## In The Matter Of: Charter School Forum

**Deposition of** 

June 01, 2017



## **Central Court Reporting**

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1	BEFORE THE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
2	STATE OF WASHINGTON
3	
4	In re:
5	PUBLIC FORUM )
6	IMPACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS )
7	) )
8	) )
9	)
10	
11	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
12	June 1, 2017
13	6:15 p.m. Church By the Side of the Road
14	4566 South 148th Street  Tukwila, Washington
15	ranwira, washington
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18	CERTIFIED COPY
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23	Taken Before:
24	Laura A. Gjuka, CCR #2057
25	Certified Shorthand Reporter

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APPEARANCES
 1
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 3
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         KAAREN HEIKES
         JESSICA GARCIA
         ELIZABETH COHEN
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         CINDI WILLIAMS
 6
 7
     Executive Director:
         JOSHUA HALSEY
 8
     Applicant:
 9
         JEN DAVIS WICKENS
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1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 1st of June, 2. 2017, 6:23 p.m., at 4566 South 148th Street, Tukwila, 3 Washington, before LAURA A. GJUKA, CCR# 2057, Washington 4 State Certified Court Reporter residing at University 5 Place, authorized to administer oaths and affirmations 6 pursuant to RCW 5.28.010. 7 WHEREUPON the following proceedings were had, to wit: 8 9 10 11 MR. HALSEY: So welcome, everyone. 12 name is Joshua Halsey. I'm the executive director for 13 the Washington State Charter School Commission. 14 wonderful to see you all here tonight. We're excited to 15 be here with you tonight, myself and the commissioners, 16 and many from my leadership team are here as well. 17 of you has taken time out of your very busy days to come 18 here, listen and learn and share your thoughts on this 19 charter school application. And it's with this in mind 20 that we are dedicated to creating a safe and civil 21 atmosphere for each and every person here tonight. 22 that means is, while we may have differing views or 23 differing opinions around charter schools or this application, we are dedicated to creating a safe and 24 25 civil atmosphere for those views to be heard in a civil



- 1 way.
- 2 This public forum is part of our evaluation process
- 3 of the Impact Public Schools' application they have
- 4 submitted to us for a new charter school to be opened in
- 5 the 2018/'19 school year. This forum is an opportunity
- 6 for the applicant, in this case Impact Public Schools,
- 7 to engage directly with the commissioners -- who are
- 8 seated to my left, to your right -- as well as the
- 9 public to learn about and provide input on their
- 10 application.
- 11 The Commission will be meeting on June 29th, that's
- 12 a Thursday, at the South Seattle Community College
- 13 Georgetown campus where we will pass resolutions to
- 14 either approve or deny the two charter school
- 15 applications that are currently under review. We hope
- 16 you can join us. We will be starting that meeting at
- 17 10:00 a.m. and generally we have our resolutions
- 18 starting around 11:00, 11:30.
- 19 When I get done with my introduction of setting the
- 20 stage of how tonight will run, the applicant, in this
- 21 case Impact Public Schools, will provide you a 15-minute
- 22 overview of their school and their proposal. So the
- 23 PowerPoints will be available for you to review.
- Tonight we also have with us five commissioners, and
- 25 at this point I would like them to please introduce



- 1 themselves to you.
- 2 CHAIR COMMISSIONER SUNDQUIST: Good
- 3 evening. My name is Steve Sundquist. I served one term
- 4 on the Seattle School Board, and I chair the state
- 5 charter school commission.
- 6 COMMISSIONER HEIKES: Hi, I am
- 7 Kaaren Heikes. I'm on the commission and I'm a director
- 8 of policy for the state board of education.
- 9 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Hi, my name is
- 10 Jessica Garcia. I come to you as a strong parent
- 11 advocate sitting on the commission, and I also work with
- 12 the Center for Latino Leadership.
- COMMISSIONER COHEN: My name Betsy Cohen,
- 14 and I'm an education advocate and newcomer to the
- 15 commission.
- 16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Hi, I'm
- 17 Cindy Williams and I'm a commissioner.
- 18 MR. HALSEY: Thank you, commissioners. So
- 19 once the applicant provides a 15-minute overview, we
- 20 will start what we call our public comment period. It
- 21 lasts for 45 minutes and it's a 45-minute running clock,
- 22 meaning that once the first person begins their public
- 23 comment the clock starts, and we run for 45 minutes.
- As you signed in, you had the opportunity to
- 25 indicate whether you wanted to provide public comment,



1 and if you did so you had a raffle ticket. We ask you

- 2 to hang on to that raffle ticket. And by the looks of
- 3 the crowd, we have well over 20 people who are
- 4 interested in providing public comment. And what we
- 5 will do as soon as the applicant provides their
- 6 presentation, we will randomly select 20 numbers
- 7 associated with those raffle tickets you're holding.
- 8 And if your number matches one of the numbers that we
- 9 pull, then we would invite you to come up and start a
- 10 line to my right, your left, and you will be provided
- 11 two minutes to provide your public testimony. For
- 12 individuals that require or want to use translation
- 13 services, we have four minutes to be equitable to you as
- 14 well.
- We ask you to be good stewards of time tonight. So
- 16 the two minutes does go by quickly. We ask you to try
- 17 to stay on that two-minute point as much as possible so
- 18 that we can hear from as many people as possible.
- 19 If you are unable to provide oral public testimony
- 20 tonight, we still would love to hear from you and we
- 21 have a public comment box in the back with paper and
- 22 pencils, self-addressed envelopes, and we also have an
- 23 email address you can send us additional information if
- 24 you would like. We have to receive all of your comments
- 25 by June 9th for those to be considered as part of the



1 public record regarding this particular application.

- 2 So in addition to myself, my team, and the
- 3 commissioners being with you tonight, we also have a
- 4 stenographer, Laura, who is standing behind me. She is
- 5 taking verbatim notes of transactions as it happens
- 6 tonight. So we ask, when you give your oral testimony,
- 7 that you speak clearly and you speak slowly so she can
- 8 capture it as accurately as possible. She may interrupt
- 9 you at points to make sure that she captures exactly
- 10 what you said, and please repeat if she does ask you
- 11 that.
- 12 So with that said, we're going to start our
- 13 15-minute presentation by the applicant. I will invite
- 14 Natalie Hester, the co-founder of Impact Public Schools
- 15 to come up.
- 16 (Applause)
- 17 MS. HESTER: Wow. Look at this room.
- 18 This is amazing. I just am so glad and happy to be
- 19 here, and I really appreciate all of you coming out
- 20 tonight.
- 21 My name is Natalie Hester, and I'm cofounder,
- 22 Impact Public Schools, director of operations and family
- 23 engagement. Previously in my work prior to this, I
- 24 worked at a non-profit in South Seattle doing business
- 25 loans to immigrant minority-owned businesses. I reached



