



**2022-2023**

# **Innovation School Renewal Application**

---

# Table of Contents

[Table of Contents](#)

[Application Directions](#)

[Letter to your School Community](#)

[Innovation Plan Narrative](#)

[Section I: Educational Program Flexibilities](#)

[Section II: Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities](#)

[Section III: School Management and Leadership](#)

[Section IV: Governance and Budget Flexibilities](#)

[Section V: Proposed Flexibilities \(Optional\)](#)

[Section VI: Innovative Practices Outside of Waivers \(Optional\)](#)

[Appendix A: Evidence of Engagement and Support from Administrators, Teachers and CSC](#)

Dear DPS Community,

We at Escuela Valdez have a proud track record of consistent success for our students over the past several years while maintaining both racial and socio-economic diversity in our student body. As measured by the district SPF and the state SPF, we have maintained and at times exceeded a “meets” level even through the pandemic. Our students exceed the district average for performance at grade level and above in both Spanish and English and continue to show strong growth on multiple measures including CMAS, ACCESS and READ Act assessments. In addition, our survey data indicates high levels of social emotional well-being for students, overall happiness, and strong school community involvement. In 2017, we were awarded both the Blue Ribbon Recognition for National School excellence and the 9News Colorado State “Best Elementary School” award. We have been able to maintain this level of success in multiple areas specifically because we are an innovation school within an innovation zone and we use our flexibilities to directly serve our students and truly meet their needs. Our innovation status empowers us to act and make decisions in the best interests of our students and school in the moment and over time regardless of changes at the district and state levels.

As an innovation school in a zone, we’ve been able to create systems and structures of support for our students and staff. We can modify our calendar and schedule to align with our instruction and assessment cycles. We can modify our professional development and curriculum to serve our dual language program and support our teachers in excellent instruction. Our leaders are also able to flex and adapt their learning to support our school. We can recruit and hire strong bilingual teachers aligned with our values on a timeline that meets our needs. We are able to budget and pay for our teachers according to what they cost, allowing us decision making power to meet the needs of our kids. We value and empower our teachers and staff to have voice and make decisions that impact our instruction, schedule, staff, and how we use our money to ultimately support our students.

---

Especially during challenging times, innovation status has supported us as a school and as individuals to care for the overall health and well being of our staff to better serve our students. We listen to our teachers and we can be flexible in our schedule, staffing, and budget to support our staff as well as our students. Our teachers choose Valdez because we do have a collective voice and can make decisions that influence how we operate. Valdez has been an innovation school for over 13 years in service of our teachers and our community. In this current version of our innovation review, we have not made big changes to the flexibilities we've had in the past. Our flexibilities continue to serve our students and our community.

The development of this review application was spearheaded by teachers and a writing committee, with multiple opportunities for input from all teachers and our CSC, composed of teachers, parents, community members, and leaders. At the beginning of the school year, we hosted an all staff meeting to share the process and timeline. We then had an all teacher meeting to shape the initial application, multiple leader and writing committee touchpoints to write and finetune the application, another meeting for teachers to give input after having access to the full application for more than 2 weeks, including a time for teachers to meet without leaders present to ask questions and give input. [Here](#) is the detailed engagement tracker.

We are proud to take this opportunity to showcase our success and to illustrate the importance of our flexibilities as an innovation school within an innovation zone. Presented below are our mission, vision, and values clearly stated, which drive our innovation flexibilities to better support our students. We are excited to review our plan and clearly articulate our success factors. As a community of students, teachers, support staff, leaders and families, we are clear about the role innovation plays in our story and are excited about the path forward to use our flexibilities to positively impact our students.

Thank you for your support.

Escuela Valdez Students, Staff, and Families

---

## Innovation Plan Narrative

**Vision Statement:** *The Power of Together*

**Mission Statement:** Valdez Elementary School commits to equity through Dual Language Immersion and culturally relevant, individualized education for all learners.

Dual Language Immersion: closing the achievement gap and increasing equity by creating authentic, research-based education for all students, in order that they experience both sociolinguistic and academic success in two languages together.

Commitment to Community and Culture: creating a community together that works towards an equitable society by valuing the culture and identities of all community members.

High Expectations for Academic Success: providing authentic, personalized learning through intentional, collaborative, data-driven planning to create meaningful and lasting academic success.

---

As an innovation school, Valdez exercises additional and appropriate freedom to control our educational program, budget, staff, time and incentives to ensure that we remain one of the premier schools in Northwest Denver, while serving as a model of successful educational reform for schools across the country. These flexibilities as described below are critical to the success of our program by allowing us to align our schedule, hire our staff, and use our budget to truly meet the needs of our students.

