
From: Teren Shaffer

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 12:21 PM

To: senator.umberg@sen.ca.gov

Cc: Ghafari, Aria <aria.ghafari@sen.ca.gov>; 'zach.keller@sen.ca.gov' <zach.keller@sen.ca.gov>

Subject: JLAC audit of OCBE concerns

Senator Umberg,

I hope this finds you well. Last year, you encouraged me to reach out in advance of important hearings with any feedback on issues that might impact OCSA. I appreciated that encouragement – and in that spirit, I am writing to share the attached letter for your consideration. I understanding there may be a hearing tomorrow regarding your recent request to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to audit the Orange County Board of Education.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Teren

Teren Shaffer

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March 23, 2026

The Honorable Tom Umberg
California State Senate
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Umberg:

I am writing with deep concern over your request to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) to audit the Orange County Board of Education (OCBOE). Specifically, among your asks for the State Auditor is to review OCBOE's "charter school approval and oversight processes." As you know, since 2020, Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) has been authorized by the OCBOE. We have found OCBOE to be a fair, judicious, thoughtful, and thorough authorizer. We are unaware of any complaints or any accusations that OCBOE has violated their authorizing responsibilities. My understanding is that your letter to the JLAC does not provide any specific allegations related to their charter oversight responsibilities.

This is sharp contrast to numerous local school districts around the State of California that have flouted requirements with regard to charter authorizing practices or Proposition 39 obligations. In Orange County in particular, several cases come to mind, such as the Orange County Academy of Science & Arts' cases won against the Capistrano Unified School District over access to facilities under Proposition 39 and the case against the Anaheim City School District over its effort to stop the authorization of the Palm Lane charter school. As you will recall, our own school fought a protracted legal battle against Santa Ana Unified School District after it reneged on promises set forth in our charter petition upon renewal. OCBOE is not the problem; they literally saved OCSA's existence.

In addition, the record is clear that other school districts, such as Los Angeles Unified, violate their legal obligations to charter schools in areas such as implementation of the Charter Schools Facility Grant Program, Proposition 39, and the Charter Schools Act (including AB 1505). In Santa Clara County, charter schools won a settlement from the San Jose Unified School District for its failure to pass through state operational funds certified by the state.

It is those school districts with clear, public patterns of questionable and unethical practices that should be subject to review by the State Auditor, not OCBOE. District authorizers have a built-in conflict of interest since they are charged with regulating what they perceive as competition and often neglect their duties. This is not the case with the focused and capable authorization and steadfast leadership of OCBOE and the OC Department of Education.

I would respectfully request that you withdraw your request to the JLAC so as to not distract OCBOE from their primary obligation which is serving the students of our county.

Sincerely,



Teren Shaffer
President & CEO
Orange County School of the Arts