22 (G) The means by which the school will achieve a racial and
23 ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general
24 population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school
25 district to which the charter petition is submitted.

26 (H) Admission requirements, if applicable.

27 (I) The manner in which annual, independent financial audits
28 shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted
29 accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions
30 and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the
31 chartering authority.

32 (J) The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or
33 expelled.

34 (K) The manner by which staff members of the charter schools
35 will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the
36 Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security.

37 (L) The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing
38 within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.

39 (M) A description of the rights of ~~any~~ *an* employee of the school
40 district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work

1 in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district
2 after employment at a charter school.

3 (N) The procedures to be followed by the charter school and
4 the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to
5 provisions of the charter.

6 (O) A declaration *of* whether or not the charter school shall be
7 deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of
8 the charter school for purposes of Chapter 10.7 (commencing with
9 Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

10 (P) A description of the procedures to be used if the charter
11 school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the
12 school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of
13 the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets
14 and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.

15 (c) (1) Charter schools shall meet all statewide standards and
16 conduct the pupil assessments required pursuant to Sections 60605
17 and 60851 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute
18 or pupil assessments applicable to pupils in noncharter public
19 schools.

20 (2) Charter schools shall, on a regular basis, consult with their
21 parents, legal guardians, and teachers regarding the school's
22 educational programs.

23 (d) (1) In addition to any other requirement imposed under this
24 part, a charter school shall be nonsectarian in its programs,
25 admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations,
26 shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against ~~any a~~
27 pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220. Except
28 as provided in paragraph (2), admission to a charter school shall
29 not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil,
30 or of his or her parent or legal guardian, within this state, except
31 that an existing public school converting partially or entirely to a
32 charter school under this part shall adopt and maintain a policy
33 giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the former
34 attendance area of that public school.

35 (2) (A) A charter school shall admit all pupils who wish to
36 attend the school.

37 (B) If the number of pupils who wish to attend the charter school
38 exceeds the school's capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils
39 of the charter school, shall be determined by a public random
40 drawing. Preference shall be extended to pupils currently attending

1 the charter school and pupils who reside in the district except as
2 provided for in Section 47614.5. Other preferences may be
3 permitted by the chartering authority on an individual school basis
4 and only if consistent with the law.

5 (C) In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall
6 make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the charter
7 school and in no event shall take any action to impede the charter
8 school from expanding enrollment to meet pupil demand.

9 (3) If a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without
10 graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter
11 school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the
12 pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request,
13 provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record
14 of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and
15 health information. This paragraph applies only to pupils subject
16 to compulsory full-time education pursuant to Section 48200.

17 (e) The governing board of a school district shall not require
18 ~~any~~ *an* employee of the school district to be employed in a charter
19 school.

20 (f) The governing board of a school district shall not require
21 ~~any~~ *a* pupil enrolled in the school district to attend a charter school.

22 (g) The governing board of a school district shall require that
23 the petitioner or petitioners provide information regarding the
24 proposed operation and potential effects of the school, including,
25 but not limited to, the facilities to be used by the school, the manner
26 in which administrative services of the school are to be provided,
27 and potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the school and
28 upon the school district. The description of the facilities to be used
29 by the charter school shall specify where the school intends to
30 locate. The petitioner or petitioners ~~shall~~ also *shall* be required to
31 provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year
32 operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and
33 financial projections for the first three years of operation.

34 (h) In reviewing petitions for the establishment of charter
35 schools within the school district, the governing board of the school
36 district shall give preference to petitions that demonstrate the
37 capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to pupils
38 identified by the petitioner or petitioners as academically low
39 achieving pursuant to the standards established by the department
40 under Section 54032, as it read before July 19, 2006.

1 (i) Upon the approval of the petition by the governing board of
2 the school district, the petitioner or petitioners shall provide written
3 notice of that approval, including a copy of the petition, to the
4 applicable county superintendent of schools, the department, and
5 the state board.

6 (j) (1) If the governing board of a school district denies a
7 petition, the petitioner may elect to submit the petition for the
8 establishment of a charter school to the county board of education.
9 The county board of education shall review the petition pursuant
10 to subdivision (b). If the petitioner elects to submit a petition for
11 establishment of a charter school to the county board of education
12 and the county board of education denies the petition, the petitioner
13 may file a petition for establishment of a charter school with the
14 state board, and the state board may approve the petition, in
15 accordance with subdivision (b). A charter school that receives
16 approval of its petition from a county board of education or from
17 the state board on appeal shall be subject to the same requirements
18 concerning geographic location to which it would otherwise be
19 subject if it received approval from the entity to which it originally
20 submitted its petition. A charter petition that is submitted to either
21 a county board of education or to the state board shall meet all
22 otherwise applicable petition requirements, including the
23 identification of the proposed site or sites where the charter school
24 will operate.

25 (2) In assuming its role as a chartering agency, the state board
26 shall develop criteria to be used for the review and approval of
27 charter school petitions presented to the state board. The criteria
28 shall address all elements required for charter approval, as
29 identified in subdivision ~~(b)~~ (b), and shall define “reasonably
30 comprehensive” as used in paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) in a
31 way that is consistent with the intent of this part. Upon satisfactory
32 completion of the criteria, the state board shall adopt the criteria
33 on or before June 30, 2001.

34 (3) A charter school for which a charter is granted by either the
35 county board of education or the state board based on an appeal
36 pursuant to this subdivision shall qualify fully as a charter school
37 for all funding and other purposes of this part.

38 (4) If either the county board of education or the state board
39 fails to act on a petition within 120 days of receipt, the decision

1 of the governing board of the school district to deny a petition
2 shall, ~~thereafter~~, be subject to judicial review.

3 (5) The state board shall adopt regulations implementing this
4 subdivision.

5 (6) Upon the approval of the petition by the county board of
6 education, the petitioner or petitioners shall provide written notice
7 of that approval, including a copy of the ~~petition~~ *petition*, to the
8 department and the state board.

9 (k) (1) The state board may, by mutual agreement, designate
10 its supervisory and oversight responsibilities for a charter school
11 approved by the state board to any local educational agency in the
12 county in which the charter school is located or to the governing
13 board of the school district that first denied the petition.

14 (2) The designated local educational agency shall have all
15 monitoring and supervising authority of a chartering agency,
16 including, but not limited to, powers and duties set forth in Section
17 47607, except the power of revocation, which shall remain with
18 the state board.

19 (3) A charter school that is granted its charter through an appeal
20 to the state board and elects to seek renewal of its charter shall,
21 before expiration of the charter, submit its petition for renewal to
22 the governing board of the school district that initially denied the
23 charter. If the governing board of the school district denies the
24 school's petition for renewal, the school may petition the state
25 board for renewal of its charter.

26 (l) Teachers in charter schools shall hold a Commission on
27 Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document
28 equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would
29 be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file
30 at the charter school and are subject to periodic inspection by the
31 chartering authority. It is the intent of the Legislature that charter
32 schools be given flexibility with regard to noncore, noncollege
33 preparatory courses.

34 (m) A charter school shall transmit a copy of its annual,
35 independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year, as
36 described in subparagraph (I) of paragraph (5) of subdivision (b),
37 to its chartering entity, the Controller, the county superintendent
38 of schools of the county in which the charter school is sited, unless
39 the county board of education of the county in which the charter
40 school is sited is the chartering entity, and the department by

1 December 15 of each year. This subdivision does not apply if the
2 audit of the charter school is encompassed in the audit of the
3 chartering entity pursuant to Section 41020.

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**All matter omitted in this version of the bill
appears in the bill as introduced in the
Assembly February 22, 2013. (JR11)**

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