Valdez is and seeks to remain a proud member of the Luminary Learning Network, Denver's first innovation zone. The LLN is a diverse-by-design organization that was founded by educators, in service of educators. We remain committed to one critical common interest: achieving tangible academic and social-emotional success for all students as described in the LLN's Zone Renewal Plan and modeled through our [LLN Collective School Values](#). As an LLN school, we benefit from the continuity of working with consistent and like-minded peer groups which allows for deep relationship development and genuine support in alignment with our school's unique innovation plan.

Our calendar and schedule flexibilities as an innovation school allow teachers the flexibility to pace, condense, or extend lessons to allow for the time needed and depth achieved for rigorous academic engagement and discourse in our dual language program. Innovation flexibilities allow us to design and implement a master schedule, a teacher work schedule, and an annual calendar that will best serve our students, families and teachers. We believe that teachers need individual and collaborative planning and reflection time in order to be most effective. We work collaboratively with our families to determine the best schedule and calendar to meet the needs of our students.

Valdez teachers need the flexibility to compact, pace, extend, adjust, and deviate from some district curricula based on student needs within our program. To be truly data driven, we must be able to respond to the student needs and honor that data driven decisions may supersede fidelity to the district core curriculum. This requires the flexibility to use curricula that match our values around equity, language and student-centered learning. With our flexibilities within our innovation plan, grade level teams working with leaders have the liberty to create assessment tools and use the resulting data to positively impact student learning. Innovation allows for flexibility using our time to create a year-long assessment plan using assessments aligned to our academic and dual language programming.

Our assessment plan is a key next step to raise student achievement. We have taken great strides with collecting and using progress monitoring data in reading, writing, and math over the past several years. An essential assessment unique to our dual language program is ongoing second language assessment that checks for mastery of concepts as well as the students' progression of oral language. Assessments and performance criteria are defined through backwards lesson design in reading, writing, math, language, science and social studies. We use data cycles and data driven instruction to plan and adjust instruction as such: scoring work together; identifying teacher and student work exemplars, identifying student strengths and next-steps as a data team, planning for ongoing re-teaching and planning subsequent assessments (exit tickets, unit/theme assessments, portfolio assessments, bodies of evidence, etc.).

All of our financial resources go towards supporting individual student needs through targeted scheduling, classroom support, intervention and special education support. Our budget flexibilities allow us to center our resources on student needs. Any additional savings through budget flexibilities in teacher salaries and opting out of district services go to directly supporting students through additional intervention and special education staff.

We aim to prepare each and every Valdez student to graduate having achieved the grade level academic performance standards necessary to be competitive and successful students in any secondary school

and to attend college. Valdez students in our dual-language program will become bilingual and bi-literate in English and Spanish, enhancing their communication and cultural understanding in order to be successful and contributing members of a diverse society. We will increase academic achievement across all academic areas as measured by a variety of assessment tools for all students. Our students' academic growth will be documented through Colorado state reports, the District School Performance Framework (as it exists), and other school-generated data reports. Our collective, unwavering commitment is that all staff members are highly qualified, caring, compassionate, and dedicated to excellence. We understand that in order to provide a quality education, we must align the efforts of the people who work at our school with those of our families.

Table 1. Innovation plan goals.

Performance Indicator/Other Assessment or Measure	Current/Baseline Performance	2022-2023 Goal	2023-2024	2024-2025*
Colorado State SPF	Overall: Insufficient State Data (no growth scores in CMAS ELA or math) Academic Achievement: Exceeds Academic Growth: Meets	Overall: Meets Academic Achievement: Maintain Meets Academic Growth: Maintain Meets	Overall: Meets Academic Achievement: Maintain Meets Academic Growth: Maintain Meets	Overall: Meets Academic Achievement: Maintain Meets Academic Growth: Maintain Meets

**Innovation Plan Onboarding**

As part of the hiring process, candidates are asked a question about their background and experience with innovation schools. After the candidate shares, the hiring committee explains the vision and mission of Valdez and what innovation status and being part of an innovation zone means at our school. We give the candidate access to our plan and an opportunity to ask questions to school leaders and current teachers before being hired. When a position is officially offered, the principal states again that Valdez is an innovation school within an innovation zone, explains our flexibilities and the direct impact on teachers/other staff, gives the candidate access to our plan, and gives the candidate an opportunity to ask questions and get clarification. As part of the onboarding process, teachers receive an offer letter that they have to sign that clearly states Valdez is an innovation school within an innovation zone, and again giving them access to our flexibilities and plan. This is reviewed by both the principal and DPS HR representative, again giving the teacher an opportunity to ask questions.

In the event of leadership turnover, the Valdez staff will work with the LLN leadership and will make every effort to secure leaders who understand the nature of the innovation and zone status and who will honor the provisions within this application. The school will also create and implement an induction plan for hiring and training new leaders to ensure a successful transition, including orientation to innovation and zones if needed.

