1	BEFORE THE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
2	STATE OF WASHINGTON
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4	In re:
5	PUBLIC FORUM)
6	NEW HORIZONS ACADEMY)
7))
8))
9)
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11	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
12	May 30, 2017
13	6:00 p.m.
14	Renton Technical College 3000 NE Fourth Street, Room H105
15	Renton, Washington
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18	CERTIFIED COPY
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23	Taken Before:
24	
25	Laura A. Gjuka, CCR #2057 Certified Shorthand Reporter

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APPEARANCES
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     Charter School Commissioners:
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         MARGIT MCGUIRE
         KAAREN HEIKES
         TRISH MILLINES DZIKO
         ELIZABETH COHEN
 5
         GIL MENDOZA
 6
 7
     Executive Director:
         JOSHUA HALSEY
 8
     Applicant:
 9
         DR. WANDA M. BROWN-BILLINGSLY
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1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 30th of May, 2017, 6:09 p.m., at 3000 NE Fourth Street, Room H10, 2 3 Renton, Washington, before LAURA A. GJUKA, CCR# 2057, 4 Washington State Certified Court Reporter residing at 5 University Place, authorized to administer oaths and 6 affirmations pursuant to RCW 5.28.010. 7 WHEREUPON the following proceedings were had, to wit: 8 9 10 11 MR. HALSEY: Good evening, everyone. 12 We're going to go ahead and get started. I appreciate your being here with us today. My name is Joshua 13 14 Halsey. I'm the executive director for the Washington State Charter School Commission. Can you all hear me 15 16 okay? 17 So we are really excited to be here with you tonight 18 to hear about a charter school application that's 19 currently under review. Each of you has taken time out 20 of your very busy day to come and listen and learn with 21 us and to share your thoughts on this particular charter 22 school application, and it's with this in mind that we 23 are dedicated to creating a safe and civil atmosphere 24 for each and every person present. What that means is, while we may have different views on this application or 25



- 1 charter schools in general, what we ask is that we
- 2 create a safe and civil atmosphere and we demonstrate to
- 3 our children how do you have discourse when we may have
- 4 differing views. So we just ask you to hold that
- 5 intention as we go through this evening.
- 6 This public forum is an opportunity for the
- 7 applicants to engage directly with the commission. And
- 8 we have five commissioners here with us tonight. They
- 9 will introduce themselves to you here in just a moment.
- 10 And it's an opportunity for the public to learn about
- 11 the school and then to provide input.
- We, as a commission, will be meeting on June 29th,
- 13 that's a Thursday, at the South Seattle Community
- 14 College Georgetown campus. We will be rendering
- 15 decisions on whether or not to approve this school as a
- 16 charter school in Washington state.
- 17 Tonight we hear from New Horizons Academy regarding
- 18 their application. When I get done with my
- 19 introduction, they will have a 15-minute presentation to
- 20 provide to you through PowerPoint. Dr. Wanda Billingsly
- 21 will be providing this to you.
- 22 After that presentation, we will have 45 minutes of
- 23 public comment. And that's a running clock. So once
- 24 the first person provides public comment, the clock
- 25 starts, and we run for 45 minutes straight.



1 So if you are interested in providing public

- 2 comment, at the sign-in table you are asked to indicate
- 3 so and you are given a raffle ticket. If we have more
- 4 than 20 people interested in providing public comment,
- 5 then we will randomly select 20 tickets from the tickets
- 6 that we currently have.
- 7 You will get two minutes to provide your public oral
- 8 comment. And for individuals who need translation
- 9 support, then they are provided four minutes to provide
- 10 public comment. However, we are seeking input not just
- 11 through oral public comment; there are opportunities for
- 12 you to provide written public comment to us as well.
- 13 And there is a box in the back you can drop in your
- 14 notes. We also have contact information where, if you
- 15 want to take an envelope home and mail us your thoughts,
- 16 you can do so. Or if you want to email us, the
- info@charterschools.k12.wa.us is the email you would
- 18 send those to. All of our public comments need to be
- 19 received by June 9th in order to be considered as part
- 20 of the public record regarding this particular charter
- 21 school application.
- 22 So to help us be good stewards of time, we will
- 23 project on the PowerPoint here on our projector a timer.
- 24 So if you are giving public comment, we just ask you to
- 25 have good reference, to be able to see the timer. It



1 will click down, the two minutes or four minutes. And

- 2 we just ask you to make sure that, again, you're a good
- 3 steward of time and stay within the time frame so we can
- 4 hear from as many people as possible.
- 5 In addition to the commissioners, myself, and you
- 6 all being here, we also have a stenographer, and Laura
- 7 is here with us today, and she will be taking verbatim
- 8 note of this public forum. And we ask that when you do
- 9 provide public comments, you really speak clearly and
- 10 you project so that Laura can capture what you're saying
- 11 accurately. And if she missed something that you said,
- 12 she may ask you to repeat. We ask you to please repeat
- 13 that so we get a good public record of what's transpired
- 14 here tonight. Again, I want to make sure that if folks
- 15 are not comfortable of giving oral testimony, there is
- 16 an opportunity for you to give written.
- 17 So with that said, I would like to take a moment and
- 18 ask the commissioners, the five of them who are with us
- 19 tonight, to introduce themselves to you. Dr. McGuire.
- 20 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: Margit McGuire,
- 21 commissioner.
- 22 COMMISSIONER HEIKES: Kaaren Heikes.
- 23 COMMISSIONER MILLINES DZIKO: Dr. Millines
- 24 Dziko, commissioner.
- 25 COMMISSIONER COHEN: Betsy Cohen,



