

Y guv'Eqpvtc'Equc'Wpklkgf 'Uej qqri'F kurtlev'

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Vj gtg'ctg'grgo gpvu'qh'vj g'f kurtlevu'öUqnwkwpu'Vgco ö'o qf gn'cu'y gm'cu'uko kurtkkgu'y kj 'Kpvtg'v' Dcugf 'Dcti cklkpi 0Rgqr ng'dtkpi 'ej cngpi gu'vj cv'vj g{ 'j cxg'hceg'f .qt'ej cngpi gu'vj cv'y gtg'dtqwi j v'vq" vj go 0Rgqr ng'eqo g'kp'cpf 'f kwuu'ej cngpi kpi 'r gqr ng.'uqo g'qh'vj go 'j cxg'dggp'cv'vj g'vcdng.'y g'j cxg' y qtngf "qwt'y c{ 'vj tqwi j 'vj g'r tqdngo u'y kj qw'wukpi 'cp{ 'eqmgi krtk{ 'co qpi 'vj g'i tqwr 0' Y g'o ggv'gxgt{ 'vj kf 'Vj wtuf c{ 'htqo "; co 'wpvki33co "cpf 'kpenwf gu'Vgco uvtu."UUC"cpf 'O cpci go gpv0' Rtkqt'vq'gcej 'o ggvkpi 'vj gtg'ku'c'ecm'htq'ci gpf c'kgo u.'kgo u'ctg'eqmgev'f'cpf 'dtqwi j v'kp'rtu'htqo "vq" vj g'o ggvkpi 0'Vj g'i tqwr 'r tkqt'kk' gu'vj g'ci gpf c'kgo u'cpf 'y g'f kwuu'vj g'o quv'ko r qtwcp'v'cpf 'vcdng' vj qug'y g'y gtg'pqv'cdng'vq'i gv'vq0'

Rwtr qug'qh'Xqllegu="vq'r tqxkf g'c'uchg'ur ceg'htq'r gqr ng'vq<"

30 f kwuu'kuwgu"

40 uj ctg'kf gcu"

50 ej cngpi g'ucwu's wq"

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Uqo g'qh'vj g'vqr leu'eqxgtgf <"

30 Uchl'kpi 'hgxnu"

40 Cdugpv'gk'uo "

50 Rc{ 'F k'htg'p'v'k'cu"

Uj qt'v'ku'qh'cee'qo r rkuj o gpw<"

30 K r tqxgf "eqo o wpk'ec'v'kp'dgwy ggp'rdqt'cpf "o cpci go gpv"

40 Wpklkgf 'w'p'f'gtuc'p'f'kpi 'qh'r tqegu'gu'cpf 'r tqeg'f'wtgu"

50 Hk'p'cik' gf 'cpf 'ko r ngo gpv'f'ci t'ggo gpv'htq'c'7' "k'pet'g'cug'htq'uci kpi 'f w'k'gu'k'p'eg'p't'c'ri'h'kej gp"

Y g'gplq'q' gf "eqpuk'v'gp'v'c'w'p'f'c'peg'htqo "cm'it'gr t'gug'p'v'k'x'g'i tqwr u0'Dg'wgt'vj cp'vj cv'y g'y gtg'cdng'vq" et'g'c'v'w'w'g'qh'qr g'p'p'gu'c'p'f'j' q'p'gu'v' 'cd'q'w'vj g'ej cngpi gu'h'cekpi 'vj g'H'q'q'f' 'U'g't'x'leg'F' gr ct'vo gpv0' Y g'ctg'xgt{ 'r tqw'f'qh'vj g'y q'tn'y g'y gtg'cdng'vq'f'q'v'ku'f' gct'cpf 'y g'ht'q'ni'htq'ty c'tf'v'q'y j cv'ku'r qu'k'dng' hqt'q'w'v'gco 0'Y g'lp'x'kg'f'q'w'vq'eqo g'c'p'f' 'dg'c'r ct'v'qh'q'w'i tqwr 'qt' 'l'w'v'x'k'uk'q'p'g'qh'q'w'o ggvkpi u0'Y g' dgi k'p'q'p'Ugr vgo dgt'34.'423; 'k'p'vj g'E'g'p't'c'ri'M'kej gp'E'q'p'ht'g'peg'T'q'qo 0'

