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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2015

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Two New Public Charter Schools Approved in Washington

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OLYMPIA, WA – The Washington State Charter School Commission (the Commission) announced today that two applications have been approved to open public charter schools in the State of Washington. Through their mission, vision, and design, the approved schools are dedicated to serving Washington’s most at-risk students, and to provide those students with a high-quality, 21st Century education.

“We have built a rigorous and challenging application process in an effort to select only those schools best designed to meet the needs of Washington’s unique student population. We congratulate Summit Public Schools and Innovation Schools for submitting high-quality applications, both of which have gained our approval,” said Commission Chair Steve Sundquist. “The applications submitted by these organizations show strong educational models, a commitment to engaging the communities they intend to serve, and sound organizational structures.”

The approved schools will open in the Fall of 2016, and will be subject to strict oversight and public accountability, including annual performance reviews to evaluate their success in improving student outcomes. Over the next year, the approved schools will acquire facilities, hire staff, and enroll students.

The charter school applicants that have been approved today include Innovation Schools’ Willow Public School in Walla Walla and Summit Public Schools’ Seattle #2. Willow Public School becomes the first charter school authorized by the Commission to open in Eastern Washington.

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.

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Attachment: Recent Approved Schools August 2015

Operator: Innovation Schools
School Name: Willow Public School
Grades Served: 6-8
School Location: Walla Walla

Summary:

Designed to offer a more personalized experience for middle school students in Walla Walla, Willow Public School will use a [project-based learning](#) model to prepare students to be successful in honors and AP courses in high school, putting students on the path to success in college and career. With its approval, Willow Public School becomes the first charter school authorized by the Commission to open in Eastern Washington.

Operator: Summit Public Schools Washington
School: Summit Public School: Seattle #2
Grades Served: 6-12
School Location: South Seattle

Summary:

Summit Public Schools currently serves approximately 1,600 students from diverse communities in six schools located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Summit’s educational model includes rigorous courses, creative teaching models, high-levels of school involvement and participation and a defined path to success for students. Due diligence of Summit’s schools in California revealed a strong track record of student performance and financial viability. Summit Public Schools has two previously Commission-approved schools set to open in Fall 2015, Sierra in Seattle and Olympus in Tacoma.

Evaluation Process

The Washington State Charter School Commission has built a rigorous and challenging application process in an effort to select only the top public charters schools.

Prior to approving the schools, the Commission conducted a comprehensive evaluation of each application. The evaluations included thorough reviews of planned educational programs, operational plans, financial plans, and, in the case of Summit Public Schools, due-diligence to review their outcomes in California.

In addition to the evaluation process, the Commission hosted a public forum for each applicant, providing an opportunity for the applicant to engage directly with the Commission and for the public to learn more about and to provide input on each application.

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About Washington State's Charter School Commission

Washington State law allows for up to eight charter schools to be established each year – for a total of 40 charters over five years. The Commission has, with these approvals included, authorized a total of [10 schools: six schools to open in 2015; three schools to open in 2016](#); and Washington State's first charter school, First Place Scholars, which opened in Seattle in 2014. All charter schools in the state are free and open to all students with an emphasis on providing high-performing options to those underserved by the current system.

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 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. For more information, visit: <http://charterschool.wa.gov>.

For more questions contact:

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