Form - Application/Cover Sheet

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Waiver of Administrative Rule

UAC R277-121 allows an LEA to request a waiver from a Board rule. This cover sheet should be used as a checklist in preparation of necessary materials and supporting documents.

LEA: Wallace Stegner Academy ("WSA")

SCHOOL(S): Wallace Stegner Academy, Sunset Satellite Campus

RULE REQUESTING TO BE WAIVED: Utah Admin. R277-552-6(7)(a) and (b)

REASONING/JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTED WAIVER:

Wallace Stegner Academy opened its first campus in the fall of 2016 in Salt Lake City. Following the success of its first campus, WSA was approved to open a second campus in West Valley City in the fall of 2021 and a third campus in the fall of 2024 in Kearns.

Wallace Stegner Academy's primary purpose is to serve the specific needs of students who are at risk of academic failure. These students are often economically disadvantaged, language minority, and multicultural students that lack opportunities to take advantage of better public education options. Wallace Stegner Academy strives to foster a community of active learners through academic rigor and citizenship by providing an opportunity for at-risk students to close the achievement gap and achieve academic excellence through academic rigor; direct instruction; data-driven instruction; ability-based mathematics, language arts, and reading classes; positive learning environments; and character development.

On January 16, 2025, WSA presented a New Satellite School Application to its authorizer, the Utah State Charter School Board ("USCSB"). After a review of WSA's application and presentation, the USCSB voted unanimously to approve WSA's request to open a new satellite school in the Weber/Davis area. Part of the discussion surrounding approval of this new satellite campus was WSA's strategic opportunity to immediately secure a retired Davis School District elementary school building located in Sunset, Utah (formerly Fremont Elementary).

Inasmuch as the demographic/student performance profile of Sunset and its surrounding communities is aligned with WSA's express purpose to serve the needs of at-risk students, acquiring this school facility is not only a strategic opportunity, but it would also address a critical challenge WSA has encountered with identifying and securing each of its previous facilities. Specifically, WSA's target demographic is often situated within well-established and thoroughly developed areas with minimal facility options. Accordingly, finding a convenient and safe location within these target areas has been challenging.

The proposed location is not only aligned with WSA's mission and uniquely situated within a community as a neighborhood school, but it also presents a facility option that will require minimal improvements to be ready to serve students in August 2025. However, Utah Admin. R277-552-6(7)(a) and (b) require

WSA's authorizer to approve satellite schools and provide the satellite schools' enrollment capacities to the State Superintendent on or before October 1 of the fiscal year before the school year the intends to serve students. After discussing the immediate needs of students in this community and WSA's capacity to deliver its program, the USCSB voted unanimously to endorse a request to allow WSA to open its satellite school and begin serving students in the fall of 2025. Subsequently, WSA completed this Waiver of Administrative Rule, and its governing board unanimously approved it in an open and public meeting.

We recognize that an abbreviated timeline to open a new satellite school presents challenges, but we are willing and capable to overcome those challenges in pursuit of our mission to improve public education opportunities for the families we intend to serve. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of this request, and we hope to gain your support and approval.

☒ THIS IS A NEW WAIVER

☐ THIS IS A REQUEST TO RENEW AN EXISTING WAIVER

DATE WAIVER WAS FIRST GRANTED _____

ATTACH DATA TO SUPPORT THE REQUEST WHICH MAY INCLUDE:

☒ STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA (**Attachment A**)

☐ COMMUNITY, STAFF, OR STUDENT SURVEY DATA

☒ STUDENT ENROLLMENT DATA (**Attachment B**)

☐ FOR RENEWALS: DOCUMENTATION THAT OUTLINES HOW THE WAIVER WAS UTILIZED

ATTACH VERIFICATION OF THE FOLLOWING (AS APPLICABLE TO THE TYPE OF LEA)

☒ LEA GOVERNING BOARD VOTE APPROVING REQUEST FOR WAIVER IN OPEN MEETING (**Attachment C**)

☒ RECOMMENDATION FROM THE BOARD OF THE SCHOOL'S AUTHORIZER (IF APPLICABLE) (**Attachment D**)