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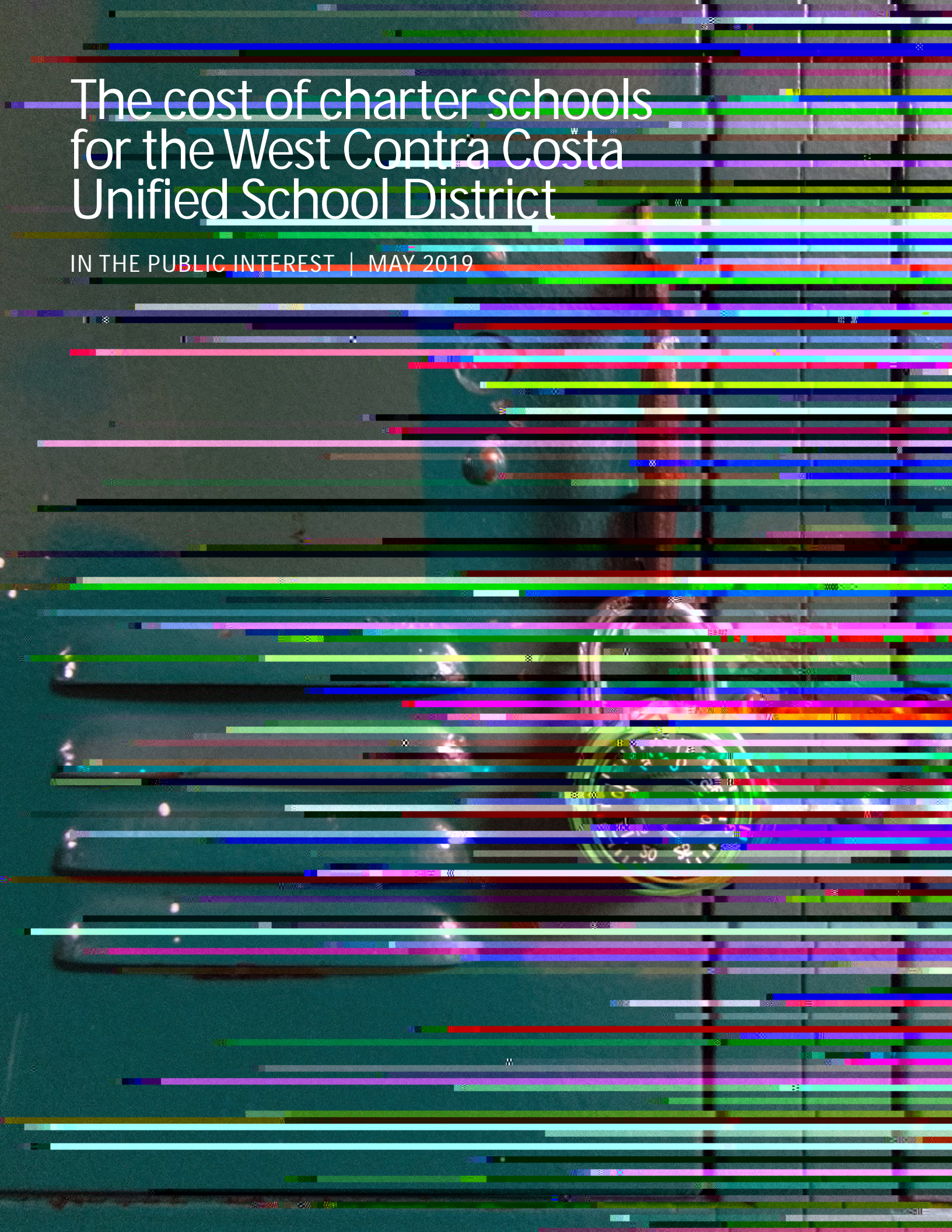
School	Grade Levels
Bayview ES	Phasing-out of TBE started in 2018

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The cost of charter schools for the West Contra Costa Unified School District

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST | MAY 2019



The cost of charter schools for the West Contra Costa Unified School District

Public school students in California's West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) are paying dearly for privately managed charter schools they don't attend. Unchecked charter school expansion in recent years has added to the cost of educating students who attend traditional public schools. This has increased pressure on the district to cut spending on academic tutoring, services for English learners, and more.

Charter schools add \$27.9 million a year to WCCUSD's costs of running its own schools, this study finds. That's a net loss, after accounting for all savings realized by no longer educating the charter school students. As a result, the district has \$978 less in funding for each traditional public school student it serves.

This previously unmeasured cost is a conservative estimate. The district faces additional fiscal pressures due to charter schools that are too difficult to measure, such as the inequitable proportion of state funding it receives for educating high-needs students.

