



## CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 29, 2017 | 11:00 a.m. to 4:10 p.m.

South Seattle College, Georgetown Campus  
Colin Education Hall, Room C122  
6737 Corson Avenue S  
Seattle, WA 98108

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### Attendance:

Elizabeth (Betsy) Cohen, Trish Millines Dziko, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams.

Leadership Team: Joshua Halsey, Executive Director; Cathy Fromme, New School Application Director; Paula Kitzke, Special Education Program Review Supervisor; Nadja Michel-Herf, Director of School Quality and Accountability; Krystal Starwich, CSP Grant Manager; Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General; Amanda Martinez, Executive Assistant.

### Call To Order

#### Roll Call

Chair Sundquist called the meeting to order at 11:18 a.m. The following Commissioners were present: Betsy Cohen, Trish Millines Dziko, Jessica Garcia, Dan Grimm, Kaaren Heikes, Dr. Margit McGuire, Dr. Gil Mendoza, Steve Sundquist, and Cindi Williams. It was determined that a quorum was present to proceed with the meeting.

### Consideration of the May 18, 2017 Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the May 18, 2017 Commission Meeting were reviewed and approved. Margit McGuire moved to approve the minutes as written. Dan Grimm seconded. Motion carried unanimously, with no opposes, Trish Millines Dziko abstains.

### Public Comment

Homer Lane e-mailed in a public comment to the Commission stating that Benaroya Research Institute does not have any involvement with the Whole Elephant School and does not plan to have a partnership with them in the future.

## **Conflicts of Interest Discussion**

The Commission discussed two potential conflicts of interest between Commissioners and the application under review; however, the potential conflicts were found to be of no consequence. Thus, the Commission found that no conflicts of interest exist between Commissioners and the application under review.

## **Executive Director Recommendation Overview**

Executive Director Halsey gave an overview of the format for the Recommendation Report. Mr. Halsey noted that there was only one Recommendation Report for review, as New Horizons Academy has chosen to withdraw their application.

New Schools Application Director, Dr. Cathy Fromme, gave a brief overview of the evaluators and evaluation team that provide the basis for the Executive Director's Recommendation Report. For this application cycle, the application team was composed of two evaluators external to the Commission and three Commission staff members.

## **Resolution Process Overview**

Chair Sundquist reviewed the resolution process.

## **Charter School Application Resolution**

### **Executive Director Recommendation and Remarks**

Executive Director Halsey reported that Impact: Seattle was recommended for approval. The proposed elementary school, if approved, would open in the fall of 2018 with 196 students, growing to 336 students at capacity.

### **Commission Questions for Applicant**

Commissioner Cohen asked why this application would not be brought to the Commission as a CMO applicant. The response is that Impact Public Schools has no open schools yet (this is their first application) and their proposed network is beginning with their first school, Impact: Seattle.

Commissioner McGuire suggested that Impact: Seattle should consider using strong academic content for their social studies curriculum, as the GLAD programs referenced in the application is a set of strategies, not academic content. Commissioner McGuire also notes that Teach for America is listed in the application and wants to encourage Impact to hire more experienced teachers.

Commissioner Williams noted that Tukwila School District's outcome for students that qualify for Special Education services could not be found on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website.

Jen Davis Wickens, Impact: Seattle's leader, responded that Impact was unable to find these numbers as well, as it looked like missing data in the state's system. This is data that will become available in the 18-19 school year under ESSA accountability recommendations.

Commissioner Williams stated that given the model and capacity of the team, these ambitious goals feel realistic. She also highlighted the Deeper Learning Rubric.

Ms. Davis Wickens responded that Impact schools will partner with Summit Public Schools and are working in conjunction with the Summit team to develop a Cognitive skill rubric for elementary students.

Commissioner Garcia asked how Impact: Seattle will appropriately develop their student affinity groups.

Ms. Davis Wickens responded that this is an area in which they are innovating and talking about bringing discussions of race and equity in as early as kindergarten. Emotional safety is at the forefront of their model.

Commissioner Dziko wanted to know how diverse the teacher core is or will be at Impact: Seattle.

Ms. Davis Wickens responded that they have a great desire to ensure that everyone on staff is reflective of the student population and that they are able to connect with the kids. The Impact team highlights their diversity equity inclusion training, professional development and the thread it has throughout their journey to create diverse faculty and staffing.

Commissioner Dziko encouraged that Impact not only meet the 50% goal of board members of color – but to then increase the goal once it has been met to 75% goal of board members of color. There has not been a school with a board majority of people color and she truly believes that the decisions being made once that goal is reached will be different.

Commissioner Garcia inquired about the methods for retaining teachers that are doing well.

Ms. Davis Wickens responded that at Impact, there will be a compensation increase for faculty, paid professional development, and a coach for every teacher with a personalized pathway for success.

### **Commission Discussion and Resolution**

Commissioner Steve Sundquist moves to adopt resolution 17-01A which approves the charter school application of Impact: Seattle. Commissioner Heikes seconded.

Commissioners voted as follows: Betsy Cohen, aye; Trish Millines Dziko, aye; Jessica Garcia, aye; Dan Grimm, aye; Kaaren Heikes, aye; Margit McGuire, aye; Gil Mendoza, aye; Steve Sundquist, aye and Cindi Williams, aye. The vote was 9-0. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Chair Report**

Chair Sundquist gave a brief Commissioner appointment update. Commissioner Hill has resigned resulting in a Commissioner vacancy. Commissioner Sundquist requested that Commissioners with suggestions let him or Mr. Halsey know.