## Section I: Educational Program Flexibilities

In the table below, use each prompt<sup>1</sup> to describe in detail each of the school's requested existing educational programming flexibilities, making sure to address the Standards of Quality for that specific flexibility. If your school is not interested in a specific flexibility, please leave those rows blank.

Educational Program Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers
Calendar	<p><b>Rationale</b> Valdez may utilize calendar flexibilities for several reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Alignment to Curriculum</u>: In line with our mission, vision, and core values, we modify and adapt curriculum across content areas for our dual language programming. Calendar flexibility allows us to plan staff development days on the cadence of our language switches and data cycles.</li> <li>2. <u>Alignment to Strategic Planning</u>: We exercise the flexibility to provide our own professional learning, which is augmented by the flexibility of being in an innovation zone. Each year, staff development days are selected based on the school priorities developed by the CSC, leadership team, and teachers, and codified in the Unified Improvement Plan.</li> <li>3. <u>School Specific Needs</u>: We have worked with our staff and families to identify some variations from the district calendar that better supports kids and promotes sustainable work loads. This currently includes starting the school year with a short week and modifying our professional development days/ data days.</li> </ol> <p><b>Adjustments</b> In our current calendar for SY 22/23, there are several adjustments as compared to the district calendar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Short week to start</u>: We start school on a Thursday, so that students and staff have time to adjust to the return to school.</li> <li>• <u>Staggered start for ECE students</u>: As is developmentally appropriate, our ECE students have a staggered start to the school year. Small groups of students start one day at a time to acclimate and adjust to being in school.</li> </ul>	<p>DCTA CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 1-7: Definition of "School Year"</li> <li>• Article 8-1-1 - 8-1-5: Contract Year</li> </ul> <p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-32-109(1)(n)(I): Schedule and Calendar</li> <li>• 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(A): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Instruction and Contact</li> <li>• 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(B): School Calendar</li> <li>• 22-33-102(1) Definition of "Academic Year"</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The application lists flexibilities that schools have previously used and may choose to use again. DPS Authorizing and Accountability encourage schools to only select flexibilities that support the school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Shifting PD days</u>: As noted above, we schedule 2 additional professional learning days based on our curriculum and strategic plan.</li> <li>● <u>Additional summer training</u>: In the past, we have planned additional summer training for staff for specific groups. This is not our current practice, but it may shift in future years based on school needs, teacher input, and budget. We will not ask staff to come back for more than five additional days and staff will be compensated for their time following HR guidance for the appropriate hourly rate.</li> <li>● <u>Work days</u>: <u>The Valdez calendar currently has teachers working 186 days, including 173.5 student contact days and 12.5 professional learning days.</u></li> </ul> <p>In the future, we may make similar and/or additional changes to the calendar based on feedback and school priorities using the process described below.</p> <p><b>Process</b></p> <p>The calendar is developed annually by a subcommittee of teachers and leaders. Leaders work with district staff to ensure compliance with legal requirements and unwaived district policies. The subcommittee seeks input from all teachers and puts a final draft to the CSC for approval. The calendar is finalized by the annual date communicated by district operations for planning needs, which typically is May 1.</p> <p><b>Supporting Families and Staff</b></p> <p>We currently work with Discovery Link to provide childcare on days that we do not have school. In our weekly communication to families, we highlight when our school calendar varies from the district calendar.</p> <p>If staff need to attend district professional learning days, we flex our professional development for them so they can receive training.</p>	
Schedule	<p>Some examples of schedule flexibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extending the workweek beyond 40 hours;</li> <li>● Changes to weekly teacher planning minutes;</li> <li>● Any changes to teacher class size or course load.</li> </ul> <p>Valdez may occasionally extend the workweek beyond 40 hours. This will be planned and approved by the CSC with at least 2 weeks advance notice. This additional time will be used to support our educational programming with targeted professional development and planning time facilitated by a leader (for example, planning out our literacy structure for our 90/10 classes</p>	<p>DCTA CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Article 1-7: Definition of "School Year"</li> <li>● Article 8-2 - 8-10: Professional Standards</li> </ul> <p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 22-32-109(1)(n)(I): Schedule and Calendar</li> <li>● 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(A): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil</li> </ul>

