Charter School Overview

Charter School Name | Dallas Community School  
Address | 124 SW Walnut Avenue, Dallas, Oregon 97338  
Administrator Name | Bill Conlon  
Contact Information | email - director@dallascommunityschool.org, phone - (503) 420-4360  
School District | Dallas School District  
Year School Opened | 2015  
Current Charter Contract Dates (Start and End Date) | 9/2015 – 6/2020  
Brief description of your charter school’s educational model (max 500 characters) | Dallas Community School (DCS) opened in 2015 and is a K-8 public charter school. Operated by the nonprofit, Community Innovation Partners, DCS provides personalized learning opportunities for 195 students and the primary learning environment is in each students’ home. Most students also participate in optional onsite classes in the school. DCS’s approach emphasizes community-based learning, where parents play a primary role in education and licensed teachers serve as skilled coaches, mentors and guides. The school emphasizes project-based learning, problem-based learning, and a variety of other innovative approaches that meet the unique needs of the students.

Waiver Request Summary

What statute would you like the State Board to waive? | ORS 338.125 and ORS 338.025  
Please summarize the waiver request (max 500 characters) | This waiver request is to allow the children of DCS staff to receive priority enrollment. Currently the school employs 10 staff, 5 of which have children who will be eligible if this waiver is approved. If all eligible staff children enrolled for the 2019-2020 school year, they would occupy 4 spaces leaving 191 for all other students. The enrollment priorities would be as follows: 1) siblings of students who have attended the school the prior year; 2) employee’s children; 3) Dallas School District students; 4) Students from outside the Dallas District.

Waiver Request Detail

1. Who are the racial/ethnic and underserved groups affected? What is the potential impact of the resource allocation and strategic investment to these groups?

Currently 87% of the student population at DCS are white. The Dallas School District, from which the Dallas Community School draws its student population, has a similar demographic; the enrollment in district schools is 79% white. Traditionally the community of Dallas has been mostly white.

For the Dallas School District, the population is comprised of 79% White, 3% American Indian/Alaska Native, 11% Hispanic/Latino, and a 5% multicultural student population. The Dallas Community School represents a slightly more diverse population and is represented by 87% White, 2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 1% Asian, 2% Black/African American, 1% Hispanic/Latino, 7% Multicultural, and 1% native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The school
serves only 7 special education students which comprises 3.5% of the school’s population. Despite any known barriers and strict compliance with the state lottery law, this number is significantly different than the composite data for all schools in Oregon. 1.95% of DCS students are served by a 504 plan. Although the school has served LGBTQIA students in the past, no current student reports being a member of this community. In prior years, the school has enrolled ESL students, but currently there are no English Second Language students attending.

The teaching staff for the Dallas School District are 99% white while the staff at the Dallas Community School are 100% white. For the current school year, DCS employs 4 female staff and 2 male staff. The demographics for the teaching staff at both the Dallas School District and the Dallas Community School are similar and serve a more diverse population than that of the community. This history of the area may explain the trend of new diverse families moving into the area.

Demographic data for the City of Dallas report 93% of the population as white, .016 as Black or African American, and 1.79% as Asian. Only 5% of the population of Dallas speak Spanish while 93% speak English. 54% of Dallas residents were born in Oregon, 43% were born out of state, and only 1% were born outside of the United States. These numbers suggest that the population of Dallas, Oregon is mostly white and the residence primarily speak English, more so than comparison data for the state of Oregon. Many of the families who reside in Dallas have lived in the area for generations. The Dallas area is home to 16,000 residents and the economic history of the community has been mostly farming and forestry. The median age is 42.1 years. Most of the residents own their homes and 79% of those reside in the area are married.

The impact of allowing staff children to enroll in the school will actually increase the ethnic and diverse population for the 2019-2020 school year at Dallas Community School. The school employs 10 staff, 4 of which have children who would be eligible to attend school at DCS for a total of 5 staff children. One of our staff already has a child in the school because they went through the lottery process. This leaves 4 staff children eligible to enroll. Of those 4 children, 2 identify as Multicultural. If all 4 of the staff’s children enrolled the impact would be slightly less than 2% of the school’s population assuming that we will increase our population next year to 201 students. If we remain at our current enrollment, the impact would be slightly over 2%. All 4 eligible students are currently enrolled in public schools either in Dallas or Salem. At least one staff qualifies for government assistance as economically disadvantaged. Another staff has a child with special needs and who is receiving services through Salem-Keizer School District. It is not known how many staff children will enroll if this waiver, but it is likely that our student population will be more diverse if it is approved.

