



February 28, 2018

Leslie Jimenez  
Oakland Unified School District  
Office of Charter Schools  
1000 Broadway, Suite 639  
Oakland, CA 94607

RE: Proposition 39 Solutions

Dear Ms. Jimenez:

Attached is our formal response to Oakland Unified School District's Proposition 39 preliminary offer.

This letter is intended to notify you that we have been working with other charter schools to discuss other potential configurations, based on the preliminary Prop 39 offers extended to individual schools. In partnership and in good faith, we are hoping to identify a set of solutions that could enable more schools to better serve students and families in their target neighborhood and provide facility stability. Ideally, this process could result in multi-year leases, which would alleviate the arduous Proposition 39 process for both OUSD and charters. Longer-term occupancy may also provide opportunities for charters to invest in capital improvements to OUSD facilities.

We invite OUSD leadership to engage as a thought partner so that we can consider the district's needs and plans for its portfolio of schools. Please let us know if you or other district leaders would be interested in joining in partnership.

Sincerely,

Casey Hoffman  
Director of Growth & Strategy  
Aspire Public Schools



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Leslie Jimenez  
Oakland Unified School District  
Office of Charter Schools  
1000 Broadway, Suite 639  
Oakland, CA 94607

**Re: *Aspire College Academy  
Response to District's Preliminary Proposal  
Proposition 39 2018-2019***

Dear Ms. Jimenez:

Aspire College Academy ("Aspire CA") is in receipt of the Oakland Unified School District's ("District") February 1, 2018 letter ("Preliminary Proposal") regarding the Aspire CA's request for facilities under Proposition 39 for the 2018-2019 school year.

The District's Preliminary Proposal is for exclusive use of thirteen (13) rooms for "Teaching Station and Specialized Classroom Space" spread across three District sites - Grass Valley Elementary School, Highland Elementary School, and Howard Elementary School. The Preliminary Proposal also allocates Aspire 23.71% of the non-teaching station space at Grass Valley, 17.25% of the non-teaching station space at Highland and 20.69% of the non-teaching station space at Howard for a total allocation of 11,058 sq. ft. of interior non-teaching station space and 116,374 exterior non-teaching station space. The Preliminary Proposal is based on a projected in-District classroom ADA of 248.93.

Section 11969.9(g) of the Proposition 39 Implementing Regulations (the "Implementing Regulations") requires Aspire CA to respond to the District's Preliminary Proposal, to express any concerns, address differences between the preliminary proposal and Aspire CA's facilities request as submitted pursuant to subdivision (b), and/or make counter proposals.

The Preliminary Proposal fails to meet the legal requirements of Prop. 39, in part, because the Preliminary Proposal fails to provide sufficient information regarding the allocation of teaching station, non-teaching space and specialized classroom space to Aspire CA and fails to provide Aspire CA with a reasonably equivalent allocation of space as required by law. Aspire CA requests that the District's final offer of space be modified in accordance with Prop. 39 and its Implementing Regulations. We remind you that the District must give the same degree of consideration to the needs of charter school students as it does to the students in District-run schools and some disruption and dislocation of the students and programs in a district may be necessary to fairly accommodate a charter school's request for facilities.



## **1. Alternative Proposal**

As set forth in more detail below, the allocation of space spread across three sites is unworkable for Aspire CA and one of the sites proposed by the District (Grass Valley) is approximately 4 miles away from the area where Aspire CA requested to be located. Aspire CA is absolutely unwilling to accept an allocation of only three classrooms at Howard and again asks the District to allocate its space on a single, contiguous site in the area near where Aspire CA requested to be located. We recommend that the three classrooms at Howard be offered to Francophone Charter School so that they have a revised offer of five classrooms total at Howard.

## **2. Condition Analysis**

A district must also determine whether a facility is reasonably equivalent by determining whether the condition of facilities provided to a charter school is reasonably equivalent to the condition of comparison group schools. Pursuant to 5 CCR Section 11969.3(c), the District must assess “such factors as age (from latest modernization), quality of materials, and state of maintenance.” The District must also assess the following factors:

1. School site size
2. The condition of interior and exterior surfaces
3. The condition of mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and fire alarm systems, including conformity to applicable codes
4. The availability and condition of technology infrastructure
5. The condition of the facility as a safe learning environment including, but not limited to, the suitability of lighting, noise mitigation, and size for intended use
6. The condition of the facility's furnishings and equipment
7. The condition of athletic fields and/or play area space

The District did not perform this complete analysis in the Preliminary Proposal or the exhibits attached thereto. The District claims that it has evaluated data on the condition of the facilities at the comparison schools based on the information available from the District’s Asset Management and Facilities Master Plan, and that the sites offered to Aspire CA are reasonably equivalent in every category. However, the District’s Asset Management and Facilities Master Plan only addresses a small subset of the categories required to be analyzed by the District under 5 CCR Section 11969.3(c). In addition, these documents were prepared a number of years ago, and thus likely do not reflect an accurate assessment of the condition of the facilities.

The Preliminary Proposal does not assess the condition of the athletic fields, play areas, furnishings and equipment, technology infrastructure, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and fire alarm systems, the suitability of lighting, or the size for intended use. Therefore, the District’s Preliminary Proposal fails to perform the complete condition analysis required by the Implementing Regulations.



