



WASHINGTON STATE
CHARTER SCHOOL
COMMISSION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014

Respectfully submitted: Cathy

Fromme 9/23/2014



WSCSC Strategic Planning Process Overview

In November 2012, voters approved Initiative 1240, making Washington the 42nd state to have public charter schools. Shortly thereafter, the nine newly appointed Commissioners began the task of establishing the Washington Charter School Commission as an independent state agency to authorize charter schools. In that first year, the volunteer commissioners developed rules, ran the first Charter application process in Washington, and hired an Executive Director in October of 2013.

In April of 2014, at the initiation of the Executive Director, the WSCS began a five month strategic planning process that took place as part of the monthly Commission meetings. The nine Commissioners and staff devoted a few hours of each monthly meeting to strategic planning. The process took place as follows:

- **April 29th:** Overview, Mission, Vision , Values and initial SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis
- **May 22nd:** Revisited mission, vision and values, completed SWOT (External opportunities and threats) converted and prioritized weaknesses and threats
- **June:** Consolidated SWOT analysis information, developed and prioritized strategies
- **July:** Edited and fine-tuned strategies and major milestones and deliverables
- **August:** Obtained and incorporated stakeholder input, final document edits
- **September 23rd:** Plan approval

The strategy development process included a first round prioritization, discussion and addition of other items, then a final prioritization. Utilizing the items from the SWOT analysis and Commissioner input, WSCSC Staff and TrustWorks collectively worked to develop the milestones and deliverables for each strategy, the logic model and timeline, and to obtain stakeholder feedback. See Appendix A for a list of Stakeholders.



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MISSION STATEMENT

To authorize high quality public charter schools and provide effective oversight and transparent accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students.

VALUES

Student-Centered

Cultural and Community Responsiveness

Excellence and Continuous Learning

Accountability/Responsibility

Transparency

Innovation

VISION STATEMENT

Foster innovation and ensure excellence so that every student has access to and thrives in a high quality public school.



WSCSC Strategies

- Strategy 1: Solidify the Washington State Charter School Commission (WSCSC)'s operational structure
- Strategy 2: Build statewide understanding about charter schools in general and more specifically the Commission's work, mission, and approved schools
- Strategy 3: Engage communities of color in charter school awareness and capacity building opportunities
- Strategy 4: Develop a closer connection to public schools
- Strategy 5: Foster positive political climate and support

As the WSCSC successfully engages in the following strategies, we believe that the ultimate outcome of creating and fostering an enabling environment for high quality public charter schools to thrive will be realized.



Strategy 1: Solidify the Washington State Charter School Commission's (WSCSC) operational structure

Summary: The WSCSC is an independent state agency that is statutorily required to authorize and provide effective oversight to high quality public charter schools throughout Washington State. This strategy seeks to identify how the WSCSC will function as a state agency so that it can authorize and provide effective oversight of public charter schools.

Major Milestones/Deliverables:

- **WSCSC as a State Agency**
 - Engage in sound hiring of WSCSC
 - Deliverable: Staff on-boarded for increased number of schools (Summer 2015)
 - Deliverable: Roles and responsibilities between WSCSC, OSPI, SBE and SAO delineated
 - Deliverable: Increased head count/FTE for WSCSC from 2.2FTE to 5.0FTE (Fall 2018)
 - Provide ongoing professional development to build staff and Commissioner capacity
 - Deliverable: Evaluate performance of the Charter School WSCSC and staff
 - Ensure continued access to technology and data systems
 - Deliverable: Functional and accessible public website (October 2014)
 - Deliverable: Monitoring data system developed and implemented
 - Develop clear understanding of biennium budgeting process
 - Deliverable: WSCSC biennium budget request approved
 - Acquire adequate and diverse funding for WSCSC functions
 - Deliverable: Revise charter school law and regulations to ensure optimal conditions for the WSCSC to pursue grants and receive funds (June 2015)
 - Deliverable: Apply for state-level federal Charter School Program grant (2015)
 - Align regulatory and statutory framework and deliverables
 - Deliverable: Identify proposed necessary regulatory changes (Fall 2014)
- **WSCSC Authorizing**
 - Institutionalize the application process within the WSCSC
 - Deliverable: Clear and transparent application process including application scoring rubric
 - Deliverable: Published annual calendar of key events associated with Authorizing
 - Deliverable: Increased capacity within Washington State to review charter school applications
 - Deliverable: Published, on WSCSC website, the application, Frequently Asked Questions and webinar orientations



