

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ACCREDITATION DIVISION
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SCHOOL SITE STATUTORY WAIVER/EXEMPTION APPLICATION
For 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Name of Site(s): Tulsa Public Schools -Education Service Center

Name of School District: Independent School District No. 1 of Tulsa
County, Oklahoma

Signature of Principal(s): * _____ Date _____
_____ Date _____
_____ Date _____

Signature of Superintendent:* _____ Date _____

County Name: Tulsa County

I hereby certify that this deregulation application was approved by our
local board of education at the meeting on _____, 2015.

Signature of Board President*

Notary: _____

Date: _____ My Commission Expires: _____

1. Statement of the Statute to be Waived: (specify statutory citation)

Pursuant to 70 O.S. § 3-126(c), Tulsa Public Schools ("TPS" or "District") requests that the Oklahoma State Board of Education waive the superintendent certification requirements contained in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act (70 O.S. § 6-180 et. seq.), which are specifically listed in 70 O.S. § 6-189.

SDE USE ONLY

PROJECT YEARS
of _____

ENROLLMENT

High School _____

Jr./Middle High _____

Elementary _____

District Total _____

Date Received _____

70 O.S. _____

*Original signatures are required.

- A. A description of the educational benefits to be derived (i.e., describe specific benefits to learning/achievement).

The Tulsa Public School (TPS) Board of Education conducted a nationwide search to find a superintendent with an extensive background in education and with stellar academic credentials. Dr. Deborah A. Gist was selected by the TPS Board to be its superintendent beginning July 1, 2015. On April 8, 2015, a 3-year contract of employment was entered into with Dr. Gist. Dr. Gist's education includes a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Oklahoma; two master's degrees- one from Harvard University and one from the University of South Florida. Her doctorate is from the University of Pennsylvania. She has taught schools in Texas and Florida for eight years, served as the state education officer for the District of Columbia before being D.C.'s first state superintendent. She has served for the last six years as Rhode Island's Education Commissioner. It would be difficult to find anyone who can bring more leadership talent to TPS in the area of learning and achievement.

- B. A definition of the standards of the plan (i.e., alternate strategies proposed).

The four finalists to be TPS's new superintendent were all from out of state. The TPS Board was aware that any candidate selected from out of state would need to engage in the superintendent credentialing process. The Board, however, was intent on finding the best person for the job. Accordingly, granting TPS an exemption from certification requirements for its superintendent for the 2015-16 fiscal year will fulfill the Board's goal of finding the best person, whether in-state or out-of-state, to lead the District and continue its efforts at academic and administrative improvement. It should be noted that while Dr. Gist's employment as superintendent will not begin until July 1, 2015, since her initial selection as superintendent-designee in February, 2015, she has been extensively involved in wrapping up her duties as Rhode Island's Education Commissioner. She also began to work with TPS' current superintendent in early April, 2015, to insure a smooth superintendent transition. An exemption from the superintendent certification requirements for the 2015-16 fiscal year will allow Dr. Gist sufficient time to pursue her certificate without adversely affecting her duties as superintendent.

- C. Development of definitive work products, such as site improvement plans and progress reports (i.e., describe the expected student performance levels to be demonstrated or results of the Statutory Waiver).

With a highly experienced and effective leader, TPS students, administrators, teachers and support staff will have the benefit of a strong leader who inspires maximum effort and ensures accountability. This maximum effort and sense of accountability will, in turn, create an environment for increased student achievement. One of the first major efforts of Dr. Gist will be to lead the district through a strategic planning process.

- D. Demonstration of collaboration of teachers, administrators, higher education representatives, students, parents/families, and the community.

The TPS Board believes that a leader with Dr. Gist's extensively demonstrated experience in several different areas of education will provide the best chance to bring together teachers, administrators, higher education representatives, students, parents/families, and the community in a collaborative effort to ensure that each student in TPS receives a top-quality education. Also, a leader with Dr. Gist's national connections will provide the District with the opportunity to draw on a variety of educational expertise around the nation which will help to increase the level of academic achievement in the District.

- E. Development and the use of an assessment mechanism to determine progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the plan (i.e., method of evaluation).

Dr. Gist, as superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools, will be evaluated based on a superintendent performance rubric developed by the Tulsa Public School Board (i.e., leadership; administration; instruction; relationship with the board, staff and community; personal qualities; financial).

- F. Development of in-service training plan to be provided to personnel at the site who will participate in the projects.

Dr. Gist will participate in in-service training recommended by the State Department of Education as well as any such training required by the Tulsa Public School Board. In addition, the TPS Board built professional development support into Dr. Deborah Gist's contract.

G. Report on the results of the plan to the State Board of Education and provision of appropriate technical assistance to other school districts and the State Department of Education as required (i.e., describe how you will report to the State Board of Education annually).

Upon request, the District will provide the results of this plan and any data needed.

H. Explanation of how the plan will affect other schools, programs or sites in the district.

The TPS Board believes that Dr. Gist's selection will continue and, in fact, accelerate the District's efforts to become a more efficient, cohesive, and thus effective, educational institution. Furthermore, the District has found in Dr. Gist a person with excellent communication skills and experience at working with different constituencies, which will result in increased community involvement and support of student needs. Dr. Gist's attributes in this regard will certainly have a positive effect on each site within the District.

I. Period of public review on the proposed plan.

A TPS Board meeting was held on Monday, May 18, 2015, at 6:30p.m. at the TPS Education Service Center. The agenda items, posted at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting, explained that the TPS Board would discuss and vote on whether to approve an application to the State Department to exempt Dr. Gist from the superintendent certification requirements for the 2015-16 fiscal year. Also, the meeting included a time for input from the community/ stakeholders.

- J. Notification and comments from the district bargaining agent, or if no bargaining agent exists, the teachers directly affected.

On May 14, 2015, TPS notified the District bargaining agents for teachers (the Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association) and the District bargaining agent for support employees (The American Federation of Teachers, Local6049, Oklahoma). Each was informed of the Monday, May 18, 2015 Board meeting and their ability to make comments regarding this request for an exemption. Each was provided with a draft of the Plan/Application on May 14, 2015.

- K. All comments, recommendations and objections made by the bargaining agent and others to the local board of education shall be forwarded to the State Board of Education for consideration prior to review of the plan.

A summary of any comments made during the May 18, 2015 TPS Board meeting will be presented to the State Board of Education prior to the Board's review of the plan.

- L. Time line for implementing the Statutory Waiver, specifying the period requested.

The District requests that the exemption be effective July 1, 2015, and be granted for the entire 2015-2016 fiscal year.