1 out and had many partnerships in my work over the last

- 2 15 or 20 years.
- In my spare time, I was an advocate for education.
- 4 I've been fighting to create options for kids, my own
- 5 kids and other people's children. I'm on the board of
- 6 WA Charters, Washington State Charter Association. I'm
- 7 a Green Dot advisory member. I'm a member of HomeSite's
- 8 board of directors of affordable housing non-profit.
- 9 And last but not least, the founding parent of a child
- 10 at Summit Sierra, going into the 11th, and a child at
- 11 Seattle Public Schools going into the sixth grade.
- 12 Tonight is about welcoming new families to this
- 13 movement. If you're new to charter schools, we want to
- 14 thank you and we're happy you're here to learn more
- 15 about what's going on. At Impact Public Schools, it's
- 16 going to be a new, homegrown charter school network. If
- 17 authorized, we start right here in Tukwila; a free, open
- 18 to all, K through 5 elementary school.
- 19 Before I introduce my cofounder, I want to give a
- 20 shout-out to this amazing Church By the Side of the
- 21 Road, the Pastor Proctor and Alondra for being an
- 22 incredible host to us. We really appreciate all the
- 23 hard work they have done to get us here, they are an
- 24 amazing partner in this community, and I really
- 25 appreciate them allowing us to start here tonight.



Let me introduce my partner in crime and cofounder 1 Jen Davis Wickens. 2. 3 (Applause) 4 MS. DAVIS WICKENS: Thanks, Natalie. 5 We're so excited to be here tonight. Thank you guys for 6 coming out. This is such a good crowd. Some of you 7 have been fighting for public charter schools with us 8 for a very long time, and we want to honor you and just 9 give you a huge round of applause. Without you guys we 10 wouldn't be here applying to start a new school. 11 then, like Natalie said, if you're new this to 12 community, we want to hear from you, we want to learn from you, and we welcome you with open arms. And we're 13 14 excited to talk about new options, in Tukwila 15 specifically. My background is I actually am a native 16 Washingtonian. So this work is both professional but 17 deeply personal for me too. I started teaching just a 18 couple miles from here at Tyee High School. And I left 19 there -- it feels like a very long time ago -- to learn about what at the time were called 90/90/90 schools. 20 21 90 percent students of color, 90 percent free and 22 reduced lunch, and 90 percent of students at or above 23 grade level. And I wanted to learn how are they doing 24 this, and why is it not happening in Washington state? 25 And since then, I founded a charter school outside



of Oakland called Impact Academy, so we're bringing the

- 2 name to Washington, which is now one of the
- 3 top-performing schools in Hayward, California,
- 4 specifically for underserved students, African-American,
- 5 and Latino students.
- 6 After that, I actually worked in Seattle Public
- 7 Schools coaching and supporting principals and assistant
- 8 principals. I definitely am just not a charter person;
- 9 I believe in great public schools.
- 10 Then I had the privilege of cofounding the
- 11 Washington State Charter School Association and most
- 12 recently was the chief regional officer for summer
- 13 public schools in Washington state. And many of the
- 14 Summit heroes that are doing that work still are here
- 15 today, and I'm grateful for you guys being here with us.
- And now we are excited to continue building great
- 17 schools and actually building them down to the K5 grade
- 18 levels to serve all families. All families deserve
- 19 options.
- 20 So thank you, and I'll speak more about our model in
- 21 a minute. But I'm going to pass it back to Natalie to
- 22 talk more about who we are.
- MS. HESTER: Thanks, Jen. So we're
- 24 intentional about why we selected Tukwila as the
- 25 location for our first school. This is the most diverse



1 district in the state. There are over 80 languages

- 2 spoken in this community. This community has so many
- 3 assets, and it's so rich with culture, and we're really
- 4 excited to be here and to be a part of it.
- 5 So we know how innovative Washington state is. We
- 6 know that it's second in concentration for STEM and the
- 7 high-tech jobs -- companies like Microsoft and Amazon
- 8 and Starbucks -- but our kids are being left behind.
- 9 They are not prepared for this future. So we've got to
- 10 do better. We have to do better. And I think with a
- 11 charter sector, Impact Public Schools, we're just a
- 12 catalyst for change. We know we can't do it alone, and
- 13 so we're looking to partner.
- So this slide just shows the gap. The gap is
- 15 widening. It's clear that the gap is growing in
- 16 Washington state. We've had powerful conversations with
- 17 Tukwila District leadership, we deeply respect the work
- 18 they are doing to close the gap, and we want to be a
- 19 part of the work they are doing for kids and families in
- 20 this community.
- 21 The red line on the graph shows white student
- 22 results for reading and math in third and sixth grades.
- 23 The yellow and green line shows the opportunity gap is
- 24 growing between black and Latino students in reading and
- 25 even more dramatically in math.



1 This talks about our mission. At Impact, we know

- 2 that the student gap can be eliminated. We've seen it
- 3 done nationally, and most recently locally, with some of
- 4 our charter partners here in the state. One day we
- 5 believe Washington state will be able to boast a public
- 6 school system that will be connected, vibrant, and just.
- 7 Next are our core values. Just to pick three of
- 8 them that stand out for me, we spend a lot of time on
- 9 our core values: diversity, equity and inclusion. Our
- 10 board, our faculty, we want to reflect the community and
- 11 we are committed to make sure the board and staff
- 12 reflect this community.
- Our students will also be developing the skills they
- 14 need and be starting an affinity group starting in
- 15 kindergarten to understand diversity, equity, and
- 16 inclusion at an early age.
- 17 Team WA. We're very clear that this cannot be done
- 18 alone. The charters are part of a larger solution and
- 19 we're locking arms with our district partners and others
- 20 to close the opportunity gap.
- 21 Play big. That's what we're doing here today. This
- 22 we want to be a party. It's a public forum, but we
- 23 think it's kind of a party too.
- We have a two-part mission. Our two-part mission:
- 25 We prepare a diverse student population to succeed in



1 college, impact communities as the next generation of

- 2 equity-driven innovation leaders.
- 3 Mission 2: We make a broader impact on public
- 4 education across Washington state by advocating for
- 5 public policies that close the opportunity gap and
- 6 provide all students with their right to a high-quality
- 7 education.
- MS. DAVIS WICKENS: Great. So now we're
- 9 going to talk about how we're going to make that mission
- 10 come true. And we have worked in and visited many
- 11 public charter schools around the country, and this is
- 12 what we believe needs to be true about schools. The
- 13 first is that we believe excellent schools are rooted in
- 14 very strong relationships and that all students need
- 15 very strong emotional attachments to both peers and to
- 16 adults in the building.
- 17 We also believe that the schools of the future
- 18 develop student agency and that every single child
- 19 deserves an IEP. Every single child deserves an
- 20 individualized education plan and deserves the right to
- 21 set long-term goals, weekly goals, and daily goals with
- 22 a mentor that's going to help them actualize their
- 23 potential.
- Last but not least, we believe that schools should
- 25 be extremely empowering. And we do that through deep,



1 what we call, juicy, authentic, project-based learning

- 2 that allows them to dig into the meaty questions of the
- 3 world that adults grapple with. We want young adults to
- 4 grapple with those questions too and to explore their
- 5 own passions and areas of interest.
- 6 So with that, we've developed and expanded the
- 7 definition of student success. So most schools, or a
- 8 lot of schools right now, stop at core skills. So, of
- 9 course, we believe that students must learn to read and
- 10 write and be mathematicians. And we will emphasize that
- 11 for sure in making sure all students can read and do
- 12 math at or above grade level.
- But we take it a step further. We believe that all
- 14 students also need to develop deeper learning skills,
- and we do that through the Next Gen Science standards
- 16 and the National Arts standards and deep, like I said,
- 17 meaty, project-based learning.
- And then we take it one step further, and we really
- 19 believe students need to develop the habits of
- 20 leadership, which for us is social-emotional learning
- 21 skills. So not just thinking about academic needs in
- 22 students but also the social-emotional side. For us,
- 23 that means also developing skills in diversity, equity,
- 24 and inclusion. We are combining SEL skills,
- 25 social-emotional learning skills, with diversity,



1 equity, inclusion.