- 1 commissioner.
- 2 COMMISSIONER MENDOZA: Gil Mendoza,
- 3 commissioner.
- 4 MR. HALSEY: Thank you, commissioners. At
- 5 this point, I would ask Dr. Billingsly to please come up
- 6 and provide you an overview of New Horizons Academy
- 7 Charter Schools.
- 8 (Applause)
- DR. BILLINGSLY: I'm so happy to be here,
- 10 and I'm so glad so many of you showed up. I know there
- 11 are a couple more on the way but I understand the
- 12 traffic is quite hectic.
- While they are pulling up the PowerPoint, I would
- 14 like to introduce myself and introduce members of my
- 15 founding board, as well as my leadership team and then
- 16 set the stage as to why we are here.
- 17 First of all, my name is Dr. Wanda Billingsly. I'm
- 18 a 30-plus-year veteran educator. I have served both in
- 19 the K12 environment as a teacher, a principal, central
- 20 office director, assistant superintendent, and also in
- 21 higher education. So I have worked diligently to help
- 22 train future teachers in the master's in teachers
- 23 program at Antioch University. I was the senior
- 24 lecturer faculty at the University of Washington and
- 25 assisted in a research grant there, as well as the



1 associate dean and chair of teacher preparation at

- 2 Heritage University. So I come with a wealth of
- 3 experience.
- 4 I would like to take the opportunity to introduce my
- 5 founding board. Starting with our chair,
- 6 Deborah Northern. And Deborah comes with a background
- 7 working in equity and social justice, training districts
- 8 in Road Map Region and also working with CCER, which
- 9 provides educational reform, support to multiple
- 10 districts in the Puget Sound region.
- 11 My chair is Sheila Guysnowden. She has a background
- 12 in human resources and she is a specialist in that
- 13 particular area. And then moving on -- and she is also
- 14 functioning as our secretary with supports.
- 15 And then our treasurer, Noah Abah. And Noah has a
- 16 background in finance and accounting. So he will be
- 17 functioning as our treasurer to make sure our revenue
- 18 and resource is working in collaboration.
- 19 And then other members of the board. We have Star
- 20 Rush. Dr. Rush is the provost at Cornish College of the
- 21 Arts. She is going to be supporting us with our work
- 22 around the performing arts and fine arts in general.
- We have Dr. Daudi Abe. Dr. Abe is a faculty at
- 24 Seattle Community College and his research area is
- 25 working with at-risk youth, in particular at-risk



1 African-American boys. So he will bring quite a wealth

- 2 of knowledge to us. Let's give those guys a hand. And
- 3 Dr. Phyllis Beaumonte is probably en route and she is
- 4 another member of our founding board.
- 5 Moving on to my leadership team. These folks, I
- 6 couldn't have done it without them, starting with
- 7 Debra Ward, who is my chief financial officer. Debra
- 8 has a background in finance. She was the CFO for the
- 9 San Francisco Airport Muni and several other municipal
- 10 entities. So we're really excited about the work she
- 11 has done in developing our budget.
- 12 Dr. Reginald Reid, back there in the back with
- 13 little Reginald Reid. He is our operations director.
- 14 And Dr. Reid has a background working at the office of
- 15 the state superintendent and federal programming,
- 16 overseeing school improvement for 295 school districts.
- 17 He has also served as a building principal and school
- 18 leader. So very, very, great team.
- 19 I would like to start by mentioning that our
- 20 New Horizons Academy program model has been well thought
- 21 out. It's based on current research and best practices
- 22 and based on a lot of input and feedback we have
- 23 received from a number of entities, including parents,
- 24 community members, et cetera.
- 25 You might ask, so why New Horizons Academy and why



- 1 now? So my answer is the achievement gap. The
- 2 achievement gap is real on a national level, as well as
- 3 on a local level. In your handouts I have provided you
- 4 with several documents, an overview of the program. So
- 5 more detailed program will be provided there. Data
- 6 points, and there are three of them, and I will
- 7 reference those. And of course my bio.
- 8 But I want to start by first talking about the
- 9 achievement gap at the national level. As a teacher,
- 10 scholar, and a researcher, I would be remiss if I did
- 11 not use that type of information to ground our
- 12 conversation this evening.
- So I would like to start with an excerpt from a book
- 14 entitled Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap:
- 15 Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change, by
- 16 Dr. Anthony Muhammad. He says the NAEP, our nation's
- 17 report card, indicates that -- and it is widely accepted
- 18 as the most objective measure to performance in math and
- 19 literacy, providing scholars, practitioners, and
- 20 lawmakers with a broad feature of the national
- 21 educational trends. Reports have shown that over the
- 22 past 20 years, the academic growth for African-American,
- 23 Latino, and impoverished students has steadily
- increased. However, the gains are not significantly
- outpacing the growth of other student groups.



1 The NAEP results from 2013 reveal the average score 2 of African-American and Latino students in fourth and 3 eighth grade mathematics and reading compared to white 4 students was more than 20 points lower, equivalent to 5 more than two grade levels behind. The twelfth-grade 6 scores reveal a gap of more than 40 points in math and 7 reading, equivalent to more than four grade levels behind. 8 9 This is particularly called the four-year gap, 10 meaning that the average African-American and Latino 11 high school senior has math and reading skills 12 equivalent to the skills of an average white eighth 13 grader. I'll let that sit with you for a moment. 14 Dr. Muhammad goes on to conclude or to summarize the 15 achievement gap. He says, "If the achievement gap is 16 going to be closed, everyone involved in the process --17 educators, students, parents, and the greater society --18 have to experience growing pains." And I think that's 19 what the charter movement represents. Those who have 20 benefited from institutionalized privilege have to 21 recognize privilege and become advocates for social 22 justice and change. In a society that prides itself on 23 being fair and just, providing every child with a solid 24 educational foundation should not be controversial. 25 Superiority and equality cannot exist at the same time.



