

Downtown Charter Academy

Material Revision Proposal

Presented to OUSD Board of Education



Amethod Public Schools Mission Statement



Our mission is to provide a **rigorous college preparatory education** and **character development** program that will **prepare students from underserved communities** to succeed in college and beyond.

Rationale for Material Revision



Amethod proposes the merger of Oakland Charter Academy (OCA) and Downtown Charter Academy (DCA). Amethod will formally close OCA and submits this material revision for DCA to accommodate this merger and closure.

What is Proposed

Establish a **one-year** enrollment preference for students displaced by the closure of Oakland Charter Academy.

Increase in DCA enrollment for 2026-27 to accommodate OCA students who wish to attend DCA

Preference applies only to the **2026-27 enrollment cycle (DCA comes back to OUSD for renewal for 2027-32)**

Why This Matters

Builds on a **stable and high performing program** at DCA to increase academic opportunity for OCA students

Increases **student diversity** at DCA

The merger creates a more **sustainable financial model** and **increases resources** for facility improvements and student programming

Addresses the declining enrollment of students across the city by **closing a school**

Proposed changes ONLY for 2026-27



Revised Lottery Preferences

- | | | NEW: 1 Year Only |
|----|---|------------------|
| 1. | Students displaced from Oakland Charter Academy | |
| 2. | Siblings of existing students at DCA | |
| 3. | Students enrolled in the prior grade level of another Amethod Public Schools charter school | |
| 4. | Children of DCA teachers and staff (not to exceed 10% of total enrollment) | |
| 5. | Students experiencing homelessness (McKinney-Vento) | |
| 6. | Residents of Oakland Unified School District | |
| 7. | All other students | |

Enrollment increase of 95 students to accommodate OCA rising 7th graders and 8th graders who choose to enroll at DCA

Impact at DCA with OCA merger/closure



Oakland Charter Academy

222

Students
Grades 6-8

88.3%

Hispanic/
Latino

52.9%

English
Learners

82.1%

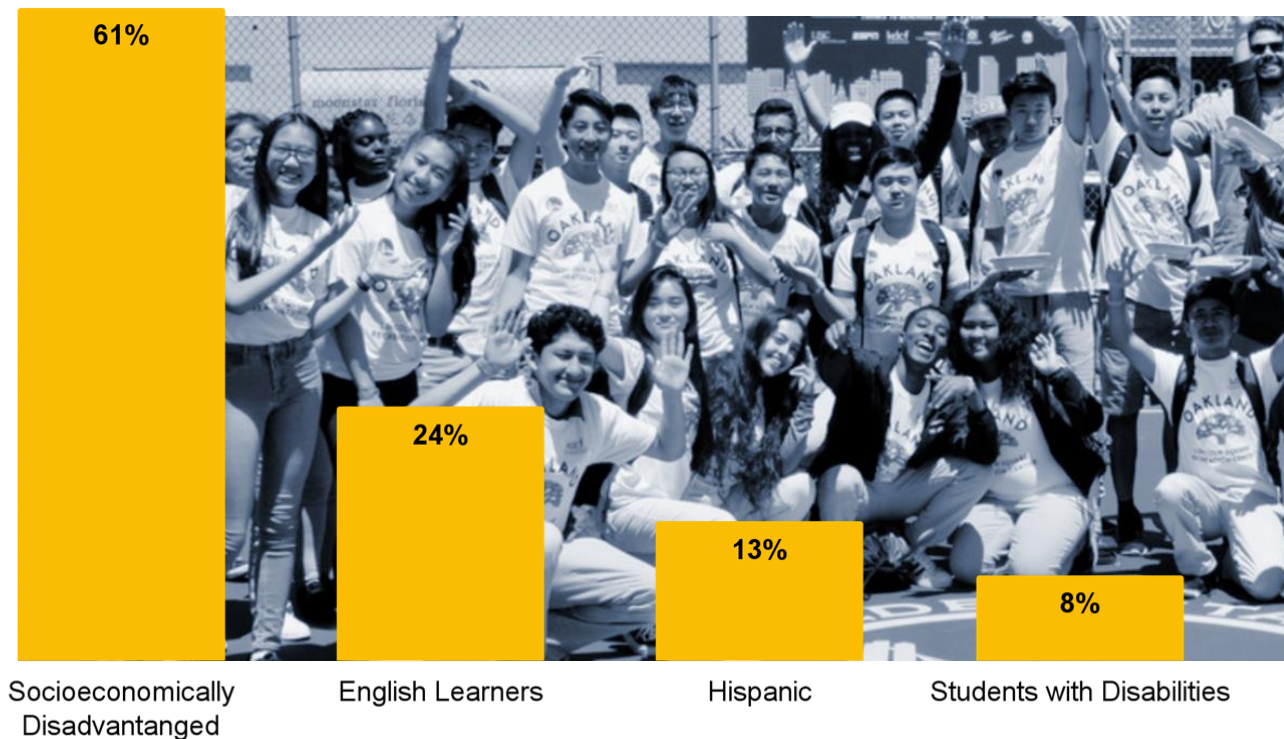
Socioeconomically
Disadvantaged

DCA and OCA Geographic and Mission Alignment

- ❖ Both serve East and Central Oakland neighborhoods (Fruitvale, San Antonio, Eastlake)
- ❖ Both serve predominantly working-class, multilingual families
- ❖ Both committed to rigorous, college-preparatory education
- ❖ Both share commitment to equity and access for underserved communities

