2022-2023 Willow Elementary School Innovation School Renewal Application



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Letter to your School Community

Dear Willow Community and Stakeholders,

As many of you know we are starting our Innovation Renewal Process. Willow Elementary School, formally High Tech Elementary school, has had innovation status since the school has opened. During this time, we have experienced many successes including having experienced high academic status and success on Denver Public Schools Performance Framework (SPF).

We attribute our high level of academic success to some of the flexibilities and waivers that are found in our innovation plan. We are able to emphasize strong team structures under the guidance of our teacher leaders. Each team works tirelessly to analyze data, plan lessons, and implement outstanding and differentiated instructional programming for all students. Our distributive leadership structure ensures that all teachers receive quality, timely observation and feedback that leads to a highly effective teacher in every classroom. Our innovation plan has allowed us to design a school structure with extended planning blocks within the school day for teachers to engage in professional learning, lesson planning, and data analysis which supports their growth and development and the academic growth of students. It also allows for students to engage in specials and PBL class everyday offering them enriching opportunities to learn and produce projects in the arts.

Our Willow Elementary School Innovation Plan expands the traditional leadership roles into teams and specific support for student culture. Given recent data we have focused on Social Emotional Learning and student engagement systems to support improvements that will lead to positive outcomes in student and school culture. The ability to have distinct leadership roles allows us to ensure equal focus on both the instructional and cultural needs of our staff, students, and parents. In addition, allows each team of teachers to be led by a senior team lead. Lastly, this proposal outlines our plan to implement a strong project-based learning model that promotes student choice and voice in the learning process. Our PBL model provides students with an average of 45 minutes a day for students to explore science standards through a project based learning approach.

Our continued status as an innovation school is imperative to achieving the previously discussed goals. Our ability to continue flexibility in hiring, scheduling, and instructional programming ensures the robust implementation of the Willow model. Freedom in deciding how we allocate funding and assign staff members

allows us to continue to grow and to meet the needs of our students and staff. We are excited about the future of Willow Elementary School!

In partnership,

Catrina Pazo

Principal

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Innovation Plan Narrative

Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values

Vision Statement

Learning at Willow is grounded in a technology-enhanced, personalized, project-based approach. All students are immersed in the learning process through exploration, discussion, and reflection. Students think, work, and create something together that demonstrates a new understanding. We foster in our students a joy and passion for learning and the development of important qualities including integrity, character, fairness, and accountability. The curriculum is rigorous, yet developmentally appropriate, providing a strong foundation for success. Students build upon what they learn in preparation for the next grade.

Mission Statement

The Willow mission is to successfully blend a project-based learning environment, a rigorous 21st century curriculum and a high standard of excellence. We are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes learning as an interactive process. We focus on every student's individual needs to ensure that all students succeed. We strive to develop critical thinkers who are caring, confident and lifelong learners in a diverse community.

These mission and vision statements strategically incorporate the key components of the DPS mission, which is to provide all students the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our diverse society and to compete in the 21st century global economy.

Core Values

Humanity. We ensure all children feel safe, loved, and valued.

Perseverance. We embrace our mistakes and encourage one another to work through challenges; we grow from success and learn from failure.

Love of Learning. We celebrate an environment that actively cultivates a lifelong love of learning.

Creativity. We cultivate a learning environment where ideas come to life and imagination runs wild.

Inclusiveness. We celebrate our community, honoring unique perspectives and ideas of everyone.

Accountability. We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We attribute our high level of academic success to some of the flexibilities and waivers that are found in our innovation plan. We are able to emphasize strong team structures under the guidance of our teacher leaders. Each team works tirelessly to analyze data, plan lessons, and implement outstanding and differentiated instructional programming for all students. Our distributive leadership structure ensures that all teachers receive quality, timely observation and feedback that leads to a highly effective teacher in every classroom. Our innovation plan has allowed us to design a school structure with

extended planning blocks within the school day for teachers to engage in professional learning, lesson planning, and data analysis which supports their growth and development and the academic growth of students. It also allows for students to engage in specials and Project Based Learning (PBL) classes everyday offering them enriching opportunities to learn and produce projects in the arts.

Innovation Plan Goals

Willow UIP

Willow is committed to the continuous growth of all students. During our first few years as a school we have celebrated overall growth for our students in all academic areas. Our teachers engage in weekly data team cycles to track student practice and adjust our instructional strategies to ensure student success. Our leadership team engages in monthly and six-week data reviews to monitor the success of all students and review the success of our instructional programming. If gaps are detected, we adjust our staffing, master schedule and curricular foci to ensure continued student growth.