1 And students, families, and schools who are at the

- 2 bottom of the achievement gap have to reflect on their
- 3 own perceptions and their behaviors and try to improve
- 4 their station. Closing the achievement gap has to
- 5 evolve from patronizing talk to real action and
- 6 sacrifice by all parties. New Horizons Academy
- 7 represents those actions.
- 8 So in your packet you have three data points. One
- 9 represents the ethnic demographics of Washington state.
- 10 You'll notice that there is some shifts occurring, the
- 11 Caucasian students who make up the majority are
- 12 decreasing, and you'll notice that the students of color
- 13 are increasing in every data cell.
- 14 The second page, if you flip it over, representing
- 15 the achievement gap in terms of disciplinary practices.
- 16 You will notice that although African-American students
- only make up 4.4 percent of the population, they
- 18 represent the highest number of suspensions and
- 19 expulsions in our state, followed by Native Americans
- 20 who only, if you go back, represent 1.3 percent of our
- 21 population. These gaps are horrendous and they have to
- 22 be addressed.
- 23 The final data point in your packet shows highly
- 24 capable program data. You'll notice that Caucasian
- 25 students make up 67 percent of the total number of



1 highly capable students, where other ethnic minority

- 2 communities are not represented hardly at all, not at
- 3 all, or in very small numbers. So when you look at New
- 4 Horizons Academy's program, we are addressing children
- 5 who are experiencing disciplinary issues, as well as
- 6 those who need rigor and other academic supports.
- 7 In addition, our efforts to design this program was
- 8 designed on input. I have met with school officials, I
- 9 have met with parents, I've met with community members.
- 10 Through those conversations we have talked about their
- 11 response or their reaction to the gap. There were some
- 12 things that were loud and clear that I heard from
- 13 families, school staff members, community advocates,
- 14 et cetera. Our parents are very frustrated with the
- 15 disciplinary practices that occur in our schools, very
- 16 much like the data we saw. Our parents are concerned
- 17 because, when children are several grade levels behind,
- 18 they remain behind; they don't catch up. Our parents
- 19 are also concerned about the lack of culturally
- 20 responsive educators in their schools and the climate
- 21 not being responsive to their needs. Fourthly, they're
- 22 concerned about the lack of rigor for children who are
- 23 considered gifted or need more.
- I'm going to go through the PowerPoint quickly. So
- 25 New Horizons Academy will serve students K5. At



1 capacity we will serve 586 students, with an average

- 2 primary teacher-to-student ratio of 22 and then
- 3 intermediate grades 33 to 1.
- 4 We have not decided on a location as of yet. We are
- 5 working with a property management company that is
- 6 helping us to find a facility and we will do so very
- 7 soon. But it will be somewhere in the south Puget Sound
- 8 region.
- 9 Our vision is focused on developing future leaders
- 10 by closing the achievement gap. I've been a member of
- 11 the Washington State Education Opportunity Gap since
- 12 2008. And I'm committed to doing that, and the work
- 13 that I'm doing represents our latest bill, which is
- 14 House Bill 1541, which is the first
- 15 opportunity-gap-closing bill in the state.
- Our mission for New Horizons: Encouraging lifelong
- 17 learning for students by providing rigorous, culturally
- 18 responsive learning environments designed to prepare
- 19 them to be contributing citizens.
- 20 My dissertation is on closing the achievement gap
- 21 and looking at opportunities at which to increase
- 22 culturally responsive learning environment. So I see
- 23 myself as an expert in this area.
- Next slide. This is our growth plan for the next
- 25 five years. We will start with grades K, 1, and 2. And



1 at that point the first year will have 276 students and

- 2 each year we will add a grade level thereafter, up until
- 3 grade 5, with a total number of students being 586.
- 4 The beauty of our program model is that we will have
- 5 a gifted or highly capable cluster classroom at every
- 6 grade level. So we can assure that those students are
- 7 getting their needs met.
- 8 Next slide. So our goals, we have several of them.
- 9 To close the opportunity gap from marginalized students.
- 10 This is how we're going to measure our growth in the
- 11 work we're doing. Creating a racially and culturally
- 12 inclusive learning environment. Once again, responding
- 13 to our parents' feedback. Providing timely
- 14 interventions. Many of our students who are behind,
- 15 they are because the interventions lack fidelity and
- 16 they are not appropriate to the population being served.
- 17 We will provide an integrated fine arts experience to
- 18 our all students with our partnership with Cornish, and
- 19 decrease the suspension and expulsion rates for black
- 20 and brown students. That is our goal.
- Our primary objective is to increase student growth
- 22 in the areas of academic and social-emotional learning
- 23 through research-based, culturally responsive practices
- 24 designed to meet the needs of a diverse population we
- 25 anticipate having.



1 Next slide. Our academic program highlights: So at

- 2 New Horizons we plan to serve low-achieving students and
- 3 high-performing students and everyone in between along
- 4 that continuum. That includes ELL and special-ed
- 5 students and other students as well. We're offering a
- 6 liberal arts educational experience that's balanced.
- 7 Common core, we have a very rich ELA and math
- 8 curriculum that I've researched that I think will be
- 9 very appropriate, an integrated social studies and
- 10 science component. Our math will be Eureka Math, which
- is through Great Minds, and there is research to support
- 12 that with the population we plan to serve.
- 13 Performing arts and fine arts will be a part of the
- 14 student's day, every day. So there is a balance. Many
- of our kids go to school and they only get math and
- 16 reading all day. We have gifted children or kids who
- 17 can be gifted in other areas.
- Our academic program highlights include a culturally
- 19 responsive learning environment. And I will call out
- 20 several components that will be implemented. A,
- 21 Culturally responsive lesson planning templates. I've
- 22 used it, I've seen it in higher education, and we've had
- 23 our pre-service teachers use them. It's our intention
- 24 when planning a lesson that it is culturally responsive
- 25 to the needs of kids of all backgrounds. Making sure