### 3. Allocation of Non-Contiguous Space

The express provisions of Proposition 39 require that the District allocate facilities to the Charter School that are “contiguous, furnished, and equipped.” (Education Code Section 47614(b).) This requirement exists irrespective of the grade level configuration of a charter school. (5 CCR Section 11969.3(a).) In its Request, Aspire CA specifically requested that the District place Aspire CA’s entire in-District enrollment on a single, contiguous site.

Section 11969.2(d) goes on to state that “[i]f the in district average daily classroom attendance of the charter school cannot be accommodated on any single school district school site, contiguous facilities also includes facilities located at more than one site, provided that the school district shall minimize the number of sites assigned and shall consider student safety.” In addition, “the district’s governing board must first make a finding that the charter school could not be accommodated at a single site and adopt a written statement of reasons explaining the finding.” “If none of the district-operated schools has grade levels similar to the charter school, then a contiguous facility within the meaning of subdivision (d) of section 11969.2 shall be an existing facility that is most consistent with the needs of students in the grade levels served at the charter school.” (Emphasis added.) This analysis is purely numerical; the Court in *Ridgecrest* noted that “all else being equal, a charter school should be housed at a single site if one exists with the capacity to handle all the school’s students.” (*Ridgecrest Charter School v. Sierra Sands Unified School Dist.*, (2005) 130 Cal. App. 4th 986, 1000, emphasis added.)

In both its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking File, and its Final Statement of Reasons, the State Board of Education specifically reiterates that 5 CCR 11969.3(d) was amended to make it clear that “when no school of the district serves grade levels similar to the charter school’s, a contiguous facility is an existing facility that is most consistent with the charter school’s grade levels” in order to bring the Regulations in line with the *Ridgecrest* decision. (Final Statement of Reasons, Page 20.) The Initial Statement of Reasons further clarified that in looking at the issue of a school district making facilities available to a charter school at multiple locations as discussed in the *Ridgecrest* decision, it was clear an addition to the regulations was necessary to formalize two requirements: 1) a school district is not permitted to treat a charter school’s in-district students with less consideration than students in the district-run schools, and 2) in allocating and providing access to facilities to a charter school, a school district must begin from the premise that the facilities are to be on a single school site. (Initial Statement of Reasons, Page 3.)

The Court of Appeal has also ruled that Proposition 39 requires that a school district “begin with the assumption that all charter school students will be assigned to a single site, and attempt from there to adjust the other factors to accommodate this goal.” (*California School Bds. Assn. v. State Bd. of Education*, 191 Cal. App. 4th 530, 548-549 (Cal. App. 3d Dist. 2010).) *Ridgecrest* also specifically acknowledged that “we have little doubt that accommodating [Ridgecrest Charter School’s] facilities request will cause some, if not considerable, disruption and dislocation among the District’s students, staff, and programs. But section 47614 requires that the facilities “should be shared fairly among all public school pupils, including those in charter schools.”



(*Ridgecrest*, 130 Cal. App. 4th at 1006.) In other words, the District may not reject a potential contiguous site for Aspire CA just because it would potentially disrupt and dislocate District students.

In addition, while the District does not have to expend general fund monies to rent, buy, or lease facilities to meet this obligation, the law implicitly recognizes that a district must use all resources including any restricted monies (parcel taxes, bond monies etc.) to meet this obligation.

The District's Findings of Fact in support of its non-contiguous allocation of space to Aspire CA provides the following explanation of how the District determined that Aspire CA could not be accommodated at a single site: "Aspire College Academy is eligible for thirteen (13) classrooms; therefore, the charter school's entire in-District ADA could not be accommodated at a single site." Based on the foregoing explanation and the District's list of "Potential District School Sites with Projected Capacity" that precedes the foregoing explanation in the District's Findings, it is clear that the District only considered whether Aspire CA's entire in-District enrollment could be accommodated in the *extra space* that exists at any one District site. This practice of only considering whether a charter school may be accommodated in the extra space that exists at District sites rather than determining whether any District site is large enough to accommodate a charter school's in-District enrollment is most consistent with Assembly Bill 544, which added a provision to the Act giving charter schools the right to use district facilities that are "not currently being used ... for instructional or administrative purposes." (Former § 47614.) Under that provision, a charter school was entitled to use district facilities only if that would not interfere with the district's use of them. However, "[t]his restriction was effectively eliminated by Proposition 39." (*Ridgecrest, supra*, at p. 999.) As stated above, the District may not reject a potential contiguous site for Aspire CA just because it would potentially disrupt and dislocate District students. As stated in *Ridgecrest*, the District "must at least *begin* with the assumption that all charter school students will be assigned to a single site, and attempt from there to adjust the other factors to accommodate this goal." (*Ridgecrest, supra*, at p. 1002.) There is absolutely no evidence that the District has done so here. Rather, after looking at the extra space available at its District sites, the District decided to locate Aspire CA across three separate sites. Since none of the District schools are spread across three sites, the District's placement of Aspire CA at three separate sites fails to provide Aspire CA with reasonably equivalent facilities and relegates Aspire CA's students to second class status.

In addition, the District's Findings do not indicate that the District considered redrawing District attendance boundaries, increasing District class sizes or the negative impact on the safety of Aspire CA's students that would occur if they are required to travel between three separate school sites spanning more than 4 miles in one day. Instead, the District's Findings focus primarily on the impact to District students of allocating to Aspire CA a single District school site – with no analysis of the safety issues facing Aspire CA's students.

A review of publicly available information reveals that there are District sites large enough to accommodate Aspire CA's entire in-District enrollment in the area near where Aspire CA requested to be located. For example, Highland previously accommodated over 900 students, but this year, there are only approximately 575 students housed on the site. Similarly, Markham, previously accommodated 642 students but now only has approximately 363 students or less on the site with no co-located charter school.



