

TULSA DISTRICT-CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT

Date Signed: January 2014

Number of All Public School Students: 42,216 (2012–2013)

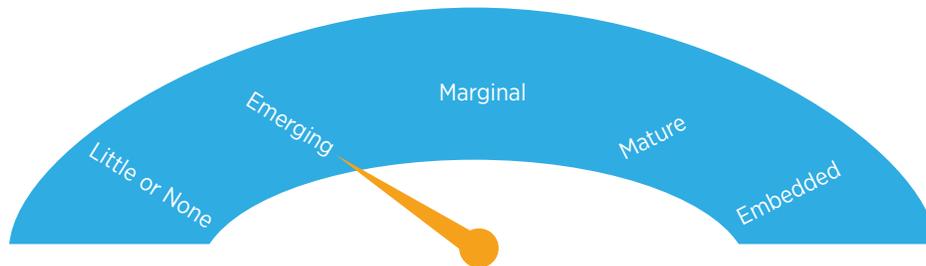
Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 3.4%

Charter Authorizer(s): Tulsa Public Schools, Langston University

School District Governing Body: Elected School Board

Compact Grant Amount: \$100,000

CURRENT STATUS OF COLLABORATION:



OVERVIEW

Tulsa, which operates in a state not widely receptive to charter schools, has set a bold course of collaboration between the district and charter sectors. Following a difficult history that included litigation in 2007 by Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) challenging the constitutionality of the state charter school law, TPS and the three district-authorized charter schools signed a District-Charter Collaboration Compact in January of 2014. Superintendent Keith Ballard, who took the helm of the district in 2008 and dropped the litigation, has been instrumental in articulating the role charters can play alongside district schools to improve student outcomes. Tulsa initiated the state's first district-charter collaboration in 2012 and gained momentum once a second Compact agreement was signed and funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was forthcoming.

Tulsa experiences high rates of poverty, student mobility, and parental disengagement. TPS sees collaboration as a way for charter schools to help the district provide more high-quality options to underserved neighborhoods.

Because of the state's low per-pupil allotment, its charter schools were unable to survive long-term in private facilities. TPS offered their charter schools low-cost facilities in exchange for a commitment to coordinate openings and serve at-risk students and unmet geographical needs.

Tulsa's Compact participation will double in 2015 with the opening of three new district-authorized charter schools. Two other university-authorized charter operators that run four schools in the city are not part of the Compact and are

perceived as having priorities that do not align with TPS' portfolio strategy. The district was reluctant to engage with these charters, given that one of the operators was formerly authorized by TPS but was denied a renewal in 2010 after the operator appeared to be engaging in questionable special education and disciplinary practices.

Thanks to a supportive superintendent and school board, Tulsa is ripe with opportunities for successful collaboration with the district-authorized charter schools. A Compact Steering Committee composed of district leaders and charter school principals meets monthly to implement the Compact agreements. Charter leaders say that these regular, candid conversations represent a sea change over previous intermittent communication that focused on immediate operational needs, such as lease agreements. Areas of priority focus now include development of a common performance framework and coordinated enrollment systems.

However, Tulsa is not without its challenges. Superintendent Ballard has announced that he will retire in 2015. As new charter schools continue to open and existing charter schools want to expand, there may be tensions among these schools competing for limited district resources. STAND UP, an educational advocacy organization led by Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, has started to galvanize community support for six new charter schools in north Tulsa. A strong, supportive leader committed to ongoing collaboration will be crucial to Tulsa's ongoing success.

| COMMON AREAS OF COLLABORATION | COMPACT PROGRESS |
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| <p>High-Performing Schools</p> | <p>Aligned with a commitment in the Compact to open more high-performing charter schools in high-needs areas, TPS approved three Building Excellent Schools (BES) Fellows to open new schools in 2015.</p> |
| <p>Special Education & English Language Learners (ELL)</p> | <p>Two of the three district-authorized charter schools serve a similar percentage of special education students as district schools, but charter schools serve fewer ELL students than district schools. Charter leaders have committed to increasing the number of ELL students served, though no plans are currently in place.</p> |
| <p>Facilities & Resources</p> | <p>All district-authorized charter schools are located in district facilities, and have negotiated a standard, low rental rate. As new charter schools continue to open and existing charter schools want to expand, available district space may be limited. District and charter leaders are exploring the possibility of sharing buildings, but charter schools have concerns over losing autonomy.</p> |
| <p>School Performance Framework</p> | <p>Two-thirds of Oklahomans don't believe the state's implementation of an A-F school grading system accurately reflects schools' performance. A primary goal of the Compact is to create a School Performance Framework that provides families another way to evaluate all schools. TPS currently publishes value-added school reports across district and district-authorized charter schools, but Compact leaders must reach agreement on what other measures to include. Any framework will likely incorporate results from teacher and student surveys that were recently launched in district schools and are expected to roll out in charter schools.</p> |
| <p>Enrollment Systems</p> | <p>District schools are zoned by neighborhood and magnet schools are filled by lottery. The district coordinates enrollment across magnet schools but not with charter schools, which run their own applications, timelines, and lotteries. In June 2014, a district central enrollment center opened that, for the first time, provides information on all district and charter school options in one place. In the Compact, leaders committed to "a common and coordinated enrollment system," but this work has yet to begin in earnest.</p> |
| <p>Human Capital & Professional Development</p> | <p>Starting in 2009, TPS and the local teachers union designed the Tulsa Model for Teacher Observation and Evaluation. Considered a strong model for measuring which teacher practices impact student achievement, the state legislature passed a bill that requires all districts to implement it. Compact leaders are currently exploring whether charter schools will participate in the Tulsa Model, and how to develop collective strategies to recruit and strengthen teacher and leader pools. For example, KIPP is currently training two district leaders.</p> |
| <p>Common Core</p> | <p>District and charter leaders face challenges over changing academic standards. In June 2014, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed legislation to repeal Common Core standards. Without a replacement plan in place, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) revoked the state's No Child Left Behind waiver in August. The state reinstated its old standards in November 2014 and the DOE restored the NCLB waiver. There are no Common Core related Compact agreements in Tulsa.</p> |