



OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

December 14, 2021

Rich Harrison
Lighthouse Community Public Schools
433 Hegenberger Road, Suite 201
Oakland, CA 94621

Notice of Concern: Violation of Charter Admissions Policies and Procedures

Dear Rich Harrison,

This letter constitutes a Notice of Concern to Lighthouse Community Public Schools (“Lighthouse”) leadership for violating the Lodestar charter admissions policies and procedures. In particular, the charter school failed to follow their Admission Priorities as listed in their charter petition and as referenced below:

Admissions Priorities - Lodestar

1. *Siblings of enrolled and admitted students to keep families together*
2. *Children of Lodestar staff and LCPS Board Members (not to exceed 2.5% of total enrollment)*
3. *Students who are homeless/unsheltered during the time of enrollment or who become unsheltered while on the waiting list. [additional details provided in petition page 122]*
4. *Students who are currently enrolled in or who reside within the elementary school attendance area of the district's public elementary school(s) in which Lodestar is located*
5. *Students living in the 94621 or 94603 zip code*
6. *Students zoned to attend underperforming schools within OUSD in which 70% or more of students qualify for free and reduced lunch: to provide an equitable, high-quality public school option to Oakland students and families*
7. *Other prospective students residing within OUSD boundaries: as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B) and to serve as a public school option for students and families of Oakland*
8. *All other applicants.*

Issue 1: Madison Park Boundary

As shown above, the Lodestar charter petition states that students will be given preference in the respective school lottery if they are:

Students who are currently enrolled in or who reside within the elementary school attendance area of the district's public elementary school(s) in which Lodestar is located.

On August 4, 2021, the Office of Charter Schools was notified by Rich Harrison, CEO of Lighthouse Community Public Schools, that the above priority (“Madison Park Boundary”) was not applied appropriately to late applications during the admissions process for the 2021-22 school year. As a result, some students were not assigned this priority despite residing within the relevant boundary and may have consequently been denied admission to the school.

The issue described herein constitutes a violation of the charter petition admission policies and procedures. OUSD acknowledges and appreciates that Lighthouse was proactive in bringing this forward.

Through a conversation with Oakland Enrolls, the non-profit which manages the organization’s admissions process, OUSD determined the following: (1) this error was, in part, due to Lighthouse staff manually assigning the Madison Park Boundary priority tags; and (2) Oakland Enrolls has worked with Lighthouse to resolve this issue for the upcoming admissions cycle by automating the process by which students receive this priority.



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Issue 2: Unhoused Priority

On December 2, 2020, the Oakland Unified Board of Education approved a material revision to the Lodestar petition to revise the charter petition's admissions preferences to include priorities for homeless/unsheltered students. As shown above, the charter petition was revised to state that students will be given preference in the respective school lottery if they are:

Students who are homeless/unsheltered during the time of enrollment or who become unsheltered while on the waiting list.

On August 4, 2021, the OUSD Office of Charter Schools was notified by Rich Harrison that the above priority was not applied appropriately during the application process for the 2021-22 school year for neither Lodestar nor Lighthouse Community Charter School. As a result of this error, approximately 52 students across the two schools who should have received these priority tags did not receive the appropriate preference in the 2021-22 application process and may have consequently been denied admission to the school.

The issue described herein constitutes a violation of the charter petition admission policies and procedures. OUSD acknowledges and appreciates that Lighthouse was proactive in bringing this forward.

Through a conversation with Oakland Enrolls, OUSD determined the following: (1) this issue was caused by a software malfunction in SchoolMint and not by any actions taken by Lighthouse; and (2) In response to this issue, Lighthouse has already taken steps to mitigate the issue, including outreach to impacted students and families.

In addition to the steps already taken by Lighthouse, OUSD is requesting that Lighthouse takes the following actions:

- By January 21, 2022: Report the number of applicants and/or the number of students impacted by the issues outlined above during the 2021-22 school year and any steps already taken to mitigate and/or resolve the issues.
- By January 21, 2022: Confirm, in writing, that Lighthouse believes the issues described have been resolved for the 2022-23 school year.
- By January 21, 2022: Commit to performing additional checks throughout the 2022-23 application and lottery window to ensure both the Madison Park boundary priority and the homeless/unsheltered priority are functioning properly and to provide OUSD, in writing, with the details of how it is fulfilling this commitment.
- By March 31, 2022: Report the results of the lottery outcomes to the OUSD Office of Charter Schools. This report should include the number of students who applied on-time and the number of students who received an offer from each enrollment priority group.

Please provide written confirmation that Lighthouse will take the above steps to our office no later than Friday, January 7, 2022. Failure to comply with one or more of the requested actions, or repeated violations of a similar nature, may result in the District issuing a Notice of Violation under Education Code §47607(d).

Sincerely,

Madison Thomas
Policy and Compliance Specialist, Office of Charter Schools

cc: Kimi Kean, Board Chair
Sonali Murarka, Executive Director, Office of Charter Schools