



December 2020 Newsletter



Our mission...

To advance quality public education for all students by providing charter school authorizing the support, resources, and collective voice necessary to foster high-performing, fiscally sound, autonomous, and accountable charter schools.

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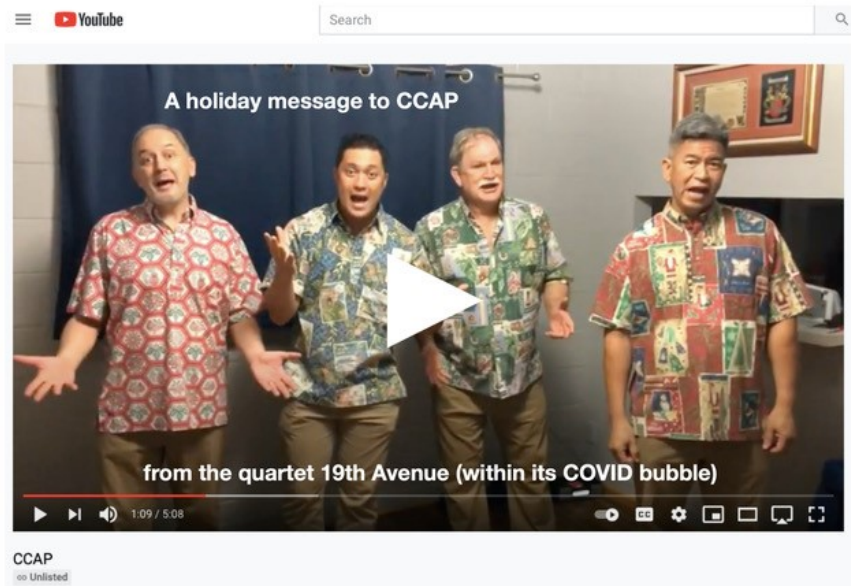
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A Message from Executive Director Tom Hutton

As this most tumultuous year draws to a close, we all look forward to a 2021 that will be much safer and less disruptive for everyone and more stable for school children. CCAP looks forward to continuing our work to support best charter school authorizing practices, even as our school districts and county offices of education continue to grapple with the pandemic and what promises to be its long aftermath. Thanks to the hard work of our member authorizers, strategic partners, and other colleagues in education, we are optimistic that the publication this month of our "Charter Authorizing 2.0" white paper, which you can read about below, will be the kick-off for some strong contributions to the field in the New Year.

On behalf of the California Charter Authorizing Professionals, we wish you and your loved ones joyful, safe, and restful holidays. And in recognition of what we've all been through over the past months, and for a bit of comic relief from the dark days still before us, we offer these sentiments:



CCAP Releases White Paper on Project to Develop Model Authorizing Practices

CCAP has published a [white paper](#) on *Charter Authorizing 2.0: Advancing Equity and Access Through Quality Authorizing (CA2.0)*, our newly launched project to improve charter school authorizing and oversight by developing a series of toolkits of model authorizing practices.

The white paper discusses the need for high quality authorizing protocols in California, which has 337 authorizing school districts and county offices of education, but no shared understanding and consistent

implementation of authorizer best practices. The white paper explains how California’s state chartering system does not adequately address the unique challenges faced by the smallest authorizers, which represent 92 percent of authorizers in our state.

CCAP is working with WestEd to develop the framework, starting with toolkits for petitions and for annual reports. The work is guided by four Core Charter Performance Questions that charter authorizers must answer — relying on key indicators of performance instead of rules and checklists — and that enable all authorizers, regardless of size, location, and finances, to achieve the highest standards of charter school authorizing.

Four Core Charter Performance Questions	
◇	Is the charter school’s educational program a success?
◇	Is the charter school financially viable?
◇	Is the charter school operating and governed effectively?
◇	Is the charter school serving public policy purposes?