- **WSCSC Oversight**

- Increase the number of high performing charter school seats each year
 - Deliverable: Define “high-quality” charter school seats based on student achievement data
 - Deliverable: The first charter school in Washington (First Place Scholars) opens and demonstrates success as measured by the Performance Framework (Spring 2015)
- Develop a clear and transparent monitoring and reporting system for charter schools (Spring 2015)
 - Deliverable: Implement Charter Contract and Performance Framework (Academic, Financial, Operational) in Year 1
 - Deliverable: Develop and post a standard yearly calendar for charter school reporting requirements and data submissions.
 - Deliverable: Develop monitoring process and data collection system (December 2014)
 - Deliverable: Finalize renewal decisions and subsequent closure activities and procedures.
- Foster and sustain Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), State Board of Education (SBE), State Auditor’s Office (SAO), Washington Charter Schools Association (WCSA) collaborations and other partnerships.
 - Deliverable: Collaborative efforts demonstrated by ongoing meetings, communications and where applicable, joint charter school policy development
- Develop financial monitoring reports and timelines for years one and two
 - Deliverable: Develop and post a standard yearly calendar for charter school reporting requirements and data submissions.
- Minimize barriers for charter schools
 - Deliverable: Address risk management pool access for charters
 - Deliverable: Explore with SAO and OSPI multiple financial audits concern
 - Deliverable: Ensure a level playing field for charter schools
 - Deliverable: Mitigate potential over-regulation/micromanagement toward a traditional public school model
 - Deliverable: Increase/build capacity in charter school governance as demonstrated by schools meeting standard on the Organizational Framework Governance Section
 - Deliverable: Increase the number of philanthropies and financiers working in Washington
 - Deliverable: Advocate for state support of charter school facilities financing
 - Deliverable: Create a bigger marketplace to bring stronger schools to Washington



Strategy 2: Build statewide understanding about charter schools in general and more specifically the Commission’s work, mission, and approved schools

Summary: Communicating to the public on the work of the WSCSC and the results of public charter schools is critical for the public to increase its understanding and support of public charter schools.

Major Milestones/Deliverables:

- Develop and implement a clear communication plan about charter schools in WA
 - Deliverable: Establish and develop communications capacity within the Commission
 - Deliverable: Improve processes to allow for clearer, more direct lines of communication between WSCSC and schools.
 - Deliverable: Increased level of public understanding and acceptance of charter schools; increased number of high-quality applicants; and increased number of charter school seats
- Develop a WSCSC website
 - Deliverable: WSCSC website populated with up-to-date relevant, and easily accessible information such as Charter school information page, application timelines, school openings, monitoring and reporting requirements and other communication documents about Charter Schools in Washington (Spring 2015 and ongoing)
- Proactively educate key stakeholders (i.e. communities served by charter schools, partner state agencies, legislative and policy staff, and the media) about charter schools
 - Deliverable: WSCSC regularly presents re: public charter schools in WA, outcomes, successes and opportunities for improvement at relevant stakeholder conferences and meetings (i.e. WCSA, WERA, WSSDA, AWSP, National Charter Conference, etc.), and advocates/educates districts, ESDs, state agencies and community partners.
- Partner with existing and emerging pro-charter organizations and leaders to increase capacity to support Washington charter schools
 - Deliverable: Demonstrated evidence of proactive relationship building, increased partners, and informed elected officials
 - Deliverable: Participate in national dialogue about authorizer oversight best practices.