2 And we have creative and flexible scheduling for

3 students that ensures that we make sure we meet the

4 needs of every single child and meet them at their

5 academic and social-emotional level at all times. So we

6 don't just have a kind of one-size-fits-all structure

7 academic program, but we are able to be flexible and

8 balanced to meet every child's needs. But all kids

9 start and end their day in crew, which for us is our

10 version of advisory or mentorship, and it's a small

11 group of students to one adult.

12 And then they also get to experience "voyage," which

is our project-based learning; "studio," which is where

14 we really close the opportunity gap in reading and math

15 by providing very small-group, targeted instruction for

16 students. And it's actually the balance of high tech --

17 so adaptive software -- with low tech, very small-group,

18 intense, guided reading and math.

19 Then we have "house," which is where our gray bands

20 come together and celebrate each other. This is where

21 badging happens around our SEL work, where we get to

22 talk about our challenges and also talk about how we're

23 growing as a community. So these are some of our

24 social-emotional learning skills, and you will see DEI

25 is at the bottom and is being combined with SEL in our



- 1 model.
- 2 And here is a day in the life, Monday through
- 3 Thursday. It starts with "power hour." That's where
- 4 students who really need additional support will be
- 5 coming to school early and staying after late and
- 6 optional for students who wants more time or needs
- 7 extended care. Again, book-ended with "crew," starting
- 8 with our small communities and our mentor group to set
- 9 those daily goals. Two hours of math and literacy
- 10 studio, which is going to be our secret sauce for
- 11 closing the opportunity gap. "Wellness" is physical
- 12 education. Our retreat is our way of saying, you know,
- 13 that's lunch, recess, and what we call "stop, drop, and
- 14 read, " where the whole community reads together.
- 15 "Project voyage" is deep, project-based learning.
- 16 And "rise" is a mix of affinity groups that Natalie
- 17 described, our "crew circle," and an "open makers space"
- 18 where kids get to truly become innovators.
- 19 And Friday is a bit different. So we have "Impact
- 20 circle," which is the whole community coming together.
- 21 And then "art expeditions," where we're actually pulling
- 22 in community partners to provide amazing art experiences
- 23 for students. And this is how our educators get 40 days
- of paid professional development time, so they can get
- 25 prepared for their next project.



1 So I'm going to scoot forward to Natalie because

- 2 we're about out of time.
- MS. HESTER: Thanks, Jen. So I wanted to
- 4 just give you an idea of what we've been doing since we
- 5 started this work. We have met with 40 organizations,
- 6 community organizations. We've been knocking on doors.
- 7 We've been talking to parents: What do you want in your
- 8 child's kindergarten experience? Asking parents about
- 9 that.
- 10 We've been volunteering at Tukwila food bank,
- 11 getting to know the community. We've connected with the
- 12 city. It's important to connect with the City and the
- 13 school district.
- And, if authorized, we want every family to know
- 15 that Impact should have this as an option. And, again,
- 16 I just want to thank you. Thanks for spreading the word
- 17 about tonight. Thanks for showing up and coming out.
- 18 We appreciate it and stay in touch with us.
- 19 (Applause)
- 20 MR. HALSEY: So we're going to start our
- 21 public comment period. And so we've posted on the side
- 22 of the room -- they are identical -- the ticket numbers.
- 23 It's the last three numbers on the raffle ticket that
- 24 you have. And if your last three numbers match, any of
- 25 these numbers, we're going to ask you to stand over here



1 with Crystal. Create a line so we do this at a perky

- 2 pace. Remember, we're going to have two minutes of
- 3 public testimony. Folks that need English translation,
- 4 support, you will get four minutes.
- 5 Real quick here, folks, as you're lining up, the
- 6 timer will be projected on the screen beside me, to my
- 7 left. So be a good steward of time.
- 8 We have two translators here tonight, one for Somali
- 9 and the other for Spanish, and I would like to turn it
- 10 over to them so you can give a rundown of what I just
- 11 said.
- 12 (Interpreters translating.)
- MS. BINDER: Thank you, Executive Director
- 14 Halsey and to the Washington State Charter School
- 15 commissioners. Welcome to the new charter school
- 16 commissioners for the opportunity to speak on behalf of
- 17 Impact Public Schools.
- 18 My name is Libuse Binder, and I know many of you in
- 19 this room. I'm the executive director of Stand For
- 20 Children in Washington state, and together many of us
- 21 worked very hard to pass a new charter school law.
- 22 As an organization that advocates for improvements
- in our statewide education system, I can tell you there
- is a great need for more options for many of our
- 25 low-income students and students of color.



1 Washington state currently ranks 41st in high school

- 2 graduation rates, and we are 50th in the nation in
- 3 academic results for our low-income students of color as
- 4 compared to their more affluent white peers. In
- 5 addition, we are one of the only places where that gap,
- 6 also known as the achievement or opportunity gap, is
- 7 actually widening rather than narrowing.
- 8 Impact Public Schools in Tukwila is a much-needed
- 9 elementary school opportunity that would feed into the
- 10 successful middle and high school public charter schools
- 11 that have opened already in our region.
- 12 Impact Public Schools believes that all students,
- 13 regardless of socioeconomic status, can be successful.
- 14 And they are committing to partnering with the
- 15 communities where their proposed school be located.
- 16 Their commitment to true engagement is evidenced already
- 17 by the fact that Impact has begun to partner with
- 18 Tukwila Public Schools.
- 19 At their best, public charter schools add another
- 20 great option and choice for students and partner with
- 21 the district where the school is located to share best
- 22 practices and learnings across all types of schools.
- What's more, cofounder Natalie Hester is an active
- 24 parent, as we have already heard, and was one of the
- 25 main voices in last year's campaign to save our public



1 charter schools in Washington.

