

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION – TOPIC SUMMARY

Topic: Bend International School (Charter School) Waiver Request

Date: April 9 2015

Staff/Office: Kate Pattison/Office of Learning

Action Requested: Informational Only Adoption Later Adoption Adoption/Consent
Agenda

ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD: Whether the State Board of Education should approve a request for enrollment priority to be given to children of founders and employees of the new Bend International School as well as children who live within a specific neighborhood.

BACKGROUND:

The Bend International School (BIS) is a new public charter school sponsored by the Bend-La Pine School District. The school will serve students in grades K-8 with the mission to “promote academic excellence through Integrated International Education, and work toward eliminating the equity gap in our nation and our own community by promoting innovative educational options for ALL students.”

BIS is requesting a waiver of the enrollment statute ORS 338.125 to allow some students to be granted enrollment priority in the new charter school. The school anticipates conducting its first lottery in April 2015 since the number of applications already outnumber the spaces available for students in the 2015-16 school year. The three priorities BIS is requesting include: 1) children of founding members, 2) children of staff, and 3) children who reside in a specific neighborhood.

The school has articulated its rationale for requesting this waiver in the attached letter.

581-026-0130 Procedure to Waive Certain Provisions of the Charter School Law

(1) A public charter school may petition the State Board of Education for a waiver of any provision of ORS 388. The written petition must specify the reason(s) the charter school is seeking the waiver and any other relevant information.

(2) The public charter school must notify the sponsor if a waiver under this section is being considered. Waivers granted by the State Board to a charter school may require amending the charter under the provisions of OAR 581-026-0100 (7).

(3) The State Board of Education, upon receipt of a waiver petition, will review the petition and may grant the waiver upon a showing that approving the waiver would:

- (a) Promote the development of programs by providers;
- (b) Enhance the equitable access by underserved families to the public education of their choice;
- (c) Extend the equitable access to public support by all students; or
- (d) Permit the development of high quality programs of unusual cost.

(4) The State Board of Education may not waive any review provision under the Act or any provision under ORS 338.115(1).

BIS has indicated that any priority granted to children of staff will be included in the benefits package for staff of the public charter school. This is consistent with guidance provided by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

POLICY QUESTIONS:

- Is this request consistent with the April 8, 2015 work session discussion?

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ODE staff recommends approving the Bend International School waiver request for the 2015-16 school year.

ATTACHMENT –

March 20, 2015

Oregon State Board of Education
255 Capitol Street, NE
Salem, OR 97310



Dear State Board of Education,

I write to you on behalf of Bend International Charter School (BIS). We are a K-8 public charter school, opening our doors in the Fall of 2015. Our mission is to promote academic excellence through Integrated International Education, and work towards eliminating the equity gap in our nation and our own community by promoting innovative educational options for ALL students.

We are proud recipients of the prestigious U.S. Federal Charter Schools Grant, which provides 3 years of start-up funding for our school. We also were recently approved with **unanimous** support by the Bend-La Pine School Board! It is an honor to bring this program to Bend, which promises to reduce the equity gap, increase the high school graduation rate by empowering all students to excel and building diversity and global competence in our community.

We request a waiver to ORS 338.125 which mandates that, if there are more applicants than available slots, students shall be selected for admission to the charter school through an equitable lottery. We are requesting that this requirement be waived only with regard to the children of Bend International School's (BIS) Founding Members. These founding members have been working for two years through countless hours of service to bring this program to life. Many of them will continue on as Board Members, and their service to moving the school into implementation is crucial for the school's success.

The Founding Members have laid the groundwork and are critical to guide the program's implementation and development due to their commitment to the mission and vision of BIS and the strong skill sets they possess. These individuals are professional teachers (including special education teachers knowledgeable about serving diverse student populations), accountants and school finance specialists, business managers knowledgeable about running a small business, grant writers, and community outreach/public relation specialists who have and will continue to market the school to our target community and raise the funds necessary to meet the school's goals.

Finally, it is important to note that only half of the BIS Founding Members even have children of school age and eligible to enter BIS. This shows how we have recruited a diverse range of community professionals to develop our school, and the members are volunteering their service, not for personal gain, but for the benefit of our community and world. It is also important to note that a high percentage of those BIS Founding Members whose children will attend BIS, are of color and minority status, which adheres to BIS' mission of serving the underserved in our educational systems and promoting diversity.