Strategy 3: Engage communities of color in charter school awareness and capacity building opportunities

Summary: The WSCSC values being responsive to the communities and cultures that can be positively impacted by high quality charter schools; therefore, dedicating time and resources to developing outreach strategies to communities of color is a critical component to the success of the WSCSC and public charter schools.

Major Milestones/ Deliverables:

- Seek out and build strong relationships with state and local organizations that represent and/or support communities of color
 - Deliverable: Maintain a list serve of state and local community and civic organizations that provide outreach and engagement to communities of color.
 - Deliverable: Regularly communicate and engage these organizations in dialogue re: charter school opportunities, how the WSCSC authorizes, and charter school areas of potential concern
 - Deliverable: Increased number of high-quality applications from members representing communities of color within Washington
- Include communities of color in a partnership at all levels of charter school development and authorization.
 - Deliverable: Maintain an ongoing presence with communities of color as demonstrated by increased relationship building and participation in community activities and events.
- Provide capacity-building opportunities both in conjunction with and on behalf of communities of color to provide a continuing growth in understanding charter schools and improved educational opportunities for students.
 - Deliverable: Research and explore options for incorporating community engagement practices (e.g. Chicago Neighborhood Advisory Council, Tennessee community engagement).
 - Deliverable: Use tools for communicating that are inclusive and acceptable (i.e. communications, social media technology and how to make this technology an accessible tool for different populations). Translate information when appropriate and necessary.



Strategy 4: Foster the development of connections between public charter schools and traditional public schools and school districts

Summary: The WSCSC believes that for all students in Washington State to benefit from the best, promising and innovative practices in traditional and charter public schools, strong connections between charter and traditional public schools must exist.

Major Milestones/Deliverables:

- Foster the development of respectful and dialogue-driven relationships between the WSCSC, its staff and school boards of the districts that charter schools are sited within.
 - Deliverable: Develop strong lines of communication between WSCSC staff and district staff (ongoing)
 - Deliverable: Deepen WSCSC understanding of the hopes and fears districts have concerning public charter schools operating within their boundaries
- Collaborate with OSPI and SBE to develop guidance to districts concerning legal obligations associated with public charter schools sited within their boundaries (surplus buildings, levies, etc.)
 - Deliverable: Publish on WSCSC, OSPI, and SBE websites Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) concerning district legal obligations associated with public charter schools sited within their boundaries
 - Deliverable: Publish on WSCSC website FAQ concerning how districts can best collaborate and develop synergistic relationships with public charter schools
- Develop a strong understanding of Charter District Compacts and develop a plan for Washington Charter/District collaborative relationships.
 - Deliverable: Provide information to districts concerning examples from Washington State and the nation of high functioning mutually beneficial relationships between districts and public charter schools. This will focus on districts that are not authorizers of public charter schools.
 - Deliverable: Develop and implement a plan for increased Washington Charter/District relationships.
 - Deliverable: Publish on WSCSC website innovative practices that public charter schools are engaging in.