Approval of this waiver will help retain staff at DCS which will have a positive result on teaching and learning for all students. The Dallas Community School has a unique model that few teachers who apply to the school have had experience with. Although there are benefits of bringing in new teachers, they must be extensively trained in order to be successful, which uses time and financial resource. Due to less financial resource for charter schools, the staff at DCS receive a smaller salary and benefit package than their peers who teach in a traditional public-school program. With only 6 licensed teachers, staff turnover is costly, erodes stability, and has a direct impact on learning.

2. Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? What is the impact on eliminating the opportunity gap?

Dallas Community School is a small school and because of the model employs fewer employees than a traditional school program. For the 2018-2019 school year, all students who participated in the lottery were offered the opportunity to enroll at Dallas Community School. When the 2018-2019 lottery and wait list were exhausted, the school opened enrollment to Dallas School District families who had already applied for the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, the disparities that would impact minority children to apply are negligible.

With regard to student performance on state assessments, the outcomes of the school’s profile did not include enough students to be counted separately; all data was reported in a single category. For Dallas Community School, the data combines all ethnic groups, all children eligible for special education services, all students with a native language other than English, and all socioeconomic levels. Despite the lack of data available, the school works with the individual needs of all children in an effort to eliminate the opportunity gap through the use of the Personalized Learning Plans, IEPs, 504 Plans, and referrals for families who need support from the community and local
community agencies. Students with unique needs are supported with goals and services identified on their Personalized Learning Plan in order to ensure equity to the educational services provided for all students.

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<th>3. How does the investment or resource allocation advance the 40/40/20 goal?</th>
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| Only 7.2% of the residence in Dallas have attained a graduate degree, 15% have earned a bachelor’s degree, and 9.4% have earned an associate’s degree. 1.7% of the population in Dallas did not complete the 9th grade and only 32% of those who call Dallas home graduated high school. Although this trend is changing, the educational level of this region is lower than the state average and other nearby communities. The “On-Time” graduation rate for the Dallas School District is currently at 75%, slightly lower that the state average of 77%.

All K-8 students attending the Dallas Community School have a Personalized Learning Plan that outlines their individual learning goals, educational activities, and the curriculum and educational learning materials used for instruction. The goals are used to develop lessons and all lessons are aligned to Common Core and/or academic content standards. Lessons are taught at home and onsite as well as educational field trips and other learning opportunities in the community.

Learning is assessed in a variety of ways using standardized and informal methods. In addition to eligible students being offered the opportunity to participate in state assessments, all students are expected to participate in a diagnostic assessment 3 times a year using a commercial instrument called Let’s Go Learn. Diagnostic test results are used to measure learning and to develop new lessons. In addition, students submit writing and math samples that are scored using the ODE scoring rubrics. A number of informal assessments are used, including authentic assessment strategies and project-based assessments.

As a result, when students leave at the end of the 8th grade year, they have participated in an educational program that is designed to align with high school coursework and the 40/40/20 state goal. Some students will enroll in a public high school after completing the 8th grade at the Dallas Community School while most will either attend a private high school or complete their high school courses at home. The school has not been open long enough to track the number of students who enroll in college, or complete high school.

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<th>4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (E.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)</th>
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| All Dallas Community Staff will participate in a equity training during the Fall Inservice. For staff who enroll their children at Dallas Community School, a separate training will be held to specifically address potential equity issues to include class selection, discipline, grading, and adherence to the Parent Agreement document that all parents sign. The training will also cover awareness of perceptions of other students and families and how to address any issues that may arise. Staff parents will serve as a model of equity and transparency for students and families, and all staff will be encouraged to engage students in “teachable moments” when an opportunity presents itself. The school already has a culture where staff are comfortable to talk with other staff and the director about issues that concern the school. Participating staff families will have a responsibility to have similar ongoing conversations with their own children that attend the school so that it is understood by everyone that staff children are treated the same as every other student.

