



WASHINGTON STATE  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
COMMISSION

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# Accountable Options

## A Message From The Executive Director

In staffing the Commission, I have always fallen back on the vision that if we can foster innovation while ensuring excellence that someday every student can thrive in a high-quality public school. I am motivated, even through what can seem like an improbable balancing act of creating an independent state agency while simultaneously ensuring smooth application, evaluation, and resolution processes, by the thought that in the end we will see not only improved educational outcomes, but an education system that is culturally and community responsive.

The goals of the Commission have never been to be at odds with the districts and schools who currently serve our students. Quite the contrary, I have always envisioned a collaborative effort. Many of our charter school leaders and applicants are educators who have worked for years in the established public school system. These educators have engaged in many practices that can be transferred from traditional public schools to public charter schools; yet, these educators value flexibility that can lead to innovative practices. The Commission has consistently valued innovation and it seeks charter school operators that develop, test, and document new ideas that can be replicated in other Washington schools.

The prospect of an ever-evolving ecosystem of public schools that consistently inform one another of best practices is exciting to say the least. Further, the general concept of an engaged Washington populace discussing education is a large share of what the Commission strives for. Even prospective operators that we deny are conversing about education, and they are theorizing about can be done to positively impact Washington's at-risk youth. These operators are engaging community members and parents in a dialogue about what is possible and how all students are capable of realizing their fullest potential. I see ahead of us an education system in Washington that is anything but insular. For this state, charter schools have the potential to be where the exchange of innovative ideas is finally realized.

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### Washington State

#### Charter School Commission

Washington State's Charter School Commission was formed with the mission of creating a rigorous and comprehensive proposal process and to hold charters accountable to high standards of quality. The Commission is an independent state agency that exists to authorize and oversee high quality public charter schools throughout Washington with an emphasis on schools designed to expand opportunities for at-risk students, providing leadership and oversight that is consistent with national principles and standards of charter school authorizers and the provisions of Washington's charter school law.

1068 Washington St. SE  
PO Box 40996  
Olympia, WA 98504-0996  
Phone: 360.725.5511  
E-mail:  
info@charterschool.wa.gov



## First Place Hires School Leader

Over the past 25 years, in what can only be called a dynamic evolution, First Place has continuously expanded its services and programs to provide education, family support services, health and mental health services, and housing to South Seattle's youth and families suffering from homelessness and multiple traumas. In the fall of 2014, First Place will once again build upon its mission of "hope, home, and education for every child, one family at a time" as it opens the doors to Washington State's first charter school, First Place Scholars Charter School.

For years, former Washington State Charter School Commissioner, Dr. Doreen Cato, devoted herself to the administration of both the social and the educational services of First Place. Her tireless efforts and achievements became the foundation of First Place, producing strong outcomes in both sets of services. Dr. Cato's vision has been kept alive

*"The Scholars who enter the doors of First Place Scholars Charter school are empowered to become what they were created to become..." - Evie Taylor-Livingston, School Leader, First Place Scholars Charter School*

### A Brief History Of First Place Scholars:

- 1989: Transitional school founded offering short term educational services to children whose families were living in homeless shelters and transitional housing.
- 1998: Services expanded to include housing support, parent education, and life skills training for families of enrolled students.
- 2001: Changes to federal education laws ends funding for First Place from Seattle School District. First Place continues on as a non-profit, serving approximately 10,000 clients to date.
- January 30, 2014: First Place Scholars Charter School is approved to by the Washington State Charter School Commission.
- September 3, 2014: First Place Scholars Charter School scheduled to open its doors to students as Washington State's first charter school.

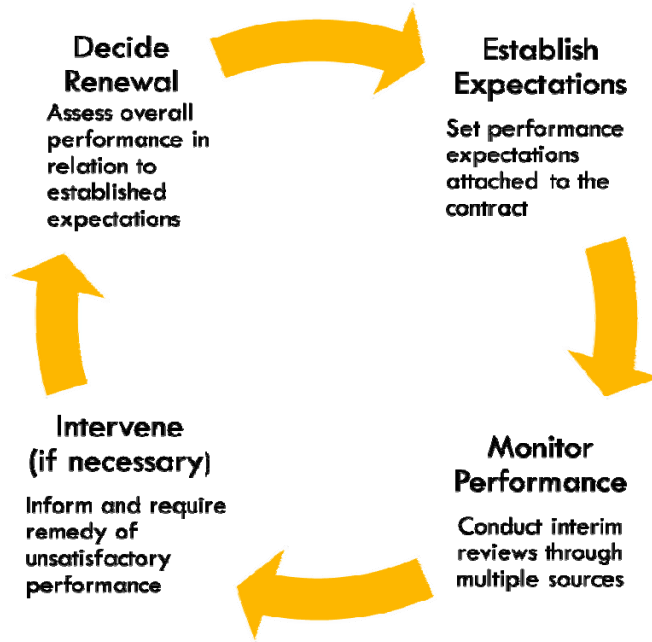
by a devoted board, staff, and a host of volunteers.