ATTACH THE FOLLOWING

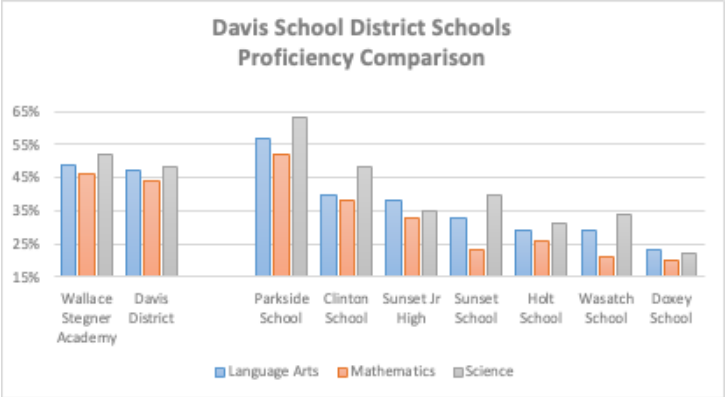
☐ WRITTEN AGREEMENT TO BE PROPOSED TO THE BOARD INCLUDING:

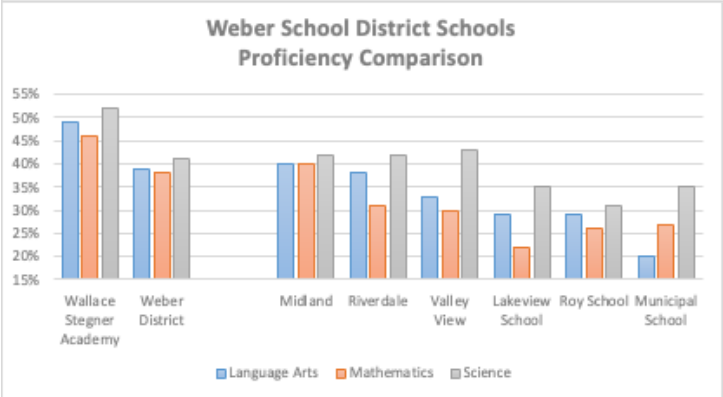
- ✓ EFFECTIVE DATE OF WAIVER (*or of the renewal*)
- ✓ HOW LEA OR SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY (*such as parent/student/staff survey*)
- ✓ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE BOARD'S ABILITY TO REQUIRE ANNUAL UPDATES
- ✓ A SUNSET DATE FOR THE WAIVER (*three years or less*)

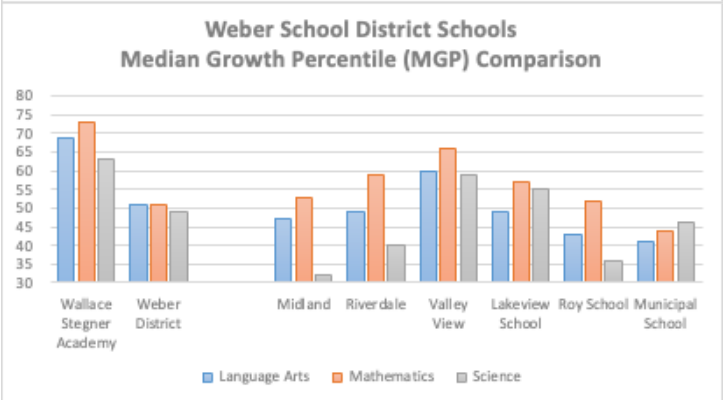
The student demographic profile in the proposed location resembles that of WSA's current population which can be characterized by higher-than-average percentages of economically disadvantaged students, ethnic/racial minority students, and ELL students that attend underperforming schools that struggle to meet the academic needs of students in the area.

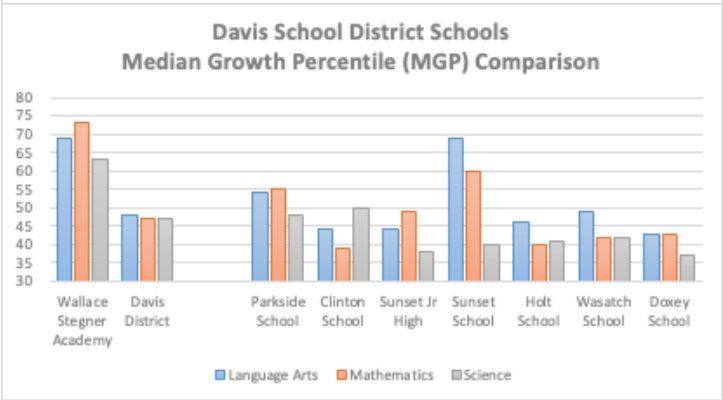
The charts to the right illustrate the achievement gap that exists between the proficiency rates and MGP of the districts as a whole and the individual schools in our target area. On average, district proficiency rates exceed these individual schools' rates by 10 percentage points in language arts, 12 percentage points in mathematics, and 6 percentage points in science. Similarly, on average, WSA's proficiency rates exceed the target area schools' rates by 15 percentage points in language arts, 16 percentage points in mathematics, and 13 percentage points in science.