Current families were asked to provide input on the terms of this waiver and they overwhelmingly supported this opportunity. Several parents commented that it was a positive message to them that staff believed enough in the school to enroll their own children. A few families commented that they thought it would encourage staff to provide better services, knowing that their work included members of their own family. There will be no financial impact to the school. Staff children will pay the same fees and receive the same level of service provided for all other children. In turn, staff children will be included in the ADM count which will contribute the same amount of funds to the school’s budget.

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<th>5. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the waiver request? How do present your information in questions (1), (2) and (3) to these stakeholders?</th>
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| The Dallas Community School model is designed to involve parents in the educational process. In fact, parents sign an agreement which lists their responsibilities as team members along with licensed teachers to provide instruction.
Parent/student conferences are held twice a month and our licensed teachers are available to parents each day during regular work hours. The school provides a “Family Room” which is accessible for parents who visit the school that is furnished with comfortable seating and work space for family use. Parents are encouraged to participate in our classes and a small volunteer force works in the school. Parents also attend most field trips with their children and are responsible for providing related instruction prior to the trip. The school has an active Parent Teacher Organization that has raised funds to support a number of school projects.

An email was sent to all parents requesting their input on this waiver. It was explained that enrollment for DCS staff children would be prioritized above other applicants if approved. Dallas Community School families overwhelmingly supported staff enrolling their children. Out of the 82 families who received the email, 59 responded with strong support to give priority to staff children, and 1 family who did not believe that DCS staff should receive any lottery preference. Many families commented that they thought that it was only right that staff children be allowed to enroll in the school. If all of the current DCS staff enrolled their children, 3 additional students will be added that will increase diversity in the school.

Members of the school board for the Dallas Community School support this waiver and the board president wrote a letter to support this application (see attached). The board has been highly supportive of the staff and the important work they are doing educating children.

The superintendent of the Dallas School District, Dr. Michelle Johnstone, has been informed of the charter school’s intent to submit an application for this waiver and submitted the attached memo of support.

6. How will you modify or enhance your strategies to ensure each students’ and communities’ individual and cultural needs are met?

The community of Dallas, Oregon is predominately white. Students in area schools do not have exposure to a wide variety of other cultures which is a disadvantage. Although some youth will remain in the area, others will move to larger metro communities with more diversity. The Dallas Community School teaches the “Life Skills” of how to interact with other cultures. A goal of the school is to provide exposure to more diverse populations than this local community.

One way the Dallas Community School has addressed this goal is by offering classes that expose students to a wide variety of cultural experiences. A number of classes have been offered to students which include the following:

- Choir/Music Appreciation
- Guitar
- Weather Patterns and Civilizations
- Poetry
- Shakespeare
- Pen Pals
- Coding
- Calligraphy
- Native American Culture
- Unit on MLK and Racial Injustice
- Unit on Winter Olympics with Study of Countries
- Unit on Ancestry
- Architecture Around the World
- Ancient Civilizations
- Biomes Around the World
- Athenian Secret Math
- Greek Mythology and History
- US History
- French
- Famous Artists
- Design Principles
- Drama/Theater
- Stem Through Art
- IEW
- Creative Writing
- Basic Art Skills
- Ballet
- Piano
- Ukulele
- School Newspaper
- Media Literacy
- Ceramics
- World Folk and Fairytales
- World Mythology
- Global explorers
- Spanish
The Dallas Community School has also offered staff professional development opportunities in order to serve students with special needs. The school currently has a student with multiple disabilities and requires one-on-one assistance and a medical nurse at all times. Staff received training on how to use adaptive equipment necessary for this student to access her education. The parent also worked with the staff on how to communicate with this child and to understand her preferences and dislikes. All staff have been trained in the SIT process (Student Intervention Team) in order to identify students with a suspected disability and how to determine eligibility for special education services. DCS staff have also participated in professional development on diverse cultures. One of the staff members lived in Europe and has developed learning opportunities on different cultures and languages for both staff and students. In order to develop the courses listed above, staff have extensively researched many cultures and provided fun and interesting lessons that students, parents, and staff have learned from.