On July 2, 2014 First Place announced the hiring of Evie Taylor-Livingston as First Place Scholars' school leader. Evie possess over a decade of experience as a K-12 school administrator, leading the staff of culturally diverse and high poverty schools to develop and implement education strategies catered toward the schools' population.

Mrs. Taylor-Livingston states that she is dedicated to ensuring that, "The scholars who enter the doors of First Place Scholars Charter School are empowered to become what they were created to become, mobilized to achieve what they have been designed to do, and dedicated to bringing with them their peers, family members and friends along this journey of new discoveries and extraordinary achievements."

First Place's Board President and Founding Member, Dan Seydel, was enthusiastic in welcoming Mrs. Taylor-Livingston, saying, "We intend to leverage her experience and best practices to accelerate academic growth of all our scholars."

Evie's hiring is a huge step as First Place Scholars steams towards its fall opening. Washington State Charter School Commission Executive Director, Joshua Halsey, notes that First Place Scholars has made all of its pre-opening deadlines, and the school appears healthy and strong in this preliminary stage. Mr. Halsey stated, "The Commission, as well as myself, wish First Place Scholars the best as it continues to make strides towards opening Washington State's first charter school."



*The Performance Management Cycle*

## WSCSC Designs Performance Framework

Charter school authorizing begins with a bargain for performance. As an authorizer, the Commission agrees to entrust a charter school’s governing board with public dollars and public school students, and to give it broad autonomy over how it achieves agreed-upon goals. In return, the school’s board commits to achieving specified results, managing public funds responsibly, complying with its legal obligations, and providing a quality education to the students in its care. In order for this bargain of autonomy in exchange for accountability to work, it is essential that the Commission establish, maintain, and enforce high performance standards for all schools in its portfolio. This includes not only holding schools accountable for the academic performance of all of their students, which will always be the primary measure of quality, but also holding schools accountable for financial and organizational performance. The Commission is engaged in the development of a Performance Framework that includes academic, financial, and organization performance measures for use by schools and the Commission to establish expectations, guide practice, assess progress, and inform decision making over the course of the charter term and at renewal or revocation. Once developed, adopted and incorporated into the charter school contract, the Academic, Financial and Organizational Performance Frameworks form the backbone of the Commission’s performance management system. The Commission plans to adopt a high quality Performance Framework before the end of the 2014 calendar year.

Individuals wishing to participate in a series of surveys regarding the Performance Framework should visit <http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/education/commission/performance>.

### National Association of Charter School Operators (NACSA):

NACSA is a leading non-profit whose mission is to support the establishment and operation of quality charter schools through responsible oversight and public interest. NACSA has assisted the Commission since the Spring of 2013. Their work for the Commission has included guidance and support with the Commission’s first and second application cycle, as well as the current Performance Framework design process.

For over ten years, NACSA has been at the forefront of charter school authorization and achievement. Their work has helped to ensure that the dream of public school options is realized through improvements in policy and practice.

NACSA’s *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing* has been specifically called out in the Washington State Charter School Act (RCW 28A.710.100(3)) as a compendium of policies and practices required of Washington State authorizers.



## Excel Welcomes Ms. Myra McCormick as Dean of Academics

On June 11, 2014, Excel Public Charter School announced the hiring of Ms. Myra McCormick as Dean of Academics. Ms. McCormick brings a verity of both state and national experience to one of Washington’s first charter schools.

“Ms. McCormick brings several years of public charter school experience as a program director, lead science teacher, grade level chair, and administrator at several schools, including Boston Collegiate, Williamsburg Collegiate, and Uncommon: Bed-Stuy in Brooklyn, New York,” Founder and Executive Director Adel Sefrioui said in a press release. “As a STEM-focused school, Excel will stand to benefit greatly from

*“As a STEM-focused school, Excel will stand to benefit greatly from Ms. McCormick’s content-area expertise in science instruction.” - Adel Sefrioui, Founder & Executive Director, Excel Public Charter School*

Ms. McCormick’s content-area expertise in science instruction.”

