

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION – TOPIC SUMMARY**

**Topic:** Imbler 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 to be given to children of charter school employees at Imbler Charter School.

**BACKGROUND:** The Imbler Charter School, sponsored by the Imbler School District in 2008, is a K-12 school serving up to 340 students. The school is the only public school in the district and serves as a central connecting place for the community. The school graduates close to 100% of students.

As explained in the waiver request letter, housing costs in Imbler are prohibitive for teachers and employees of the public charter school. As the charter school recruits and retains qualified and effective staff, employees new to the area are typically locating outside the district boundary. Since these families are not residents of the sponsoring district, they are not as likely to be selected through the lottery to enroll in the charter school. Currently, 64% of students enrolled in the charter school are residents of Imbler School District, with over 40% enrolling through the lottery as out-of-district students.

In 2014, 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. 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 Imbler Charter School waiver request complies with the requirements in the process published by the Department. The Imbler School District has been notified of the request and supports the request. 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 Imbler Charter School waiver request to grant priority enrollment to be given to children of charter school employees 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 would have very little impact on the equitable access to the school. If approved this waiver would likely affect less than 3% of the student population.

*Does the Imbler Charter School waiver request to grant priority enrollment to be given to children of charter school employees promote the development of programs by providers and*

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*permit high quality programs of unusual cost?* The Department concludes that providing this waiver supports the school in recruiting and retaining staff. The waiver will allow staff to find affordable housing options and reduce potential childcare costs associated with having children attending schools in other neighboring rural communities.

### **POLICY QUESTIONS:**

- Are there any specific data the board wants to consider if the Imbler Charter School 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. Staff recommends limiting the waiver to 5% of the total student enrollment.

**EFFECT OF YES VOTE:** The Imbler Charter School will be allowed to give priority enrollment to children of charter school employees for the remainder of the charter contract for up to 5% of the total student enrollment.

**EFFECT OF NO VOTE:** The Imbler Charter School will not be allowed to give priority enrollment to children of charter school employees.