	<p>transitioning to 50/50). This additional time will be compensated. If we add instructional minutes, these extra instructional minutes will be exchanged for a compensated day off for teachers of equal length or teachers will be compensated for this extra time in accordance with the DCTA contract//compensation philosophy.</p> <p>All other aspects of Article 8 in the DCTA contract will be observed.</p>	<p>Instruction and Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(B): School Calendar</li> <li>• 22-33-102(1) Definition of "Academic Year"</li> </ul>
<p>Extra Duty Compensation</p>	<p>Valdez will provide extra duty compensation through both extra duty pay and through stipends.</p> <p>The Valdez Office Manager will oversee the submission of additional hours worked for class coverage, instructional planning, child care to support family engagement, school events, etc through True Pay no later than the Friday of the week those additional hours were worked. Valdez school leaders are eligible for classroom coverage pay at the current teacher class coverage pay rate per hour for hours spent covering classes in teachers' absence. The Office Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all stipends are provided to eligible staff. The principal will approve additional hours and extra pay. If an individual teacher or other staff member is seeking additional pay for a service or extra time worked, the request must be submitted and approved by the principal before the extra service or time is completed.</p> <p>Valdez 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.</p> <p>Valdez may seek to provide extra duty compensation for professional development, additional duties above and beyond job description, teachers assuming leadership roles, etc, which will support the school by additional adult learning for better instruction, developing adults to better serve kids, and providing much needed additional support for the safety of students.</p> <p>Valdez will work with DPS HR to ensure that all necessary processes are followed when developing the compensation philosophy.</p>	<p>District Policy:</p> <p>CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCTA - Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation</li> <li>• DFPNSE - Article 19: Compensation</li> </ul> <p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-32-109(1)(f): Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Personnel and Pay</li> </ul>



<p>Curriculum and Assessment</p>	<p>Valdez 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, Valdez will retain flexibility to make changes to their curriculum in accordance with state and legal requirements.</p> <p>Valdez is a 90/10 Spanish Dual Language Program that empowers all students to reach their highest potential as members of an evolving global society. The two-way immersion program at Valdez provides a research proven instructional model for students to learn Spanish and English. This additive bilingual program teaches all students Spanish without compromising English language development.</p> <p><b>ECE</b> Our ECE classrooms are play-based, using themes and stations with the Creative Curriculum and Montessori philosophies to teach language and content throughout the day. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is one of the most widely used pre-K curricula in the nation. It's comprehensive, research-based, research-proven, and it features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.</p> <p><b>K-2nd grade literacy:</b> Built on the Science of Reading, Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA) sequences deep content knowledge with research-based foundational skills. Amplify CKLA enables students to build a robust knowledge base for accessing and unpacking complex texts so real comprehension can happen in both Spanish and English. The curriculum builds foundational skills such as phonics, word study, and fluency.</p> <p><b>3rd-5th grade literacy:</b> The EL Education curriculum is designed to engage students in reading, thinking, talking, and writing about engaging grade level texts on meaningful topics, using high quality, grade level texts in English and Spanish. Each module in grades 3-5 consists of two one-hour blocks of content-based literacy instruction. Together, these two hours of curriculum teach and formally assess all strands of the Language Arts standards for each grade level. We have adapted the EL curriculum to fit our 50/50 dual language programming.</p> <p><b>English Foundational Skills:</b> We have adopted SIPPS to support our systematic approach to teaching English foundational skills. SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) is a research-based foundational skills program proven to help both new and struggling readers in grades K–12, including English learners and students identified with dyslexia. The program's systematic scope and sequence provides a structured-literacy approach to instruction through explicit</p>	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks;</li> <li>• 22-32-109(1): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards</li> </ul>
----------------------------------	---	---

routines focused on phonological awareness, spelling-sounds, and sight words.

**Mathematics instruction** at Valdez is concept based, focused on problem solving, differentiated, and includes games. Our Investigations Math Curriculum integrates core mathematical practices that focus on reasoning, communication, and making sense into the learning sequence. Investigations is a focused, coherent, and rigorous K-5 mathematics curriculum. Fully aligned to the content and practice standards of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), deep and careful attention is paid to mathematics content and to student thinking and understanding. Making sense of mathematics is the heart of the work for students.

**Science** is actively taught to allow students to explore their world and discover new things through hands-on labs and experiments. We use Amplify Science, a K–8 science curriculum that blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers.

**Social Studies** includes civic engagement, as well as knowledge from the core content areas of civics, economics, geography, and history. We are transitioning to Inquiry Journeys by InquirED based on the strong use of strategies to support student voice and choice and connect to students' experiences and interests. Grades 4 and 5 will be implemented in the 2021-22 school year, and grades K-3 will be implemented in the 2022-23 school year.

**Social Emotional Learning**

We consider a cohesive, positive and intentional school culture to be a vital part of our comprehensive plan to create a thriving and enriching dual-language program. Being a dual-language school requires unique sensitivities to not only language differences, but to cultural differences as well.