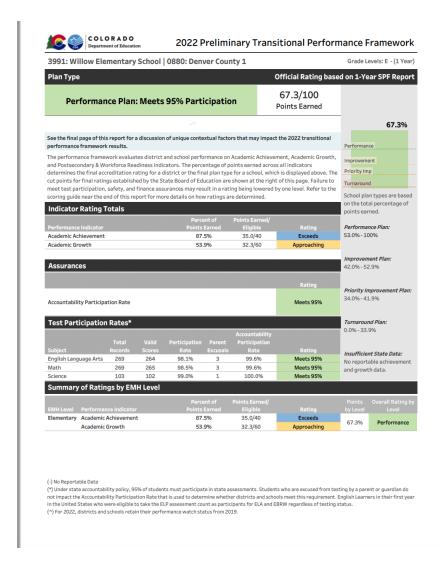
If data show that we are not making adequate progress or that a group of students are not meeting benchmarks, immediate action is taken. Students are further assessed, teacher practice is analyzed, curriculum is reviewed and analyzed, and changes to instructional practices occur. Changes include but are not limited to:

- Instruction pacing, scope-and-sequence, and/or delivery.
- Grouping regrouping across classrooms, smaller groups, etc.
- Time students may spend more time in a particular content area until the gap is closed.

Table 1. Innovation plan goals.

Willow SPF

Performance Indicator/Other Assessment or Measure	Current/ Baseline Performance	2022-2023 Goal	2023-2024	2024-2025*
Colorado State SPF	Green	Students at or above grade level will show consistent growth. The academic growth indicator on SPF will increase from 59.3% to 65.9%	Students at or above grade level will show consistent growth. The academic growth indicator on SPF will increase from 65.9% to 70%	Students at or above grade level will show consistent growth. The academic growth indicator on SPF will increase from 70% to 80%



Innovation Plan Onboarding

During the hiring process we notify teachers that we are an innovation school and tell them the main flexibilities for innovation that impacts teachers include the calendar and the curriculum.

During the hiring process we notify new leaders that we are an innovation school and tell them the main flexibilities for innovation that impacts teachers are the calendar and the curriculum. Innovation status is included in job postings and the innovation plan is posted/linked in job postings.

Section I: Educational Program Flexibilities

	Educational Program Flexibilities			
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers		
Calendar	Willow Elementary may design their yearly calendar with the following in mind: ■ To provide additional professional learning that compliments our curriculum, Willow Elementary will modify our yearly calendar. These changes will provide additional time for both leader and teacher designed professional learning; □ No more than 3 additional professional learning days will be scheduled per year (in addition to the number of professional learning days scheduled by the district). □ Any professional development days that may not align with those scheduled by the district. These days will be scheduled with input from the CSC to best serve the school community. Willow Elementary's yearly calendar may have fewer student contact days than the district calendar but will meet or exceed district and state minimum requirements for student contact. The yearly calendar will be developed no later than 60 days before the end of the school year by the principal in consultation of the CSC.	DCTA CBA: Article 1-7: Definition of "School Year" Article 8-1-1 - 8-1-5: Professional Standards- Calendar Subsections State Statute: 22-32-109(1)(n)(I): Schedule and Calendar 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(A): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Instruction and Contact 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(B): School Calendar 22-33-102(1) Definition of "Academic Year"		
Extra Duty Compensation	Describe how staff will be compensated for extra time worked or additional responsibilities/activities through a compensation philosophy, including an overview of how the school will handle that compensation process (e.g. if extra hours worked will be submitted via True Pay, who will make that submission and on what timeframe?) Willow's Compensation Philosophy Willow may provide extra duty compensation through both extra duty pay and through stipends. The Office Manager will oversee the submission of additional hours worked for extra duties through True Pay no later than the Friday of the week those additional hours were worked. The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that all stipends are provided to eligible staff.	District Policy: CBA: DCTA - Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation DFPNSE - Article 19: Compensation State Statute: 22-32-109(1)(f): Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Personnel and Pay		

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Willow may submit a compensation philosophy each year that describes additional compensation for staff through stipends and extra duty pay. The compensation philosophy document will be reviewed by HR and submitted to DPS compensation by the date indicated on the submission form.

Willow may seek to provide extra duty compensation for committee work and extra responsibilities, which will support the school by distributing leadership.

Willow will work with DPS HR to ensure that all necessary processes are followed when developing the compensation philosophy.

Curriculum and Assessment

Describe the process your school will use to select curriculum and assessments. How will you monitor these materials to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and cultural sustainability?