- 1 that we engage parents around critical conversation
- 2 related to race and equity involving our communities of
- 3 color.
- 4 Personalization comes in the form of individual
- 5 learning plans for all students that change. At each
- 6 benchmark period we're responding to the data so the
- 7 goals for those children will change.
- 8 Timely interventions, as I mentioned previously,
- 9 having high-efficacy interventions, using them with
- 10 fidelity and using tools with which to measure the level
- 11 of fidelity. Technology integration, having
- 12 interventions, electronic interventions, as well as
- other electronic supports to support project-based
- 14 learning, et cetera. Authentic family and community
- 15 engagement using Karen Mapp's dual-capacity framework
- 16 and enrichment in fine arts.
- Our daily schedule, we will have an expanded school
- 18 day that runs from 8:00 to 5:00 o'clock every day of the
- 19 week. But the research says that for children who are
- 20 behind or children who are challenged academically, you
- 21 need to increase the frequency and/or duration. That's
- 22 a common research-based practice.
- 23 Extended school year: for grades 1 through 5,
- 24 210 days, and for grades K, 220 days. An extended
- 25 school year program, which is designed to offset summer



1 loss at six weeks, and it will go into the first two

- 2 weeks of August, or first week of August. And then
- 3 school will begin the second week of September.
- 4 Our student demographics. I've had a chance to take
- 5 a look at or analyze the data for several schools which
- 6 we plan to draw from: Tukwila, Auburn, Renton, very
- 7 diverse school environments or districts. And one of
- 8 the things I noticed with the SBA or their Smarter
- 9 Balanced Assessment data, as the students matriculate
- 10 toward middle school, the scores decline in both ELA and
- in mathematics. In one district, and I will call no
- 12 name, at eleventh grade their students were only at
- 13 21 percent proficiency level in mathematics. Eleventh
- 14 grade.
- We will be addressing the total child; looking at
- 16 both behavioral outcomes and academic outcomes being
- 17 related. Children don't leave their social-emotional
- 18 selves at home. At the national level to support this
- 19 we have federal guidelines around disciplinary practices
- 20 that came out in January of 2014. Title I funds were
- 21 released to support social-emotional learning during
- 22 that same time frame, and the Every Child Succeeds Act
- 23 will provide for innovative opportunities to close the
- 24 achievement gap using the funds that are listed below at
- 25 the local level, House Bill 1541, which is the



1 opportunity gap bill that I mentioned, House Bill 5946

- 2 and then the McCleary Settlement. It is our hope that
- 3 through these mechanisms we will have the resources
- 4 needed to support the diverse needs of our students.
- 5 I'm going to pause now and then I will continue the
- 6 remainder of the presentation. I think it's time for
- 7 public comment.
- 8 MR. HALSEY: Thank you, Dr. Billingsly.
- 9 So right now we're going to open up the public comment
- 10 period. So the way that this will work is we will work
- on a 45-minute running clock. So if you want to give
- 12 public comment and you have a ticket, we ask you to go
- 13 ahead and line up over here, and we will take your
- 14 comments as they come up. Once we exhaust everyone that
- 15 has a ticket, if there are additional comments that want
- 16 to be made, we have some time available to do that.
- 17 Again, I'd just ask folks who are giving public
- 18 comment to just watch the board here. I'll put a
- 19 two-minute timer up. Be a good steward of time so we
- 20 can hear from everyone and we'll get started here
- 21 shortly.
- MS. RUSH: Hello. I'm Star Rush and I'm
- 23 the interim provost at Cornish. And I wanted to speak
- 24 to the importance of the integrative arts curriculum in
- 25 the school's proposal. I have a quote that I wanted to



1 read first from Jeremy Anderson, who is the president of

- 2 Education Commission of the States. "Ensuring all young
- 3 people, regardless of income, race, and ethnicity have
- 4 critical analysis, creativity, and collaboration as
- 5 foundational elements of a well-rounded education is
- 6 what will help continue to strengthen the educational
- 7 achievements of students across the country and prepare
- 8 them for a 21st century workforce."
- 9 So the idea of closing the opportunity gap and
- 10 integrating visual and performing arts, research has
- already has told us for many, many years that doing so
- 12 improves student achievement across racial difference,
- 13 across economic difference, in mathematics, in language
- 14 arts, building resilience, efficacy, better cognition,
- 15 and most importantly in our age, the responsiveness and
- 16 the ability to bounce back. That's what the arts do for
- 17 all. And I am biased because I work in arts education.
- 18 I'm a literary arts practitioner. But the arts aren't
- 19 the privilege of the few; they are the right of the many
- 20 to see their world, to process that world, express their
- 21 place in that world, and move the world ahead. If we
- 22 don't increase our engagement of the arts within the
- 23 curriculum, then we have to ask, Whose culture are we
- 24 building? I encourage you to support the school.
- 25 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Brandon Johnson.