Current research has demonstrated that the most effective strategy for positively fostering pro-social behaviors and character development in students is to explicitly teach, model, and recognize these characteristics. Unique to our school is the need to have this system align well with all of our families, both linguistically and culturally. Our acronym for positive behavior expectations meets this requirement, as it is easily translated into both languages, is equally culturally relevant, and is equally accessible by all. We also use character instruction to build a culture that embraces the diversity in our student body, and to provide opportunities for leadership and recognition to all students. We do this through daily morning meetings in all classrooms and regular use of the district SEL curriculum.

Aligned with our instruction, we are intentional about the **assessments** we use to deeply understand our students' academic strengths and growth areas, which determine our next steps for instruction. We progress monitor on a

weekly/bi-weekly basis using CorePhonics, iStation, DIBELS/IDEL, writing samples and exit slips to closely monitor and drive instruction. We create and administer interim assessments 3 times a year aligned with our teaching and learning cycles. We design our interims using Illuminate and the PARCC item banks as well as the district interims as resources for standards based aligned assessments. We analyze the results carefully to determine gaps, areas of challenge, and where to teach next.

Provide the current selections for curricula:

Curriculum Subject	Commercial Program Name
K, 1st, 2nd literacy	Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA)
3rd, 4th, 5th literacy	EL Education

Math	Investigations
Social Studies	Inquiry Journeys by InquirED
Science	Amplify Science
SEL	Harmony

Provide the current selections for assessments:

Assessment Subject	Assessment Type
literacy	iStation, CorePhonics, DIBELS, EL unit testes, Interim, CMAS
math	Exit slips, unit tests, interims, CMAS

Professional Learning

To support our dual language programming and our curriculum, Valdez will host our own professional learning days rather than attend district scheduled professional learning. To meet the needs of both our new and veteran teachers, we provide directed, content relevant professional development in the mornings and scaffolded team planning time in the afternoons for implementation of professional development content. Throughout the year teams break into grade level and content specific strands as needed for directed professional development. Whole staff professional development is focused on language development and equity, in alignment with our

- 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

	<p>vision and mission and school target areas. If district professional learning covers topics that are relevant to our current program and curricula, staff may be asked to attend those sessions. Examples of these include (but are not limited to) CKLA literacy training, Amplify science training, etc. Our specials and special education teams will attend district professional development that is relevant to their content area.</p> <p>Additionally, we will implement 2 additional professional learning days throughout the school year. These days will be scheduled as a part of calendar development (see above). These days provide us additional time to dive into data and content to support instruction. We also use this flexibility to participate in peer learning labs and PD in the LLN collectively planned by the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC).</p> <p>The effectiveness of our professional development is measured through our regular student data cycles as well as teacher observations in classrooms. The leadership team analyzes these points of data to determine effectiveness and what professional development is needed next. Valdez teachers also work with the TAC to determine next steps in PD and additional ways to support teachers driven by teachers through learning labs, conference style PD, etc.</p> <p>School staff will still complete all training related to health, safety, special education, and other legal compliance</p>	
<p>Supplemental and Enrichment Programming</p>	<p>To support our dual language programming and specifically our need for native level Spanish, Valdez may seek to hire supplemental and enrichment educators to teach afterschool programming, enrichment activities in Spanish, etc. that do not hold a teacher's license to ensure high quality language development and instruction.</p> <p>Valdez will identify when hiring supplemental and enrichment educators without a teaching license would best support our school community by first working with the district to find licensed candidates and exhausting all other options for candidates with the appropriate licensure.</p> <p>All applicable teachers will meet Multilingual Education requirements outlined in the Consent Decree, and teachers of core content will continue to meet licensure requirements, including special education licensure requirements.</p>	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-63-201: Employment - License;</li> <li>• 22-32-110(1)(ee): Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non certificated personnel;</li> <li>• 22-32-109(1)(f): Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Personnel and Pay</li> </ul>

## Section II: Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities

In the table below, use each prompt to describe in detail each of the school's requested existing teaching/staffing flexibilities, making sure to address the Standards of Quality for that specific flexibility. If your school is not interested in a specific flexibility, please leave those rows blank.

Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers
Recruitment	<p>Describe how flexibility related to hiring timelines and committees will support your school. How will this flexibility be leveraged to support equitable hiring practices?</p> <p>If your school would be best supported by the flexibility to fill summer school positions with your own staff, please provide rationale to support this flexibility.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>            Valdez requires flexibility with regards to hiring timelines in order to ensure our preparedness to meet the academic and language needs of our diverse student population with highly qualified staff that both are qualified to teach in Spanish and English, and reflect the diversity of our student body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In accordance with the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, Valdez 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.</li> <li>● In addition to this posting, the school may engage in independent outreach efforts to recruit candidates outside of the centralized recruitment channels.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hiring Process Timelines:</b>            End of December: staff survey to determine open positions            First Week of January: Post known positions based on Staff Formal Resignations            Second Week of January: Begin reviewing resumes            Last Week of January: Phone interviews begin            First Week of February: Formal Interviews and teachers come to Valdez to teach            End of First Week of February: Offer jobs to matching candidates            Ongoing as necessary: Post second round of positions, phone interviews, Interviews and observations</p>	<p>DCTA CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Article 13-7 Hiring timelines</li> <li>● Article 13-8 Personnel Committee</li> <li>● Article 14-1 Summer School Teaching Positions</li> </ul>