Another example of how the Dallas Community School has studied culture involved a 4-day study of Ancient Egypt for all students this past January. The school was decorated in an ancient Egyptian theme that included a ceiling high pyramid and sphinx in the middle of a classroom. The hallways were lined with “ancient stone blocks”, and all the staff were dressed in full costume. Students registered for “workshops” of their choosing which included topics such as foods, holidays, traditions, customs, contributions to modern society, hygrographs, story-telling, arts, employment, architecture, economy, daily life, and many more. The schedule included a number of hands-on activities and demonstrations as part of the learning. Families developed some of these workshops which were included in the schedule. The culminating event was a field trip to OMSI attended by over 200 children and family members to see the King Tut Traveling Exhibit.

As part of writing this waiver, the Dallas Community School has been made aware of resources through the Oregon Department of Education that will be explored to train staff and expand learning for the school’s community. We have recently ordered a number of books from the “Laugh Out Loud Multicultural Picture Books” to be put into our student library. These books will help familiarize students with other cultures, which is important in Dallas due to the predominately white population.

7. How are you collecting data on race, ethnicity, and native language?

The school collects data on race, ethnicity, and native language when parents complete our registration forms. This data is entered in the Dallas School Districts student data base and reported to ODE. If a student requires support as a result of a native language other than English, the Dallas School District provides assessment and instructional support. Students who are on an IEP are referred to the Dallas School District for special education services. In addition, the school asks parents to complete a voluntary Household Income Survey Form to gather data on economic levels.

The Dallas Community School as mentioned above is mostly white and all families communicate in English. The school has not had the opportunity to work with families through an interpreter. For the 2018-2019 school year the school does not have any students identified as or receiving ESL services. This demographic data from the school is consistent with the demographic data from the community of Dallas.

8. What is your commitment to P-20 professional learning for equity? What resources are you allocating for training in culturally responsive instruction?
Professional development is an important part of the continuous development of any school. Studies show the importance of building learning systems in schools that support data-driven, job embedded, sustained, classroom-focused, professional learning. At the Dallas Community School, professional development is aligned to our Mission and Vision Statements which read:

**Mission Statement**

Dallas Community School is an inclusive public charter school supporting collaborative, standards-based education in a flexible, non-traditional environment.

**Vision Statement**

Dallas Community School will empower non-traditional learners with knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed in and contribute value to their community.

At the Dallas Community School, professional development is embedded into the day-to-day ethos of the school. Cultural competence will be one of the professional development goals for the 2019-2020 school year. The staff will learn new strategies on how best to teach students about different cultures and diverse populations. The staff at the Dallas Community School have developed a strong collaborative philosophy that supports student learning and the work of providing high quality education. They work well as a team to learn new strategies to improve teaching and learning. Professional development funds will be made available to send staff to conferences and to provide trainings onsite. In addition, DCS provides training for parents throughout the year and will develop at least one seminar on culturally responsive instruction.

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<td>All charter schools with approved waivers will be required to report the impact of the waiver annually to the State Board. What is the charter school’s plan for collecting data on how the proposed waiver will impact students and the quality of education? The plan must minimally include disaggregated data by student demographics and stakeholder engagement.</td>
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At a small emerging charter school like Dallas Community School, financial resources for providing staff development are often in short supply. The school has utilized the expertise of the staff to provide leadership in the areas they have expertise. One method used to collect data will be publishing the Staff Development Calendar and by documenting staff attendance. Data will be collected to determine the impact of new instructional strategies.

Data will be taken on financial resource allocation for professional development. Each year the budget allocation for staff development has increased and next year’s budget will mark $2,000 (1/6th of the total PD budget) to target equity and culturally responsive instruction. Training may be in the form of sending staff to a train-the-trainer model or hosting a training specifically for Dallas Community Staff.

Assessment measures will be analyzed by the staff focusing on the progress of each individual student. Data will be collected on student performance and used to evaluate students who have a known barrier to learning. Personalized Learning Plan teams will use this data to develop appropriate instructional plans for each child.