The CA2.0 white paper also sets forth the following six Design Principles that guide the development of a high quality, transparent, and effective performance-based charter school authorizing system for California:

Six Design Principles for High Quality and Effective Charter Oversight	
○	The role of the authorizer is primarily regulatory.
○	The first level of oversight responsibility resides with charter school governing boards.
○	There are fundamental performance-based indicators of charter school quality that can be identified and measured.
○	The intensity of oversight is tied to the charter school’s results with respect to the Key Performance Indicators.
○	The authorizer communicates results of monitoring to the charter school, laying a foundation for future decisions.
○	Implementing the process for effective authorizing must be within the capacity of all entities that serve as authorizers.

Through CA2.0, CCAP aims to work with and help authorizers of all sizes and circumstances ensure that charter schools powerfully advance quality, equity, and access in California’s public education system as a whole. We invite you to read the white paper to understand our goals and — with your continued help — how we are pursuing them.



AB 1505 Update: Development of Implementation Regulations

Courtney de Groof, Edward Sklar, Erin M. Hamor, and CCAP

More guidance is in the works for authorizers on the changes that [Assembly Bill 1505](#) made to California's charter school system. At the [November meeting](#) of the State Board of Education (SBE), the California Department of Education (CDE) provided an update on the implementation of AB 1505, including the development of new proposed regulations that could provide some more guidance on details in AB 1505 that are not fully explained in the legislation

The CDE already has conducted stakeholder engagement to solicit input on proposed regulations, in which [CCAP participated](#). The Department anticipates presenting a regulatory package to the SBE at its January 13-14, 2021 meeting. At this point, it is unclear what specific regulatory language the CDE will propose to the SBE.

Over the past several months, authorizers have been working to revise their charter school policies and procedures to address AB 1505's provisions. This experience has raised many questions about the practical implementation of some of the changes the legislation made to the state [Charter Schools Act of 1992](#). While regulations may help to clarify and interpret how to implement these changes, some regulations may restrict an authorizer's exercise of discretion and have unintended consequences. In some cases, the absence of regulations actually affords authorizers more local discretion in shaping policies and procedures to implement AB 1505 in a way most appropriate for local circumstances.

For example, AB 1505 provides that an authorizer may grant a high-performing charter school a five-, six-, or seven-year renewal term, but the Legislature did not include specific criteria for when a five-year renewal term, as opposed to a longer one, is appropriate. As it's currently written, authorizers have the discretion to determine the renewal term for a high-performing charter school. A detailed regulation on this point could strip authorizers of this discretion.

AB 1505 also requires that if an authorizer's denial of a petition is appealed, and the petition on appeal is found to contain different "material terms" than the petition as denied, it must be "remanded," or returned back to the authorizer that denied it.

For example, the county board must immediately remand the petition to the district governing board for reconsideration if the petition as submitted to the county board contains new or significantly different terms than it did when the district board rejected it. The district governing board must then grant or deny the petition within 30 days. However, the Act is silent as to the specific procedures for triggering this 30-day timeline, and regulation might clarify when the 30-day timeline begins for the district governing board to grant or deny the remanded petition.

Another question that authorizers have raised is when to consider two new bases to deny an existing charter school's petition for certain material revisions to its original charter. AB 1505 now provides that an authorizer may consider the community interest or fiscal impact of a proposed "expansion" that constitutes a material revision. But the statute does not clearly define what constitutes such an "expansion." A regulation might provide such clarification.

It is unlikely that the SBE regulations will cover all of the questions raised regarding the implementation of AB 1505. Therefore, whatever happens with the regulations, authorizers will need to think about how to address the questions raised by AB 1505's amendments to the Act.

Request for Input from Authorizers and Other Stakeholders

CCAP recently convened authorizers to discuss your priorities for areas where additional regulatory guidance would be helpful, what those provisions might say, and any thoughts you had regarding areas in which you may prefer not to see additional regulations. The proposed draft regulations are expected to be presented to the SBE at its January meeting and, if approved, would then go to the 45-day public comment period.

CCAP intends to submit comments and encourages you to contribute additional thoughts or questions now and/or after the draft regulations are published. Please reach out to Executive Director Tom Hutton at tom.hutton@calauthorizers.org. CCAP welcomes input from all authorizers and from other stakeholders and, as always, is especially interested in input from smaller authorizers.