**Hiring Process:**

The hiring process at Valdez is guided by our mission and vision and specifically seeks to intentionally maintain the diversity of our staff in language and culture to represent and serve the students in our community. All of our posts are public and open opportunities to all qualified professionals to apply for all available positions.

- The school leader shall be responsible for hiring all staff and shall implement a hiring process that best meets the needs of the innovation school. The hiring committee supports the hiring process, including being part of the interview team. The school leader may decide to include some or all members of the Hiring Committee in a particular interview panel. Hiring Committee decisions are made by consensus when possible. Should the Hiring Committee fail to reach consensus, the school leader shall cast the deciding vote. To the extent possible, the Hiring Committee shall include representatives from staffing areas that will be affected by the new hire. During school breaks, the school leader can fill positions without attempting to consult the Hiring Committee.. The hiring committee is responsible for:
  - vetting resumes to surface highly qualified candidates who represent the values of Valdez and are fluent speakers of the language(s) necessary for the open position;
  - conducting phone interviews with questions created by the Committee that help candidates focus their responses on their understanding of equity in education;
  - observing candidates as they teach a demo lesson with a set of criteria to guide observations, with a specific focus on how candidates interact with students in the classroom;
  - conducting formal interviews that allow candidates to address their understanding of equity, language, high quality instruction and the joy of learning.
- In addition, Valdez works with DPS HR for all aspects of hiring outside of our internal interview process. We have an assigned recruiter, an HR representative and onboarding support staff.

	If summer school is located at Valdez, we prioritize current Valdez teachers as candidates for open positions, ensuring we have qualified bilingual candidates and the continuity in relationships with our community for both attendance and student support purposes.	
Reduction in Building Procedure	Describe the process through which your school will make RIBS decisions if necessary.  Valdez follows the DCTA RIBS procedure and is not seeking flexibility in this area. The hiring committee as described above will be involved in the RIBS process.	DCTA CBA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13-10 Reduction in Building Staff (RIBS)</li> </ul>
Standards of Quality - Reduction in Building Procedure		
<input type="checkbox"/> Describes the alternative process through which the school will make RIBS decisions, if necessary, including timelines for decisions. <input type="checkbox"/> Details clearly the process through which criteria and consideration groups would be chosen and the stakeholders that would be involved (e.g. CSC/CSC-equivalent, personnel committee, etc.).		
<b>If you are interested in RIB process flexibility, we recommend you consult your HR partner on what your desired process would be.</b>		

### Section III: School Management and Leadership

In the table below, use each prompt to describe in detail each of the school's requested existing management and leadership flexibilities, making sure to address the Standards of Quality for that specific flexibility. If your school is not interested in a specific flexibility, please leave those rows blank.

School Management and Leadership Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers
School Leader Training and Development	Based on our dual language programming and individual school need, the Valdez principal may opt out of district training. Instead, the principal will attend LLN specific principal training and support sessions including coaching and evaluating from the LLN executive director, district dual language principal collaboration and support, and CDE principal training opportunities. The quality of the training will be determined by impact on teacher professional development, observational data from teachers,	State Statute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22-32-109(1)(jj): Identify Areas in which the Principal/s Require Training or Development</li> </ul>

	<p>student data, and survey data including overall culture and climate. The Valdez principal is evaluated by the LLN ED using the LEAD framework for evaluation in alignment with the district timeline.</p> <p>The principal will meet with their Principal Supervisor when necessary to make decisions about coaching and professional learning and will still complete all training related to health, safety, equity and other legal compliance (such as special education and MLE).</p>	
--	--	--

**Section IV: Governance and Budget Flexibilities**

In the table below, use each prompt to describe in detail each of the school’s requested existing governance and budget flexibilities, making sure to address the Standards of Quality for that specific flexibility. If your school is not interested in a specific flexibility, please leave those rows blank.

