



## **ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **Staff Report Findings of Fact and Recommendations**

**Samueli Academy**

**January 16, 2026**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to summarize findings resulting from a comprehensive review of the renewal charter petition for Samueli Academy, conducted in accordance with Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2, and to provide recommendations for consideration by the Orange County Board of Education (the Board).

### **II. BACKGROUND**

Samueli Academy is a countywide charter school serving grades seven through twelve with a single location within the boundaries of the Garden Grove Unified School District in city of Santa Ana. The Board approved the Samueli Academy countywide charter petition for a five-year term from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2023. Pursuant to statutory extensions codified in law, the current charter term was extended through June 30, 2026.

On November 21, 2025, Samueli Academy submitted a renewal charter petition. The Board held a public hearing on January 7, 2026, on the provision of the charter petition and to consider the level of support for the school by teachers employed by the school district, other employees of the school district, and parents.

### **III. LEGAL STANDARD**

A chartering authority may grant one or more subsequent renewals to a charter school pursuant to Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2. Charter renewals and material revisions of charters are governed by the standards and criteria described in Education Code section 47605, and shall include, but are not limited to, a reasonably comprehensive description of any new requirements of charter schools enacted into law after the charter was originally granted or last renewed.

In evaluating the renewal petition, the Board shall consider the school's fiscal and governance performance and whether the school is serving all pupils who wish to attend. The chartering authority shall consider the performance of the charter school on the state and local indicators included in the California School Dashboard, giving greater weight to performance on measurements of academic performance. Additionally, the California Department of Education annually publishes a data file that provides the performance categories for all non-Dashboard Alternative School Status (non-DASS) charter schools for the purposes of charter renewal determinations.

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## IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Pursuant to Education Code sections 47607 and 47607.2, which establish a three-tiered performance framework for charter school renewal, Samuelli Academy falls within the middle performance category and is therefore eligible for a five-year charter term. The findings summarized in this report identify areas requiring corrective action and may be addressed through an Agreement between the parties or alternatives, may serve as a basis for denial should the Board deny the renewal.

### A. Teacher Credential Concerns

Education Code Section 47605(l)(1) requires that teachers employed by a charter schools hold the appropriate certificate, permit, or other credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the assignment they are teaching. Credential documentation must be maintained at the school site and is subject to periodic review by the chartering authority.

The California Statewide Assignment Accountability System (CALSAAS) is used to monitor assignment and credentialing compliance and identifies teachers who are not appropriately credentialed for their assigned positions. Teachers identified through CALSAAS are reported annually as “misassigned.” Since the implementation of CALSAAS in 2020, Samuelli Academy has had a total of 24 teachers reported as misassigned, with some individuals appearing in multiple reporting years, as summarized below.

- 2020–21: 2 teachers
- 2021–22: 6 teachers
- 2022–23: 8 teachers
- 2023–24: 4 teachers
- 2024–25: 4 teachers

During the current charter term, Samuelli Academy has received two notices of concern, and credentialing deficiencies have been cited in multiple annual oversight reports. At the time of this report, two credentialing issues remain unresolved. Staff continue to work collaboratively with the school to ensure that all certificated staff are appropriately credentialed for their assignments.

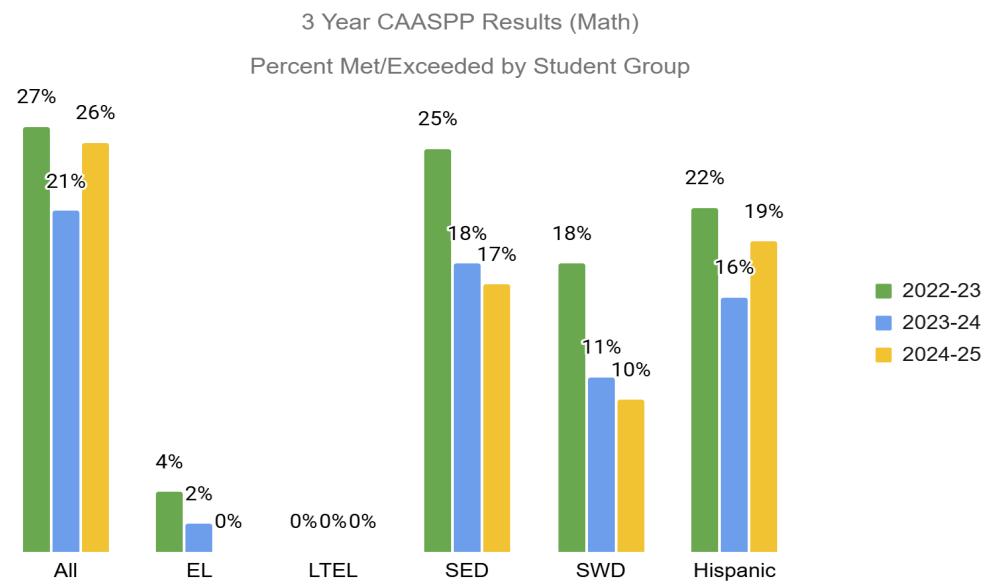
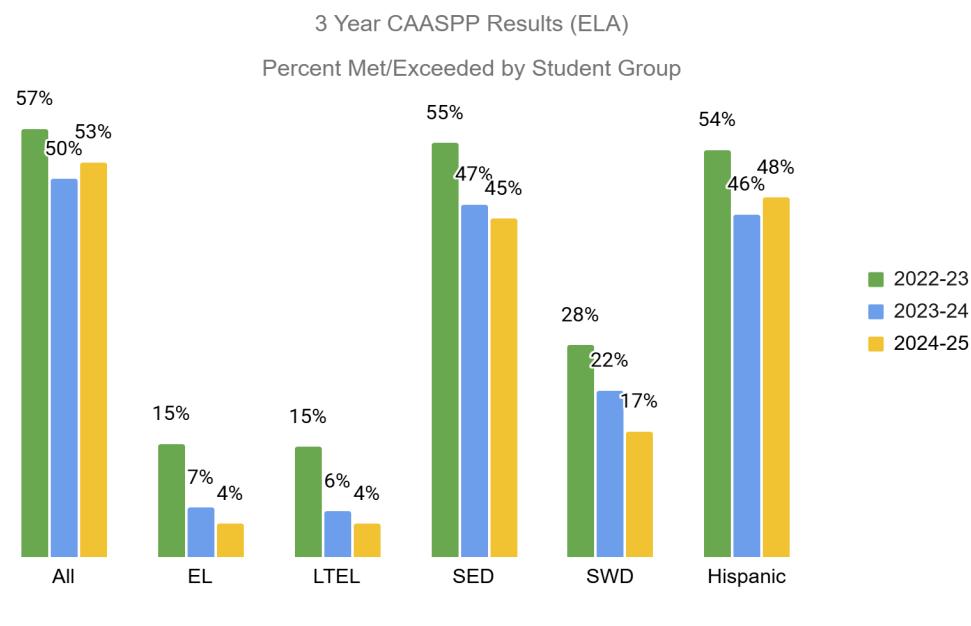
### B. Measurable Pupil Outcomes