Willow will participate in the universal flexibilities process when selecting a new curriculum, and will follow the district approval process if seeking to implement a new curriculum outside of this process. If curriculum flexibility is not provided by DPS, Willow will retain flexibility to make changes to their curriculum in accordance with state and legal requirements.

Through Project Based Learning and additional enrichment opportunities we are able to provide students with a well rounded approach to curriculum and education.

Willow's current selections for curricula:

Curriculum Subject	Commercial Program Name
Literacy K-5	CKLA
Math K-5	Engaged New York
Science/Social Studies K-5	Amplify
SEL	Zones of Regulation, EmpowerEd, Morning Meeting Structure

Willow's current selections for assessments:

Assessment Subject	Assessment Type
MAPs K-5 (Literacy, Math, Science)	Interim Assessment

State Statute:

- 22-32-109(1)(t):
 Determine
 Educational
 Program and
 Prescribe
 Textbooks;
- 22-32-109(I): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards

	iStation K-5 (Literacy)	Progress Monitoring/Monthly Assessment for Read Act	
Professional Learning	Willow Elementary School will Professional Learning through rand will determine relevance for provide a differentiated approach diverse community. We will util necessary or as our ILT see's fit. School staff will still complete a safety, and other legal compliant	resources in our Collaborative or Willow specific learning to the homeet the needs of our lize district PDs and PDUs as all training related to health,	State Statute: • 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks; • 22-32-109(1): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards

Section II: Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities

	Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers	
Recruitment	 Willow will not adhere to the district staffing cycle. In accordance with the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, Willow will post vacancies when they become open. Each school year, the school will work with the district Human Resources office to determine system availability, procedures and timelines for staffing to ensure timely recruitment and posting for open positions through the district website. In addition to this posting, the school will engage in independent outreach efforts to recruit candidates outside of the centralized recruitment channels. 	DCTA CBA: • Article 13-7 Hiring timelines • Article 13-8 Personnel Committee • Article 14-1 Summer School Teaching Positions	

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Section III: Governance and Budget Flexibilities

Governance and Budget Flexibilities			
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers	
School Committees	Describe how stakeholders will be involved in decision making through your school's CSC. How will decisions by these groups be made? How will members of these groups be selected? Willow will combine the SLT and CSC into one governing body referred to as CSC. See Willow CSC Bylaws for further details. In addition to the responsibilities required in state statute, CSC (or another committee described in the innovation plan) will: • Meet at least once a month; • Assume the responsibilities of the SLT detailed in Article 5-5 of the DCTA contract: • Advise on the school's master calendar and schedule • Make recommendations regarding the school's curriculum and instruction, culture and behavior, services for special populations, and use of school facilities. • Determining and approving the school's master calendar and schedule. The CSC will make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the principal will have final decision making power. Family representatives on Willow's CSC will be elected from a group nominated by the current CSC. Nominations will be based on selecting family representatives that best represent Willow's diverse community. All staff will be elected by majority vote per their subgroup. In addition to the responsibilities required in state statute, the CSC will work in partnership with the District to: • Identify 1 or more principal candidates (when a vacancy exists). • The CSC will act as the interview panel to conduct principal interviews. • The superintendent (or designee) shall make a final hiring decision from among the candidate(s) or, if the superintendent determines that no candidate is sufficiently qualified, direct the CSC to work with the District to identify additional principal candidates.	District Policy: BDF-R4 Collaborative School Committee (If the SLT and CSC are combined): CBA: Article 5-5: School Leadership Team State Statute: 22-32-126: Employment and Authority of Principals	

Committee Name and Acronym	Members	Brief Overview of Responsibilities
CSC	Administrative Group: 1 Principal/executive director, Assistant Principal/director, & Dean Community Group: 1 Community Liaison Classroom Teacher Group: 1 teacher representative from each team: ECE, K/1, 2/3, 4/5. Support Staff Group: 1 teacher representative from the support staff teams: specials/PBL and special education. Classified Staff Group: 1	Responsibilities See below
	Classified Staff Member. This position will rotate each year, allowing each classified staff member to have an opportunity to participate in the CSC.	
	7 Family Representatives - Nominated by and voted on by CSC in following years. The family representatives will serve a 1-year term. Total number of family representatives in the "family representative group" will always number one more than any other CSC subgroup.	