1 I am an engineer for the Boeing Company. I have a few

- 2 things to say about the leadership. So I'm not an
- 3 educator, but I have come from a family of educators.
- 4 And one of the things I wanted to speak on was the
- 5 importance of good educators in your life and in the
- 6 students' lives.
- 7 One of the things that I remember coming from
- 8 schools that I matriculated through was the value of
- 9 their care for my education. Not only did they teach me
- 10 about the arts and math and science, but they also
- 11 taught me about who I am as a person, being a good
- 12 person. Those things are valuable. And sharing that
- 13 community with people that care about you is really,
- 14 really important. You know, when you're growing as a
- 15 child, you want to be in a safe environment, one that
- 16 engages you, one that challenges one, and one that
- 17 supports you in a way that you need particularly.
- 18 And people who understand that, those are good
- 19 educators. Not just people who can teach you how to do
- 20 equations. It's people who really want you to know how
- 21 to gain knowledge, not just use it. And that's the most
- 22 valuable thing. And I think this school and the people
- 23 that are going to be running this school are going to be
- 24 exactly that example for these students. Thank you.
- 25 MS. GUYSNOWDEN: I think I'll take that



- 1 22 seconds, the 21 seconds and add it on.
- 2 Hi, my name is Sheila Guysnowden, and my daughter
- 3 reminded me of something, so I'm going to make this
- 4 personal. My daughter, who is now 50, graduated in the
- 5 '80s. And she reminded me, she said, "Mom, remember
- 6 when you sued the Seattle Public Schools because there
- 7 wasn't an arts program?" I've forgot all about it.
- 8 She graduated -- actually, she was appointed into
- 9 Seattle Public Schools. We took the APP, advanced
- 10 placement test. They said she didn't pass. I went to a
- 11 private school, the first school of arts and humanities
- 12 on Capitol Hill. She took the same test and passed with
- 13 flying colors. We went back to Seattle Public Schools,
- 14 and they were going to enroll her into the APP program.
- 15 And said no. She went to the arts and humanities on
- 16 Capitol Hill. So it goes to show you arts is where it's
- 17 at. I'm not saying anything about the STEM program.
- 18 But she is very creative. She is great. She did
- 19 everything she is supposed to and graduated with honors.
- 20 Just to let you know, that was back in the '80s. That
- 21 school still has problems, because kids aren't getting
- 22 what they are supposed to get.
- 23 Getting to the reason I'm here tonight, not to speak
- 24 about that, but also to let you know that every parent
- 25 and every child should have an opportunity to enroll in



1 the school that they think is going to be meeting their

- 2 needs academically, educationally, socially, all that
- 3 good gamut. I'm just saying that everybody needs a
- 4 choice, and it doesn't have to be one school. They
- 5 could be a charter school. So I'm very attuned to that.
- 6 The third reason I asked to be on the board is
- 7 because of my experience in human resources. I've been
- 8 doing that for 35 years, and I do believe we need the
- 9 best teachers, we need the best administrators, and I
- 10 want to make sure that happens, that there won't be no
- 11 lawsuits coming our way. Thank you.
- MR. HUDSON: Hello, my name is
- 13 Geramy Hudson, and I'm a mental health therapist. So I
- 14 just think about this school and the format and the
- 15 platform that Dr. Billingsly and the board and her board
- 16 is putting together is just phenomenal. My early work,
- 17 I worked in a therapeutic-type alternative school, and I
- 18 was a behavior interventionist. So a lot of kids came
- 19 to us because they were kicked out. They reached every
- 20 last form of discipline that that school had, and they
- 21 ended up in our facility for some therapeutic-type
- 22 services, somewhat in the shape of wraparound services.
- I want to speak directly to the support of social
- 24 and emotional assessments and looking at that as a
- 25 guiding tool to know exactly what these kids are going



1 through. Our kids, our kids of color, to know what they

- 2 are going through at home, to know the type of adverse
- 3 experiences they are going through, which is driving
- 4 some of the social and emotional deficiencies that might
- 5 look like -- to the average eye might just look like
- 6 behavioral issues or so and so is having a hard day, he
- 7 needs in-school suspension. So and so tore the
- 8 classroom up. We don't know why. So and so's grades
- 9 are failing. We don't know why. Maybe put them in the
- 10 corner with a one-on-one and we don't look any further.
- 11 I feel like with New Horizons leading that charge with
- 12 social-emotional assessments and looking at what exactly
- 13 the kiddos are going through from a mental health
- 14 standpoint is key.
- 15 So I would like everybody to get on board, open
- 16 their eyes, and know that the social-emotional piece is
- 17 huge. It affects every aspect of our young kids' lives,
- 18 and having that implementation is a huge benefit. Thank
- 19 you so much.
- 20 MR. HERRON: Good evening, everyone. My
- 21 name Al Herron. My typical spiel is I'm a physicist and
- 22 electrical engineer by training, I'm an entrepreneur by
- 23 inclination. I come to work with students between
- 24 kindergarten and second year in college. You're never
- 25 too young to be an entrepreneur; you're never too old to



- 1 be a student. That's been my theme.
- Over the last four years, I've been working with
- 3 different school districts, and I've had a chance to
- 4 fight to bring in student enrichment programs. And
- 5 there is money and there is not money. There is drive
- 6 and there is not drive. So I've run the gamut on what
- 7 opportunities are out there and chasing those
- 8 opportunities to provide real stimulating enrichment
- 9 opportunities for hundreds, and now at this point,
- 10 thousands of kids.
- I found a partner to work with, and we push the
- 12 limits of different districts. So we've had -- I'm
- 13 saying this to you because that's the experience I've
- 14 had. So when I tell you that I welcome the opportunity
- to work with Wanda from the beginning, and to work in
- 16 enrichment programs that have a serious impact, I'm
- 17 really driven to do that.
- 18 And I really do appreciate what the gentleman before
- 19 me had to say. My wife is a school neuropsychologist.
- 20 We work very well together. I helped her build a
- 21 psychology private practice, and we bring that into what
- 22 we do with our programs.
- 23 And furthermore, in the last year and a half we've
- 24 added a data analysis acumen to what it is we do because
- 25 you must. You need to prove what you say, do what you