This report follows a 2018 study by In the Public Interest revealing the cost of charter schools for three other California districts.¹ It was produced by In the Public Interest and

Special education and newcomer students

Our calculation—that charter schools impose a net cost on WCCUSD of \$27.9 million per year—is actually a conservative estimate. This is so partly because some of the



Impacts on students in West Contra Costa traditional public schools

Faced with a budget deficit, the WCCUSD Board of Education approved \$12.5 million in budget cuts in December 2018 eliminating 82 positions, closing an academic tutoring program, and cutting services for English learners.⁷ The board continues to debate cutting the number and/or pay rate of police officers who serve as school resource officers.⁸

The cost of charter schools exacerbates the district's budgetary dilemma and amounts to millions of dollars of lost potential for WCCUSD students. If the district weren't losing \$27.9 million per year, it could have improved the education of students in many ways. School Board Member Consuelo Lara shared that the district could restore "the things that we've had to cut which include graduate tutors, counselors, nurses, and intervention programs for students. But what we need most of all are services for our most needy students such as those experiencing homelessness, in foster care, and suffering from trauma, and the full-service community schools programs that would outreach to parents and provide services they need for their children to be successful, including parenting classes, help with housing or food banks or employment training, and other ways we could reach out to the community with home visits. We do have a challenging population, but we know how to help and serve them when we have all our resources. And, of course we would make sure our teachers are well compensated, hire the most qualified, and provide needed professional development."⁹

Policy recommendations

California law prevents school boards from considering budgetary or other impacts on the district when evaluating new charter school applications.¹⁰ Based on this report, which was designed to produce conservative cost estimates, we strongly recommend reforming the law so that decisions to authorize charter schools include analysis of real financial impacts. The California Charter School Act must be amended to empower elected officials at the district, county, and state levels to balance the potential value of charter schools against the needs of traditional public school students.

Additionally, every district should produce an annual report assessing the economic impacts of charter school expansion in its community. This data and analysis will be crucial for effective stewardship of education budgets for all students.

Methodology

To measure the fiscal impact of charter schools on West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), district staff—with support from In the Public Interest—used a template created by Dr. Gordon Lafer and In the Public Interest based on the methodology described in detail in *Budgetary Policy: California's Public Schools* (page 23).

The template tool is pre-loaded with all charter schools located in the district—whether they are authorized by the district or Contra Costa County—along with enrollment data both for those charter schools and for traditional public schools within the district. In addition, the template also uses Local Control Funding Formula data, together with data reported in charter schools' own financial reports, to determine how much revenue currently goes to charter schools that would otherwise be available to the district. All this information is provided automatically in the template, not by the district.

To complete the calculation using the template, district staff entered overall enrollment, and special education enrollment, for WCCUSD traditional and charter schools; the percent of charter students at each school who live within the boundaries of WCCUSD; current staffing levels and compensation of employee classifications which would—under current district practices—require increased staffing in order to serve additional students (specifically: Teachers, Assistant Principals, Counselors, Library Classified Staff, Campus Security Officers, Special Education Teachers, Special Education Instructional Assistants, Psychologists, Speech Therapists, and Occupational Therapists); and costs for books and supplies.

After district staff input this data, the template calculated how much additional revenue the increased enrollment of existing charter students into district schools would bring to the district, and how much it would cost to educate these additional students in traditional public schools. The difference between the revenue and cost is the net fiscal impact of charter schools on the district.

Endnotes

- ¹ Lafer, Gordon, "Breaking Point: The Cost of Charter Schools for Public School Districts," May 2018. https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/ITPI_Breaking_Point_May2018FINAL.pdf
- ² California Department of Education, 2018-19 Enrollment Multi-Year Summary for Charter and Non-Charter Schools, <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrCharterYears.aspx?cds=00&aggllevel=state&year=2018-19>.
- ³ California Department of Education, Charter School Closures, Fiscal Year 2016-17, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ch/chclosures1617.asp>.
- ⁴ Charters may draw students from multiple districts. We used the charter schools' own reports of student residence to ensure our cost calculations were based only on those who would otherwise be the responsibility of WCCUSD.
- ⁵ Detailed methodology is provided in "Breaking Point: The Cost of Charter Schools for Public School Districts," by Dr. Gordon Lafer for In the Public Interest, May 2018. https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/ITPI_Breaking_Point_May2018FINAL.pdf
- ⁶ Data provided by Nina Hochman, WCCUSD Multilingual and Multicultural Services/RAP Center.
- ⁷ "WCCUSD board approves \$12.5M in cuts," *Richmond Standard*, December 14, 2018. <https://richmondstandard.com/richmond/2018/12/14/wccusd-board-approves-12-5m-in-cuts/>
- ⁸ Edward Booth, Richmond Confidential, *Richmond Confidential*, March 22, 2019. <https://richmondconfidential.org/2019/03/22/graduate-tutors-still-threatened-by-school-district-budget-cuts/>
- ⁹ Interview with WCCUSD Board Member Consuelo Lara
- ¹⁰ California School Boards Association, *Charter Schools: A Manual for Governance Teams*, 2009.

Kennedy High special ed students finish another
beautiful vacation phase