2 I thank the many community members for being here in

3 support of Impact Public Schools, and I pledge to do all

4 that I can to support the opening of not just this first

5 school but the additional schools around the state where

6 Impact plans to open, where the need is greatest, and I

7 urge the commission to vote to authorize the school.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 MS. TAUANUU: My name is Helen Tauanuu. I

11 have two kids at Rainier Prep, a seventh grader and a

12 fifth grader. This pretty much feels like I'm in the

13 principal's office, like I did something wrong. But

14 okay. Schools within our districts: We have private

15 schools, home schools, public schools, higher education,

16 early education, and charter schools. All these schools

17 do one thing and one thing only: That is to educate all

18 our students within the funds they are given from all

19 different levels, from how they learn, from programs for

20 special education, disadvantaged students and the ones

21 that just need extra help to earn extra credit.

22 My son and my nephew were in special education.

23 They still get help as adults right now. Being their

24 advocate is a beautiful job within itself. It's like we

25 have to grow up very fast and learn all the twists and



- 1 turns of education.
- 2 All the programs that would have helped them by the
- 3 time they got to high school were not there. They were
- 4 pulled out to help other programs, to help other kids.
- 5 So I took them to California to finish school
- 6 because it was pretty hard to find help out here. Staff
- 7 and teachers helped us so much; they said they don't
- 8 have the programs, they don't have the funds. They told
- 9 us to go to Seattle. Well, we don't live in Seattle, we
- 10 live here in Tukwila. So my only option was to take
- 11 them to California to graduate, which I can say they
- 12 have.
- 13 (Applause)
- MR. D'AMELIO: Good evening, Chair
- 15 Sundquist and members of the commission. My name is
- 16 Patrick D'Amelio. I'm the CEO of the Washington State
- 17 Charters School Association. And behalf of WA Charters,
- 18 I would like to offer our full and unwavering support
- 19 for Impact Pubic Schools in its pursuit to open a K-5
- 20 grade school here in Tukwila.
- The need is clear. Much of it has been noted
- 22 already; 41st in the nation in terms of graduation
- 23 rates, one in five students does not complete high
- 24 school on time. And it's local, not just statewide.
- 25 Here in the Road Map Project, we know that



1 significant gaps are already present across our

- 2 elementary schools in Tukwila. Low-income students,
- 3 English language learners, minority students enter
- 4 school and continue to be on the wrong side of the
- 5 educational gap. But, we also have reason to be
- 6 hopeful. You've already heard from Natalie and Jean
- 7 that there is an extraordinary team assembled around
- 8 them.
- 9 I want to note in their prior experience, under
- 10 Jen's leadership at Summit, some pretty incredible
- 11 results. Summit Olympus in Tacoma, ninth-grade students
- 12 more than doubled the national average for growth in
- 13 reading and more than tripled the national average for
- 14 growth in math, putting Olympus in the top third of
- 15 schools in the nation in terms of math growth.
- 16 At Summit Sierra in Seattle, founding ninth-grades
- 17 student outperformed the national average by 20 percent
- in reading and more than doubled the national average in
- 19 math. This team has what it takes. And I have no doubt
- 20 that the Tukwila community will be rewarded with a truly
- 21 innovative and successful elementary school. Not only
- 22 will Impact Pubic Schools positively affect the South
- 23 Seattle community, it will critically, at an important
- 24 time, support the continued growth and strength of the
- 25 nation's charter sector across Washington. Given the



- 1 tremendous experience and expertise of the
- 2 Impact Pubic School team and their collective commitment
- 3 to opening a high-quality, truly innovative charter
- 4 public schools school that will be responsive to the
- 5 needs of this community, I urge you to approve
- 6 Impact Pubic School's charter application. Thank you.
- 7 (Applause)
- 8 MS. PUENTE: Good evening, I didn't
- 9 prepare a note so I feel a little unprepared. I'm
- 10 Suzette Puente. I'm coming to you as a parent of a
- 11 kindergartner moving into the first grade. I'm coming
- 12 to you as an early childhood advocate and educator. My
- 13 former dean is in the room somewhere. Everything that
- 14 we've talked about today is exactly what we need;
- 15 choice, opportunity for our children. Certainly, last
- 16 but not least, I'm raising a brown boy. And it warms my
- 17 heart to see the collective of this project and of
- 18 charter schools, and what they do is provide choice and
- 19 that's exactly what we need in the area of education and
- what we're facing today.
- 21 I've most recently come as a fifth grade teacher in
- 22 this community, and I see this as a full opportunity,
- 23 again, for parents to have a choice and give their
- 24 students an opportunity to grow. Thank you.
- 25 (Applause)



1 MS. WILSON: Good evening. Thank you to

- 2 Chair Sundquist and the commissioners for the
- 3 opportunity to make comments this evening. My name is
- 4 Shirline Wilson. And I'm a parent, community member,
- 5 advocacy partner, and interested citizen.
- 6 I'm here today to voice my enthusiastic support for
- 7 Impact Pubic Schools, the team, and to provide my
- 8 endorsement for their application to become part of
- 9 Tukwila's K5 public schools system as a new charter
- 10 school. I've had the opportunity to know each of the
- 11 cofounders in very different ways, but all for the same
- 12 cause, and that is to make high-quality options
- 13 available to families who deserve them.
- 14 As part of the Save Our Schools campaign to keep the
- 15 first group of authorized charter schools open, I've had
- 16 the opportunity to get to know Natalie Hester. I became
- 17 familiar with Ms. Hester's work in the Rainier Valley
- 18 and how much she has done for our community and the
- 19 small business she served during her tenure there. From
- 20 those early days, I learned of her vision and passion
- 21 for starting the school. And over time, I continue to
- 22 see her vision become a reality as she worked to learn
- 23 the systems, processes, community members, and financial
- 24 supporters needed to realize her vision. I am so
- 25 impressed that a parent, business person, and advocate



1 can go as far as she has in becoming a true part of a

- 2 movement and a change for our community.
- 3 Mrs. Hester is joined by Jennifer Davis Wickens, who
- 4 has, as I've seen and experienced firsthand, had a
- 5 successful track record at developing high-quality,
- 6 high-performing schools. I came to know
- 7 Mrs. Davis Wickens as part of my role as chair of the
- 8 Summit public schools board. In this role, Jen and I
- 9 worked closely to develop a cadence that provided
- 10 oversight, accountability, and governance for two, and
- 11 now three, charter public high schools.
- Jen's savvy with building communities and networks,
- 13 both as an educator and entrepreneur -- I see my time is
- 14 ending here -- impressed me greatly. She is a skillful
- 15 and tremendous leader and a powerful educator. And she
- 16 would be an amazing addition to the community, as will
- 17 the entire Impact Pubic School's team. Thank you.
- 18 (Applause)
- MS. KLEIN: Good evening, my name is
- 20 Rachel Klein. I am an educator and a parent and I'm
- 21 excited to talk to you tonight about
- 22 Impact Pubic Schools.
- I've been working in public education in districts
- 24 in Washington state and across the country for the last
- 25 20 years. I was a district administrator at Highline



