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California Department of Education  
WAIVER SUBMISSION - General

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CD Code: 3768049

Waiver Number: 33-12-2016

Active Year: 2016

Date In: 12/15/2016 7:26:47 PM

Local Education Agency : Dehesa Elementary School District  
Address : 4612 Dehesa Rd.  
El Cajon, CA 92019

Start: 7/1/2016

End: 7/1/2018

Waiver Renewal: N

Previous Waiver Number: Previous SBE Approval Date:

Waiver Topic: Charter School Program

Ed Code Title: Geographic Limitations - Non-classroom Based

Ed Code Section: Portions of *Ed. Code* Sections 47605(a) and 47605.1

Ed Code Authority: 33050

Ed Code or *CCR* to Waive: *Education Code* Section 47605:

(a) (1) Except as set forth in paragraph (2), a petition for the establishment of a charter school [within a school district] may be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the charter school. A petition for the establishment of a charter school shall identify a single charter school [that will operate within the geographic boundaries of that school district.] A charter school may propose to operate at multiple sites [within the school district] if each location is identified in the charter school petition.

(5) [A charter school that is unable to locate within the jurisdiction of the chartering school district may establish one site outside the boundaries of the school district, but within the county in which that school district is located, if the school district within the jurisdiction of which the charter school proposes to operate is notified in advance of the charter petition approval, the county superintendent of schools and the Superintendent are notified of the location of the charter school before it commences operations, and either of the following circumstances exists:

(A) The school has attempted to locate a single site or facility to house the entire program, but a site or facility is unavailable in the area in which the school chooses to locate.

(B) The site is needed for temporary use during a construction or expansion project.)

*Education Code* Section 47605.1:

(d) [Notwithstanding subdivision (a) or subdivision (a) of Section 47605, a charter school that is unable to locate within the geographic boundaries of the chartering school district may establish one site outside the boundaries of the school district, but within the county within which that school district is located, if the school district in which the charter school proposes to operate is notified in advance of the charter petition approval, the county superintendent of schools is notified of the location of the charter school before it commences operations, and either of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The school has attempted to locate a single site or facility to house the entire program, but such a facility or site is unavailable in the area in which the school chooses to locate.

(2) The site is needed for temporary use during a construction or expansion project].

Outcome Rationale: Diego Hills Public Charter School (Diego Hills) was authorized by Dehesa School District (DSD) in 2009 and received a five-year renewal term from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2019. Diego Hills is a non-classroom based/independent study charter school program offering personalized learning education programs for grades K-12.

Diego Hills is specifically designated as an Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM) serving high-risk pupils and drop-outs. The State recognizes that our school's population has an extremely high turnover rate and can serve an entirely new group of students every 12 months.

Diego Hills primarily serves 9th-12th grade students who are considered "highly at-risk" The term highly at-risk encompasses students who are pregnant, significantly credit deficient, have medical problems that prevent regular attendance in a comprehensive program, and are on probation for criminal offenses. At-risk youth typically come from single-parent homes, have a low socioeconomic status, and experience a high degree of transiency in their living situations. Despite these barriers to achievement, Diego Hills continues to help these students succeed and graduate from high school.

Diego Hills serves approximately 2,200 students annually with 71% of the population eligible for free- and reduced-price meals (Socio-economically Disadvantaged). The population includes 35% English Learner population and 12% SPED students. Many of Diego Hills's students have previously dropped out of high school and enroll at Diego Hills with an average of 50 credits deficient.

Diego Hills has an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) composed of parents, students, and teachers fanned to address the needs of EL students. The ELAC committee has provided professional development on teaching EL students in an independent study setting, created an EL study hall, implemented EL instructional rubrics, and helped guide the allocation of educational resources towards English Learners.

Diego Hills students with special needs are served in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs including but not limited to special education and related services provided by a Specialized Academic Instructor, who provides one-on-one instruction, along with accommodations and modifications. Diego Hills is part of the El Dorado County Charter SELPA.

Diego Hills's students receive academic instruction from highly qualified (HQ) teachers in the core content areas of ELA, science, math and social studies. HQ teachers will also be provided to students in the areas of foreign language, art, and in Career Tech Education (CTE) courses.

At Diego Hills each course is designed for the students and reviewed with the student by a supervising teacher in both the one-on-one and small group settings. Diego Hills's approach to Personalized Learning includes ample student support through individual tutorials, small group pull-out sessions, small group tutorials, career technical education pathways and courses, labs, online classes and technology based learning opportunities and tutorials.

Diego Hills also provides instruction to meet the educational needs of federally funded learn-and-work or learn-and-earn programs, including but not limited to the federal Workforce Investment Act pursuant to *Education Code* Section 47605.1(9). Diego Hills's year-round program emphasizes attainment of basic skill competencies, enhancing opportunities for

academic and occupational training, and providing exposure to the job market and employment. Activities may include instruction leading to completion of secondary school, tutoring, internships, job shadowing, work experience, adult mentoring and comprehensive guidance and counseling. The program emphasizes services for out-of-school youth.

