



**ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**Staff Report Findings of Fact and Recommendations**  
**California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County**  
**September 23, 2025**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes the review conducted by Orange County Department of Education staff regarding the petition submitted by CRLA Southern California to establish California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County as a countywide charter school. The report also provides staff's recommendations for consideration by the Orange County Board of Education (the Board).

Pursuant to Education Code section 47606.6, the Board must take action to either grant or deny the charter within 90 days of its receipt unless the timeline is extended by up to 30 additional days by mutual agreement. Board action is scheduled for the October 8, 2025, regular meeting.

Based on the review, including a clarification meeting held with petitioners on September 11, 2025, Orange County Department of Education staff recommend approval of the California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County countywide charter petition.

**II. BACKGROUND**

On July 17, 2025, the Board received a petition proposing to establish California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County as a countywide charter school. CRLA Southern California, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, currently operates two charter schools authorized by the Orange County Board of Education. California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County proposes to begin serving students in grades transitional kindergarten through grade twelve in the 2026-27 academic year.

On September 3, 2025, the Board held a public hearing to consider the provisions of the petition and to receive public comment regarding the level of support from teachers, parents/guardians, and school districts where facilities are proposed.

**III. LEGAL STANDARD**

The Charter Schools Act reflects a legislative preference for charters locally authorized by the district in which they operate. A county board of education may only approve a countywide charter school if it makes specific threshold findings, in addition to the legal standards and criteria under Education Code section 47605.6(b)(1)-(5). Specifically:

“A county board of education may approve a countywide charter only if it finds, in addition to the other requirements of this section, that the educational services to be provided by the charter school will offer services to a pupil population that will benefit from those services and that cannot be served as well by a charter school

that operates in only one school district in the county.” Education Code §47605.6(a)(1)

Additionally, Education Code section 47605.6(b) states:

“A county board may grant a charter for the operation of a charter school under this part only if it is satisfied that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational practice and that the charter school has reasonable justification for why it could not be established by petition to a school district pursuant to Education Code section 47605.”

Education Code section 47605.6(b)(1)-(7) states that a county board shall deny a petition for the establishment of a charter school if it finds one or more of the following:

- (1) The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.
- (2) The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.
- (3) The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a).
- (4) The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in subdivision (e).
- (5) The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of the required elements under Education Code section 47605.6.
- (6) The petition does not contain a declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public-school employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.
- (7) Any other basis that the county board of education finds justifies the denial of the petition.

If the Board denies a countywide charter petition, there is no appeal to the State Board of Education (5 CCR § 11966.5). Petitioners may instead submit a petition to the local school district under Education Code section 47605.

#### **IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County charter petition and all related information received concerning the charter petition were reviewed and considered, including information presented at the public hearing. The California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County charter petition meets the standards outlined in Education Code 47605.6. The educational

program to be provided by the charter school will offer services to a pupil population that will benefit from those services and cannot be served as well by the charter school that operates in only one school district in the county.

**V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Orange County Department of Education staff recommend that the Board approve the CRLA Southern California petition to establish California Republic Leadership Academy Orange County as a countywide charter school for a term of five years from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2031, and approve the standard Agreement that delineates the operational relationship between the parties with an understanding that the charter school will enter into said Agreement by March 2026.

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