1 prove, and continue that and do it in a sustainable

- 2 fashion.
- 3 I'm really looking forward to seeing what Wanda can
- 4 do and her team. And I know quite a few of them. Thank
- 5 you.
- 6 MS. JENKINS: Hello. My name is
- 7 Rosalund Jenkins, and I'm here for several reasons. One
- 8 reason I'm here is that I was involved in a peripheral
- 9 role in drafting the legislation that created the
- 10 charter school system here in the state of Washington.
- 11 Legislation to do it and an initiative to do it. And
- 12 part of why I was involved was I believed then and I
- 13 believe now children of color in particular and low
- income students generally need more options than they
- 15 have been receiving in the traditional public schools.
- 16 More options for success.
- 17 I'm so elated to be here speaking in support of
- 18 New Horizons and Dr. Wanda Billingsly. I've known her
- 19 now for many years and was also party to creating the
- 20 achievement gap committee and state law committee, which
- 21 she has been serving for years, to try to -- service to
- 22 the top of the legislative issues of concern, the needs
- 23 of children of color, which continue to remain unmet.
- New Horizons has brilliant leadership. Not good
- leadership, not competent leadership, not interested



1 leadership, not caring leadership, all of those things.

- 2 All of those things, but also very highly competent and
- 3 skilled educational leadership. And that's what we
- 4 need.
- 5 And when I had an opportunity to work with Wanda
- 6 when she was at the University of Washington, one of the
- 7 things she knows how to do is elevate the practice of
- 8 educators. She is a system thinker. She has crated a
- 9 model that has everything kids need to succeed, will
- 10 stimulate them mentally, intellectually, academically,
- 11 emotionally, in terms of arts and creativity. It's a
- 12 wonderful model.
- 13 And finally, we have an opportunity to see an
- 14 educator who is as skilled as she is, as caring and
- 15 capable as she is, at the head of a charter school
- 16 that's properly designed to create new opportunity.
- 17 It's been a while coming. We've had a few false starts.
- 18 This is the one that we've been waiting for, the one
- 19 that I argued for and hoped for and prayed for.
- So, please, resound in the affirmative, approve New
- 21 Horizons. Thank you.
- MR. HALSEY: All right. Thank you
- 23 everyone who was able to provide public comment. We
- 24 have quite a bit of time left. Is there anyone else
- 25 interested who didn't get a chance to sign up and would



1 like to provide public comment and be given two minutes

- 2 to provide the public with what your thoughts are?
- 3 MR. BILLINGSLY: Hello. Good evening. My
- 4 name is Michael Billingsly, and I'm here to represent
- 5 the community at large. And I would like to go on
- 6 record as supporting this effort for the
- 7 New Horizons Academy. I do believe that they will
- 8 provide the best opportunity to educate the students of
- 9 color and the low income, particularly to the families
- 10 and the people of south King County.
- I just want to go on record as saying I do believe
- 12 this is the best opportunity, and I'm in support of the
- 13 academy. Thank you.
- MS. VEN DUNK: Good evening, everyone. My
- 15 name is Erin Ven Dunk. I am currently working at
- 16 Microsoft. So I don't have an educational background,
- 17 but I do have personal experience with the type of work
- 18 that Dr. Billingsly has been trying to do.
- I grew up in a very small, white town in Upstate
- 20 New York. And you know, I wasn't part of the
- 21 demographic that we are trying to help today. I was in
- the upper middle class, but I seem to face the same
- 23 kinds of things that we're talking about. And the fact
- that me, coming from the environment that I come from,
- 25 being a student that was taking AP and honors courses, I



1 had those opportunities. I had a very high G.P.A. I

- 2 was the president of two different community service
- 3 clubs. I was the captain of my basketball team. I had
- 4 a part-time job at an engineering firm.
- 5 And when I went to apply for college and asked my
- 6 high school counselor to send my transcripts to certain
- 7 schools, he told me there was no point because I wasn't
- 8 going to get in anyway. And for me to have that
- 9 experience as a student in an environment that was
- 10 supposed to be full of opportunity, my parents
- 11 sacrificed a lot to be able to put me in that school,
- 12 and there was no other school for me. It was public
- 13 school or nothing. It was home school.
- 14 And to have that happen to me, it really makes me
- 15 think about the kids that didn't have the opportunities
- 16 I had or don't have the support in their educational
- 17 system that I had from having a stay-at-home mom that
- 18 pushed me, regardless of my environment.
- 19 And to have a school that would be here with a
- 20 demographic that isn't as supported and hasn't been
- 21 supported is really important. I came here from
- 22 New York about a year ago, and I came here because of
- 23 Dr. Billingsly. I was inspired by her work and she
- 24 continues to inspire me. So I hope that you'll support
- 25 this school and what we're trying to do here.



1 MR. HALSEY: So it doesn't look like

- 2 anyone else would like to provide public comment.
- 3 However, I would remind folks if you would like to
- 4 provide -- we've got one more coming in. We'll give you
- 5 time to provide quick comment.
- In the meantime, folks, if you weren't able to give
- 7 your public comment but you want to give us some of your
- 8 written comments, please do so. We really do value your
- 9 comments. So you can either give it to us tonight or
- 10 shoot us an email, that would be helpful. We need to
- 11 receive those by June 9th.
- MR. CURL: How is everyone this evening?
- 13 Good. My name is Reverend Ken Curl. And I'm an
- 14 associate minister up at Martin Luther King Junior
- 15 Memorial Baptist Church here in the Renton Highlands and
- 16 also a long-time community advocate, particularly around
- 17 educational issues here in the Renton School District.
- 18 And so I've come tonight -- I am a strong proponent
- 19 of public schools. And I read the materials on
- 20 New Horizons school, and I've been thinking most
- 21 recently that charter schools do have a role in our
- 22 educational system.
- 23 So I think if we can work together, public schools
- 24 and charter schools, charter schools do have their
- 25 particular role in educating our children. And I have



