

Update on Campus Connection Enrollment and Wait Lists

September 25, 2023

The Orcutt Union School District's Campus Connection Childcare Program currently serves nearly 700 students in grades TK-6 at the district's five Orcutt-area elementary schools: Alice Shaw, Joe Nightingale, Patterson Road, Pine Grove, and Ralph Dunlap. Due to increased demand for childcare, Campus Connection currently has wait lists at each site. That said, **we do expect the situation to improve as the 2023-2024 school year progresses.** This update will explain why.

For background, Campus Connection continues to serve fee-paying students while also following the state requirement to provide free childcare to low-income students, English Learners, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness. We have wait lists for the following reasons:

- **We have more demand for Campus Connection childcare this school year.** Over 100 more students are signed up for Campus Connection than in 2022-2023.
- **Meantime, we have to meet state-required student-to-staff ratios.** The state requires Campus Connection to have student-to-staff ratios of 10:1 in grades TK and K and 20:1 in grades 1-6. These ratios mean that many more staff are needed for childcare than in past school years.
- **The state also has requirements for childcare staff.** Staff need to pass a test to meet the qualifications for an instructional assistant. This makes it more difficult to find staff.

We do believe that the situation will improve and that we will be able to enroll students from our wait lists in the weeks and months to come. As the school year progresses, demand for childcare typically decreases a bit and families take students out of the program. Campus Connection Director Pam English fills slots as they become available. Campus Connection expects to continue to add staff during the course of the year. And, later in the fall, OUSD classroom teachers will be added to the Campus Connection Program to provide academic enrichment. This will help with ratios and enable more students to be enrolled in childcare.

If anyone is interested in working in the Campus Connection Program, please refer them to Michelle Gitchell of OUSD Human Resources, mgitchell@orcutt-schools.net or 805-938-8910.