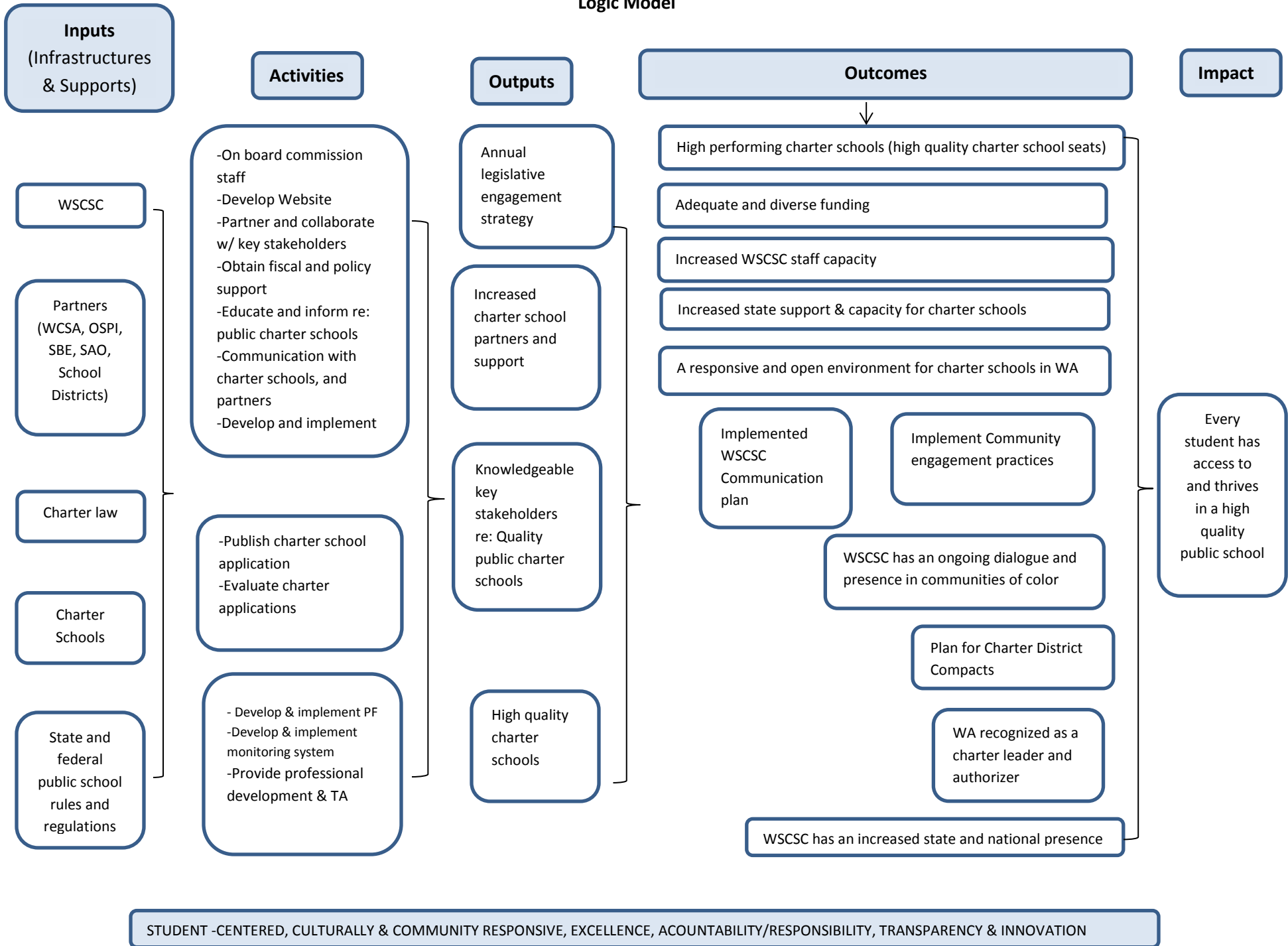
Strategy 5: Foster positive political climate and support

Summary: The WSCSC recognizes that political support for public charter schools is critical to the success of public charter schools. While Initiative 1240 passed in the fall of 2012, it did so by a narrow margin. Washington's public charter school law, while nationally recognized as strong, is open for modification that can either strengthen or weaken it. Therefore, it is a focus of the WSCSC to foster political support of and a positive political climate for public charter schools in Washington State.