	If your school is seeking this flexibility, these are the minimum duties of the CSC as described in state statute: 1. Act as the school accountability committee for the school. 2. Recommend to the principal priorities for spending school money and formulating school budget requests. 3. Advise and make recommendations to the Principal and Principal supervisor on the school improvement plan. 4. Advise and make recommendations to the Board of Education on the school priority improvement or turnaround plan. 5. Provide input and recommendations on an advisory basis to the District Accountability Committee and the Instructional Superintendent concerning Principal evaluations. 6. Increase the level of parent engagement in the school. The committee's activities to increase parent engagement will include, but not be limited to: a. Publicizing opportunities to serve and soliciting parents to serve on the CSC. In soliciting parents to serve on the CSC, the CSC will direct the outreach efforts to help ensure that the parents who serve on the CSC reflect the student populations that are significantly represented within the school; b. Assisting the District in implementing at the school the parent engagement policy adopted by the Board of Education; and c. Assisting school personnel to increase parents' engagement with teachers, including but not limited to parents' engagement in creating students' READ plans, in creating individual career and academic plans, and in creating plans to address habitual truancy.	
Budgeting on Actual Teacher Salaries	Willow currently budgets on actual teacher salaries and will continue to budget this way. This budgeting strategy allows Willow to spend any additional budget on resources to support student learning and wellbeing.	No Associated Waivers

Waivers and Replacement Language

Calendar

DCTA CBA:

- Article 1-7: Definition of "School Year"
- Article 8-1-1 8-1-5: Contract Year

State Statute:

- 22-32-109(1)(n)(I): Schedule and Calendar
- 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(A): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Instruction and Contact
- 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(B): School Calendar
- 22-33-102(1): Definition of "Academic Year"

The school shall **develop its own annual calendar that supports the mission, vision, and goals stated in the innovation plan**, provided it meets or exceeds the minimum standards of the district and state, including the actual hours of teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact.

Schools will follow calendar creation and submission guidance in the District's innovation guidebook.

- The SLT or SLT-equivalent must vote to approve the final calendar, which must be approved no later than the date specified in the innovation guidebook. If no date is specified in the guidebook, the final calendar will be approved no later than April 15th.
- Input from parents and teachers will be sought prior to scheduling in-service programs and other non-student contact days. This calendar shall serve as the academic calendar for the school. All calendars shall include planned work dates for required staff in-service programs. Once a calendar is adopted, any further changes must be approved by the district. Such changes shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice of no less than 30 days, except for emergency closing or other unforeseen circumstances as determined by the district.
- A copy of the upcoming school-year calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students who are
 currently enrolled. The approved upcoming school year calendar will be placed on the school's website prior to
 May 1 of the prior academic year and a copy shall be provided to the school's Instructional Superintendent.
 The school shall submit their calendar to the district in a timeframe as requested by the district in order to
 meet requirements for alignment with hiring/onboarding, transportation, facilities and other service provision.

The term "school year" as used in corresponding Articles and policies affecting the school shall mean the school calendar as it is established by the innovation school. This definition will include an identification of days. "Academic year" refers to the year as it is established by the innovation school's developed academic calendar for the School.

Extra Duty Compensation

DPS CBAs:

- DCTA Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation
- <u>DFPNSE Article 19: Compensation (Paraprofessional Compensation)</u>

State Statute:

• 22-32-109(1)(f): Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Personnel and Pay

The School has the authority to **determine its own compensation philosophy to provide school determined extra-duty pay and to compensate employees based on school priorities** including activities such as, but not

necessarily limited to, additional time, additional roles and responsibilities, coaching, tutoring, professional development or for performance incentive pay, provided that the School submits a Compensation Philosophy to their CSC and HR for annual review. The compensation philosophy must be shared with the school's HR partner no later than the date specified in the innovation guidebook. If no date is specified in the guidebook, the compensation philosophy must be provided to the school's HR partner for review by March 1st.

Pursuant to state law, the DPS board will delegate the duty specified in 22-32-109(1)(f) to the innovation school.

Curriculum and Assessment

State Statute:

- 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks
- Section 22-32-109(1)(aa): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards

The DPS Board authorizes the school to **develop an educational program that aligns to the mission and vision** of the school and supports the mission, vision, and goals stated in the innovation plan. The school will continue to follow the district's policy on curriculum and assessment as long as the district continues to operate a process through which schools are provided with curriculum flexibilities. The school may maintain this flexibility if the district changes its policy on curriculum and assessment.

The school's curriculum will provide a program of instruction that enables students to meet or exceed the CCSS and CAS. The school will regularly evaluate its education program and make changes to curriculum content, instruction, and assessments.

Professional Learning

- 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks
- Section 22-32-109(1)(aa): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards

The DPS Board authorizes the school to **develop professional development that aligns to the mission and vision of the school** and enables the school to implement the innovation plan. As described in the innovation plan, the School will participate in district-provided coaching and professional development except when such coaching or professional development contradicts the successful implementation of the innovation plan and/or the mission/vision of the school.

