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SB Charter School renewed with conditions

By ELIZABETH HAMILTON NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

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Santa Barbara Charter School will see another five years after its charter was renewed Tuesday following a unanimous vote by the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board of Education.

The vote came more than two months after the school submitted a petition for renewal in October and board members expressed concern about the school's lack of diversity and failure to implement Common Core standards.

On Tuesday, board members renewed the charter only on the condition that the school address diversity and transition into Common Core standards over the next three years.

Of particular concern to board members is under-representation of Latino families. Santa Barbara Charter admissions are based on a lottery system, so admissions cannot be tailored on the basis of race.

The revised charter includes a plan to provide transportation assistance to Latino families, bridge the language barrier between Latino students and English-speaking teachers and actively recruit Latino students. The school's goal is to increase the Latino student population by 10 percent per year.

Board members and Superintendent David Cash thanked Santa Barbara Charter's Bev Abrams, director of education, and David Weisman, director of operations, for their work revising the charter to meet the board's requirements.

More than a hundred charter school parents and students attended the meeting and cheered when the board voted to renew the charter.

"I just wanted to take a moment to stand in support of the incredible commitment of this school and the teachers and the parents," said Sidney Friedman, a charter school board member with a fifth-grade daughter. "I just want to say thank you to the school and commend my support of the renewal of the charter."

In other business, the board conducted its annual election of officers.

Former Vice President Kate Parker was elected president and member Edward Heron was elected vice president.

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