

Bond Case Briefs

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CHARTER SCHOOLS - CALIFORNIA

Napa Valley Unified School Dist. v. State Bd. of Education

Court of Appeal, Third District, California - March 14, 2025 - 110 Cal.App.5th 609 - 331 Cal.Rptr.3d 763 - 2025 Daily Journal D.A.R. 3072

School district and school boards association filed separate complaints and petitions for writs of mandate against State Board of Education, challenging Board's decision finding that school district board of education and county board of education abused their discretion in denying charter school proponent's petition to establish charter middle school.

The Superior Court granted petitions and issued peremptory writ of mandate commanding Board to set aside its decision. Charter school proponent appealed grant of both petitions, and appeals were consolidated.

The Court of Appeal held that:

- Evidence was insufficient to support finding that district board's process was unfair on basis that it was not in accord with statute prohibiting denial of petition unless board made written factual findings;
- Evidence was insufficient to support finding that district board's process was unfair on basis that board members prejudged charter school petition;
- Evidence was insufficient to support finding that district board's process was unfair on basis that board members did not consider evidence rebutting report by district board's, evidence presented at public hearing, or public comments favoring approval of petition;
- Evidence was insufficient to support finding that district board's process was unfair on basis that it "discredited" petition because lead petitioners were parents, and not experienced school administrators;
- Evidence was insufficient to support finding that county board's denial was ineffective on basis that it failed to make written factual findings;
- Proponent perfected submission of its petition no earlier than date it sent email to school district superintendent, thus, county board's denial of petition was timely; and
- Evidence was sufficient to support county board's factual finding that charter school was demonstrably unlikely to serve interests of community, as statutory grounds for denying petition.