



Helix School District

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Brad Bixler, Superintendent*

Charter School FAQs

The Helix Charter School Commission has created the following document with answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the potential to become a Charter District/School and what this would look like for Helix.

Q: Why is becoming a Charter School up for discussion?

A: The short answer is declining enrollment. Making the change to a Charter School offers the potential to increase student enrollment. Since state funding is calculated on Average Daily Membership (ADM), more students means more funding for our school. At the current enrollment level, Helix School can operate as-is for approximately one more year before cuts to programs and/or staff would need to be seriously considered.

Q: What would change if Helix becomes a Charter school?

A: The biggest change would be that Helix school would essentially have open borders. Helix would have the potential to accept students from out of district without families having to go through the inter-district transfer process. Helix would also be able to bus students to and from school from areas outside the Helix School District boundaries.

Q: Is a charter school a private school?

A: No, a charter school is still a public school, operating under [ORS 338](#)

Q: What about class sizes? Would they stay small?

A: The charter document would place caps on student enrollment - likely a range of 13-17 students per grade level as well as a total cap on school enrollment somewhere around the 190 number.

Q: How will students be selected?

A: If more non-resident students apply for any grade than can be accommodated, admission will be based on an equitable lottery conducted by the Helix Charter School under the following principles:

Resident Preference. Preference will be given to students who reside within the boundaries of the District. Students residing within the boundaries of the District shall be admitted subject to applicable District policies.

Equitable Principles. Lottery selection shall be guided by recognizing the following order of priority for admission:

1. siblings of students who were enrolled at HCS during the previous year/years;

2. students who were on a waiting list, and have re-applied for admission;
3. non-resident students who are not eligible under categories 1 or 2.

Q: Does this change our funding from the state?

A: In short, no. Funding levels from the state are calculated based on enrollment, and the calculation is the same whether a school is a charter or not.

Q: Would there be changes to teacher requirements?

A: A Charter school does offer flexibility in teacher licensure, but Helix School would likely require the same teacher standards as we do now, with the possible exception of some instructor requirements for specialty CTE programs.

Q: If my out-of-district current student attends Helix, would they still be able to attend if Helix became a charter school?

A: Yes, all currently enrolled students would be accepted into the charter school.

Q: Are you looking into the possibility of a 4-day school week?

A: The commission decided that the potential for a 4-day school week is worth looking into. However, the group agreed this would best be served as a separate body of work independent of the charter commission. Therefore, there will be a separate work group to investigate the possibility of going to a 4-day school week that will commence work later this year/early fall.

Q: What would the governing structure look like for the charter district/school?

A: Oregon statutes allow for a single administrator to serve as the Principal and Superintendent of the Charter district and school, so that structure would stay the same. The Helix School District board of directors would remain the same (elected officials residing within the district). There is potential for the creation of a Charter Advisory Council, which would include out-of-district parents and would report to the Helix School Board of Directors.

Q: What happens if we become a charter school and it doesn't work out?

A: If it is not working out for Helix to be a charter school/district, we can simply rescind the charter agreement and return to a conventional public school.

Q: What is the timeline for possible move to a charter school?

A: The commission is planning to present a charter application to the Helix School Board at the May 10th board meeting. If the board is agreeable, the board would then hear public comment at the June 14th board meeting. The Helix school board could potentially accept the charter agreement at the July 12th meeting, and by July 13th the Helix Charter School would be open for student enrollment.

Q: How can I give input on the Charter School possibility? Who can I go to with additional questions?

A: A public hearing will be held in June to hear public comment. If you have questions about the process or would like further information, please contact Mr. Bixler or any member of the Helix Charter Commission.

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