1 Public Schools for six-and-a-half years until recently.

- 2 While there, I worked closely with families, teachers,
- 3 school and district leaders across the region on
- 4 strategies such as Title 1, highly capable, blended
- 5 learning, and more.
- 6 There is a lot of great work happening in our
- 7 schools around here. But there are still too many
- 8 students who are not achieving their full potential.
- 9 Only about 50 percent of our third and fourth graders
- 10 were on grade level for reading and math last year.
- 11 Those numbers don't speak to the great assets that our
- 12 students have. But I don't think it's okay for us to be
- 13 satisfied when half of our students are not performing
- 14 to our hopes and expectations.
- Jen Wickens, who I have known for years, is also not
- 16 okay with these numbers. Jen, as she said, got her
- 17 start as a teacher in Highline and that is where we met
- 18 years later. Since meeting her, I've been constantly
- impressed with her behind-the-scenes but all-consuming
- 20 commitment to improving educational outcomes for
- 21 students in Washington. She works tirelessly and always
- 22 with families in mind.
- I read the Impact charter application, and I was
- 24 impressed with so many aspects of it. But I want to
- 25 highlight two areas that are especially cutting edge and



1 promising. The first is blended learning. I was part

- 2 of the team that brought and implemented blended
- 3 learning in Highline. It can be a great support to
- 4 teachers while allowing some students to do meaningful,
- 5 challenging, independent work while the teacher focuses
- 6 on face-to-face work with a small group of students.
- 7 The best part is that students love it. Many are highly
- 8 engaged with their digital tools and it helps to ensure
- 9 that each student has face-to-face time with teachers
- 10 every day.
- 11 The other thing about Impact that is exciting is
- 12 their dedicated approach to partnering with the school
- 13 districts in our area. I believe that our schools and
- 14 school districts should constantly be collaborating with
- 15 each other, regardless of their governance model.
- 16 Impact will be learning a lot about the most innovative
- 17 practices and education due to the esteemed networks
- 18 that they are part of. And I would love to see our
- 19 district-operated schools learn about these practices as
- 20 well so we have a thriving, collaborative set of public
- 21 schools options in this region. Thank you.
- 22 (Applause)
- MR. GALLARDO: Great, thank you. Hello
- 24 community, friends, staff, teachers, educators,
- 25 commissioners. My name is Rafael Gallardo. I'm



1 currently the director for personalized learning at the

- 2 Puget Sound Educational Service District. And I'm here
- 3 on behalf today to pledge my support and endorsement for
- 4 the Impact Pubic Schools.
- 5 I've been in education for 17 years. Originally
- 6 from California, moved here in 2008, and started working
- 7 for the Highline Public School District in 2011 with
- 8 Rachel Klein who just spoke. And I've been -- I've
- 9 worked as a teacher, codirector, central office staff,
- 10 and most importantly, technology and innovation.
- 11 And I come also with a new perspective. I'm soon to
- 12 be a father, so this is even more important to me now.
- 13 I have 16 nieces and nephews, but now it's become even
- 14 more important to me. My role in education is to
- 15 identify not only innovative practices but to identify
- 16 the best ones. As an educator I want to be able to
- 17 support the best-equipped schools, the most resourceful
- 18 schools, the most resourceful and definitely the most
- 19 innovative schools. As a director in my current role, I
- 20 want to be able to sustain and support equitable access
- 21 to education for all, and it's even become more
- 22 important to me now.
- As a parent, I want strong leadership, and I do
- 24 believe strongly and firmly that this organization will
- 25 be able to bring that to all of our parents and



- 1 communities.
- Over the last six years, I have worked with multiple
- 3 school districts, schools, teachers, school leaders, and
- 4 I've never met anyone that has worked as hard as the
- 5 organization that you are inviting into Tukwila Public
- 6 Schools. I've personally followed the innovative work
- 7 that has been introduced to our education communities.
- 8 The innovation has already made an impact on student
- 9 outcomes. This is the type of innovation that we
- 10 require to be able to continue to contribute to our
- 11 families and our communities. I believe the innovation
- 12 that Impact is planning will undoubtedly continue to
- 13 landscape, especially where it's most needed. Thank
- 14 you.
- 15 (Applause)
- MS. RAZO: Hola, mi nombre es
- 17 Michaela Razo. I'm actually from Impact. I'm on the
- 18 board. And I'm from eastern Washington. Who knows
- 19 Yakima and Tri-Cities?
- 20 So I didn't think I was -- I never get chosen in a
- 21 lottery, so it's one of these things I was like, Oh. I
- 22 didn't write a speech. I'm going to speak from the
- 23 heart. I think that brings more of a realization of why
- 24 I'm here.
- One of the reasons why I'm here has a lot to do with



1 the dream that Jen had. And I've been in education, a

- 2 private consultant around education and advocacy, and
- 3 I've been fighting for charters within our Yakima and
- 4 Tri-Cities for many, many, many years. It seems ten
- 5 years, but it's not.
- 6 With that said, one of the reasons I fight for
- 7 education is because I do have a child with a
- 8 disability. And within the school system, I've had to
- 9 move my child around from different districts to try to
- 10 get him the resources that he needs because our
- 11 districts don't have them down there.
- 12 One year we did go to Florida, and within that year
- 13 he entered into a charter school down there, one of the
- 14 strongest charter schools. And within that just one
- 15 year that my son was able to turn around and believe in
- 16 himself and get at the level he needed with the services
- 17 needed. That was amazing. What was sad about it was
- 18 that we needed to come back to Washington. When we did
- 19 come back to Washington, we went back, that same hole,
- 20 where our son's IEP was not accepted and was not given a
- 21 chance. When Jen asked me, Would you be on our board,
- 22 and I saw what was being presented, I said, This is what
- 23 my son deserves, so every other child deserves that. So
- 24 she brought hope to me knowing that she will bring hope
- 25 to you guys and make that a reality happen here is



1 amazing. You guys are privileged to have these kind of

- 2 schools down here that we can't have in eastern
- 3 Washington. So taking that to heart, make sure that you
- 4 support this lady here and you support our school
- 5 because we don't have that in eastern Washington.
- 6 (Applause)
- 7 MS. LIU: Commissioners and staff. First,
- 8 thank you so much for your time and for your service to
- 9 our kids. My name is Amy Liu. I'm here today as a
- 10 parent and as a proud board member of Summit Public
- 11 Schools Washington. And I'm here to voice my
- 12 wholehearted support in the Impact team and model.
- I had the honor of being recruited by Jen Wickens to
- 14 join the board for Summit Public Schools Washington.
- 15 And I think one of the marks of a really great leader is
- 16 they can build teams and systems that thrive beyond them
- 17 and Jen has certainly done that. It's clear to me she
- 18 was incredibly thoughtful in creating the board. We
- 19 have great diversity in both race and skill set. Our
- 20 focus is always on the kids and the local community.
- 21 And we have robust but never chaotic discussions.
- I know Jen values a strong board with local
- 23 knowledge and relationships. She also had a strong
- 24 track record of hiring amazing staff, some of whom are
- 25 here today. They are lifelong learners, they understand



