



Date: April 22, 2019

To: Board Members

From: Kevin Sved

Re: CEO Update

Dear Trustees,

The chartering environment in California is becoming increasingly challenging. Despite the shadow the changing landscape may cast, it's important that we remember the successes we've had this year, including:

- Getting to the cusp of a successful launch of Watsonville Prep; the [WPS report](#) provides highlights, including meeting enrollment targets and hiring 85% of WPS staff.
- Effective leadership transitions and sustained programmatic implementation at GPS and HPS, as documented in the [February 2019 Board meeting report](#).
- Significant strides integrating Social Emotional Learning into the classrooms, as evidenced by the [report](#) provided to the Board in February 2019.
- Sustaining strong relationships with Gilroy Unified, Hollister SD, and Healdsburg, as demonstrated by Prop 39 approvals and strong support at WPS charter hearings.
- Development of new donors including Walton Family Foundation and New Schools Venture Fund.
- Preliminary success with pilot dissemination efforts with Wonderful Prep, detailed in the February 2019 [report to the Board](#).

Nonetheless, it is also important to take stock of our areas for improvements. Charter adversaries are increasingly emboldened as evidenced by a legislative agenda that threatens the very survival of the charter movement in California. Legislative bills that have passed the Assembly education committee and that are on a path to being heard on the assembly floor include bills that would take away charter appeal rights to the county and the state for both new charters and charter renewals. Furthermore, districts could deny new charters or renewals based on grounds including negative impact on district finances, facilities, or academics.

Given the existential threats facing charter schools, it is imperative that Navigator take action to fortify our strong standing in the public school ecosystem. Specifically, moving into 2019-20, key goals must include:

- 1) Continue to deliver exceptional results at GPS and HPS
- 2) Launch WPS with powerful academic growth and smooth operations
- 3) Fortify relationships in Gilroy and Hollister to protect GPS and HPS, and forge new relationships in Watsonville that promote the long-term success of WPS, including local board approval of WPS's renewal in five years

- 4) Strengthen governance and operational excellence, identifying and closing any gaps that create vulnerability in a potentially more hostile environment
- 5) Achieve financial sustainability for the Support Office, which will be more challenging if the 2018-19 fundraising targets are not met

These five goals take on a special urgency in 2019-20 given the changing political environment. Succeeding in these efforts will require that we get continue to get better. At the highest levels of leadership, this may include:

- Board – Increased engagement; fully-functioning committees, including academic success committee; and documented Board goals and self-evaluation processes.
- CEO – Excellent communication with Board members; effective and utilization of Board member strengths to support execution on organization goals and objectives; improved prioritization of time; improved dedication to relationship-building and donor development; and improved overall performance.
- Executive Leadership Team – Collectively and individually getting better at our jobs and how we integrate our work with Board committees and the Board as a whole.

It will be imperative to develop clear goals and objectives with metrics, timelines, and benchmarks to support Board oversight and decision-making functions. This is a joint function for the Board and Executive Leadership Team to get right. I am excited that we will have Marci Cornell-Feist, Founder and CEO of Board on Track, joining us on April 29th to support our efforts to strengthen Navigator governance.

And while the times call for shoring up our footholds and strengthening our areas for improvement, it is also important that we continue to grow our influence and expand our impact. Navigator is a mission-driven organization and our mission is a big one:

Navigator Schools equips students to become learners and leaders in high school, college, and beyond. We develop top-tier teams of educators who continuously improve and innovate schools that deliver phenomenal outcomes for all students, regardless of their circumstances.

Navigator has the potential to positively impact learning for hundreds of more Navigator students and, through our proposed dissemination efforts, possibly thousands of other public school students. Staff prepared materials for your review, discussion, and consideration relating to plans for growth and dissemination, including a [Strategic Direction Memo](#) that frames this topic. We are delighted that Andrew Bray will facilitate the Board's dialogue regarding Navigator's Strategic Direction.

I look forward to working with you and Navigator staff to continue to deepen and expand Navigator's positive impact.