

**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 29, 2014 – 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Avanti High School Auditorium

1113 Legion Ave SE

Olympia, WA 98501

**Attendance:**

Trish Millines Dziko, Margit McGuire, Steve Sundquist, Roberta Johnson Wilburn, Cindi Williams, and Larry Wright

Absent: Kevin Jacka, Raymond Navarro, and Dave Quall

Staff: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General; Colin Pippin-Timco, Executive Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call**

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m. Attendance was taken. The following Commissioners were present: Trish Millines Dziko, Margit McGuire, Steve Sundquist, Roberta Johnson Wilburn, and Cindi Williams. It was determined a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

**Approval of the June 10 Commission Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes for June 10, 2014 were reviewed and approved – Commissioner Williams moved, and Commissioner McGuire seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mitch Price of the Washington State Charter Schools Association (WACHarters) thanked the Commission and staff for continued stakeholder engagement throughout the creation of the Commission's Performance Framework. Mr. Price encouraged the Commission to remain consistent with RCW 28A.710.180(2) in their oversight:

“An authorizer may conduct or require oversight activities that enable the authorizer to fulfill its responsibilities under this chapter, including conducting appropriate inquiries and investigations, so long as those activities are consistent with the intent of this chapter, adhere to the terms of the charter contract, and do not unduly inhibit the autonomy granted to charter schools.”

**CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Sundquist noted that Commissioner Wright had assumed the role of Acting Chair while Chair Sundquist was out of country June 13-22, 2014.

Chair Sundquist encouraged Commissioners to consider sending a contingent to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference in Miami. He noted that new appointments to the commission, Commissioner Navarro and Commission Wilburn, should be considered .

Chair Sundquist informed the Commission that Commissioner Quall was recovering from pneumonia, and would be present at the August 19, 2014 Commission meeting in Tacoma. He noted as well that Commissioner Quall had requested that the Commission hold one of its 2015 meetings in Mt. Vernon.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – JOSHUA HALSEY**

##### **Commission Communications and Website Update**

Mr. Halsey updated the Commission on the Department of Enterprise Services' work on the Commission's new website, scheduled for release in October. He noted that the website was being developed on the WordPress content management system, and the site's URL would be [charterschool.wa.gov](http://charterschool.wa.gov).

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that a press release was issued on June 15, 2014 regarding the four proposals received in response to the Commission's 2014 Request for Proposals (RFP). He noted as well that staff had released the Commission's inaugural newsletter in July. Mr. Halsey had contributed to the front page message, and encouraged commissioners to consider providing content in the future. The newsletter is scheduled for quarterly release, making the next issue available in October 2014.

##### **Legislative Engagement Strategy Update**

Mr. Halsey reported that since the June 10, 2014 meeting he had engaged partisan and non-partisan legislative staffers in regards to the Commission's legislative priorities in the coming 2015 legislative session.

##### **Authorized Charter Schools Update**

Mr. Halsey provided an update regarding approved charter schools Excel, First Place, Green Dot, Rainier Prep, SOAR, and Summit.

##### **Compliance Calendar and Process Update**

Mr. Halsey reported that staff were in the process of identifying a provider for the Commission's authorized schools compliance tracking needs. Staff had engaged in discussions with Epicenter, a provider of a web-based compliance tracking interface. Epicenter provides services on a sliding cost-scale, and staff would consider an RFP if this cost-scale was prohibitive.

##### **Current RFP Update and Calendar of Key Events**

Mr. Halsey informed the Commission that staff had received and reviewed for completeness four proposals in response to the 2014 RFP. He also noted that staff had moved forward with the contracts of four expert evaluators. The evaluators would spend the next month evaluating the proposals, engaging in capacity interviews with the four applicant teams on August 28, 2014. Following the capacity interviews, applicants will be required to appear in a public forum in the affected community of their proposed charter school. These forums are slated for the first three weeks in September 2014.

Mr. Halsey reported that two of the 2014 applicants had not delivered hardcopies of their proposal on time to Commission headquarters, an administrative requirement of the RFP. Caught in traffic, one applicant had been turned back from delivery late in the day on the day that hardcopies were due, as Commission staff determined that they would not make the deadline. The other applicant had forgotten to send the copies, and had to be prompted to send the hardcopies by Commission staff. Applicant names were not disclosed during the description of each violation. The Commission engaged in a conversation around the leniency that should be granted to the affected applicants.

Commissioner Dziko moved to allow the applicant who tried for delivery to move forward in the RFP process, and Commissioner Williams seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner McGuire moved to allow the applicant who had forgotten to send hardcopies to move forward in the RFP process, and Commissioner Dziko seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

After the decisions, Mr. Halsey disclosed that the applicant who tried for delivery was the Ducere Group; the applicant who had forgotten to send hardcopies was Green Dot Public Schools Washington State.