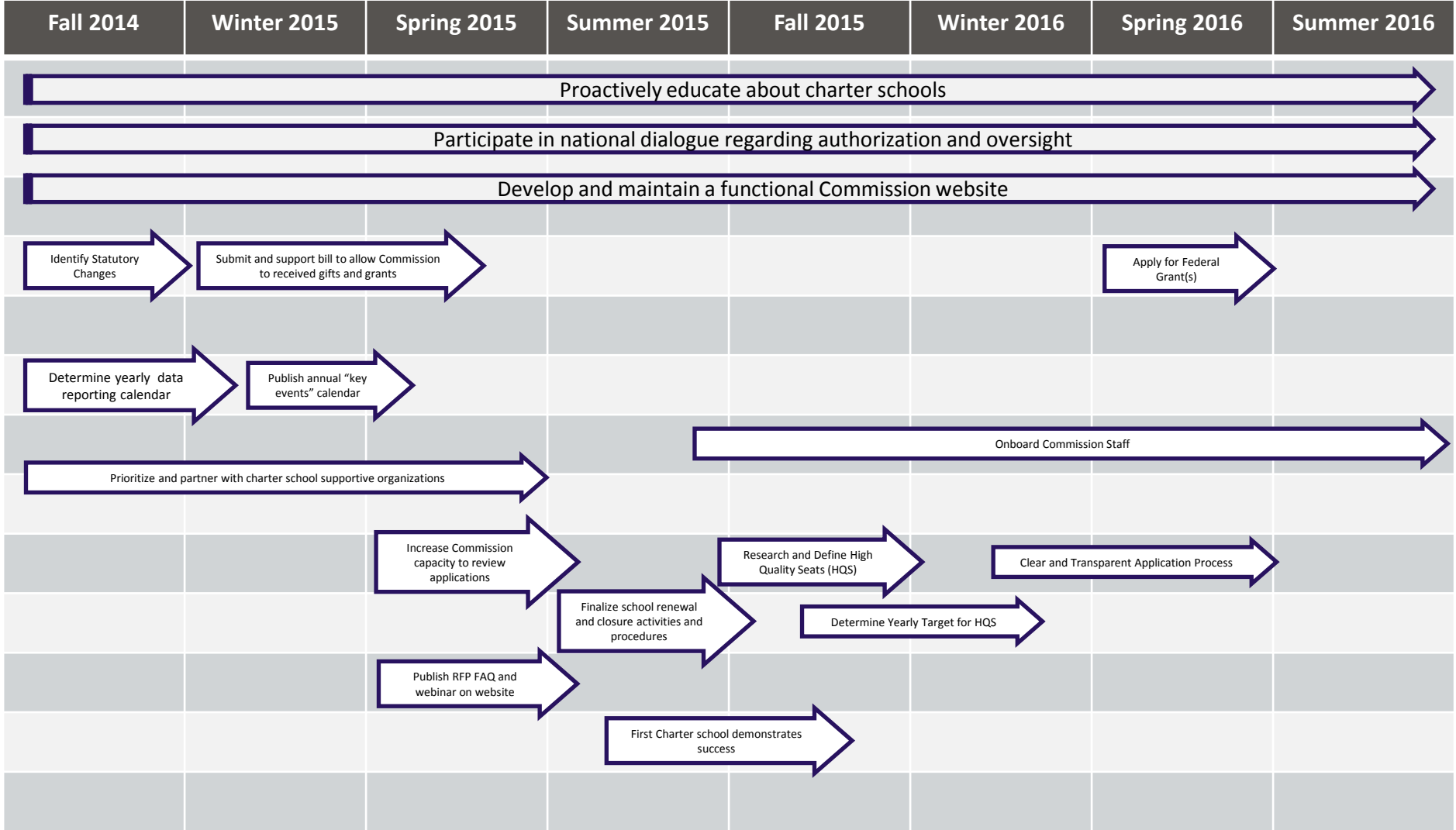
Major Milestones/Deliverables:

- Develop clear messages to communicate to legislators and their staff concerning the WSCSC and public charter schools in Washington State.
 - Deliverable: Annual legislative engagement strategy
 - Deliverable: A legislature that is educated and informed about charter schools
- Educate legislative staff who can impact issues important to the WSCSC and public charter schools (i.e. Senate and House Education and Finance Committees, Caucus, etc.)
 - Deliverable: A legislature that is educated and informed about charter schools
 - Deliverable: Legislative support of public charter schools
- Foster relationships with education reform organizations and entities that support public charter schools in order to positively influence legislative policies impacting public charter schools
 - Deliverable: Legislative support of public charter schools