Governance and Budget Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Associated Waivers
<p>School Committees</p>	<p>Valdez has a CSC and a separate SLT and follows the state statute. We do not need waivers in this area.</p> <p>In the event of principal turnover, the Valdez staff will work with LLN leadership and DPS staff and shall have equitable and representative decision-making power in selecting a replacement principal and will make every effort to secure a principal who understands the nature of the innovation status and who will honor the provisions within this application. The school may also create and implement an induction plan for hiring and training a new principal to ensure a successful transition.</p> <p>The selection of school leader candidates for LLN schools is done in partnership with unique school-based leadership committees, and in alignment with best practices as outlined in DPS’s hiring process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a School Principal Selection Advisory Committee (SPSAC) with diverse representation (parents, teachers, support staff, etc.)</li> <li>● SPSAC grounds in school’s mission, vision, and values, and innovation plan</li> <li>● SPSAC determines plan for community engagement in determining desired candidate profile/hiring rubric, including</li> </ul>	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 22-32-126: Employment and Authority of Principals</li> </ul>



	<p>outreach to be conducted in various formats (e.g. survey, interviews, forum) with translation services available when needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPSAC collects and analyzes data produced during community engagement process</li> <li>• SPSAC hosts community forum to allow candidates to share their qualifications and plans for the school with the public</li> <li>• Committee reviews applicants against desired candidate qualities, and select final candidates to move forward with interviews</li> <li>• Using the agreed-upon hiring rubric, SPSAC recommends candidate to move forward with one candidate</li> <li>• The school’s Collaborative School Committee or equivalent body, the LLN ED, and the LLN Board vote to approve the recommended candidate</li> <li>• The recommended candidate conducts a final interview with the District’s Superintendent</li> <li>• The candidate is hired as an employee of Denver Public Schools, to be supervised by the LLN ED</li> </ul>	
Budgeting on Actual Teacher Salaries	Valdez currently budgets on actual teacher salaries and will continue to budget this way. This budgeting strategy allows Valdez to spend any additional budget on resources to support student learning and wellbeing directly in line with our dual language programming and our mission to support critical thinking and deep learning with every student. Valdez makes hiring decisions based on candidate qualifications and need for the open position.	No Associated Waivers

		•

**Section VI: Innovative Practices Outside of Waivers (Optional)**

In the table below, provide an overview of innovative practices you would like to share in your innovation plan that are not connected to waiver-based flexibilities.

*Please note: While the sharing of innovative practices is critical for collaboration between innovation schools to disseminate best practices, these innovative practices follow all state, district, and DCTA CBA policies. As such, these practices are subject to change throughout the term of this innovation plan.*

Innovative Practices	
Innovative Practice	Rationale and Specific Benefits
	As an innovation school in a zone we are able to leverage our flexibilities to support all of the pieces of our dual language model. We are able to flex our schedule, professional development, curriculum, intervention, hiring and budget to align with our values and model to be more effective in meeting the needs of all students, especially our multi-language learners.

## 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.

While the school seeks flexibility on some aspects of the school calendar as noted in the plan, it maintains the limit on the number of working days using the language of the contract, which allows for compensated additional days.

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

- The CSC 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 principal supervisor. 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.

### Schedule

**DCTA CBA:**

- [Article 1-7: Definition of “School Year”](#)
- [Article 8-2 - 8-10: Professional Standards](#)

**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](#)

**The school may modify the professional standards outlined in Article 8-2 - 8-10, as described in the innovation plan.** All other aspects of Article 8 in the DCTA contract, besides those related to planning time and those indicated in the Calendar flexibility, will be observed (all references in article 8 to the SLT will refer to the SLT equivalent)

Extra Duty Compensation

**DPS CBAs:**

- [DCTA - Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation](#)

**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.

In determining the School's PD and coaching schedule, the principal supervisor 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.

Supplemental and Enrichment Programming

**State Statute:**

- [22-32-110\(1\)\(ee\): Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non certificated personnel](#)
- [22-63-201: Employment - License](#)
- [22-63-402. Disbursements](#)

The school may **employ either licensed or non-licensed personnel for supplemental and enrichment instruction or supervision consistent with the innovation plan**, and the DPS board may enter into employment contracts with non-licensed teachers and/or administrators at the school as necessary to implement the school's innovation plan. Non-licensed personnel will, at a minimum, possess a bachelor's degree or have relevant work experience, subject to approval by DPS HR. The school will employ licensed teachers for teaching of core content pursuant to state and federal law. Core content areas are considered as: Language Arts; Math; Science; Foreign language; Social Studies (Civics, Government, History, Geography, Economics); Art. All core content teachers shall meet the federal and state requirements, and shall possess a valid Colorado teacher license.

School district monies will be used to pay both licensed and non-licensed teachers hired to perform services consistent with the innovation plan. Prior to hiring any person, in accordance with state law, the district shall conduct background checks.

