



BULLIS charter school
A CALIFORNIA K – 8 PUBLIC SCHOOL

June 19, 2019

The Honorable Jessica Speiser

Board President

Los Altos School District Board of Trustees

201 Covington Road

Los Altos, CA 94024

Dear Board President Speiser:

Joe Hurd, Chair of the Bullis Charter School ("BCS") Board of Directors (the "BCS Board"), has referred your May 28, 2019 letter regarding the status of the geographic preference (the "Preference") to me in my capacity as part of the team that negotiated the 2014 agreements.

The Preference was originally created to benefit those portions of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills that were within the Bullis-Purissima Elementary School attendance boundaries during the 2002-2003 school year. At one time, the Los Altos School District ("LASD") served that large area with four elementary schools, but closed them one-by-one over time until none remained. In 2003, when LASD closed the Bullis-Purissima Elementary School ("Bullis"), it then sought to enter into a long-term lease of the site now housing Gardner Bullis School to a third party. I believe all of us would agree in hindsight that it was a good thing that BCS supporters challenged that leasing effort and that LASD dropped the plan.

As you and your fellow Trustees probably recall, the addition of the Preference to BCS's status came only after quite a struggle. Indeed, after the Santa Clara County Board of Education ("SCCBOE") approved the Preference, LASD sued the SCCBOE, arguing that the Preference violated the law, but lost.

In the heavily-negotiated 2014 Facilities Use Agreement ("2014 FUA"), BCS agreed to "submit a redline petition or other documents required by Santa Clara County Board of Education seeking its approval to reduce the geographic preference as stated herein for the above five years," referencing the five school years beginning in 2015 and ending in 2020 (emphasis added). It was agreed that any change to BCS's charter would "be limited to that necessary to effectuate this provision." The preference-limiting paragraph begins by noting that the limitation is "[f]or the five years starting with the lottery for admission in the 2015-2016 school year.

The language above is clear. It is consistent not only with actual, but realistic, expectations. BCS agreed to limit the benefit of the hard-won provision, supported by a judge's ruling, that helps protect parts of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills from a future LASD board again leaving a large part of LASD – including the entire town of Los Altos Hills – with no public schools.

In return for reducing the Preference, BCS received tangible benefits from the negotiated FUA, namely the stability of known sites and facilities at a known cost--but only for a five-year period. Those benefits expire on June 30, 2019. It is only logical that the restriction on the Preference expires as well (it last applies to the lottery for enrollees for the school year ending June 30, 2020).





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Your May 28 letter also refers to the “broad public process” “around a long-term facilities agreement.” My fellow BCS Board members and I, along with the rest of the BCS community, had understood from prior public LASD Trustee statements that BCS Board members would be included as a part of this broad public process. As of the date of this letter, no one from LASD or its communications firm has contacted any representative from the BCS Board to participate. The BCS Board looks forward to engaging constructively in that process, including design, as befitting the other of two signatories to any long-term facilities agreement. Any such process should include only those who have the long-term best interests of both LASD and BCS at heart.

Let me close by noting that the BCS Board understands that LASD may wish to extend the prior limitation to the Preference to any future long-term agreement, and the BCS Board expects that such extension will be part of the negotiations between the two parties.

Sincerely yours,

Francis La Poll