| Student Group | DCA Current | DCA Projected with OCA students |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Hispanic/Latino | 13% | 30-32% |
| English Learners | 24% | 30-32% |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 61% | 66-68% |

We are building on a strong academic program at **Downtown Charter Academy** with a record of success and powerful academic outcomes.



Great!
SCHOOLS.org **10**/¹⁰

BEST
MIDDLE SCHOOLS
U.S. News
A WORLD REPORT
RANKINGS

DCA ranks in the top 10% of the 2025 U.S. News & World Report's Best California Middle School Rankings.

On the 2024 CA dashboard, DCA outperformed CA in all areas



California School DASHBOARD

Downtown Charter Academy qualifies as a 'high-performing' school under AB 1505. In the most recent CA Dashboard release, DCA outperformed the state for every color indicator.

| 2023 CA Dashboard | | |
|---------------------|----------|--------|
| | DCA | State |
| Chronic Absenteeism | Orange ↓ | Yellow |
| ELA | Green ↑ | Orange |
| Math | Blue ↑ | Orange |
| ELPI | Green ↑ | Yellow |
| Suspension | Blue ↑ | Orange |

| 2024 CA Dashboard | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|
| | DCA | State |
| Chronic Absenteeism | Blue ↑ | Yellow |
| ELA | Blue ↑ | Orange |
| Math | Blue ↑ | Orange |
| ELPI | Blue ↑ | Orange |
| Suspension | Blue ↑ | Green |

↑ = color better than state ↓ = color worse than state

DCA's capacity and readiness to incorporate OCA students



Academic Excellence

- ❖ 73% ELA, 72% Math proficiency (CAASPP 2023-24)
- ❖ Rigorous college-preparatory curriculum

English Learner Support

- ❖ 90.9% of EL students making progress
- ❖ Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- ❖ Designated and Integrated ELD programs

Fiscal Stability

- ❖ Strong financial reserves
- ❖ Sustainable budget model
- ❖ Multi-year budget projections show growing financial sustainability

Operational Readiness

- ❖ Adequate facility capacity for expansion
- ❖ Safe, well-maintained facilities at 2000 Dennison Street.



AMPS has made significant progress in addressing issues with financial oversight and governance



New finance team

- CEO with significant charter finance expertise, Charter Impact back office support,, experienced former CMO CFO advisor, and a new auditor in place
- Conduct weekly trainings for the finance team.



Internal audit

- Identified gaps in policies, systems, practices, and staffing.
- Cleaned up financial reports for all late parcel tax, 401(k) and the FY24 audit.
- All audits completed and FY25 audit on track



Comprehensive action plan

- CEO, legal counsel, and advisor developed a comprehensive action plan to address financial management weaknesses
- Nepotism Policy implemented
- New Chief of Staff responsible for organizational compliance



Ongoing

- Continue board training; recruit one more board member to complete 7-member board
- Implement stronger internal budgeting process for schools
- Develop a Home Office org chart that better aligns with org priorities
- Building a talent strategy



New policies and systems

- AMPS updated its board and operational fiscal policies with:
- Financial reporting calendar
 - Monitoring procurement and contracting
 - Tracking system for restricted funds expenses
 - Cash management policy



New board

- Governance training for full board
- Ongoing governance training
- New board fiscal policies
- **All board members from December 2024 have resigned, and there are 6 board members with expertise in charter management, charter finance, and school governance.**

AMPS has recruited a professional board with decades of experience in financial oversight and charter school management

Rodolfo Ornelas

- Currently coaches principals and site leaders at OUSD
- Has served on several charter network and school boards
- Former HS principal and teacher in both charter and district schools

Jorge Lerma

- Former OUSD school board director
- Former preK-12 teacher and administrator
- Co-chair of Latino Educational Network

Margie DiGiorgio

- Currently CAO at Griffin Technology Academies in Vallejo
- 20+ years as teacher and administrator in site-based and independent study schools
- Served on several charter school boards

Peter Hanley

- 5 terms on the San Mateo Union High School District Board, 5 times as president
- Served on AMPS board for 5 years previously
- Has been on several charter boards and worked for CCSA