BEND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL K-8
P.O. Box 9462 | Bend, Oregon 97708-9462 | 541-389-5708 www.bendinternationalschool.org

BIS FOUNDING MEMBERS

Founding Members	# of Children to attend BIS / (Ages)
Bruce Churchill - realtor/strategic planning	0
Bruce Abernethy - grantwriter	0
Meera Dayal Rupp - founder/director	3 (13, 11, 8)
Gonzalo Morales - business	1 (7)
Flora Morales - Latino Outreach/fundraising	1 (10)
Eddie Jones - Education/Outreach with diverse pop.	0
Andrea Thomas - Special Education Teacher/Secretary	1 (7)
Kerani Mitchell - International Education/Outreach	1 (7)
Lisa Fulkerson - Public Relations	2 (9, 7)
Julie McMullin - Accountant/Board Treasurer	3 (12, 10, 6)
Rebecca Hoshi - Administration	2 (10, 7)
Dr. Changhua Wang - Education Policy/Evaluation	0
Rhea Grogan - Fundraising Chair	1(18 mo.)

Percentage of Minority Founding Members: $6/13= 46\%$

Number of Students of Founding Members to attend BIS in 2015: $14/135=10\%$

Important Notes:

- Only 8 students will be admitted with the “Founding Member” priority: $8/135=6\%$. The others will be admitted under the “sibling priority” clause provided for in ORS 338.
- BIS will be opening in a 3 year scale-up model where our student population will grow over three years. Here is the breakdown of the students admitted under the “Founding Member” priority for those 3 years:
 Year 1- $8/135 = 6\%$
 Year 2- $8/165 = 5\%$
 Year 3- $8/195 =4\%$
- Percentage of minority Founding Member children to enter BIS: $6/12=50\%$
- Bend is a community that has a low minority population (only 13% of the total population). The high percentage of minority board members and children in BIS reflect BIS’ commitment and active outreach to promoting diversity and working with diverse groups in our population to reduce the equity gap and provide equal access to innovative educational programs.

BIS also sees the value and importance of keeping families together. We believe that BIS staff will be able to better focus their energies and attention on our school if their children can attend as well. Therefore, we seek a waiver to ORS 338 to allow preference to also be given to BIS’ staff children. We plan to offer this as part of the employment compensation package, so as not to cause conflict with ORS 224. BIS seeks a diverse and international staff and requires half of our staff to be bilingual in Spanish, therefore the entrance of these children will be in accordance with the school’s overall goal and mission. *Note: Only a small percentage of children will be admitted due to the staff or founding member priority. The percent will always be under 10%.*

In conclusion, BIS would like to request a waiver to allow priority for a small neighborhood in Bend. This neighborhood is entirely low-economic, minority, and the majority of these

students are at-risk. Being in this neighborhood is like being in an authentic “barrio”, a sub-population within our community. There are no alternative or choice options in this area of Bend, and these students currently attend very large traditional schools with large class sizes. The target location for our school is right in this neighborhood, close to these apartments. BIS has been working with community service organizations to build connections and relationships with these families, in order to help their students succeed and excel in their education. Language barriers, cultural differences, and low economic and ability levels keep these students as the “under-performers” in our schools. Currently the Latino Community Association, the Peace and Justice Center, and the Circulo de Amigos are involved in our outreach efforts to this community area.

By allowing priority to this neighborhood area, it will help BIS to serve their target population, achieve their mission of serving a “diverse” student body, promote diversity within our school, community, and within our educational choice options. It is difficult, if not impossible, to implement a successful international school without having diversity within it. Bend International is working diligently to recruit and hire a diverse staff. We must also take efforts to ascertain that we achieve a diverse student body. ODE will be supporting our program, mission, and our future successful outcomes, by approving this waiver request. ODE will also be guaranteeing that all students, especially students of color and economic need, who traditionally have not been successful in our educational system, and are underrepresented in alternative and charter schools, have a chance to attend our school, and experience the education that they deserve and need. Our program, which is supported by the Bend-La Pine School District and a United States Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant Recipient, promises to reduce the equity gap by providing academic excellence, differentiation, and individualized support to all students while recognizing and honoring our differences.

The geographic area we would like to give priority to is known as the “Thurston” area. The area can be seen at the following link.

<http://www.bendk12.or.us/education/components/docmgr/default.php?sectiondetailid=1313>. The area is within the Juniper Elementary Attendance Zone. The boundaries for this neighborhood area are: Butler Market Road to the north, 3rd Street NE (business 97) to the east, Greenwood Avenue to the south, and 8th Street to the west. BIS requests this waiver for one year.

Please let me know if you need any more information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meera Rapp

Meera Rapp
Director & Teacher
Bend International School
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Gonzalo Morales

Gonzalo Morales
Bend International School Board
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