For all the foregoing reasons, the District’s failure to offer Aspire CA a contiguous site violates Prop. 39 and its Implementing Regulations.

#### **4. Location of Allocated Space**

Unfortunately, the allocation of space at Grass Valley is not near where Aspire CA wishes to locate; it is not anywhere near Aspire CA’s current campus or where its school community lives, where Aspire CA’s charter commits it will locate, and where Aspire CA has done all of its community building and recruiting. Pursuant to Education Code § 47614(b), the District is required to make “reasonable efforts” to provide Aspire CA “with facilities near to where the charter school wishes to locate.” In its Proposition 39 request, Aspire CA requested to locate as close to 8030 Atherton St., Oakland, CA as possible, to continue to serve the surrounding community and make transportation as easy as possible for families.

As noted above, Aspire CA notes that the District has never actually attempted to treat charter school and District students fairly, by looking for ways to consolidate District programs to make space for charter school programs. Again, while always closing District sites or moving District students around would not meet the intent of Prop. 39 to treat all students fairly, the District does not act in compliance with the law if it never does these things to make space. As *Ridgecrest* said, some displacement is required in order to minimize the harm to both District and charter school students. Here, the District favors only its own students and places charter school students in harm’s way by forcing them to locate on multiple sites separated, in this case, by at least 4 miles. Aspire CA believes that there are schools in the area have sufficient room for its program, and believes that the District’s offer of space at Grass Valley is therefore inconsistent with the requirements of Proposition 39.

#### **5. Allocation of Teaching Stations**

All California public school students are entitled to learn in a classroom that is safe, that is not crowded with too many students, and that is conducive to a supportive learning environment. In accordance with the implementing regulations, the District must provide a facility to Aspire CA with the same ratio of teaching stations to average daily attendance (“ADA”) as those provided to students in the comparison group of schools, as well as a proportionate share of specialized classroom space and non-teaching space, and are to be allocated at each grade level consistent with the ratios provided by the District to its students. (5 CCR Section 11969.3(b)(1).) There is no such thing as a fractional classroom for a single grade level of students and the allocation cannot be based upon the District’s “loading standard,” nor can it be based on an arbitrary and fabricated formula.

In responding to a charter school’s request for classroom space, a school district must follow a three-step process, as explained by the California Supreme Court in *California Charter Schools Association v. Los Angeles Unified School District* (2015) 60 Cal. 4th 1221):



First, the district must identify comparison group schools as section 11969.3(a) prescribes. Second, the district must count the number of classrooms in the comparison group schools using the section 1859.31 inventory and then adjust those classrooms 'provided to' students in the comparison group schools. Third, the district must use the resulting number as the denominator in the ADA/classroom ratio for allocating classrooms to charter schools based on their projected ADA. (*Id.*, p. 1241.)

In calculating the number of classrooms that the District will make available to the Charter School, the District must count the number of classrooms in the comparison group schools and cannot use districtwide norming ratios. (*Id.*, p. 1236.)

Under 5 CCR Section 11969.3(b)(1), "[t]he number of teaching stations (classrooms) shall be determined using the classroom inventory prepared pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 1859.31, adjusted to exclude classrooms identified as interim housing." Classroom shall be provided "in the same ratio of teaching stations (classrooms) to ADA as those provided to students in the school district attending comparison group schools." (*Id.*)

In the *CCSA v. LAUSD* case, the Court explained further that classrooms used for preschool or adult education, or by other charter schools are not counted as classrooms provided to the District's non-charter K-12 public school students. (*CCSA v. LAUSD, supra*, p. 1240.) However, the Court held that "counting classrooms 'provided to' district students for the purposes of section 11969.3(b)(1) is not the same as counting only those rooms a district elects to staff with a teacher." (*Id.*, p. 1241.) The Court reasoned that "[c]ounting only those classrooms staffed by an assigned teacher would effectively impute to charter schools the same staffing decisions made by the District. But there is no reason to think a charter school would necessarily use classrooms in the same way that the District does." (*Id.*)

On a practical level, even if certain rooms are not used for classroom instruction, students nonetheless benefit from these additional rooms, either in the form of having additional space to use for break out instruction or storage, or in having less crowded classrooms. Thus, **the District is required by the Supreme Court's ruling count all of the classrooms provided to students in the District for K-12 classroom instruction regardless of whether the classrooms are staffed by teachers or not and use the resulting number as the denominator in the ADA/classroom ratio for allocating classrooms to charter schools based on their projected ADA.** Despite the clear language of *CCSA v. LAUSD*, however, the District's Preliminary excludes "unassigned" or "out of service" classrooms from the teaching station count. These classrooms are not specifically accounted for anywhere else in the District's Preliminary Offer; the District's Preliminary Offer, therefore, is in violation of the ruling in *CCSA v. LAUSD*.

Very simply, Prop. 39 requires the District to count the number of regular teaching stations at the comparison schools and divide the ADA at the comparison school by the number of regular teaching stations. The spreadsheet forming Exhibit C to the Preliminary Offer, which the District cites as the source of its





calculation, is a list of each of the classes at each comparison school and, we assume, the number of students enrolled in each class. The District then averages the number of students enrolled in every class at these two schools to arrive at its “teaching station to ADA ratio” calculation.