DSD has provided supervisory oversight and performance monitoring services for Diego Hills, including monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the school's audit reports, performing annual visits to the school facilities and resource centers, and considering charter amendment and renewal requests. To the best of DSD's knowledge, Diego Hills has operated its resource centers consistent with the advice and written guidance issued by the California Department of Education since 2002 (see Attachment).

On October 16, 2016, the 3rd District Court of Appeal ruled in *AUHSD v. Shasta Secondary Home School* that under *Education Code* Section 47605(a) independent study charter schools may not have resource centers outside of the boundaries of the school district in which the charter school is authorized, but within the same county.

Currently, Diego Hills has two (2) resource centers located within San Diego County that may be affected by the ruling and if these centers were to close, it would also jeopardize two (2) resource centers in the adjacent Riverside County as the student population in San Diego County could be reduced, thus impacting the ability of Diego Hills to maintain a majority of students who reside in San Diego County as required by *Education Code* Section 47605.1(c). This waiver is necessary to protect the continued operation of Diego Hills's existing resource centers where special education services, English Language Development, and intervention services are provided.

The ruling impacts approximately 2,200 students annually with 71% of the population Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 35% English Learners and 12% SPED students. Also impacted are the 109 Diego Hills employees.

Diego Hills current staffing includes, but is not limited to Certificated Teachers. Special Education Teachers, Counselors, School Psychologists, Tutors, Student Relation Technicians, Student Relations Managers, Registrars. Student Retention Support Specialists, Principals, Assistant Principals, Community Liaison, Instructional Specialists for Professional Development and Teacher Training, Program Specialist, Curriculum Instructional Specialist, Career Technical Education Instructional Specialist. And an Online Instructional Specialist.

Since 2009, Diego Hills has opened and operates five resource centers (one inside the Dehesa School District boundaries, two inside San Diego County but outside District boundaries, and two in adjacent Riverside County). As a non-classroom based charter school, Diego Hills is not eligible for Proposition 39 funding so each initial build out and start up is directly funded by the charter school. In addition, each resource center lease agreement does not have a termination "out clause" allowing the schools to release them of their long term financial liability. Furthermore, despite Diego Hills's high free- and reduced-price lunch ratio, it is not eligible for rental reimbursement under SB 740 as a nonclassroom based charter school.

Diego Hills created these resource centers in alignment with the direction provided by the California Department of Education as provided in the letter dated November 14, 2002 from Janet Sterling, Director, School Fiscal Services Division, updating Charter School Administrators, County and District Superintendents and Chief Business Officials on recent charter legislation, including AB 1994 (attached).

The impact of the court's ruling in Shasta may result in the closing of these resource centers impacting 2,200 highly at risk students who are now engaged in school and on a path towards graduation, employment of 109 school employees and the inability to meet the millions of dollars in long term leases and other financial obligations. The result may cause Diego Hills to become insolvent and force it to file for bankruptcy. In addition to the impact on students being displaced, the staff's loss of employment and the school closure cost, local communities and the state of California will be affected by the loss of the societal benefit of each high school dropout recovered through Diego Hills' educational program. On average each high school dropout costs the state of California \$209,200 (Source: Levin, et. Al.) The dropout recovery of Diego Hills's educational program has a potential savings of \$460,240,000 for the state California. For many of these students Diego Hills's program is their last hope of obtaining a high school diploma.

The waiver is necessary to protect the continued operation of Diego Hills's existing resource centers that provide the services and resources required under Education Code Section 51746, intervention support for all students, direct instruction opportunities for all students, and also provides a location for Federally mandated special education services to allow the provision of a free appropriate public education ("FAPE") to students who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEA"), UCOP approved A G coursework, including hands on science labs with equipment and manipulatives and state mandated testing as required of charter schools pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(c).

Please note, Diego Hills' employees are not organized into bargaining units, but the DSD consulted with the employees' exclusive representatives prior to the submission of this waiver request, and they are not opposed to the waiver.

Student Population: 2200

City Type: Rural

Public Hearing Date: 12/8/2016

Public Hearing Advertised: Notice Posted at the Dehesa School District main office and Diego Hills Public Charter School main office, Diego Hills resource centers and Diego Hills website.

Local Board Approval Date: 12/8/2016

Community Council Reviewed by: Diego Hills Public Charter School Board of Directors

Community Council Reviewed Date: 11/7/2016

Community Council Objection: N

Community Council Objection Explanation:

Audit Penalty YN: N

Categorical Program Monitoring: N

Submitted by: Mr. Eric Stevens

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Bargaining Unit Date: December 1, 2016

Name: Dehesa Teacher's Association ("DTA")

Representative: Nicole Suetos, President and Mynor Pinillos, Vice President

Position: Support