



Date: April 22, 2019

To: Board of Directors

Submitted By: Kirsten Carr, Director of Engagement & Partnerships

Subject: Growth Update **Agenda Item Type:** Informational, Discussion

Objective(s):

- 1) To provide the Board with a current status report on growth opportunities and updated greenlighting metrics to achieve the board approved strategic plan.
- 2) The Board will provide feedback to modify the strategic plan to reflect the areas of largest need and revised timeline.

Overview

Navigator's board-approved impact statement had Navigator growing to five schools within a geographically defined Northern Central Coast region by 2022. The combination of a long and more contentious process to open WPS with the changing political dynamics in California necessitates a thorough review of both the area of growth as well as the steps needed to ensure a successful petition.

Key questions for staff and the board to consider include:

1. What does growth mean? Has our vision of impact changed since the board approved the strategic plan?
2. How will we achieve our objectives?
3. What are the most viable partner districts for a 4th Navigator school? Why? Is there a timeline?
4. How will we achieve our objectives? What do we need? Staff? Resources?
5. How do we dissemination and growth go together?
6. Are there risks for pursuing growth? What are they? How do we mitigate them?
7. What are the financial implications of not growing?

1. What does growth mean? Has our vision of impact changed since the board approved the strategic plan?

- a. The simple answer is growth means fewer students in the area are attending schools which are not preparing them for success in the future. The ability to positively impact more students drives staff to find opportunities for Navigator involvement.
- b. The current impact statement has Navigator growing to five TK-8 schools, serving 2,825 students, at least 75% of whom are low-income across the geographic region designated the Northern Central Coast. This region was determined by both local need and proximity to the support office and current school sites. The pathway to a local authorization was not as crucial as the charter-friendly State Board of Education provided a safe backstop for approval. As we all know, however, elections have consequences and the changing political climate in California is making a positive local authorization pathway a necessity. And, while the need of students in the region is still the same, the pathway to a sure local authorization is not clear.
- c. To meet the intense need, staff proposes extending the geographic region to increase chances of partnering with a supportive district authorizer.

2. How will we achieve our objectives?

- a. The board-approved green lighting plan included detailed plans to reach the goal of five schools. As shared with the board in previous reports, staff will be recommending modifications to the metrics to reflect the need to intensify our vetting process.
 - i. In reviewing the internal metrics, staff did not identify areas which need to change.
 - ii. External/New Market Criteria metrics to change:
 1. Pathway to authorization is viable at the local level
 2. Facilities pathways are viable

3. Are there districts with a high probability of success for partnership with Navigator?

- a. The Community Engagement team is working to create portfolios on 2-3 possible districts in the expanded region who both meet the external metrics and have a possible entree to establish a relationship. Staff is reviewing enrollment, district priorities, local connections, and community interest or support. To date, informal activities have included:
 - i. Tour of HPS by Alisal Union School District board member with another tour being scheduled

- ii. Conversations with guards from Soledad Correctional Facility interested in touring a Navigator site as they strive to find quality educational options for their children.
- b. The green lighting process includes a 24-month pathway which will be triggered when the board approves a specific community. As we did not launch the efforts for school four in time for a 2020 start, the 24 months would currently work for a 2021 opening.

4. How will we achieve our objectives? What resources do we need?

- a. “Regardless of circumstances” is the last line of our mission but it isn’t just referring to the circumstances of the students we serve. It captures the commitment Navigator has to increasing impact, for all students. In order to achieve this mission and meet the goals set forth in our strategic plan, Navigator is committed to creating a work plan with delineated resources and areas of responsibility.
- b. Charter School Growth Fund has shown its commitment to and interest in Navigator’s continued growth. Their financial support will help ensure Navigator is able to provide the staff resources needed to become integrated into the community we are hoping to serve.
- c. Navigator’s experience with parent involvement and engagement through the Innovate Community Engagement training has created a team of parent leaders who can help staff create a new team of parent leaders.
- d. As Navigator pursues both growth and dissemination, creating full teams dedicated to each of our three pillars (excellent schools, growing new schools, and expanding impact) will protect against diluting the support and efforts dedicated to those areas.

5. How do dissemination and growth go together?

As we heard at the State Board of Education hearing in January, Navigator’s commitment to sharing best practices with schools, in and outside of our authorizing districts, played a large role in board members’ decision to support Navigator. Being able to partner with a district through professional development and dissemination activities provides a less threatening way to get to know the Navigator model and its ability to positively impact students. As more schools serving a similar demographic to Navigator take on the model, the ability to show its positive effect will give us more credibility and eliminate the charge that Navigator doesn’t have a record of serving “all students”.

6. Are there risks for pursuing growth? What are they? How do we mitigate them?

- a. With any new opportunity there are risks to consider and whether or not the risks outweigh the benefits.

- i. Navigator could get denied at the local level - Navigator's new green lighting process will include opportunities to halt a petition in a community if there is not a clear pathway to authorization.
- ii. Will growth negatively impact current sites? Navigator's internal green lighting metrics focus on both the academic and organizational health of current sites. These metrics ensure staff does not lose sight of the performance levels for our students and executive leadership and the board has the ability to halt growth if expectations are not being met. Navigator has also created teams focused on specific areas of the strategic plan to make sure no one team is trying to cover all areas.
- iii. Current political climate - The package of extremely damaging bills targeting charter schools made it out of the Assembly Education committee last week and will be headed to the assembly floor soon. These bills, if passed, could make growth incredibly difficult without a clear pathway for local authorization.

7. What are the financial implications of not growing?

Navigator's financial projections included growing to five schools within five years which obviously had dollar amounts associated with that growth. While the growth isn't happening within the same time frame as when the plan was approved by the board, the financial needs associated with strengthening the organization still exist. As financial implications should not be the main factor driving factor for a growth decision, if all other green lighting metrics have been met then the financial advantages will be a positive.