



ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Staff Report and Recommendation Excel Academy Charter School-Irvine – Appeal Petition July 21, 2026

Executive Summary

Excel Academy Charter School-Irvine filed an appeal with the Orange County Board of Education (“Board”) following the Irvine Unified School District’s denial of its charter petition.

The Orange County Department of Education (“OCDE”) reviewed the petition, supporting documentation submitted with the appeal, the administrative record, and information presented during the public hearing and clarification meeting. Based on that review, OCDE staff recommends that the Board approve the appeal petition for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2031.

Background

On February 2, 2026, Excel Academy Charter Schools submitted to IUSD, a petition to establish Excel Academy Charter School-Irvine within the boundaries of IUSD. The petition proposes a nonclassroom-based charter school serving students in transitional kindergarten through grade twelve.

On May 19, 2026, IUSD unanimously denied the petition. IUSD’s denial of the petition was not made pursuant to Education Code section 47605(c)(8).

On May 22, 2026, the Board received the appeal and conducted a public hearing on July 8, 2026, to consider the level of support for the petition by parents and employees of the school district.

OCDE staff conducted a clarification meeting with representatives of the petitioner on July 1, 2026, to confirm staff’s understanding of the petition.

Legal Standards

Education Code section 47605(k)(1)(A)(i) authorizes a county board of education to review a charter petition following denial by a school district governing board in accordance with the requirements of Education Code section 47605(b) and (c).

Education Code section 47605(c) provides that a charter petition for the operation of a school shall be granted if the Board is satisfied that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational practice and with the interests of the community in which the charter

school proposes to locate. In making its determination, the Board shall consider the academic needs of the pupils the charter school proposes to serve.

The Board may deny the petition only by making written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts supporting one or more of the grounds identified in Education Code section 47605(c).

Staff Analysis

Excel Academy Charter School–Irvine ("EACS-Irvine") will be operated by Excel Academy Charter Schools ("EACS"), a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corporation. EACS currently operates two charter schools: Excel Academy Charter School–Warner, authorized by the Warner Unified School District in San Diego County, and Excel Academy Charter School–Helendale, authorized by the Helendale School District in San Bernardino County.

EACS-Irvine proposes to operate as a nonclassroom-based charter school serving transitional kindergarten through grade 12.

Staff determined that the appeal was timely filed, does not contain new or different material terms from the petition submitted to the Irvine Unified School District, and includes the affirmations required by Education Code section 47605(e).

Based on its review of the petition, supporting documentation submitted with the appeal, and information presented during the public hearing and clarification meeting, staff determined that the petition satisfies the requirements of Education Code section 47605 and did not identify any statutory basis for denial under Education Code section 47605(c).

Recommendation

OCDE staff recommends that the Board approve the charter petition on appeal for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2031.

If the Board approves the petition, OCDE staff will work with the charter school to execute the Board-approved Agreement as directed, but no later than before charter operations begin.

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