Commission Board elections will take place at the August 17 Commission Meeting. The board elections establish an Executive Committee which is tasked with providing support to Mr. Halsey and the Commission staff between meetings. Anyone with questions surrounding the Executive Committee can reach out to Chair Sundquist or Mr. Halsey directly.

Tukwila School District has put in a Notice of Intent to apply to the State Board of Education (SBE) to become a charter school authorizer. Tukwila's application is due in October and SBE will approve or deny by February 1, 2018. If approved, they would not authorize until the 19-20 school year.

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has their annual conference in Phoenix, Arizona in October. Historically, Commission staff and several Commissioners have attended. Commissioners were encouraged to contact Mr. Halsey if they are interested in attending.

## **Executive Director Report**

### **General Updates**

The Commission has started a Strategic Assessment process. There is a Guide Team comprised of several Commissioners and Commission staff that will begin meeting in July in support of the contractor, Demeter Matrix Alliance, conducting the Strategic Assessment. The Strategic Assessment will conclude with a report that is due to the Commission in October.

### **Charter School Program (CSP) Grant**

There are currently four charter public schools eligible to apply to receive CSP funds. CSP Grant Manager, Krystal Starwich, will work with these four schools as they apply to OSPI regarding CSP funds.

### **Impact of Potential State Government Shutdown**

With no budget in place, an emergency leave without pay notice was presented to the Commission for Executive Director Halsey in the event the state does not approve a budget by the June 30 deadline. Chair Sundquist moved to issue the emergency leave without pay notice to Executive Director Halsey to begin on July 1, 2017 if the budget is not enacted by 11:59 pm on June 30, 2017. Trish Millines Dziko seconded. No opposes, no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Legislative**

There is no budget agreement in place yet regarding the 17-19 capital budgets. The Commission's budget and the impact of the budget to the charter schools in our portfolio will be discussed at the August 17 Commission meeting.

## **Charter School Updates**

### **Spokane International Academy (SIA) Contract Transfer Updates**

Executive Director Halsey gave an update on the contract transfer of SIA from Spokane Public Schools to the Commission. SIA spoke with Mr. Halsey on June 19 with the information that the lease agreement regarding the facility SIA as pursuing will not be executed. SIA School Leader, Travis Franklin requested that the application to transfer the contract to the Commission be withdrawn. SIA will remain under contract with Spokane Public Schools.

### **Pre-opening Conditions**

The Commission has met with both schools slated to open in Fall of 2017; Summit Atlas in West Seattle and Rainier Valley Leadership Academy in South Seattle. Director of School Quality and Accountability, Nadja Michel-Herf, meets with the schools on a monthly basis and believes they will be ready to go when the school year starts. Teacher recruitment seems to be less of an issue than student enrollment for these new schools. The schools have found creative ways to recruit teachers. Teachers appreciate the flexibility in their curriculum and the professional development opportunities afforded to them by the charter schools. The Commission does not currently collect information on teacher's ethnicities, but does look for credentialing in Washington State, if staffing matches the budget, and enrollment numbers and educational programming.

### **Annual Site Visits**

The Commission finished annual two-day site visits of operating charter schools for this school year. These visits were mainly to ensure that the schools are operating in compliance with their charter contracts. These visits included classroom observations, interviews with staff, school leaders, board members, teachers, parents and students. This was a beneficial process to provide the schools feedback, technical assistance as needed and to ensure that they are operating under the guidelines of their charter contracts. No schools had any corrective actions following the site visits.

### **SOAR Academy and Seneca Family of Agencies ESP Contract**

SOAR Academy has an Educational Service Provider (ESP) Contract with Seneca valid through the end of the school year but which can be renewed at SOAR's request. SOAR is looking at making some academic and leadership changes at the school that may change the terms of their contract from a SOAR led operational model to a Seneca based operational model. SOAR may be invited to the August meeting to further explain this partnership and the direction that SOAR Academy is hoping to pursue.

### **Annual Charter School Leaders Convening**

The Annual Charter School Convening was held on June 27, 2017 at Educational Service District 113 in Tumwater. The convening was a success as measured by participant evaluations. School leaders, regional directors and some operations staff were in attendance along with personnel from the Washington State Charter Schools Association, Puget Sound Educational Service District, EdTec and Seneca Family of Agencies.

### **Lawsuit Challenging Constitutionality of Charter School Act Updates**

No further updates since the last Commission Meeting.

### **New Horizons Academy Update**

The application for New Horizons Academy (NHA) was withdrawn by the applicant. The applicant stated that they withdrew their application because they felt they did not have the resources to be successful moving forward.

### **Rainier Prep Presentation**

Maggie O’Sullivan and Hong-Nhi Do of Rainier Prep gave a presentation to the Commission regarding their school, their outcomes so far, and some practices and procedures that they have in place.

### **Executive Session**

An Executive Session was begun at 3:18 pm pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.110(1)) to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.

### **Open Session**

At 3:49 pm, Chair Sundquist resumed open session stating that no final action had been taken during the Executive Session.

### **Next Steps**

The following next steps were identified:

1. July we do not have a monthly Commission meeting, the next meeting is Thursday, August 17 in Vancouver
2. Continuation of the appointment process to fill Commissioner Hill’s resignation from the Commission
3. Strategic planning assessment process has begun and commissioners may receive communication for interviews from the consultants

4. August 17 Meeting includes both board elections and discussion of the ESP contract between Soar Academy and Seneca
5. Compensation action for Executive Director Halsey's review from last fall
6. Mr. Halsey and team are working on building Goodwill tours of the charter schools for commissioners and will bring a draft design to the August Commission meeting

## **Meeting Adjournment**

Chair Sundquist adjourned the meeting at 3:51 pm.