1 read the materials for the New Horizons school and how

- 2 they plan to hire staff consistent with the needs of the
- 3 students that apply and work with the parents and the
- 4 students. And it's really a holistic approach that I
- 5 read as far as the materials that were passed out.
- 6 So, like I said, normally I'm a proponent of public
- 7 schools. I'm a product of public schools. I went on
- 8 and got my degree at the University of Washington. But
- 9 I believe that this New Horizons project should be given
- 10 an opportunity to show what they can do. And I believe
- 11 that it can be an asset, not only to our community but
- 12 to low-income parents and students in this area. So
- 13 thank you.
- 14 MR. HALSEY: All right. Thank you. So
- 15 we're going to invite Dr. Billingsly back up, and she
- 16 will provide some closing comments. Dr. Billingsly, why
- don't you come up and join me. Because I've asked my
- 18 commissioners to have questions for you and I think I've
- 19 got a few for you. I've asked Dr. McGuire to check in
- 20 with her colleagues and she will ask questions of you.
- 21 All right?
- 22 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: I loved reading
- 23 your application. I'm curious about a couple of things
- 24 that I would like you to elaborate on.
- DR. BILLINGSLY: Okay.



1 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: Can you explain how

- 2 you are going to actually partner with Cornish for the
- 3 arts, which I think is fabulous, and I would just like a
- 4 little more explanation of how you intend to do that.
- DR. BILLINGSLY: We do have a full
- 6 schedule developed in the afternoon for the performing
- 7 arts. Dr. Reid helped to put it together. There will
- 8 be a rotating opportunity for students based on interest
- 9 so they will get to select one -- well, two arts
- 10 activities per day. And the Cornish institute, actually
- 11 the college of the arts, will be partnering with us. We
- 12 have a meeting coming up with the president and also the
- 13 fund development officer, and we're going to be sort of
- 14 expanding more on what that will look like. We have a
- 15 basic schedule. We have worked it into the concept or
- 16 the design, and so we will be exploring what that will
- 17 actually look like.
- We do know we will offer vocal music, instrumental
- 19 music, classical ballet, and modern dance, as well as
- 20 visual arts and theater, which they are well versed in
- 21 all of those.
- 22 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: Thank you. Then
- 23 just a comment. Looking -- and people that know, I'm a
- 24 longtime educator that is adamant about strong civic and
- 25 social studies education. I read in your proposal that



1 you're talking about project-based learning for social

- 2 studies. And I just want to say we can't leave out the
- 3 social studies, and even more so today, strong civic
- 4 education because we need to hear these kids' voices as
- 5 they are part of our democratic process. I hope you
- 6 don't leave those behind when I know you've got
- 7 pressures to do so many things.
- 8 DR. BILLINGSLY: If I could comment on
- 9 that. I will say that we have selected curriculum for
- 10 ELA that is an integrated approach for science, social
- 11 studies, and English and language arts. It's developed
- 12 by the folks at National Geographic. And so they are
- 13 well versed in science. And I've looked at the
- 14 curriculum. You've had a chance to see it. It's in the
- 15 binder. It is pretty robust. There is expository as
- 16 well as fictional material in the content, but it lends
- 17 itself to a lot of opportunities for kids to expand and
- 18 explore in both areas.
- 19 COMMISSIONER DZIKO: Hello. So after
- 20 reading the material and reading your application, I'm
- 21 trying to get a sense of the culture of the school. I
- 22 get the closing the achievement gap opportunity, all
- 23 that is important. Everything that's in here is
- 24 important.
- 25 But can you give us a sense of what it's going to be



1 like for children to be in the school and what is the

- 2 culture of the school? How are you engaging? What is
- 3 the feel of the school?
- 4 That's a little harder to do because there is
- 5 nothing for us to walk into yet, but how would you
- 6 describe it to make me want to come to or bring my
- 7 children to the school?
- 8 DR. BILLINGSLY: So I would describe it as
- 9 an environment that is inclusive, culturally inclusive.
- 10 Which means that, first of all, folks seeing individuals
- 11 who look like them. There is a lot of research out
- 12 there that shows that our children need to see role
- 13 models who represent their culture, an environment where
- 14 students have voice and parents have voice.
- 15 And in the literature or in the application I
- 16 outline how we will involve parents through the
- 17 dual-capacity framework which was developed by
- 18 Dr. Karen Mapp. And her focus is on how do you engage
- 19 parents of color. For parents who are marginalized,
- 20 they typically do not have a voice in school.
- 21 So our goal is to create an inclusive environment
- 22 where parents are actually partners. And I think you
- 23 can get a feel for a school you come in, how welcoming
- 24 it is, how well people sort of engage with each other.
- 25 The next slide that I was going to share with you, that



1 centered around the multi-tier system of support. And

- 2 focusing on that social-emotional really does lend
- 3 itself to supporting children and helping them feel
- 4 comfortable in school.
- 5 It starts first by acknowledging the fact that some
- of our children come in with social-emotional issues, as
- 7 the gentleman spoke to, and having screening and data to
- 8 support that. And not just marvelling at the data but
- 9 responding to it. Effective case management, working
- 10 with our families and ensuring that they have support
- 11 and can access resources through the school. And I
- 12 think that's another way of building a culture of trust.
- I mentioned earlier about the culturally responsive
- 14 efforts. The lesson planning templates that really are
- 15 explicit in terms of creating lessons where you're
- 16 thinking about not just the content, but how to engage
- 17 students and allow them to bring their culture and
- 18 experiences into the learning.
- In addition, I mentioned the opportunities for the
- 20 community, the inter-cultural speaker series, to
- 21 actually have an opportunity to engage around diverse
- 22 topics. And I've seen this work in numerous settings
- 23 where you're engaging around particular topics. It
- 24 might be related to gaps in healthcare. It might be
- 25 related to gaps that are seen in, for instance, language