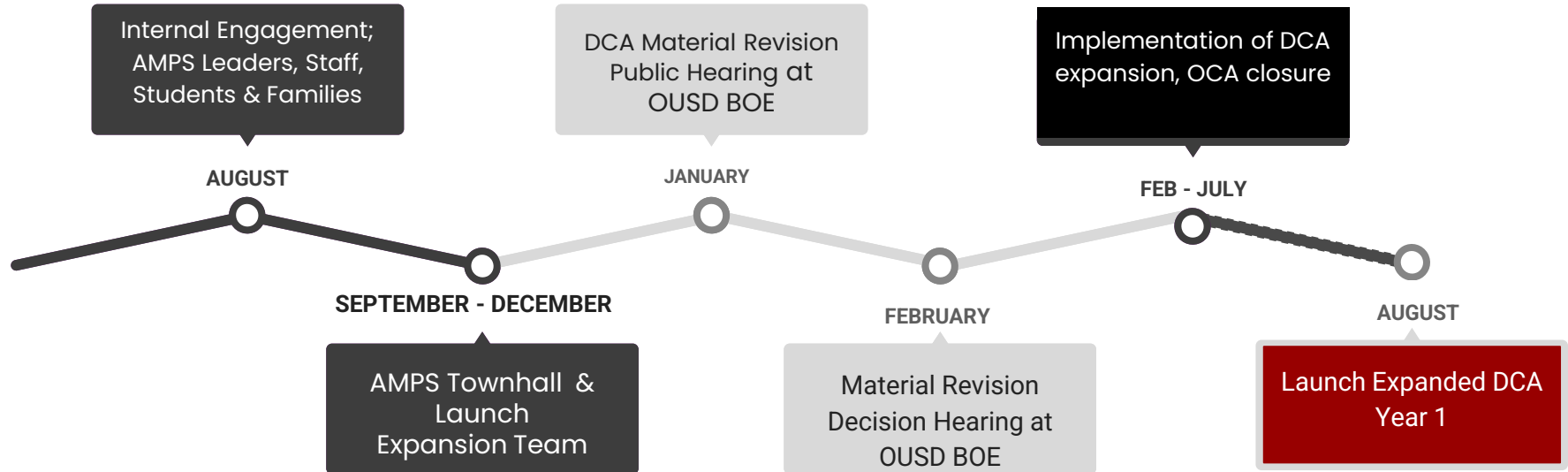
Davis Leung

- Background in accounting with decades of C-level experience in operational and financial management
- Served as board chair and finance chair for a charter school in Oakland

Elizabeth Martinez

- COO of Making Waves Charter Academy
- 7+ years of experience CMO leadership

Timeline of activities for DCA expansion and OCA closure



Alignment with OUSD Goals



OUSD Equity and Access Priorities

- ❖ Supporting historically underserved student populations
- ❖ Ensuring continuity of education during school transitions
- ❖ Expanding access to high-quality public education
- ❖ Serving English Learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities with excellence

DCA's Partnership Commitment

- ❖ Transparent collaboration with OUSD Office of Charter Schools
- ❖ Full compliance with district policies and reporting
- ❖ Participation in district-wide initiatives
- ❖ Serving Oakland with demonstrated excellence

Community Benefit

- ❖ Stable, high-quality option for displaced families
- ❖ Maintains educational continuity
- ❖ Expands diversity and maintains excellence
- ❖ Supports equity and student success

DCA is committed to being a strong, transparent partner in OUSD's mission to provide excellent education for all Oakland students.

Summary of Key Points



DCA's Strong Performance

- ❖ **Blue Dashboard** ratings in ELA, Math, and English Learner Progress
- ❖ **73% ELA** proficiency, **72% Math** proficiency (2023-24)
- ❖ **90.9% of English Learners** making progress (Blue rating)
- ❖ Proven success serving underserved student populations

Equity Impact

- ❖ Moves DCA demographics closer to OUSD averages
 - **Hispanic/Latino: 13.1% → 29-32% (OUSD: 47.3%)**
 - **English Learners: 23.9% → 29-33% (OUSD: 32.9%)**
- ❖ Supports **educational continuity and equity** for displaced families

Temporary One-Year Preference

- ❖ One-year enrollment preference for **displaced OCA families**
- ❖ Applies only to **2026-27 enrollment cycle**
- ❖ Returns to **standard policy in 2027-28** and beyond
- ❖ Time-limited, transparent approach to school transition

Capacity and Readiness

- ❖ Strong **fiscal stability** and multi-year budget projections
- ❖ Adequate **facility capacity** to serve displaced students
- ❖ **Proven programs** for EL, SWD, and SED students
- ❖ AMPS has made significant improvements in financial oversight and governance

DCA respectfully requests OUSD Board approval of this material revision to serve OCA families with excellence and equity.

Downtown Charter Academy



Providing a **rigorous college preparatory education** and **character development** program that will **prepare students from underserved communities** to succeed in college and beyond.



**Thank
You**

Contact Information

Address

2000 Dennison St.
Oakland, CA 94606

Phone

(510) 535-1580

Website

dca.amethodschools.org