1 when they make mistakes and own them, and they have a

- 2 relentless desire to grow and improve, and I'm just
- 3 humbled to be associated with them.
- 4 The board and the staff that Jen recruited all share
- 5 her deep belief in the ability of all kids to achieve at
- 6 high levels. She set a strong foundation for Summit
- 7 Public Schools Washington, and for that we are extremely
- 8 grateful.
- 9 Jen is a local Washingtonian. She is deeply
- 10 invested in our home state and community. She has a
- 11 fierce and unwavering focus on kids; as a parent, as a
- 12 board member, and as someone who wants badly for there
- 13 to be more environments where all kids can be truly
- 14 known, loved, and supported to reach their full
- 15 potential and be their best selves. I'm fully
- 16 supportive of this team and this model, and I
- 17 respectfully ask for you to approve this application.
- 18 Thank you again for your time.
- 19 (Applause)
- 20 MS. EDMONDSON KEMP: Good evening. My
- 21 name is Felicia Edmondson Kemp, and I'm an early
- 22 childhood professional in this community, and I've
- 23 worked in this community for about 15 years. I'm a
- 24 mother and a grandmother of four brown boys who go to
- 25 school in this district. And my second grader had an



1 opportunity to go to a charter school last year, and he

- 2 did phenomenal. Our family was super-excited about it.
- 3 Even though we had to commute in the opposite direction
- 4 about 18 miles both ways, we did it for the sacrifice.
- Nevertheless, he wasn't able to go this year because
- 6 they lost their funding so it's a whole different school
- 7 experience. So having Impact, just the thought of it
- 8 coming to our neighborhood, to our community, I'm
- 9 totally excited, totally ready to support it. And I'm
- 10 spreading the word about it. So please, please approve
- 11 this. Thank you.
- 12 (Applause)
- MS. WILLIAMS: Hi. I'm RoQuesia Williams.
- 14 I'm a mom of four, all four in charters, a second
- 15 grader, a kindergartner, a seventh grader and a tenth
- 16 grader this year. I just wanted to say -- give my
- 17 support for Jen to open up this school. It has been an
- 18 amazing journey for us since we started charters. It
- 19 would be a great asset for this community to serve the
- 20 children that would not get this opportunity otherwise.
- 21 My kids are doing great. I think that to be able to
- 22 serve 336 more students who need it would be amazing. I
- 23 worked with Jen at Summit. She's an amazing school
- 24 leader and amazing person. And I think that her having
- 25 a school here to be great. Thank you.



1 (Applause) MS. COLEMAN: Hi. So I also did not 2 3 prepare anything this evening. My name is 4 Baionne Coleman. I am a parent of four. I am a native 5 to Seattle. I have 42 nieces and nephews who live in Seattle, in the Tukwila area. We come from a family of 6 7 So we have a lot of experience in the education 8 system and my mother was also a teacher. 9 I have worked in education for a little over 10 15 years. And I've had the opportunity to go into 11 private, public, and parochial -- independent and 12 parochial schools as well. My kids go to a private 13 school, and they go to a private school because I've 14 sent them to a public school and the experience was more 15 about compliance than it was about creating critical 16 thinkers. 17 My son is a little brown boy who was in a school 18 where he did not feel he was included. That's a problem 19 for me. And I think it's a problem for a lot of our 20 community members as well. I grew up on Beacon Hill, 21 lived in West Seattle, and I've watched -- I've watched our minorities have to continue to move south. And the 2.2 23 schools have not been ready for it. The public 24 education system has not been ready for it. And it is



25

incredibly critical for us to get schools that include

1 those students, that include our students, that include

- 2 my students.
- I have nieces and nephews who have disabilities; I
- 4 have nieces and nephews who do not have disabilities or
- 5 any neural diversity at all who have been put into
- 6 special education just because they don't know what else
- 7 to do.
- 8 There is no project-based learning in the schools
- 9 that are engaging the students. There is no
- 10 social-emotional learning. I'm a big advocate for
- 11 social-emotional learning. I've seen how it -- I've
- 12 seen how it changes the school community around.
- So I urge you to please affirm this application, not
- 14 just for my nieces and nephews and my own children, but
- 15 for the children in this community. Thank you.
- 16 (Applause)
- 17 MS. BHATT: Thank You Executive Director
- 18 Halsey, Chair Sundquist, and commissioners for this
- 19 opportunity to speak on behalf of the
- 20 Impact Pubic Schools. My name is Rekha Bhatt. I'm the
- 21 director of school services at the Washington State
- 22 Charter Schools Association. And I'm here to talk about
- 23 how we need leaders like Jen and Natalie and the team
- 24 they built around them. We need leaders who are ready
- 25 to do something big, bold, and different for Washington



- 1 students because they need it.
- 2 Washington does not yet have an elementary school
- 3 model that wraps the personalized learning and SEL
- 4 factors that Impact has proposed in their application.
- 5 The Impact team has looked toward high-performing
- 6 charter schools nationally, taken those practices,
- 7 iterated on them, and developed a model that is
- 8 responsive to the needs, demands, and desires of this
- 9 Tukwila community.
- 10 We've heard over and over again tonight about Jen's
- 11 track record of success, closing the opportunity gap for
- 12 students and similar personalized learning models. And
- 13 Natalie is a charter school parent. No one can speak to
- 14 the potential a charter school holds for a student
- 15 better than she can. This team is ready to do it.
- 16 At the association we are eager to partner with
- 17 them, should they be authorized, to support them through
- 18 their planning year and operation and we are so excited
- 19 to see the impact they will have in Washington.
- 20 (Applause)
- 21 MS. BURNS: Good evening. I'm honored to
- 22 be here. My name is Malia Burns, and I'm so thrilled to
- 23 be able to speak on behalf of my suggestion that you
- 24 approve Impact Pubic Schools' application.
- I have spent the last 11 years in education and I am



1 currently the founding principal at Summit Sierra in

- 2 Seattle. I want to -- we all saw the statistics around
- 3 the need for high-quality schools in our area. And as a
- 4 high school administrator and as a high school teacher,
- 5 I see those needs on a daily basis. These families and
- 6 students have names and real-life experiences.
- 7 And so when students come to us -- and over half of
- 8 the students who come to us as ninth graders come to us
- 9 behind in literacy and in mathematics and in their
- 10 skills -- and they make incredible strides. Our
- 11 students are growing and outpacing their compatriots at
- 12 other schools and we're so proud of all that growth.
- 13 And I've seen this model of personalized learning
- 14 work beautifully with students. I've also seen
- opportunities like having a mentor in a student's life
- 16 transform school for kids and take a student who may or
- 17 may not have felt included and felt known and felt
- 18 supported and turn them into a kid who is excited about
- 19 school, who knows that they have a parent in their
- 20 corner -- a parent at school, if you will -- and who
- 21 knows that they always have advocates. So I've seen
- 22 these models work. And it gets me thinking, What if
- that half of students didn't actually come in behind?
- 24 What if they actually came to us all on grade level?
- 25 What if the experiences that they had in our school were



1 the experiences that they have had in elementary school?