Recruitment

**DCTA CBA:**

- [Article 13-7 Hiring timelines](#)
- [Article 13-8 Personnel Committee](#)
- [Article 14-1 Summer School Teaching Positions](#)

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

**The school leader shall be responsible for hiring all staff and shall implement a hiring process that best meets the needs of the innovation school.** The school leader, with consultation from the CSC, may establish a hiring committee as described in the innovation plan to provide input into hiring decisions. To the extent possible, the hiring committee shall include representatives from staffing areas that will be affected by the new hire.

During school breaks, the principal can fill positions without attempting to consult the personnel committee or the school's replacement for the personnel committee.

**The Innovation School will fill summer school positions with its own teachers to the extent possible.** Should additional teachers be necessary, the school will fill those positions with the best possible candidates, not necessarily teachers currently in the District. Teachers will be compensated for summer school time as determined by CSC during the budgeting process.

#### Reduction in Building Procedure

**DCTA CBA:**

- [13-10 Reduction in Building Staff \(RIBS\)](#)

The principal, with consultation from the CSC, will follow the RIB process as described in the innovation plan or the process as outlined in Article 13-10.

#### School Leader Training and Development

**State Statute:**

- [22-32-109\(1\)\(jj\): Identify Areas in which the Principal/s Require Training or Development](#)

In accordance with the innovation plan, the Principal 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.**

In determining the Principal's PD and coaching schedule, the principal manager will collaborate with the Principal to ensure that district PD and coaching supports the school leader and/or leadership team in implementing the goals of the innovation plan.

#### School Governance and Committees

**State Statute:**

- [22-32-126: Employment and Authority of Principals](#)

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

#### Membership in an Innovation Zone

**District Policy:**

- N/A

**CBA:**

- N/A

**State Statute:**

- [22-9-106: Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluation for Licensed Personnel](#)
- [22-32-109\(1\)\(f\): Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Personnel and Pay](#)
- [22-32-109\(1\)\(g\): Handling of Money](#)
- [22-32-110\(1\)\(h\): Local Board Powers Concerning Employment Termination of School Personnel](#)
- [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](#)
- [22-32-126: Employment and Authority of Principals](#)

**Zone Management and Supervision of District Employees**

The ZONE under the authority of its Board of Directors (“ZONE Board”) shall oversee and support the ZONE member schools. ZONE shall be an independent Colorado nonprofit corporation and a supporting organization under the Internal Revenue Code. All staff at the School are solely and exclusively employees of the district and the district continues to retain all liability and has final decision-making rights for evaluation, retention, and termination of district employees working in the School.

The ZONE shall support the District by recommending candidates to serve as principals of ZONE Schools, subject to the District’s employment authority, and the District’s consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, conditioned or delayed. The process and recommendations must be permissible under the terms of the individual school innovation plans and the Zone plan.

The ZONE shall support the District by evaluating leaders of the school while it is in the Zone and make recommendations for retention or termination, as needed, to the DPS Board of Education. ZONE will use district evaluation procedures [i.e. LEAD] as defined by the DSLA agreement, but adapt the sub- standards so they are in alignment with the instructional program at the school, and define the performance metrics for school leaders that are compliant with applicable state law, including the Licensed Personnel Performance Evaluation Act, and the DSLA agreement. The ZONE recommendations are subject to the district’s employment authority, provided, however, that the ZONE recommendation shall be followed by the district unless there are clear and convincing reasons otherwise, with such reasons provided to ZONE in writing.

The district will not take action regarding the selection, retention or termination of school leaders without seeking the approval of ZONE. If the parties fail to agree and cannot resolve the dispute, either party may escalate any disputes to the DPS Board of Education.

ZONE has the authority to recruit candidates on behalf of all Zone schools using processes, channels, and timelines of its creation. All hiring of staff will be made according to the individual school innovation plans and District policy.

**Zone and Zone School Participation in District Professional Learning**

Zone Schools and zone school leaders will participate in professional learning as determined by Zone Schools and ZONE, and shall not be required to attend district training or professional development, unless such practices or requirements are related to the health and safety of students, discrimination or harassment of students and

employees, and/or other legally required trainings, or in cases when the BOE determines that the practice or requirement applies to all District managed schools and has not been subject to waiver.

**Zone Fundraising**

ZONE may receive direct contributions from any source, and may engage in fundraising on its own behalf as well as on behalf of Zone Schools. Such funds shall be the sole and exclusive property of ZONE (in the event of dissolution, any remaining assets would revert to the district, unless prior agreement is reached with the district to distribute to the schools) and shall not in any way reduce allocations to the school as part of DPS annual budgeting. The Zone will provide an accounting to the district regarding funds raised on behalf of Zone Schools in accordance with a Professional Services Agreement.

***If at any point the School is no longer a member of the ZONE, only the school-based waivers will apply for the School.***

## 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.).

### [Record of Engagement](#)