Board Member Spotlight



Corey Loomis

[Corey Loomis](#)' public school career was on a “traditional path,” as he describes it, starting as a teacher before making the jump to a school administrator. He was a high school principal in the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District when the road came to a fork. He took both pathways.

Loomis, in his other role, as a father, became a founding parent of a K-8 charter school that his children attended called Inland Leaders Charter School. “I think all parents like to have choices and we all like to have better choices, and in this particular school, the numbers, the data, were definitely outperforming the local schools,” he explained. “Beyond that, though, is really the heart and kind of intent behind charter schools of reform. That’s really where my true passions lie.”

A few years later, Loomis left the district to become director of educational services at Inland Leaders, overseeing curriculum and instruction, teacher professional development, and special education. Being on the inside transformed his perception of charter schools from something that seemed like a good idea in concept to a tangible means of providing education differently and more effectively. “I was a believer, kind of on the sidelines up until then, but now I’m more of a firm believer in the power of charter schools than ever before,” said Loomis.

His passion for the work and his expertise in charter schools took Loomis to the Riverside County Office of Education where, four years ago, he became director of the charter schools unit, overseeing all 12 charter schools— enrolling about 14,000 students — that are authorized by the County Office of Education. (Another 10,000 students in the county attend 19 charter schools authorized by local school districts.)

Becoming an authorizer gave Loomis new insights into the importance of quality authorization in developing quality charter schools. He also realized that with the exception of the state’s largest authorizers, which are already working at a high level, such as Los Angeles and San Diego Unified School Districts and their county offices of education, most California authorizers are small or oversee few schools or both. Therefore, they

don't have as many resources and deep experience with authorizing. These challenges led him to become involved in CCAP; he joined the Board two and a half years ago.

“We’re trying to help small authorizers, in particular, providing them with resources, templates, training, and what we’re calling our toolkits to help them embed best practices in higher-quality authorizing,” explained Loomis. These materials are under development –with the active participation of authorizers from across California– through CCAP’s recently launched project Charter Authorizing 2.0: Advancing Equity and Access Through Quality Authorizing (CA2.0).

But some authorizers need a different level of assistance, Loomis acknowledges. “They simply don’t have the bandwidth and the capacity, some of those people have to wear multiple hats.” For them, CCAP is providing “office hours” for individual authorizers to call or email for one-on-one assistance.

As CCAP fine-tunes its resources and broadens its reach in California, Loomis says the organization is also collaborating with larger authorizers to identify best practices and is reaching out to the state department of education to discuss partnering in professional development and training for authorizers.

“Our goal,” said Loomis, “is to both influence authorizers and provide influence at the state level to help standardize best practices in California.”



State Board of Education approves some verifiable data flexibility under AB 1505

An outpouring of [letters](#) and calls from CCAP and other charter authorizers and education organizations persuaded the State Board of Education (SBE) to approve additional data sources that charters can use to measure academic performance and growth required for charter renewal and to provide additional clarification on the use of data.

At its [November 6 meeting](#) (see agenda item 14), the SBE unanimously approved an amended verified data policy allowing authorizers to use the [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress](#) (CAASPP), albeit with some caveats, in addition to the [California School Dashboard](#) for evaluating charter school

performance.

[AB 1505](#) (Chapter 486, Statutes of 2019) requires the SBE to set specific criteria for charter school petitions and renewals.

Upcoming Events

January 15-18, [International School Choice and Reform Conference](#) (ISCRC)

January 27-28, [2021 Superintendents' Symposium Live Online Event](#) (ACSA)

February 3-4, [Every Child Counts Symposium Live Online Event](#) (ACSA)

February 24, [Authorizing for All: Envisioning Authentically Equitable Practices](#) (NCSI)

March 15-19, [California Charter Schools Association Virtual Conference](#) (CCSA)

March 23-27, [California Association of Bilingual Education Virtual Annual Conference](#) (CABE)



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