- 2 So this is very personal for me. I am honored to
- 3 serve 200 students in my building right now. We have
- 4 freshman and sophomores. It's even more personal for me
- 5 right now. I'm six months pregnant. Thank you. We
- 6 will be having a son very soon, and it's our first
- 7 child. I live in Rainier Valley, and so I'm thinking a
- 8 lot about for me what choices we would like. And we
- 9 would love to have this as an option for our family.
- 10 Thank you.
- 11 (Applause)
- MR. PONIKVAR: Good evening. My name is
- 13 Greg Ponikvar. I am the principal of Summit Olympus in
- 14 Tacoma, Washington. Good to see everyone.
- 15 I'm honored to speak tonight in support of
- 16 Jen Wickens, Natalie Hester, and Impact Pubic Schools.
- 17 As an educator for over ten years and current principal
- 18 of Summit Olympus, a high needs, diverse, personalized
- 19 learning school, I have complete faith that Impact will
- 20 create an excellent personalized elementary school for
- 21 Tukwila. Ms. Wickens and Ms. Hester both have an
- 22 impressive track record of successful innovation and
- 23 creating environments that enable students of all kinds
- 24 to thrive.
- In my school, I see the benefits of personalized



1 approach to education each day. Students are empowered

- 2 to advocate for what they need, articulate their
- 3 learning styles, develop positive, action-oriented
- 4 mindsets and habits of learning, set and reflect on
- 5 goals, and learn how to use adults and peers as
- 6 researchers, coaches, and quides.
- 7 The earlier we start this work with students, the
- 8 better. My average incoming ninth grader joins us four
- 9 grade levels behind in reading and math and oftentimes
- 10 has the mind-set that teachers have all the answers and
- 11 that their job is to sit, listen, and regurgitate. The
- 12 earlier we can improve the mindsets and skills of
- 13 students coming in our high schools, the more able we're
- 14 going to be to prepare students for college and a
- 15 lifetime of success.
- 16 As someone who has worked with Jen Wickens for
- 17 years, I'm genuinely excited for the families in this
- 18 community to have her on their team. Working with
- 19 Ms. Wickens has truly been one of the highlights of my
- 20 career. She is that rare kind of person who people
- 21 trust and want to be around because she gets really good
- 22 things done. People who know Ms. Wickens knows she will
- 23 find the best partners, like Natalie Hester, and the
- 24 best school leaders and teachers.
- We know she will immerse herself in the community



1 and incorporate feedback from her plans on day one. We

- 2 know her standards for serving young people are
- 3 sky-high. And if anyone can make these goals a reality,
- 4 it's Ms. Wickens and her great team. Thank you.
- 5 (Applause)
- 6 MS. CEDANO: Hello, everyone. My name is
- 7 Abigail Cedano, and I'm here tonight as a former
- 8 kindergarten teacher and former elementary school
- 9 principal in support of this fabulous option,
- 10 Impact Pubic Schools.
- I could speak for hours about all of the things
- 12 about Impact that I believe in. But the thing that I
- 13 want to focus on the most is the strategic choices that
- 14 Jen and her team have made about the model.
- We've talked a lot about the need for all students
- in Washington to be proficient in math and in literacy.
- 17 But proficiency is just the lowest of the things that
- 18 Jen and her team are focused on.
- 19 Washington has so many fabulous career opportunities
- 20 for our students, but we know that proficiency and
- 21 literacy in math is not enough to be an employee at
- 22 Amazon or Microsoft or Starbucks or to fulfill whatever
- 23 passion you have in life. To do those things you need
- 24 to be an excellent collaborator. You need to be a
- 25 phenomenal goal setter and time manager. You need to be



1 able to advocate for yourself. You need to be able to

- 2 teach yourself. You need skills that are much deeper
- 3 than just proficiency.
- 4 Jen and her team believe that every young child,
- 5 every kindergartner, is capable of phenomenal things.
- 6 And the adults in the building are responsible for
- 7 setting up the environment so that kids can achieve
- 8 those things. The model is set up for kids to own their
- 9 own learning, to set their short-term and long-term
- 10 goals and plan their time to work towards those goals,
- 11 to learn from their mistakes, to learn which ways they
- 12 learn best, and to be able to reflect with their mentor
- on which things they need to grow and really own that
- 14 growth as well.
- I imagine that a kid who starts to do that in
- 16 kindergarten is going to be the type of child who can
- 17 fulfill whatever dream they have, where the doors of
- 18 possibility will be open for that child to be able to do
- 19 whatever it is that they want in life, and that's what
- 20 Jen and her team want for our students. So I'm very
- 21 excited to be here in support of Impact and know that it
- 22 will make a huge difference for all of our students.
- 23 Thank you.
- 24 (Applause)
- MS. YEE: Good evening, Chair Sundquist



1 and members of the charter commissioner and Mr. Halsey.

- 2 I'm very pleased to speak to all of you in support of
- 3 Impact Pubic Schools. I've known Jen Wickens and
- 4 Natalie Hester for a few years.
- 5 My name is Joyce Yee, by the way. I forgot to say
- 6 that. I'm sorry. My name is Joyce Yee. I'm an
- 7 organizer with the League of Education Voters for South
- 8 King County and South Seattle. And I wanted to speak to
- 9 you not with my LEV hat on, but with a previous position
- 10 that I used to hold with communities and schools of
- 11 Kent. I used to be an AmeriCorps site coordinator at a
- 12 Title 1 school in Kent. And at that school we actually
- 13 had pretty strong leadership which emphasized
- 14 relationships and parent engagement, but that is not
- 15 necessarily the norm in every public school.
- 16 So what I wanted to call out that I really, really
- 17 totally appreciate is that, first of all, too often data
- 18 just defines parents and students as their deficit; they
- 19 are lacking, they are lacking this and they are lacking
- 20 that and students are failing. Students are not just
- 21 kids that are failing. Right? Data doesn't tell the
- 22 whole story. So I wanted to call out that Impact
- 23 actually had two design meetings where they consulted
- the community. How often does that happen, right?
- 25 And second of all, that relationships kept coming to



me, strong relationships, as I read their proposal that 1 what they are proposing is to maintain -- start and 2 3 maintain strong relationships through home visits as 4 well as a mentorship model. It's really practicing that whole-child approach so that there aren't any surprises. 5 6 Over and over in my work, with LEV and beyond with 7 other agencies, like communities and schools, parents 8 have told us that they don't want to just get a phone 9 call, their child gets in trouble and is about to be 10 suspended and expelled. It's starting, developing, and 11 maintaining those strong relationships so that we know the strengths of our kids. A student is not just an 12 13 English language learner, that student is actually at 14 least bilingual or multilingual. But we don't call it a 15 strength; we call it a deficit. So I urge you to 16 approve the application for Impact Public Schools. 17 (Applause) 18 MS. DUSSEAULT: Hi. Good evening, 19 Executive Director Joshua Halsey, Chair Sundquist, and 20 Washington State Charter commissioners. Thank so much 21 for being here. My name is Brianna Dusseault. 2.2 executive director at Green Dot Public Schools, just one 23 of the charter networks here in Washington state. 24 here to speak on behalf of Jen and Natalie's leadership 25 and Impact Academy.



