



Beyond the Parent Trigger Hype and Propaganda: Just the Facts

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Researched by Caroline Grannan, San Francisco Parents Across America founding member

1. There have been no successful parent triggers anywhere. Only two parent triggers have been attempted, both in Southern California. [\[i\]](#)
 2. The organization that created the parent trigger, Parent Revolution, organized both of those campaigns. [\[ii\]](#)
 3. Parent Revolution has been inaccurately described as “grassroots” and as founded by concerned mothers. Actually, Parent Revolution was created by charter school operator Steve Barr, who founded the Green Dot charter school chain. [\[iii\]](#) Parent Revolution has a \$1 million annual budget and 10 full-time staff members. Its funders include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, the Wasserman Foundation, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisers, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and more. [\[iv\]](#)
 4. In both of those two parent trigger campaigns, many parents at the targeted schools said they did not want their schools to become charter schools, and a number attempted to rescind their signatures from the petitions. [\[v\]](#) In both, conflict and controversy exploded among the parents at the schools. [\[vi\]](#)
 5. In the first of those parent triggers (McKinley Elementary School in Compton, CA, December 2010), the charter school operator that had been poised to take over the school didn’t do so; instead, it opened a new charter school a few minutes away. Only a fraction of the McKinley families (apparently between 12% and 20%) moved their children to the charter school. [\[vii\]](#) With the charter school having opened nearby instead of taking over the school, the McKinley Elementary School parent trigger appears to have failed. [\[viii\]](#)
 6. In the second parent trigger (Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto, CA, January 2012), a July 2012 court ruling has been reported as a victory for parents. But actually, what the court ruled was that parents who wanted to rescind their signatures from the parent trigger petition could not do so. [\[ix\]](#)
 7. The current status of the parent trigger at Desert Trails in Adelanto is that Parent Revolution is seeking a charter operator to take over the school, although many parents have said that they don’t want the school to become a charter. [\[x\]](#)
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ENDNOTES

[i] There have been two attempted parent triggers, with petitions signed and turned in to officials. The first was at McKinley Elementary School in Compton, CA, in 2010. It has failed, with the school remaining under the same governance as before. The second is at Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto, CA, in 2012. It is still being fought out among factions of parents and school and district administrators. The ultimate outcome is unknown at this point.

[ii] This is borne out by ample news coverage and other sources. Here's [what the Los Angeles Weekly reported](#) about the Compton parent trigger (Dec. 9, 2010): *Parent Revolution decided to focus on McKinley Elementary School and approach parents there after researching the worst school districts in California. ... (Parent Revolution's paid) field organizers have canvassed a large chunk of the 10-square-mile city of Compton, knocking on hundreds of doors, walking its sidewalks and driving its streets, asking people if their children attend McKinley. ... [Organizing director Pat DeTemple] set up a computer program to track trends in the progress of his staff's work.* The Los Angeles Times reported (Jan. 13, 2012) on Parent Revolution's involvement in the Adelanto parent trigger ([this version](#) of the Times article posted on the Parent Revolution website): *In Adelanto, the process has been transparent and fair, said Gabe Rose of Parent Revolution, the Los Angeles educational reform group that helped train and organize parents in both cities.*

[iii] [This Los Angeles Times article](#) (May 11, 2009) describes how Steve Barr, founder of the Green Dot charter school chain, created Parent Revolution in 2009.

[iv] The Los Angeles Weekly (Dec. 9, 2010) [described Parent Revolution's funding](#): *Parent Revolution, with 10 full-time staff members and a \$1 million annual operating budget, is funded by blue-chip philanthropic endeavors, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wasserman Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation.*

[v] [Los Angeles Times](#): *Some parents are rescinding their signatures to convert McKinley Elementary into a charter school.* Dec. 11, 2010) See also: [San Bernardino County Sentinel](#) (April 7, 2012): *[A]t least 97 parents rescinded their signatures [in the Adelanto parent trigger].*

[vi] The Los Angeles Weekly [live blogging](#), Dec. 14, 2010: *"We're reporting live from the [Compton Unified School District] board meeting, packed with press and hundreds of angry parents — many of whom say they were tricked into signing the Parent Trigger petition without understanding its gravity. Above all, the air is buzzing with confusion. ... More and more, the crowd reveals itself as anti-Parent Trigger."* [Los Angeles Times](#), Feb. 19, 2012: *"Some parents say the Desert Trails campaign has divided the campus, destroyed friendships and given rise to charges on both sides of harassment and deceit."*

[vii] [The Los Angeles Times reported](#) on Nov. 14, 2011, that 1/5 of the families at McKinley Elementary had transferred their children to the new Celerity Sirius charter – amounting to 1/3 of the families who had signed the petition. But actually, California Department of Education data show a drop of considerably less: McKinley enrollment dropped 12.9% when the charter opened – from 426 students to 371.

[viii] [The Los Angeles Times](#) (Nov. 14, 2011) described the outcome of the Compton parent trigger as *"legal defeat when the petition was found lacking on largely technical grounds."* The Times editorial added: *"Ultimately, the charter operator, Celerity Educational Group, decided to open a school a few blocks away instead, to predictions that this would wipe out McKinley by drawing away most of its students. But that's not what happened."*

[ix] [Los Angeles Times, July 24, 2012](#): *Ruling supports Adelanto charter school effort: Judge rules that California's 'parent trigger' law does not allow signatures to be revoked, meaning Desert Trails Elementary in Adelanto could become a charter.*

[x] [KABC Los Angeles, July 23, 2012](#): *Superior Court Judge Steve Malone ordered the Adelanto School District to accept the petition filed by the Desert Trails Parents Union within 30 days and to immediately seek proposals from charter school operators to take over Desert Trails Elementary School. Natasha Lindstrom, the local reporter who has been covering the Adelanto parent trigger issue, July 23, 2012. Many (parents) told me they didn't want a charter. Both sides of Parent Trigger like the current principal, who only took (the) helm in October.*