Not only does the District’s calculation fail to count the number of regular teaching stations at the comparison schools, or divide the ADA of the school by that number (the required formula), but it also uses enrollment, rather than ADA, to determine its class size average – and enrollment, because it is a larger number than actual ADA, will result in an artificially higher “ratio.” This manner of calculation is illegal and in direct contravention to the formula set forth in the regulations and applicable case law.

The District also has previously claimed that its list of classrooms at the comparison school that are staffed with District teachers is “far superior” to the District’s own Facilities Master Plan that specifically identifies the number of classrooms on a site. However, the number of classrooms that may be staffed with a teacher is not necessarily equivalent to the number of classrooms provided to District students for instruction. As noted above, in the *CCSA v. LAUSD* case, the Court held that “counting classrooms ‘provided to’ district students for the purposes of section 11969.3(b)(1) is not the same as counting only those rooms a district elects to staff with a teacher.” (*Id.*, p. 1241.) Unless the District accounts for all of the specific uses of each classroom at the comparison schools, Aspire CA has no way to verify that the information provided by the District is accurate.

A review of the publicly available information for the District comparison school’s teaching stations, enrollment, and attendance rates, specifically CDE data regarding enrollment in 2016-17, the 2015-16 OUSD “Fast Facts” regarding the average District attendance rate, and the 2012 OUSD Facilities Master Plan, the Blueprint documents, and the Facilities Utilization Baseline Estimator suggests that Aspire CA is entitled to an allocation of at least **fourteen (14) teaching stations in addition to reasonably equivalent specialized classroom and non-teaching station space.**

School Name	ADA <sup>1</sup>	Teaching Stations <sup>2</sup>	Corrected Teaching Station to ADA Ratio
Community United/Futures	604.41	32	18.89
Burckhalter	220.09	12	18.34
PRIDE	304.75	31	9.83
Greenleaf	609.16	23	26.49

<sup>1</sup> Aspire CA used the District’s projected ADA for the comparison schools, without accepting the accuracy of the District’s projections.

<sup>2</sup> These numbers are developed from reviewing the OUSD Master Plan site profile and Blueprint document for the comparison schools to determine the number of classrooms, as well as a review of the District’s Exhibit C and the comparison school websites to determine the actual number of regular classrooms used by the District for regular teaching stations (which includes Newcomer and A-G classrooms as these rooms are used for general education), excluding rooms used for specialized classroom and non-teaching space (such as a parent center, band/music, special education, science labs, computer lab space, home economics, or an art room).





New Highland/RISE	551.28	41	13.45
Markham	322.06	23	14.00
Parker	353.54	16	22.10
Acorn/Encompass	606.51	27	22.46
Howard	182.69	15	12.18
Korematsu/Esperanza	616.33	34	18.13
REACH	351.47	17	20.67
Madison Lower	274.12	10	27.41
<b>AVERAGE</b>			18.66

Therefore, Aspire CA requires an additional three (3) teaching stations for a total of fourteen (14) teaching stations.

**6. The Preliminary Proposal Does Not Allocate Sufficient Specialized Classroom and Non-Teaching Station Space to Aspire CA**

Aspire CA is entitled to reasonable allocations of specialized and non-teaching station space. Section 11969.3(b)(2) requires that, if a school district includes specialized classroom space, such as science laboratories, in its classroom inventory, the Proposition 39 offer of facilities provided to a charter school must include a share of the specialized classroom space. The Preliminary Offer must include “a share of the specialized classroom space and/or a provision for access to reasonably equivalent specialized classroom space.” (5 CCR § 11969.3(b)(2).) The amount of specialized classroom space allocated and/or the access to specialized classroom space provided shall be determined based on three factors:

1. the grade levels of the charter school’s in-district students;
2. the charter school’s total in-district classroom ADA; and
3. the per-student amount of specialized classroom space in the comparison group schools.<sup>3</sup>

As such, the District must allocate specialized classroom space, such as science laboratories, art rooms, computer labs, music rooms, weight rooms, etc., commensurate with the in-District classroom ADA of Aspire CA. The allocated site must include all of the specialized classroom space included across all of the different grade levels.

In addition, the District must provide non-teaching station space commensurate with the in-District classroom ADA of Aspire CA and the per-student amount of non-teaching station space in the comparison group schools. (5 CCR § 11969.3(b)(3).) Non-teaching space is all of the space at the comparison school that is not identified as teaching station space or specialized space and includes, but is not limited to, administrative space,

<sup>3</sup> Id.; see also *Bullis Charter School v. Los Altos School Dist.* (2011) 200 Cal.App.4th 296 and *California School Bds. Assn. v. State Bd. of Education* (2010) 191 Cal.App.4th 530 (CSBA).



a kitchen/cafeteria, a multi-purpose room, a library, a staff lounge, a copy room, storage space, bathrooms, a parent meeting room, special education space, nurse's office, RSP space, and play area/athletic space, including gymnasiums, athletic fields, locker rooms, and pools or tennis courts. (*Ibid.*)

The allocation of specialized teaching space and non-teaching space is based on an analysis of the square footage of each category of space available to students at the comparison schools (i.e., "the per-student amount of specialized classroom space in the comparison group schools"). (5 CCR § 11969.3(b)(2)(C).) Moreover, just because one kind of specialized classroom or non-teaching station space is not available at all the comparison schools, the District may not fail to provide an allocation of that kind of space (especially here, where the District averaged the specialized classroom and non-teaching station space over all the comparison schools). Instead:

[W]hile a Proposition 39 analysis does not necessarily compel a school district to allocate and provide to a charter school each and every particular room or other facility available to the comparison group schools, it must at least account for the comparison schools' facilities in its proposal. A determination of reasonable equivalence can be made only if facilities made available to the students attending the comparison schools are listed and considered. And while mathematical exactitude is not required (*cf. Sequoia, supra, 112 Cal.App.4th at p. 196* [charter school need not provide enrollment projections with "arithmetical precision"]), a Proposition 39 facilities offer must present a good faith attempt to identify and quantify the facilities available to the schools in the comparison group--and in particular the three categories of facilities specified in *regulation 11969.3, subdivision (b)* (i.e., teaching stations, specialized classroom space, and non-teaching station space)--in order to determine the "reasonably equivalent" facilities that must be offered and provided to a charter school. (*Bullis, supra, 200 Cal.App.4th 296, 336.*)

Here, the District has failed to count wide swaths of specialized classroom and non-teaching station space at the comparison schools, or has entirely failed to account for those spaces in its offer.

**a. Allocation of Specialized Classroom Space to Aspire CA**

The Preliminary Proposal allocates a total of two (2) exclusive use "specialized" classrooms to Aspire CA. However, the Preliminary Proposal does not indicate whether any of the classrooms allocated contain any specialized furnishings or equipment or are appropriate for specialized instruction.

In addition, in an approach that ignores the literal language of Section 11969.3(b)(2), the District asserted that "At the elementary level, specialized rooms are estimated as 1 for every 8 of general education classrooms. At the middle school level, specialized rooms are estimated as 1 for every 6 of general education classrooms. At the high school level, specialized rooms are estimated as 1 for every 10 of general education classrooms." The District then allocated specialized classroom space "based on the number of general education teaching stations" at the comparison schools. The District's allocation of specialized classroom space does not comply with the Implementing Regulations in several respects.



The District is not permitted to base its determination of the amount of specialized classroom space at the comparison schools on the number of general education teaching stations at those schools. Nothing in the law authorizes the District to average all the various types and amounts of specialized classroom spaces across all the comparison schools in this manner. According to the Implementing Regulations, the allocation of specialized teaching space and non-teaching space is based on an analysis of the square footage of these types of space available to students at the comparison schools (specifically, “the per-student amount of specialized classroom space in the comparison group schools.” (5 CCR Section 11969.3(b)(2) and (3).) Further, the 2017-18 Facility Utilization Baseline Estimator on which the District relies to support its calculation of specialized classroom space makes it clear that the estimations of specialized classroom contained therein are not based on “actual use” and “[i]t is assumed that the actual use is likely much higher than the estimate.”

The District’s calculation completely fails to account for the “the per-student amount of specialized classroom space in the comparison group schools.” The Preliminary Proposal is completely void of any discussion of the different amounts (square footage) and types of specialized classroom space that exist at the comparison schools including: computer lab, music room, science lab, and art room space.

Aspire CA is entitled to a reasonably equivalent allocation of or access to all of these types of specialized classroom spaces since they exist at the comparison schools, and *Bullis* requires the District to make “a good faith attempt to identify and quantify” the specialized classrooms spaces that exist at the comparison schools. Therefore, the District’s methodology for determining the specialized classroom allocation to Aspire CA and its failure to identify and quantify all the various types of specialized classroom space at the comparison schools violates Prop. 39 and its Implementing Regulations.

In addition, the District may not combine different types and sizes of specialized classroom space and then allocate non-specialized classrooms to Aspire CA. If there are science labs, computer labs, music rooms, art rooms, and the like available at the comparison schools, then the District must allocate reasonably equivalent, fully furnished and equipped kinds of these spaces space and/or access to Aspire CA. A standard classroom does not have, for example, the risers in a choral classroom, the gas and water stations in a science classroom, or the computers in a computer classroom, nor can all these different kinds of uses (and the attendant furnishings and equipment) happen in just three classrooms (along with administrative, office and library space). Aspire CA also notes that by allocating one classroom for all these uses, the District is relegating Aspire CA students to second-class status, given that District students enjoy access to these separate, furnished and equipped spaces. The District cannot force Aspire CA to create its own fully furnished and equipped specialized classroom space in a standard teaching station space. “[A] school district does not have the discretion to employ practices that are contrary to the very intent of Proposition 39 that school district facilities be “shared fairly among all public school pupils, including those in charter schools.” (*Bullis Charter School v. Los Altos School Dist.* (2011) 200 Cal.App.4th 296, 336.)

Aspire CA is entitled to reasonably equivalent allocations of specialized spaces, and of furnishings and equipment that accompany those spaces in the comparison schools, and it anticipates receiving its full complement of the specialized space at the school sites.



**b. Allocation of Non-Teaching Station Space to Aspire CA**

The Preliminary Proposal does not properly allocate non-teaching space to Aspire CA. The Preliminary Proposal allocates lumped-together categories of non-teaching station space (admin/office/conference, MPR/auditorium/cafeteria/Gym, and library) as well as a catch-all “other interior” without any further specification. The offer provides for a total allocation of 11,058 square feet of interior non-teaching station space and 116,374 total outdoor space to Aspire CA spread across three separate sites.

The District’s allocation of non-teaching space to Aspire CA in the Preliminary Proposal does not comply with Prop. 39 or its Implementing Regulations in several respects, including its failure to identify the specific non-teaching station space to be allocated to Aspire CA and its allocation of non-teaching station space based on the percentage of Aspire CA’s enrollment on the sites, as determined by the District. Moreover, the District’s calculations of the space to be allocated to Aspire CA are opaque, unverifiable, and based on mysterious formulas that have not been provided to Aspire CA. This makes it almost impossible for the school to understand both how the District arrived at its allocation of space and make a determination whether that allocation is legally compliant.