1 I think folks have said what I was going to say.

- 2 But what I would underscore are just two things: One,
- 3 is just the need in our community for another great
- 4 option. Not just one school but I hope many schools
- 5 down the road.
- 6 We are currently recruiting students for our middle
- 7 school, Rainier Valley Leadership Academy, South
- 8 Seattle, which is about a 15- to 20-minute drive from
- 9 here. And we have actually had more parents ask to
- 10 enroll their elementary students than the sixth graders
- 11 we are looking for. We have had, as early as
- 12 kindergarten, applications coming in, waiting for our
- 13 sixth-grade seats. There is no question that there is
- 14 need for the school. And we have actually mentioned
- 15 that there are two charters with new applications in,
- 16 and parents' eyes light up and get very excited. I see
- 17 it firsthand.
- 18 As a community member living in Rainier Beach, I
- 19 would say this is a constant conversation among my
- 20 community, my neighbors, that options are always good
- 21 and the kind of work that Impact represents is always
- 22 needed.
- I'll think I'll close with, that I have worked with
- 24 both Jen and Natalie on my advisory committee at
- 25 Green Dot and then professionally at the Washington



1 State Charter School Association. There is just no

- 2 better combination that I can think of who can get this
- 3 work done. The tenacity, coupled with deep awareness of
- 4 what our community wants and needs and the complications
- 5 of that work sits before us now, and I know they will
- 6 build a great school.
- 7 Finally, these ladies have already raised both
- 8 national attention, as well as local attention, in
- 9 securing some of the country's first grants from
- 10 New Schools Venture Fund and Charter School Growth Fund
- 11 for their school, which I think speaks to a national
- 12 awareness of their impact down the road too. So thank
- 13 you and I urge you guys to approve the charter.
- 14 (Applause)
- MS. FLETCHER: Last, but not least, my
- 16 name is Vernee Fletcher and I am a mom of six. I have a
- 17 son who entered Summit Sierra in ninth grade. I'm the
- 18 parent who absolutely needs charter schools. I
- 19 experienced a severe trauma with my daughter. She was
- 20 kidnapped and abducted about two years ago. My children
- 21 were traumatized going back into public schools. They
- 22 didn't know if they can trust the teachers even though
- 23 they had been going day in and day out.
- 24 My son going to Summit Sierra, with that trauma and
- 25 having some scholastic issues, really seemed to



1 struggle. I felt like, Oh, my gosh, I got a charter

- 2 school. This is going to be so great. And it has been
- 3 a struggle for him. But because of the team that is in
- 4 the charter school with the independent learning plan,
- 5 him using technology -- because they use computers, it's
- 6 computer-based -- him having a mentor just to check up,
- 7 and a partnership from the parent to the mentor to the
- 8 principal and all of the teachers, I can proudly say
- 9 that my son isn't just surviving -- because surviving is
- 10 great for some -- but I like to thrive.
- 11 So charter schools to me is a thriving situation.
- 12 We don't want our kids in Seattle, Tukwila, Tacoma, and
- 13 Washington just to survive elementary school, middle
- 14 school, or high school. We want them to thrive. We
- 15 want them to have very prepared individuals to go into
- 16 life, to be able to take on advantages. So I urge that
- 17 this be an option available to Tukwila.
- 18 (Applause)
- MR. HALSEY: Thank you. That's going to
- 20 close our public comment period.
- We're going to ask Jen to come back up. Before Jen,
- 22 you can close out with some comments, I believe,
- 23 Commissioner Williams, you have a question.
- 24 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: One of the things
- 25 we heard loud and clear today was that you guys have



1 been working in a really deep and productive way with

- 2 the district, which is not always the case and it's
- 3 certainly not what we always hear at the forums. So I
- 4 would love to hear a little bit more about those
- 5 conversations and plans to share best practice or to
- 6 work together, and I'm assuming this isn't one-sided.
- 7 It's not just that you will share with them, but that
- 8 they are also sharing with you some of the things that
- 9 have worked here in the community.
- 10 MS. DAVIS WICKENS: Thanks, Cindi. I was
- 11 actually just whispering in Josh's ear that there are a
- 12 number of folks here from the district that we want to
- 13 just acknowledge and thank them for coming, and also
- 14 from the City of Tukwila. So thank you so much for
- 15 coming out.
- And I also would say, we are in very early
- 17 conversations, but we know that to do this work really
- 18 well, to serve the families in Tukwila that will
- 19 hopefully attend Impact Pubic Schools, but then to also
- 20 have the ripple effects of really leveraging a charter
- 21 in a community, that we must do that in partnership with
- 22 district partners. And we also just really applaud the
- 23 efforts that they are doing right now in the schools to
- 24 close the opportunity gap. There is some amazing work
- 25 happening here and amazing educators.



1 We have met with district leadership to talk about

- 2 what shared PD could look like, what shared resources
- 3 could look like, what a pilot program could look like,
- 4 and we're exploring those further with them.
- I have five minutes to close out. I think I'm just
- 6 going to say that I'm completely humbled and grateful
- 7 for all of the supporters who came out today. And then
- 8 I want to again acknowledge those of you who are new in
- 9 the charter sector. You've got to hear what some of the
- 10 schools across the sector have provided families. But
- if you have questions about public charter schools,
- 12 about Impact in particular, please come talk to us, we
- 13 would love to walk you through what we're learning. And
- 14 to the district folks who are here, we are so excited
- 15 engage with you and share practices with you moving
- 16 forward. Thank you guys so much.
- 17 Like Natalie started, this is a party. So we're
- 18 going to turn the music up in a minute. There is more
- 19 food in the back and there is still a bouncy house here
- 20 and face paint. So stay and enjoy each other, and thank
- 21 you again so much for coming out.
- 22 MR. HALSEY: Thank you, Jen. Thank you,
- 23 everyone. This is going to close out the formal portion
- of our public forum. And we invite you to please
- 25 provide us with your public comments. If you weren't



```
able to give those to us tonight, we want to hear them.
 1
     Again, the deadline for that is June 9th. Information
 2
 3
     regarding our website is also in the back. You can find
 4
     our agenda for the June 29th meeting, where we will be
 5
     rendering a decision whether or not to approve this
 6
     charter school, as well as one other, that is currently
 7
     under review.
         So on behalf of the commission and my team, I want
 8
 9
     to say thank you so much for coming out tonight.
10
     really great to hear from so many of you, and I hope you
11
     enjoy the rest of the evening with the great food and
12
     hopefully some good music. With that, I will say
13
     goodnight.
                 Thank you.
14
                            (Applause)
15
                (Hearing concluded at 7:28 p.m.)
16
17
18
19
20
21
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23
24
25
```



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	6th day of June, 2017.		
22			
23	Jan Land		
24	00		
25	Laura Giuka, CCR No. 2057		



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