

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION – TOPIC SUMMARY

**Topic: Adoption**—Coburg Community Charter School Waiver Request

**Date:** January 21, 2016

**Staff/Office:** Cindy Hunt & Kate Pattison, Office of the Deputy Superintendent

**Action Requested:**  Informational Only  First Reading  Adoption/Consent  
**Agenda**

**ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD:** Review waiver for enrollment priority for children who live within the previous Coburg Elementary attendance boundary for up to 50% of total enrollment.

**BACKGROUND:** The city of Coburg is approximately 8 miles from downtown Eugene. The Coburg School has been in the city of Coburg since 1865. During the 1960s Eugene School District annexed the Coburg School District. Eugene School District elected to close the Coburg Elementary School at the end of the 2010-11 school year. Coburg Community Charter School was approved to operate as a charter school starting in the 2011-12 school year. The school successfully opened in 2010 with a three year charter and has been approved to operate for another three years beginning this school year.

In 2012, the Board approved a similar waiver allowing enrollment priority for children who live within the previous Coburg Elementary attendance boundary for up to 50% of total enrollment. In 2014, Coburg Community Charter requested the waiver continue through the new charter contract. The State Board began asking many questions about public charter school waivers and began a rigorous discussion on issues around ethics, equity, and the waiver request procedure itself. This discussion concluded in a separate work session on April 2014. In order to support the operation of the charter schools requesting waivers and provide time for a thorough discussion, the State Board approved the 2014 request only for the 2015-16 school year.

Following the work session and discussion on public charter school waivers in 2014, the State Board approved an updated procedure that includes an equity lens to help guide charter schools in addressing the criteria in ORS 338.025.

The Coburg Community Charter waiver request complies with the requirements in the process published by the Department. The Eugene School District has been notified of the request and does not have any objections. When evaluating the request against the criteria in statute, the Department considered the information included in the letter and the information in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school report cards. This request was before the board for a first read on December 10, 2015.

*Does the Coburg Community Charter waiver request to grant priority enrollment up to 50% of total enrollment to students who live within the former attendance boundary enhance the equitable access by underserved families to the public education of their choice and extend the equitable access to public support by all students?* The Department concludes that providing this waiver, Coburg residents will have better access to a neighborhood school of their choice. The school is the only elementary school in the community and is designed to serve

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the local community. Based on the nature of public charter school enrollment requiring an application and lottery, providing a geographic priority allows students and families without knowledge of the processes or transportation to the surrounding area greater access to this public charter school. The public charter school receives a high number of applications from outside the Coburg community and without this waiver, the students who live closest to the school in this rural community would have less access to the school. Additionally, the public charter school has generally performed better than the state average and the Eugene School District in reading and math. This waiver may provide greater access to students whose native language is not English and for economically disadvantaged students.

*Does the Coburg Community Charter waiver request to grant priority enrollment up to 50% of total enrollment to students who live within the former attendance boundary promote the development of programs by providers and permit high quality programs of unusual cost?* The Department concludes that providing this waiver supports the school in achieving its mission to be a community school serving the students and families who live in the rural town of Coburg.

### **POLICY QUESTIONS:**

- Are there any specific data the board wants to consider if the Coburg Community Charter is approved for the waiver and returns in the future with a similar request?

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The Department recommends approving the waiver request for the duration of the current charter contract with the expectation that the charter school will maintain records and data related to the charter school application, lottery, and enrollment processes.

**EFFECT OF YES VOTE:** The Coburg Community Charter will be allowed to continue their practice of giving priority enrollment for children who live within the previous Coburg Elementary attendance boundary for up to 50% of total enrollment for the remainder of the charter contract.

**EFFECT OF NO VOTE:** The Coburg Community Charter will not be allowed to continue their practice of giving priority enrollment for children who live within the previous Coburg Elementary attendance boundary for up to 50% of total enrollment.