**2015 Request for Proposals (RFP) Recommended Dates**

Mr. Halsey briefed the Commission on his proposal to adjust dates for the Commission's 2015 RFP: The timeline would shift back 45 days, with the RFP released in February and final approval or denial slated for August. There was discussion around the extent to which the proposed dates could be adjusted, and the overall timeframe remain intact.

Commissioner McGuire moved to initiate the Commission's 2015 RFP process on February 13, 2015 with the Commission meeting to decide on which charter school application to approve on August 13, 2015; Commissioner Wilburn seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Halsey noted that he would brief the Commission at the August 19, 2014 Commission meeting about the possibility of a tiered application process.

Commissioner Wright arrived at 11:23 a.m.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Commission engaged in strategic planning with Commission Contractor, Cathy Fromme. Ms. Fromme reviewed the Commission's strategic planning to date, and presented the strategies the Commission had arrived at, and she had later been tasked with refining:

- Operationalize the Commission
- Develop a Communications Plan
- Plan of outreach to communities of color
- Foster the development of connections between public charter schools and traditional public schools and school districts
- Foster positive political climate and support

The Commission broke into work-groups of two to address the strategies and their milestones/goals and deliverables. Below is a table of changes to strategies and their milestones/goals and deliverables:

<b>What</b>	<b>7/29 DRAFT</b>	<b>Recommended change</b>
Threats p. 3	1.Work to elect supportive officials, Educate candidates	1.Work to educate/inform the legislature re: charter schools
Strategy 1: Commission as a state agency	Acquire adequate and functional technology	Ensure continued access to technology and data systems
	Provide ongoing professional development to build staff capacity.	Duplicative - deleted
	Missing element	Work to ensure that regulatory and statutory framework and deliverables match

Strategy 1: Commission as a state agency: Deliverable	Missing element	Evaluate performance of the Charter School Commission and staff
Strategy 1: Oversight: Deliverable	Determine yearly targets for the number of high performing charter school seats.	Delete - not yet time to do this
Strategy 2	Add implement	Develop and implement a communications plan
Strategy 2: Milestones	Develop a clear communication plan about charter schools in WA	Develop and implement a clear communication plan about charter schools in WA
	Proactively educate about charter schools	Proactively educate key stakeholders (i.e. communities served by charter schools, partner state agencies, legislative and policy staff,) about charter schools
	Prioritize and partner with those with capacity and emerging charter school supporters	Partner with existing and emerging pro-charter organizations and leaders to increase capacity to support Washington charter schools
Strategy 2: Deliverables	Hire or contract with dedicated or external communications staff	Establish and build capacity in dedicated communications staff
Strategy 3	Plan of outreach to communities of color	Strategy 3: Develop and implement a plan of outreach to communities of color
Strategy 3: Deliverables	Engage these organizations in dialogue re: charter school opportunities, how the CSC authorizes, and charter school areas of potential concern	Regularly communicate and engage these organizations in dialogue re: charter school opportunities, how the CSC authorizes, and charter school areas of potential concern
Strategy 3: Deliverables	Missing element	Maintain an ongoing presence with communities of color as demonstrated by increased relationship building and participating in community activities and events.
Strategy 4: Milestones	Develop a strong understanding of Charter District Compacts	Develop a strong understanding of Charter District Compacts and develop a plan for Washington Charter District compacts
	Identify process for identifying and highlighting innovative practices public charter schools are engaging in that are producing positive results for students	Delete - combine with bullet above
Strategy 5: Milestones	Foster relationships with education reform organizations that support public charter	Foster relationships with education reform organizations and entities that

	schools in order to positively influence legislative policies impacting public charter schools (i.e. Washington State Charter School Association, League of Education Voters, Democrats for Education Reform, Stand for Children, etc.)	support public charter schools in order to positively influence legislative policies impacting public charter schools.
Strategy 5: Deliverable	Proactively educate legislature about charter schools	A legislature that is educated and informed about charter schools

The Commission broke for lunch at 12:00 p.m., and returned at 12:40 p.m.

### **COMMISSION BIENNIUM BUDGET PLANNING**

Mr. Halsey presented the Commission’s draft 2015-2019 budget. Discussion and questions followed.

Mr. Halsey stated that he would return to the August 19, 2014 meeting with a finalized budget for approval.

### **PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

#### **Organizational Framework Overview**

William Haft and Whitney Spaulding-Spencer from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers presented their organization’s work on the organizational framework component of the Commission’s performance framework. The organizational framework evaluates a charter school’s compliance with state and federal labor and education laws and the charter contract utilizing the following indicators:

- Education Plan
- Financial Management and Oversight
- Governance and Reporting
- Students, Parents, and Employees
- School Environment
- Additional Obligations

The Commission engaged in a discussion regarding the organizational framework’s deployment, how the Commission would be notified of the organizational non-compliance of a charter school, and what intervention would be possible if such non-compliance were to occur.