As Dean of Academics, Ms. McCormick will be responsible for ensuring that all students are demonstrating dramatic achievement gains, as well as the character traits and intellectual habits needed to succeed in the college of their choice and to lead in their communities.

“My experiences in schools serving low-income and ethnically diverse students have offered valuable insight into the mindsets and practices of excellent schools,” Ms. McCormick notes. “ These schools all have curriculum that is rigorous, engaging , and well-planned.”

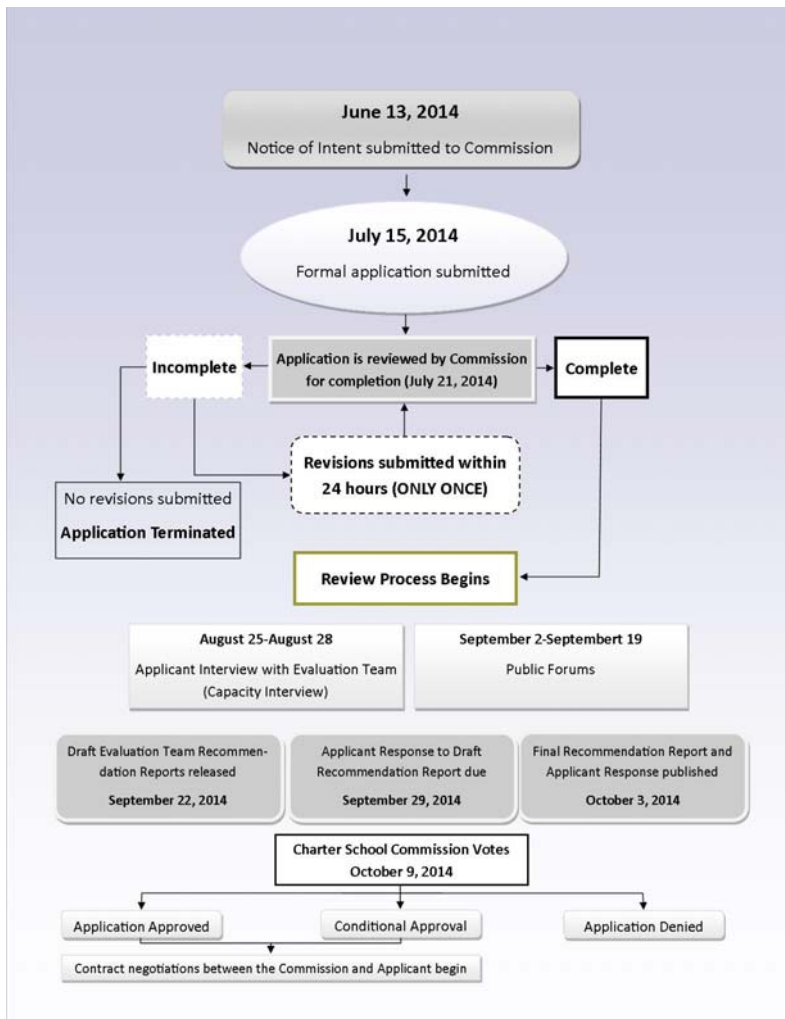
Ms. McCormick received her Bachelor of Arts from Willamette University, her Master of Public Administration from the University of Washington’s Evans School of Public Affairs, as well as a Masters from Relay GSE, a graduate school of education founded by three of the nations highest performing charter school organizations.

As Excel moves forward through its pre-opening processes, Ms. McCormick will help to ensure effective educational staff leadership, management, and development as the school begins to bring on faculty. Opening in the Fall 2015, Excel expects up to 156 students. To teach these students, Excel will hire and train eight teachers over the coming months.

# WSCSC Application Process Update

The flowchart below details the Commission’s 2014 charter school operator petitioner timeline. On July 15, 2014, the Commission announced that it had received four (4) proposals by the 5:00 p.m. PDT deadline. The organizations that submitted proposals are (organization, school name, location):

- Bilingual Charter Academy, Bilingual Charter Academy, Clark County
- Charter Schools of Sunnyside, Sunnyside Charter Academy, Sunnyside
- The Ducere Group, The Village Academy, Pierce County
- Green Dot Public Schools Washington State, Seattle Charter School, South Seattle



RFP Process Flowchart

WSCSC Approved  
Charter Schools







Raymond Navarro, Jr.



