



ST. HOPE

Pipeline

November 15, 2007 Vol. VI No. 2

www.sthope.org

FINAL EDITION

There Is No Debate: Sac High's Charter Will Be Renewed

By Dana Gonzalez

On October 18, Sac High submitted a petition for charter renewal to the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) Board of Trustees. As is defined in state law, the process for renewal requires a public hearing to be held within 30 days of petition submittal and a decision to be rendered by the Board within 60 days. Sac High's public hearing was held on November 1. Over 300 students, parents, teachers, staff and community members came out to show their support, ten of whom had an opportunity to speak on behalf of the school including Councilmember Rob Fong, Buzz Oates and Bob Ceccatto of Wells Fargo. Only two people spoke in opposition to the charter renewal.



Sac High students stand proud in support of their school.

Sac High's approval hearing is currently scheduled for December 20. Under state law clear criteria exists for renewing charters: API Growth, State Rank, Similar Schools Rank or Comparison to District Schools. According to the law, a school's charter must be renewed if it meets just one of these four criteria. Sac High has met three; well exceeding the requirement for renewal.

Before St. HOPE stepped in Sac High had been identified as one of 24 "failing" schools and was facing potential state takeover. Academic achievement levels were among the lowest in the district and the learning environment was chaotic and unsafe. Over the last four years, Sac High under St. HOPE's leadership has made a significant, positive impact on student outcomes; documenting a value-added benefit to students. The School has created a safe, orderly, structured and disciplined learning environment complemented by a culture of high expectations and a college-going mindset. Academic achievement has steadily increased while disciplinary issues have steadily decreased. Four-year college acceptance rates have soared as have the numbers of students meeting University of California and California State University "a-g" college entrance requirements. The data below provides a snapshot of Sac High's key student achievement results:

- Sac High's Academic Performance Index (API) score increased 65 points over the last four years and is the highest in school history.
- Sac High was one of only three schools in SCUSD to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). West Campus and Rosemont were the other two.
- Sac High's combined California High School Exit Exam scores have increased 25% over the last four years.
- 79% of seniors met the UC/CSU "a-g" college entrance requirements in 2007.
- 70% of seniors were accepted to at least one four-year college or university. Seniors we accepted to over 60 different including Stanford, Berkeley and UCLA.
- Charter renewal is not about politics or rehashing past issues. It is about the facts and the facts are clear. There is no debate around Sac High's charter renewal. Sac High has undeniable results, as well as overwhelming parent and community support. More importantly, the school has met the criteria for charter renewal.



Joie (far left) with Barack Obama.

Sac High Alumna Speaks: Joie Harvey

By Lisa Serna-Mayorga

Last week Sac High alumna and former St. HOPE intern Joie Harvey sent an email to staff giving us just a small (but powerful) glimpse into her college experience. A graduate of the class of 2007, Joie attends UC Irvine and is enjoying every minute. Harvey writes: "Once again I love college. Today I went to my chemistry office hours and received some clarity on some concepts and after that I just have to say that I LOVE chemistry and I LOVE college. I love learning and I thank everyone who helped me get here. Without St. HOPE I would not have this new appreciation for science and learning. Oh, and I was chosen as one of 2 executive interns for the African Student Union board as well. I will be a freshman board member in the spring and a freshman on board is a big deal!!!"

Sac High Charter Renewal FAQs

Over the last four years, Sac High has made a significant, positive impact on student outcomes. For the next month we will document the value-added benefit to students as outlined below in the following frequently asked questions:

1. What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school usually created or organized by a group of teachers, parents and community leaders, or a community-based organization. It is usually sponsored by an existing local public school board or county board of education. Charter schools are generally exempt from most laws that apply to regular public schools. In exchange for this increased autonomy, charter schools are held much more strictly accountable than most non-charter public schools. Charter schools must meet all the student performance and operational goals listed in their charter, or their charter may be revoked.

2. How does Sac High's performance compare to other SCUSD schools?

- Sac High's 19 point API gain in 2007 was the third largest growth seen across the comprehensive high schools within SCUSD;
- Sac High was only one of three high schools within SCUSD to meet its AYP in 2007;
- Sac High's "a-g" course completion rate was better than the majority of SCUSD high schools in 2006 and is on track to be the highest in the District in 2007.

3. Does Sac High "cherry pick" its students?

No. Sac High welcomes all students. While some detractors posit that the school is "cherry picking" students, a review of two key data points (free and reduced meal eligibility and achievement scores of incoming students) clearly proves that this is not the case. The data illustrates that we are serving a population of students reflective of those most impacted by the achievement gap. Not only do we openly embrace these young people, our mission as a school is in service to these students.

Barack Obama Invites Sac High Students to Bay Area Event

Nearly 100 Sac High students accepted a personal invitation from presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama to volunteer at a fundraising event scheduled for November 14th in San Francisco. Students will be responsible for meeting, greeting and checking in nearly 7,000 people at Wednesday's event. In August, Sac High students were invited by Obama to volunteer at a local fundraising event hosted by Mark Friedman (see front page photo). Kudos to Sac High students for making a great impression on Barack Obama!

Sac High Makes Playoffs for the First Time in 15 Years

Once again our Sac High Dragons defeated the McClatchy Lions at the annual "Bell Game" last Saturday. Stomping on the Lions 48 to 6, the Dragons secured their spot in the playoffs with this win for the first time in 15 years. Nearly 500 fans sat in the rain to cheer Sac High to victory as they defended their spot as the keeper of the bell for one more year.

Dragons Make Metro Team

Congratulations to five Sac High football players for making the 1st Team All Metro League. All Metro League players include Donovan Ford, Craig Reese, Marquis Palmer-Corbett, Spencer Teeple and Alonzo Brinkley. Come out and support the team this Friday as they play Granite Bay.

11/15 SCUSD Board Meeting

On Thursday, November 15th 500 Sac High students, teachers and parents are expected to pack The Serna Center to hear the staff recommendation on the location of the consent decree high school. An option we are opposed to, the Sac High campus is one of four options for the new high school which means co-locating with Sac High. We encourage you to come out in support of Sac High this Thursday evening!

In the News

November 14, 2007: Letters to the Editor

<http://www.sacbee.com/326/story/489295-p2.html>

November 14, 2007: Nonprofit Groups May Run Failing D.C. Schools, Rhee Is Weighing Several Options

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/13/AR2007111302210.html>

November 12, 2007: Sac High's big test

<http://www.sacbee.com/101/story/485590.html>