First, there is a considerable amount of non-teaching station space at the comparison schools that is not referenced in the District’s calculation or allocation to Aspire CA. The Preliminary Proposal does not appear to include any of the following types of spaces in its calculation of non-teaching space at the comparison schools or its allocation to Aspire CA even though such spaces are available at the comparison schools: kitchen/servery, nurse/health clinic space, psychiatric/OT/RSP/special education/ESL/Title I/speech rooms, and parent centers/community use rooms.

Similarly, the Preliminary Proposal does not address the various types of outdoor areas that exist at the comparison schools such as gardens, basketball courts, play fields, and play structure space but rather lumps all the different types of exterior spaces together when calculating exterior non-teaching station space. The District is required to provide Aspire CA with a reasonably equivalent allocation of all these types of spaces based on the “per-student amount of non-teaching station space in the comparison group schools,” and Aspire CA requires an allocation of all these types of spaces in order to operate its educational program. Each of these types of spaces has a specific use and furnishings and equipment and/or design that are appropriate for such use, and the District’s allocation method does not ensure Aspire CA will receive a reasonably equivalent allocation of each type of non-teaching station space that exists at the comparison schools. As stated in *Bullis, supra*, “a school district, in determining the amount of nonteaching station space it must allocate to the charter school, must take an objective look at all of such space available at the schools in the comparison group.” (*Bullis, supra*, at p. 1047, emphasis added.) The District is not permitted to average all of the unique types of non-teaching station spaces that exist at the comparison schools and then allocate Aspire CA a percentage of unspecified non-teaching station spaces that exists at the allocated sites, which are not comparison schools.



Second, the Preliminary Proposal contains no listing or description of the types of shared non-teaching spaces to which Aspire CA will be provided access at the offered sites beyond large categories of space, or any proposed schedule for Aspire CA's use. The District's failure to provide this basic information to Aspire CA precludes Aspire CA from engaging in timely and efficient negotiations with site principals regarding shared use schedules and prevents Aspire CA from assessing whether the Preliminary Proposal provides Aspire CA with access to all of the different types of non-teaching station space to which Aspire CA is entitled. 5 CCR section 11969.9(h) requires that the school district, in its final facilities proposal, specifically identify the nonteaching station space offered to the charter school. (*Bullis, supra*, at p. 1046.) As such, Aspire CA expects that the District's final offer will specifically identify all the non-teaching station space to be allocated to Aspire CA.

Third, the District may not base its non-teaching station space allocation to Aspire CA on the "minimum" amount of non-teaching space that exists at any one of the comparison group schools, which results in a significantly and artificially reduced allocation to Aspire CA. The District claims a "charter school's allocation is considered to fall within reasonable equivalence standards if it falls within the minimum/maximum Sqft/ADA ratios at the comparison group schools." However, the District has not and cannot provide any legal authority to support this claim, and such a position directly conflicts with the basic premise of Prop. 39 – that public school facilities must be shared fairly between all public school students, including those in charter schools. **Just based on the District's figures, the average amount of non-teaching station space at the comparison schools is 551.6 sq. ft. per unit of ADA, and as a result, Aspire CA is entitled to at least 137,309.79 sq. ft. of non-teaching station space, i.e., 9,877.788 sq. ft. more than the District allocated to Aspire CA.**

Fourth, Tables 7a and 7b add even more opacity to the District's analysis. The District is using these tables, we assume, to calculate how much total non-teaching station space exists at the comparison schools (including indoor and outdoor space) per unit of ADA. Furthermore, the District has ensured that its calculation misstates the actual per ADA amount of non-teaching station space by deducting the total "classroom space"<sup>4</sup> from the "total site area".<sup>5</sup> By using this formula, the District has assumed that all classrooms larger than 600 square feet are accounted for in its teaching station to ADA ratio – but by its own admission, the District's teaching station to ADA ratio calculation only includes rooms staffed by a teacher – not empty rooms, not classrooms used for storage or counseling or restorative justice or any other purposes. This space is also not necessarily captured by the specialized teaching station allocation, as this is also based only on the number of classrooms larger than 600 square feet on the site, but does not actually determine the use of each space, or whether the proportion actually captures usage at each comparison school site.

For all these reasons, the District's allocation of specialized and non-teaching station space included in the Preliminary Proposal fails to comply with Prop. 39 and its Implementing Regulations. Aspire CA is entitled to reasonably equivalent allocations of specialized and non-teaching spaces, and of furnishings and equipment

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<sup>4</sup> Defined as the square footage of all classrooms that are equal to or larger than 600 square feet "and any attached classroom storage space included in the Prop. 39 preliminary offers."

<sup>5</sup> The total square feet of outdoor and building square feet on the campus, including non-ground level building square footage.



that accompany those spaces in the comparison schools, and it anticipates receiving its full complement of the specialized and non-teaching space at the offered school sites.

## 7. Pro Rata Charge Worksheet:

As a preliminary matter, Aspire CA notes that the District has indicated that Aspire CA's "share of the custodial costs may be subject to reconciliation in the event that the District is required to increase staffing as a result of the Charter School's use and occupation of the District's site." To the extent that the District is indicating its intent to charge Aspire CA an additional amount for custodial services above what is included in the pro-rata share, this is not permitted by the Implementing Regulations.