1 choices, et cetera, or language that's spoken in the

- 2 school.
- 3 So it's just -- it's complex and it's
- 4 multi-facetted. And when you get more into the
- 5 application, then we talk about building trust, doing
- 6 what you say you're going to do, and some of that is
- 7 just basic, right? And also having the opportunities
- 8 for folks to have access to leaders, as well as others
- 9 in the school. So that's just sort of an idea. But
- 10 stimulating, culturally inclusive, accepting, and
- 11 allowing for voice.
- 12 COMMISSIONER DZIKO: I'll just follow up
- 13 real quickly to encourage you to talk about that more,
- 14 sans the education piece, and really focus on that feel.
- 15 Because I think that's really what's going to make the
- 16 difference for parents or for community members who are
- 17 going to want to be a part of this school.
- Because that's the thing that's different, right?
- 19 The whole notion of charters is they are supposed to be
- 20 different -- not necessarily innovative, even though
- 21 people throw that word out -- but different in a good
- 22 way, right? And describing those differences, I think,
- 23 really helps a lot. So thank you.
- 24 DR. BILLINGSLY: If I could add one other
- 25 piece. I mentioned tools to measure fidelity. It's one



1 thing to say we are a culturally inclusive environment,

- 2 but it is something else to have a tool that measures
- 3 that. In my application I speak to the six domains in
- 4 schools. And instead of guessing and saying, Yeah,
- 5 we're doing a good job with engaging different cultures,
- 6 you can do a dipstick, and there is an assessment or
- 7 survey that's done with both certificated staff,
- 8 classified staff, and parents that indicate that, along
- 9 with the other traditional ways which you get feedback
- on families, you do your yearly parent survey and those
- 11 kinds of things, or your climate survey. This goes a
- 12 little deeper than that. So we will be responding and
- 13 creating goals around that data as well.
- MR. HALSEY: Thank you so much,
- 15 Dr. Billingsly.
- 16 COMMISSIONER MENDOZA: Dr. Billingsly, as
- 17 I look at your program overview and I'm looking at the
- 18 enrollment and your class sizes, I'm looking at your
- 19 class sizes for K12 at 22 to 1.
- DR. BILLINGSLY: Yes.
- 21 COMMISSIONER MENDOZA: And 3, 4, 5 are 30
- 22 to 1. Our state funding model for K3 is 17 to 1. Can
- 23 you address that?
- DR. BILLINGSLY: I'm going to defer to
- 25 Debra Ward.



1 MS. WARD: My name is Debra Ward, and I'm

- 2 the one that helped put the numbers together in order to
- 3 prepare the budget. One of the things that we were
- 4 looking at was the amount of flex that we will need in
- 5 order to make sure that the project actually pencils
- 6 out, and we can turn the corner at the end of year
- 7 three.
- 8 So those are the maximum numbers. There is going to
- 9 be a cluster class for each group. I also wanted to
- 10 make sure that I could -- or that the school could
- 11 actually sustain an enrollment that was lower than that.
- 12 So I'm actually anticipating, instead of the 22 in a
- 13 full class, there will probably be more like 17. And
- 14 that some of those kids will actually be going to that
- 15 cluster class. So that fourth classroom takes care of
- 16 that.
- 17 MR. HALSEY: Any other questions,
- 18 commissioners?
- 19 Okay. So with that said, we're going to go ahead
- 20 and bring this to a close for tonight. I want to thank
- 21 everyone again for being here with us tonight. There
- 22 was valuable information from many of you -- actually,
- 23 all of you. Again, I'm Josh Halsey, the executive
- 24 director of the Charter School Commission. If you want
- 25 to chat after, I'll be floating around. There is food



```
here. Please take some home. There is a public comment
 1
 2.
     box. Again, drop those comments in there. We need to
 3
     receive them by June 9th.
 4
         Finally, June 29th is a Thursday. We will be having
 5
     our public meeting where we will be rendering decision
     to either approve or deny our school applications, and
 6
     New Horizons Academy will be considered at that point.
 7
     We anticipate having that conversation around
 8
 9
     11:00 o'clock on the 29th. So if you're planning to
10
     attend, just be there around 11:00. We'll probably go
11
     until 1:00 or 2:00 on that particular agenda topic.
12
         So again, I'll just thank you for coming out and
13
     fighting the traffic after a nice, long, beautiful
14
     weekend, and I hope you have a good night. Thank you.
15
                            (Applause)
16
                (Hearing concluded at 7:03 p.m.)
17
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1	CERTIFICATE
2	I, Laura Gjuka, a Certified Court Reporter in
3	and for the State of Washington, residing at
4	University Place, Washington, authorized to administer
5	oaths and affirmations pursuant to RCW 5.28.010, do
6	hereby certify;
7	That the foregoing Verbatim Report of Proceedings
8	was taken stenographically before me and transcribed
9	under my direction; that the transcript is a full, true
10	and complete transcript of the proceedings, including
11	all questions, objections, motions and exceptions;
12	That I am not a relative, employee, attorney or
13	counsel of any party to this action or relative or
14	employee of any such attorney or counsel, and that I am
15	not financially interested in the said action or the
16	outcome thereof;
17	That upon completion of signature, if required, the
18	original transcript will be securely sealed and the same
19	served upon the appropriate party.
20	IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
21	1st day of June, 2017.
22	
23	- XXXX
24	00)
25	Laura Gjuka, CCR No. 2057



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