The school will continue to follow the district's policy on curriculum and assessment.

In determining the School's PD and coaching schedule, the Instructional Superintendent will collaborate with the Principal to ensure that district PD and coaching supports the School in implementing the goals of the innovation plan. The School must participate in all trainings required for health, safety, and other legal compliance.

Recruitment

DCTA CBA:

Article 13-7 Hiring timelines

The Innovation School will have autonomy to recruit staff and make offers to candidates outside of the traditional district hiring calendar.

School Governance and Committees

District Policy:

BDF-R4 Collaborative School Committee

CBA:

• Article 5-5: School Leadership Team

State Statute:

• 22-32-126: Employment and Authority of Principals

The School will utilize innovation status to **combine the School Leadership Team and School Collaborative Committee**, **creating the Collaborative School Committee**. The CSC will comply with State Law on School Accountability Committees (summarized below).

The membership of the CSC will include at least 7 voting members, with parents constituting the largest group The CSC will include representation by the the following parties (more representatives can be added in these or other categories, provided parents constitute the largest group):

- Principal or principal's designee
- At least 3 parents or legal guardians of students enrolled at the school
- At least 1 teacher who provides instruction at the school
- at least 1 person who is involved in business or industry in the community
- At least 1 adult member of an organization of parents, teachers and students recognized by the school

The number of members of the CSC will be determined by the principal. Parents on the committee will be the highest represented group. To the extent practicable, the CSC will represent a cross-section of the school community.

The CSC will provide input into principal hiring as described in the innovation plan. The CSC may also choose to follow the typical district process for principal hiring

The CSC will not:

- 1. Participate in the day-to-day operations of the school;
- 2. Be involved in issues relating to individuals (staff, students, or parents) within the school; or
- 3. Be involved in personnel issues other than principal hiring (the School Personnel Committee will stand alone according to the current DPS/DCTA contract).

Although the school is waiving DPS policy BDF-R4, C.R.S. 22-11-401 and 22-11-402 are not waived.

Summary of State Statute

(This statute is not waived and the CSC must adhere to C.R.S. 22-11-401 and C.R.S. 22-11-402).

Meetings

The CSC will publicize and hold public CSC meetings at least every quarter to discuss whether school leadership, personnel and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the school's performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is applicable.

If applicable, the CSC will publicize a public hearing to discuss strategies to include in the school priority improvement or turnaround plan and to review a written school priority improvement or turnaround plan.

Summary of Duties (see 22-11-402 for state statute verbatim)

The CSC will:

- 1. Act as the school accountability committee for the school.
- 2. Recommend to the principal priorities for spending school moneys and formulating school budget requests.
- 3. Advise and make recommendations to the Principal and Instructional Superintendent on the school improvement plan.
- 4. Advise and make recommendations to the Board of Education on the school priority improvement or turnaround plan.
- 5. Provide input and recommendations on an advisory basis to the District Accountability Committee and the Instructional Superintendent concerning Principal evaluations.
- 6. Increase the level of parent engagement in the school. The committee's activities to increase parent engagement will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Publicizing opportunities to serve and soliciting parents to serve on the CSC. In soliciting parents to serve on the CSC, the CSC will direct the outreach efforts to help ensure that the parents who serve on the CSC reflect the student populations that are significantly represented within the school;
 - b. Assisting the District in implementing at the school the parent engagement policy adopted by the Board of Education; and
 - c. Assisting school personnel to increase parents' engagement with teachers, including but not limited to parents' engagement in creating students' READ plans, in creating individual career and academic plans, and in creating plans to address habitual truancy.

Appendix A: Evidence of Engagement and Support from Administrators, Teachers and CSC

Please attach any documentation of staff and community engagement conducted by the school in designing and writing the innovation plan. This could include a description and list of staff and/or community meetings held regarding innovation, materials used during these meetings or in the development of the plan, committees or teams utilized to write the innovation plan, trackers used to monitor engagement communication, or any other means by which the school engaged its community or gathered feedback on the innovation plan. When describing these engagement opportunities, please also include how many people attended and how participation was structured (i.e. open to everyone, committee with specific membership, etc.).

Engagement Opportunity	Participation Structure and Attendees	Links
2/14/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	Information Here
2/28/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	<u>Information Here</u>
3/7/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	<u>Information Here</u>
3/14/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	<u>Information Here</u>
3/21/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	Information Here
4/4/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	<u>Information Here</u>
4/11/22	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	<u>Information Here</u>

1/3/23	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	Waiver Look Overs
2/5/23	3 parents 3 staff members 3 students CSC representatives	Draft Innovation Plan Discussion