- a. **Police Services:** The District may not include police costs in its pro rata share calculation because Aspire CA has been told by the District's Police Services, when Aspire CA has called for help, that Police Services does not provide services to charter schools in the District. Pro rata share amounts are intended to reflect a charter school's portion of the District's facilities costs that Aspire CA uses. Because Aspire CA does not use the District's police service, the inclusion of these costs in the pro rata share calculation is not appropriate.
- b. **Insurance:** Aspire CA will provide and pay for the full spectrum of its insurance benefits, as required by its charter and the Facilities Use Agreement; it appears the District has included the cost of its own property insurance on the facility. Including the District's insurance costs in the calculations not only double bills Aspire CA for a cost it is already paying for, it is requiring Aspire CA to pay for a cost that is actually the District's responsibility. Moreover, insurance is not contemplated under the Prop. 39 regulations as an acceptable "facilities cost," and Education Code Section 47614 specifically states that a charter school may not be charged for use of district facilities beyond the pro rata share.
- c. **Custodial Services:** The District is indicating that Aspire CA must use the District's custodial services, which is in direct contravention of the Implementing Regulations. The Implementing Regulations provide that ongoing operations and maintenance of facilities, which includes custodial costs, are the responsibility of Aspire CA (5 CCR Section 11969.4(b)) and that any costs assumed by Aspire CA cannot be included in the pro rata share calculation. Aspire CA wishes to perform its own custodial services in large part because it is not financially able to absorb the cost of District services. Therefore, the Final Offer and the FUA will need to be updated to provide for this revision. If the parties are able to reach some separate agreement, however, that Aspire CA will accept District custodial services at the three sites, the cost to Aspire CA for these services will need to be adjusted to accurately reflect Aspire CA's fair share of these costs.
- d. The District has included \$13,048,405 in facilities costs identified as "RRMA transfer from UR to resource 8150." However, Prop. 39 provides that the ongoing operations and routine maintenance of the facilities is the responsibility of Aspire CA. As such, and pursuant to 5 CCR Section 11969.7, the District may not include in its facilities costs "any costs that are paid by the charter school, including, but not limited to, costs associated with ongoing operations and maintenance and the





costs of any tangible items adjusted in keeping with a customary depreciation schedule for each item.” Therefore, please provide Aspire CA with the necessary documentation to show that the District has removed all facilities costs related to ongoing operations and maintenance from its RRMA transfer amounts that are Aspire CA’s responsibility, including custodial services.

- e. Third, the District has included its emergency debt service costs in the pro rata share calculation. 5 CCR Section 11969.7 states that only unrestricted General Fund **facilities costs** that are not costs otherwise assumed by Aspire CA are included in the methodology. Under the Implementing Regulations, items that are not specifically included in the pro rata share calculations because they are either obligations of Aspire CA or facilities-related general fund expenses may not be included in the calculation of facilities costs. “Debt servicing” is typically not a cost charged to the unrestricted general fund (e.g., bond repayment obligations are excluded). Further, even if repayment of the District’s emergency loan constitutes debt service that is charged to the unrestricted general fund, the pro rata share is intended to reimburse the District for a charter school’s proportion of the District’s **facilities costs** in exchange for Aspire CA’s use of District facilities. The Emergency Apportionment state loans are clearly not facility-related debt service costs, and thus may not be included in the calculation. Again, only those facilities costs charged to the unrestricted general fund can be included in the pro rata share calculation. (5 CCR Section 11969.7.) If it is the District’s position that the repayments of the emergency state loan are debt service for “facilities costs” then we request that the District provide some documentation demonstrating that the emergency loan monies were spent on “facilities costs.”
- 8. Draft Facilities Use Agreement:** We are reviewing the draft Facilities Use Agreement and look forward to negotiating the terms of that or an in-lieu agreement over the next several weeks, as required by the Implementing Regulations. (5 CCR Section 11969.9(k).)
- a. **Section 1:** This section states “District agrees to allow use of the Premises at the School(s) by Charter School for the sole purpose of operating Charter School’s educational program in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local regulations relating to the Premises and to the operation of Charter School’s educational program.” This section will need to be revised to include Aspire CA’s summer school, if any, and programs procured by Aspire CA through third party entities, e.g. after-school program providers.
  - b. **Section 1.4:** The FUA currently requires Aspire CA to comply with the District’s “policies and procedures regarding the use and occupation of District facilities.” Prop. 39 only requires Aspire CA to comply with the District’s policies and procedures related to operations and maintenance, and not where actual school district practice substantially differs from official policies. (5 CCR Section 11969.4(b).)
  - c. **Section 1.6:** Fees charged under the Civic Center Act are intended to reimburse school districts for the costs they incur to process permits and to clean up after community use of their





facilities. The portion of the Civic Center Act fees related to custodial and maintenance costs must be paid to Aspire CA if Aspire CA is responsible for cleaning up its sites after each community use.

