

STAFF SUMMARY

Staff Summary No. 9

Date: September 25, 2025

To: Members of the California School Finance Authority

From: Katrina M. Johantgen, Executive Director

Subject: Resolution No. 25-27 – Authorizing the assignment of Charter School Facilities Program (Ed. Code, §17078.52 et seq.) agreements from EJE Middle Academy (“EJE Middle”) to EJE Elementary Academy (“EJE Elementary”), and related actions, in connection with the merger of Middle into Elementary located in San Diego County

Background on EJE Academies: EJE opened its Elementary Academy in 2005 to offer a high-quality, social justice focused, dual-language education option in El Cajon for historically underserved students and their families at a time when these options were not available for these students. Because of the success of EJE’s Elementary Academy, and the demand of many families to continue their dual-language study beyond elementary school, four years following the opening of EJE’s Elementary Academy (EJE Elementary), EJE decided to take advantage of start-up grants available to new charter schools and opened a second charter school serving middle school students. Both schools are authorized by the Cajon Valley Union School District (District). According to information provided by the school, EJE Middle Academy (EJE Middle) was recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2023 by California’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond.

Both the EJE Elementary and the EJE Middle operate on the same site. They have been housed for many years on the site of the oldest school in the District, having been originally built in the 1950s. Working collaboratively with the District, EJE secured funding through the Charter School Facilities Program (Program) to modernize the facilities on the site and build a new school on the same site for the EJE Middle. *Both schools were found financially sound in May 2022 for purposes of a Final Apportionment under the Program.* Both are run by the same nonprofit – EJE – under the leadership of the same Executive Director.

The two schools were established with their own separate charter numbers, EJE has been maintaining distinct accounting and records to ensure regulatory and legal compliance, including duplicative audits, separate LCAPs, and dual compliance calendars which results in an administrative burden that diverts energy and resources from the classroom.

As the charters for both schools are up for renewal this year, EJE is proposing to use this opportunity to bring both charters under the same charter number, which will enable EJE to minimize duplicative administrative work and increase resources available to both schools.

The schools believe this change will make EJE stronger and have a neutral or actually positive impact on its CSFP agreements in place with both of its schools and the State. As is reflected by

the enclosed letter of support from the District (attached as Exhibit A), the District also sees this change as having a neutral or positive impact. We believe it will also ease certain administrative burdens for the District in terms of its oversight responsibilities.

Proposed Administrative Realignment: EJE Elementary Academy will submit a material revision to its charter to serve grades K-8. Upon approval of that revision by the Cajon Valley Union School District, EJE Middle Academy's charter will naturally lapse at the close of its current term. As the surviving charter entity, EJE Elementary Academy will assume all existing obligations under both Charter School Facilities Program Funding Agreements and related Use Agreements ("Funding Agreements"). All payment obligations and responsibility for the shared campus located at 851 S. Johnson Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020 will remain unchanged.

CSFA Consent: The Elementary Charter and Middle Charter are each party to the Program Funding Agreements. Section 3.6 of each of those Funding Agreements requires the Authority's consent when a charter school's interest or rights with respect to the funded facilities are assigned or when there is any transfer of control. Because the Elementary Charter will become the sole obligor under both Funding Agreements, the Authority's consent is essential.

Impact on Students and Community: According to information provided by the schools, the realignment will not affect students, staff, or curriculum. No one will be displaced, and our two-way immersion model will remain intact. Families will still drop off and pick up at the same campus. Our commitment to social-emotional learning, biliteracy, and the pursuit of educational equity remains unwavering.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the board approve Resolution No. 25-27 – Authorizing the assignment of Charter School Facilities Program (Ed. Code, §17078.52 et seq.) agreements from EJE Middle Academy to EJE Elementary Academy, and related actions, in connection with the merger of Middle into Elementary located in San Diego County. Once board approval is in place, the Executive Director will work with STO Legal Counsel to ensure that the assignment and related actions are carried out in the State's best interest.