Mr. Haft reminded the Commission of the timeline for approval of the performance framework, slated for December 2014. Mr. Halsey noted that the Commission would receive stakeholder feedback on the organizational framework in September 2014.

### **COMMISSION POLICY DISCUSSION**

#### **Charter School Operators and Multiple Schools**

The Commission engaged in a conversation regarding charter management organizations who wished to open multiple schools in Washington, and how the operator’s lack of a portfolio in Washington State would affect the Commission’s decision of approval or denial of their proposal. Commissioner Dziko disagreed with the statement that the Commission could not pass a resolution to affect operators in the 2014 RFP.

Mr. Halsey and Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General agreed to would return to the August 19, 2014 Commission meeting with research and recommendations for the Commission to consider regarding charter management organizations.

#### **Commissioner Conflict of Interest Discussion**

Commissioner Dziko notified the Commission that Technology Access Foundation (TAF), of which Commissioner Dziko is the Executive Director, had been approached by representatives of First Place, a Commission authorized charter school, to provide teacher professional development (PD) and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum programming. Commissioner Dziko noted that TAF's PD and STEM programming were provided on a menu of services available to all schools and districts, and that TAF had not exclusively sought out the business of First Place. Further, Commissioner Dziko noted that she does not directly oversee the deployment of such services for TAF. Commissioner Dziko wished for First Place to proceed with the PD and STEM programming, as well as ensure the ability for other Commission approved charter schools to seek enrichment from TAF in the future.

The Commission discussed the above transaction, and encouraged a reinforced boundary/firewall between TAF's Executive Director and the PD and STEM Programming.

Chair Sundquist moved that the Commission ask Commissioner Dziko to further reinforce the firewall between the Executive Director and PD and STEM Programming within TAF, to return to the August 19, 2014 meeting with a document outlining the proposed firewall, and that the Commission treat future conflicts on a case by case basis; Commissioner Wright seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Amendment to Existing Charter Contracts**

Mr. Halsey presented an amendment (Amendment No. 2) to two provisions 4.15.1(e)(1)(a) and 4.15.1(e)(2) of the contract of Commission approved charter school First Place. The first removes the Commission as the beneficiary of fidelity bonding secured by First Place, and instead names the Commission as the loss payee in such bonding; the second allows First Place to annually renew a Payment and Performance Bond, rather than maintaining one bond for the full term of their contract.

Commissioner Wright moved to accept Amendment No. 2 to the contract between the Commission and First Place Scholars Charter School; Commissioner Dziko seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

#### **WASHINGTON STATE CLIMATE FOR NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Mr. Halsey reported that Chair Sundquist and he had travelled to Ellensburg on July 14, 2014 to meet with Sunnyside School District Superintendent, Dr. Rick Cole. The meeting had been in regards to 2014 RFP applicant Charter Schools of Sunnyside. Dr. Cole expressed curiosity at the need for such a school in Sunnyside in light of the programming already available through the school district.

Mr. Halsey reported as well that Chair Sundquist and he had travelled to Tacoma on July 8, 2014 to meet with Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Carla Santorno. Ms. Santorno had noted during the meeting that the Tacoma Public School Board of Directors wished to meet with a contingent of the Commission. Ms Santorno

also shared that the board had also discussed drafting an amendment to the Charter School Act to limit the number of charter schools located in certain districts. The Commission discussed passing a preemptive motion to oppose such an amendment. However, Commissioners opted instead to move forward with the meeting with the Tacoma board of directors without currently considering such a motion.

Chair Sundquist moved to request Chair Sundquist, Commissioner Dziko, and Mr. Halsey schedule and attend an open public meeting with the Tacoma Public School Board to discuss charter schools; Commission Wilburn seconded: the motion passed unanimously.

#### **NEXT STEP**

The Commission has identified the following next steps:

1. Continue to craft legislative engagement strategy and update at the August 19, 2014 Commission meeting
2. Continue drafting the Commission's Strategic Plan
3. Continue drafting the Commission's Performance Framework
4. Review the Commission's bylaws
5. Review use of government issued email systems
6. Draft and approve biennium Commission budget
7. Continue engagement with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers regarding the Performance Framework
8. Establish process for reviewing the Executive Director
9. Establish plan for commissioner reappointment
10. Calendaring for 2015
11. Develop Commission Policy regarding Charter Management Organizations
12. Develop a list of engaged Commission Stakeholders

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Commission did not go into executive session.

The Commission adjourned at 4:30 p.m.