Dr. Roberta J. Wilburn

## New Appointments to WSCSC

The Washington State Charter School Commission welcomed Dr. Roberta J. Wilburn and Raymond Navarro, Jr. to the Commission on May 22, 2014. Both new commissioners were appointed by Governor Inslee, and possess deep knowledge and experience in our K-12 education system.

Dr. Wilburn is currently Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Education & Diversity Initiatives at Whitworth University, and has over 30 years of experience in higher education in the subjects of Teacher Training, Counseling, Cultural Awareness, International Studies, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Education, and Family Support Programs. She holds an Ed.D in Early Childhood/Special Education from George Washington University and her Th.D in Christian Counseling from Jacksonville Theological Seminary. Dr. Wilburn has served as Chair of the Division of Education at Lemoyne-Owen College, as well as a professor of special education at the University of Memphis, Howard University, and Delaware State College. Most recently, Dr. Wilburn was awarded the NAACP Service Award by the Spokane Chapter in 2013. “My vision is for equal access to high quality education for all students in Washington regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender or cultural group,” said Dr. Wilburn. “The learning opportunities in our state should be as diverse as the students we

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*“Both Commissioners bring tremendous skills and experience to the Commission as well as perspectives from different parts of Washington State..” - Steve Sundquist, Chair, Washington State Charter School Commission*

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serve; with programs that are intentionally designed utilizing innovative, differentiated, instructional strategies based on sound pedagogical principles.”

Mr. Navarro, Jr. currently serves on the Yakima School District Board of Directors, and is the board’s WIAA Representative. He holds an M.Ed in Guidance and Counseling from Heritage University and his MA in Human and Organization Systems from Fielding Graduate University. Mr. Navarro, Jr. is Director of the Central Washington University Academic Achievement Programs, and has been an active volunteer in the Yakima community for many years, serving as coach and mentor for the Southeast Yakima Saints Grid Kids Football program, and mentor for the YMCA ASPIRE Program. Mr. Navarro, Jr. is a proud Army veteran, serving as a Squad Leader with C Company, 307th Combat Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Mr. Navarro, Jr. has three children who have attended Washington State public schools.

# NACSA Contracts With Cathy Fromme To Assist WSCSC



The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has contracted with a local education expert to assist the Commission in designing its Performance Framework, as well as establishing the Commission’s strategic plan. Cathy Fromme brings 35 years of experience at all levels of the public education system to the Commission. Cathy has worked as a classroom teacher, administrator at the district level,

and Program Supervisor and Program Coordinator for Comprehensive School Reform and Professional Development, School Improvement, Migrant/Bilingual, Title I, and Special Education for the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Cathy as well brings extensive experience evaluating programs, projects and proposals at the local and state levels. At the national level, Cathy has been a peer reviewer and/or Panel Monitor for numerous U.S. Department of Education grant competitions.

At the district level, Cathy coordinated curriculum adoptions, evaluated teachers and administrators, and conducted all aspects of district wide New Teacher Orientation and New Teacher Induction programs. Additionally, Cathy developed a Continuum of Professional Development that differentiates learning and growth opportunities for early career and veteran teachers.

In 2008, Cathy founded TrustWorks, a consulting company based in Lacey, WA. TrustWorks provides group facilitation and professional development in areas of workforce diversity, trust, social capital and change management for social sector and business organizations.

Cathy received her B.S. in Kinesiology/Education from the University of California at Los Angeles , her M.S. in Therapeutic Recreation/Special Education from San Jose State University, and her Ed.D in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington. Cathy has as well participated in a post graduate teaching fellowship in Therapeutic Recreation at the University of Oregon. A Washington resident for over 20 years, Cathy has two grown sons, both of whom attended North Thurston Public Schools in Lacey, WA.



## Evergreen State College Intern Lends Unique Experience To WSCSC

Dan Frank joined the Washington State Charter School Commission as an intern in February 2014. Dan is completing his Master of Public Administration degree at The Evergreen State College, focusing on education and educational reform. He completed his Bachelors Degree at Fairhaven College at Western Washington University majoring in Law, Diversity, and Justice: Social Justice, Inequality, and Societal Change, with a minor in Sociology. Dan’s professional background is in telecommunications, assisting at-risk youth academically and with college preparation, and advocating and supporting youth and adult survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.