A comparison of the proficiency data of each WSA campus to its closest surrounding schools emphasizes the improved learning outcomes at WSA. When compared to the closest 10 schools, our Salt Lake campus proficiency rates exceed the average of the surrounding schools' proficiency rates by 25 percentage points in language arts, 18 percentage points in mathematics, and 21 percentage points in science. Likewise, our West Valley campus proficiency rates exceed the average of the surrounding schools' proficiency rates by 21 percentage points in language arts, 21 percentage points in mathematics, and 23 percentage points in science. After opening three campuses in locations where student proficiency fell far below district and state averages, we believe we have a proven methodology to close the









achievement gap that exists in our target area and meet the needs of students that will enroll in our satellite school.

While the intended future facility of satellite school is located in Sunset, our target area will also include all or portions of Clinton, Clearfield, and Roy. This area falls within the boundaries of both Davis School District and Weber School District. For purposes of this analysis, we have focused our attention on the student population and schools that exist within 2.5 miles of proposed location, the former Fremont Elementary, located at 160 W. 2525 N., Sunset, Utah. The analysis consists of one junior high school and 12 elementary schools that fall within this 2.5 mile radius.[1] According to the USBE's 2024 fall enrollment report, approximately 5,332 students attend K-9 district schools located within our target area.[2] Based on this report, 35% of students residing in the target area are racial/ethnic minorities, 45% are economically disadvantaged, and 8% are English Language Learners.[3] These student demographics provide context to a discussion of population growth and development in area.

Our target area can be described as an area of low growth that contains minimal new housing projects that are planned, under construction, or recently completed.[4] According to US Census estimates from the period of April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023, population in the cities of Sunset, Clinton, Roy and Clearfield experienced a 2% increase.[5] 93% of this population growth occurred in Clearfield, and the cities of Sunset and Roy reported slight decreases in total population during the same timeframe.[6] In short, we are not targeting a community that is experiencing overcrowded classrooms due to increased housing developments or population growth. Our target area and targeted demographic profile consists of a student population that has above average percentages of students that are economically disadvantaged, language minority, and/or multicultural students that attend schools which struggle to keep pace with state and district outcomes.

All parents want a great education for their children regardless of their economic status or any other status. Parents want their children to be treated as capable individuals, and they want their children to have the greatest chance to succeed in life. Families come to WSA because we have a demonstrable and successful record for providing direct instruction; data-driven instruction; ability based Math, Reading, and Language Arts classes for all students; character development curriculum; and explicit Academic English Language classes for English Language Learners. No schools in the target area offer this wide range of methods designed specifically around the needs of their students.

---

[1] Target area schools include Clinton Elementary, Doxey Elementary, Holt Elementary, Parkside Elementary, Sunset Jr. High, Sunset Elementary, Wasatch Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, Municipal Elementary, Roy Elementary, Midland Elementary, Riverdale Elementary, and Valley View Elementary.
[2] Utah State Board of Education, *Fall Enrollment by Grade Level and Demographics*, *October 1*, *2024*, *School Year 2024-2025*.
[3] *Id.*
[4] Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, August 26, 2022, *Davis County Demographic Insights*, *https://utahlanduse.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/20220826_Davisv2.pdf*.
[5] See, United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/
[6] *Id*.

[[INSERT MINUTES]]

ATTACHMENT D
RECOMMENDATION OF AUTHORIZER

Chair W. Bryan Bowles
Utah State Charter School Board
10008 South Creek Run Way
Sandy, UT 84070
January 17, 2025

Chair Matt Hymas
Utah State Board of Education
250 E. 500 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Members of the Utah State Board of Education,

On January 16, 2025, the State Charter School Board (SCSB) reviewed a request from Wallace Stegner Academy (WSA) to open a satellite campus in the Davis/Weber area. WSA, a public charter school excelling in serving at-risk students, was authorized to open this satellite. The typical approval timeline would have placed that opening in fall 2026. However, WSA has a strategic opportunity to acquire a retired Davis School District elementary school building, which aligns with its mission to address significant achievement gaps in the identified area.

WSA seeks a waiver of USBE Board Rule R277-552-6 (7) to start serving students in fall 2025. WSA is prepared to enroll students immediately and has financial reserves to manage funding without adjustment until the expected October 1 count occurs.

The SCSB unanimously supports this request, and you are receiving a recommendation letter from the school's authorizer, as is required for your consideration.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

W. Bryan Bowles

Dr. W. Bryan Bowles