- d. **Section 2:** The Sites must be furnished, equipped and available for occupancy by Aspire CA for a period of at least ten (10) working days prior to the first day of instruction. However, we are willing to consider taking possession earlier if mutually agreed upon between the parties.
- e. **Section 3:** This section also needs to reflect that if Aspire CA constructs or installs recreational improvements or other school facilities, Aspire CA and the District will agree to negotiate a reduction in the facilities use fees. Aspire CA's other concerns regarding the Pro Rata Share Charge outlined above are incorporated herein. Again, any costs assumed by Aspire CA cannot be included in the pro rata share calculation, including custodial and maintenance costs. Aspire CA objects to the late charge listed in Section 3.5. The Implementing Regulations do not contemplate late fees to be charged to Aspire CA.
- f. **Section 6:** This number will need to be adjusted to reflect the number of Aspire CA students on the sites.
- g. **Section 9:** This section states that the District "shall not be liable for any personal injury suffered by Charter School or Charter School's visitors, invitees, and guests, or for any damage to or destruction or loss of any of Charter School or Charter School's visitors, invitees or guests' personal property located or stored in the parking lots, street parking or the School Site, except where such damage is caused by the District's negligence or misconduct." This section will need to be changed to reflect that the District may not avoid liability for injuries or damage caused by its failure to maintain the parking spaces on the sites. The District is required to provide Aspire CA with a facility that complies with the California Building Code, and to maintain the facility in compliance with the California Building Code. (5 CCR Section 11969.9(k).) It may not provide the parking lot in an "as-is" condition. Moreover, Aspire CA is confused by the language that "Charter School may instruct its visitors, invitees and guests to park on available street parking" – Aspire CA will assume the District does not mean that it will not be sharing the parking on sites with Aspire CA, as that would be illegal.
- h. **Section 10:** For the same reason, the District may not require Aspire CA to take the facility in "as is" condition, nor may it require Aspire CA to accept the Premises in their existing condition as a pre-condition to accepting the Premises. It may also not limit its maintenance obligations "only to the extent the compliance would be required of the District without regard to Charter School's use of the Premises." Any legal compliance issues would only be required because Aspire CA is occupying the sites; to limit the District's obligations in this way not only violates 5 CCR Section 11969.9(k)(4), but it appears to be an attempt to minimize the District's maintenance obligations.



Furthermore, it is not acceptable for the District to terminate the FUA if the cost to make repairs exceeds \$150,000. The District is required to make the facilities available to Aspire CA for its entire school year (5 CCR Section 11969.5) and to maintain the facilities in compliance with the California Building Code. (5 CCR Section 11969.9(k).) As a result, if the facilities are damaged, the District must repair them, or, if they are destroyed, the District must provide alternative facilities. Moreover, the District must absolutely provide alternative facilities to Aspire CA while any repairs are being performed. Lastly, the District cannot limit its obligations under this section to damage “due to no fault or negligence of Charter School.” The District is obligated to maintain first party property insurance on the Premises, and any repair costs it incurs on other District sites are included in the pro rata share, thus it must perform these repairs for Aspire CA.

- i. **Section 12.3 and 12.4:** The District must make reasonable efforts to keep their materials, tools, supplies and equipment on the Premises in such a way as to minimize disruption to Aspire CA’s program. The District must provide relevant scheduling information and reasonable notice to Aspire CA if it will be coming onto the facility to perform maintenance. In addition, Aspire CA wishes to perform its own custodial services, and as a result, does not financially able to absorb the cost of District services. If the parties are able to reach some separate agreement, however, that Aspire CA will accept District custodial services at its sites, the cost to Aspire CA for these services will need to be adjusted to accurately reflect Aspire CA’s fair share of these costs.
- j. **Section 14:** While Aspire CA is willing to pay any taxes or assessments on its personal property, or modifications or improvements it performs on the facility, it may not otherwise be obligated to pay any costs to occupy the facilities beyond the pro rata share. (Education Code Section 47614(b)(1).)
- k. **Section 15:** Aspire CA wishes to perform its own cleaning and custodial services. Therefore, the Final Offer and FUA will need to be revised to provide for this revision.
- l. **Section 17:** does not agree to provide written verification of compliance with the fingerprinting and criminal background investigation requirements to District prior to Aspire CA taking possession of the Premises and prior to conducting its educational program on the Premises.
- m. **Section 18.1.6:** Aspire CA does not agree that it is a default under the FUA if it provides a “warranty, representation or statement to District in connection with the Agreement, or any other agreement to which the Charter School and District are parties, which is false or misleading in any material respect when made or furnished...”



- n. **Section 18.1.7:** Aspire CA does not agree that should it default under the FUA, it must pay the District its unpaid pro rata share. The District is obligated to attempt to first find an alternative occupant for the site.
- o. **Section 18.2:** This section must provide for Aspire CA to perform any District obligation if the District is in default, and to recover its reasonable costs in so doing from the District.
- p. **Section 20:** If Aspire CA chooses to seek its insurance through a joint powers authority such as CharterSAFE, JPAs do not receive an A.M. Best insurance rating. This section will need to be revised to provide that insurance through a JPA will satisfy the terms of the FUA. In addition, the JPA does not provide notice to additional insureds, so any notice requirements will have to be provided by Aspire CA.
- q. **Section 28.1:** This section must be revised to provide that the District is responsible for maintaining the Premises in compliance with applicable law, except to the extent that compliance arises as a result of modifications or improvements performed by Aspire CA.

We have attempted in this letter to enumerate all of our concerns with the District's Preliminary Proposal; however, we note that our failure to mention a concern in this letter should not be interpreted as acceptance of that term.

We look forward to working with the District to make the necessary changes to the District's Preliminary Proposal in order to ensure compliance with Proposition 39 and its Implementing Regulations in time for the issuance of the final notification of facilities on or before April 1, 2018. I can be reached at 510-434-5000.

Sincerely,

Casey Hoffman  
Director of Growth & Strategy  
Aspire Public Schools

Cc: Sarah Kollman, Esq., Young, Minney & Corr  
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