Student achievement data reflect both areas of improvement and areas requiring continued attention. Samuelli Academy has demonstrated an upward trend in California School Dashboard performance colors, suggesting that instructional strategies and academic supports are contributing positively to student learning and growth.

Over the past three years, Samuelli Academy has outperformed the statewide average in CAASPP English Language Arts (ELA). However, during the same period, the percentage of English Learners (EL), Long-Term English Learners (LTEL), socioeconomically disadvantaged students

(SED), and students with disabilities (SWD) meeting or exceeding standards has declined. Furthermore, CAASPP results continue to indicate persistent challenges in mathematics. Both the school overall and the identified student subgroups (EL, LTEL, SED, and SWD) have performed below the state average in mathematics and have experienced a decline in proficiency rates.

### 3 Year Performance Data



### Current Year State Comparison

2024-25			2024-25		
CAASPP Comparison (ELA)			CAASPP Comparison (MATH)		
Student Group	(% Met/Exceeded)		Student Group	(% Met/Exceeded)	
	Samueli	State		Samueli	State
All	53%	49%	All	26%	37%
EL	4%	11%	EL	0%	11%
LTEL	4%	6%	LTEL	0%	3%
SED	45%	38%	SED	17%	27%
SWD	17%	17%	SWD	10%	13%
Hispanic	48%	39%	Hispanic	19%	26%

While the decrease in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards indicates that additional focus is necessary to support students in reaching proficiency, it does not negate the academic progress reflected in other performance indicators. Consistent with recommendations included in multiple oversight reports during the current charter term, the school should continue to analyze student achievement data and refine instructional strategies, with particular attention to EL, LTEL, SED, and SWD students, to accelerate growth and improve outcomes.

## **V. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Should the Board approve the Samuelli Academy countywide charter renewal, staff recommend that the following conditions be incorporated into the Agreement/MOU and completed within the timelines specified below:

### **A. Teacher Credential Concerns**

By April 13, 2026, the school shall submit a detailed corrective action plan describing the procedures it will implement to ensure ongoing compliance with Education Code section 47605(l)(1). The plan shall address historical credentialing deficiencies and include processes for verifying credentials prior to employment, maintaining accurate credential records, and regularly monitoring CALSAAS reports to resolve any identified misassignments within 30 days of notification.

### **B. Measurable Pupil Outcomes**

By April 13, 2026, the school shall submit a comprehensive academic growth plan addressing declining schoolwide proficiency rates and persistent weaknesses in mathematics. The plan shall include a specific focus on EL, LTEL, SED, and SWD subgroups and incorporate measurable

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goals, defined timelines, and targeted strategies informed by ongoing analysis of student achievement data.

## **VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Orange County Department of Education staff recommend that the Board approve the Samueli Academy charter renewal petition with conditions for a five-year term from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2031. Approval of the renewal would require execution of an Agreement no later than the Board's regularly scheduled meeting in May 2026 to define the operational relationship between the parties, address the findings identified in this Staff Report, and establish timelines for completion of the required conditions. These conditions are intended to remedy identified deficiencies in teacher credentialing compliance and student achievement outcomes, ensure alignment with applicable Education Code requirements, and support improved academic performance for all student subgroups.

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