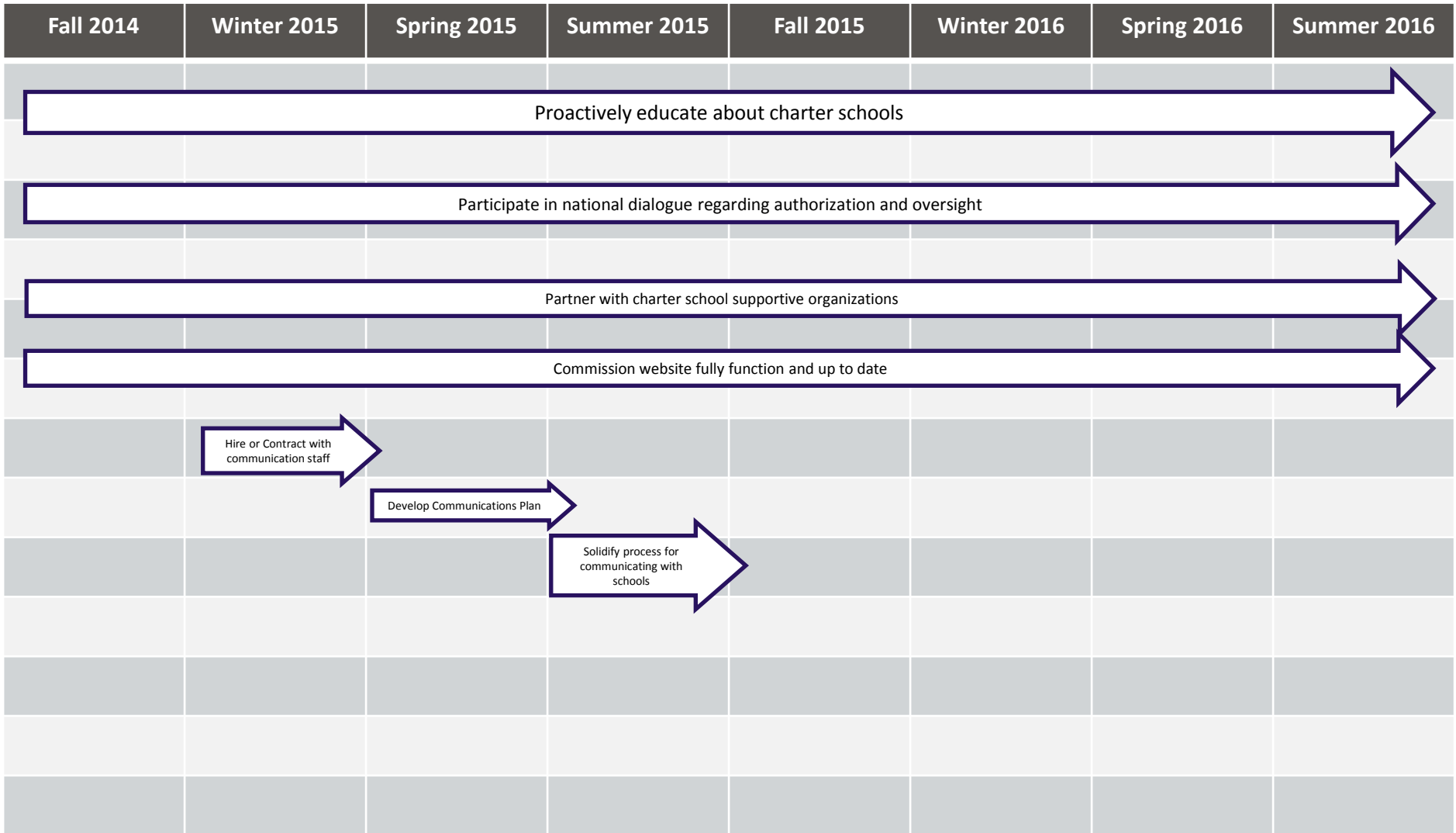
Washington State Charter School Commission Logic Model



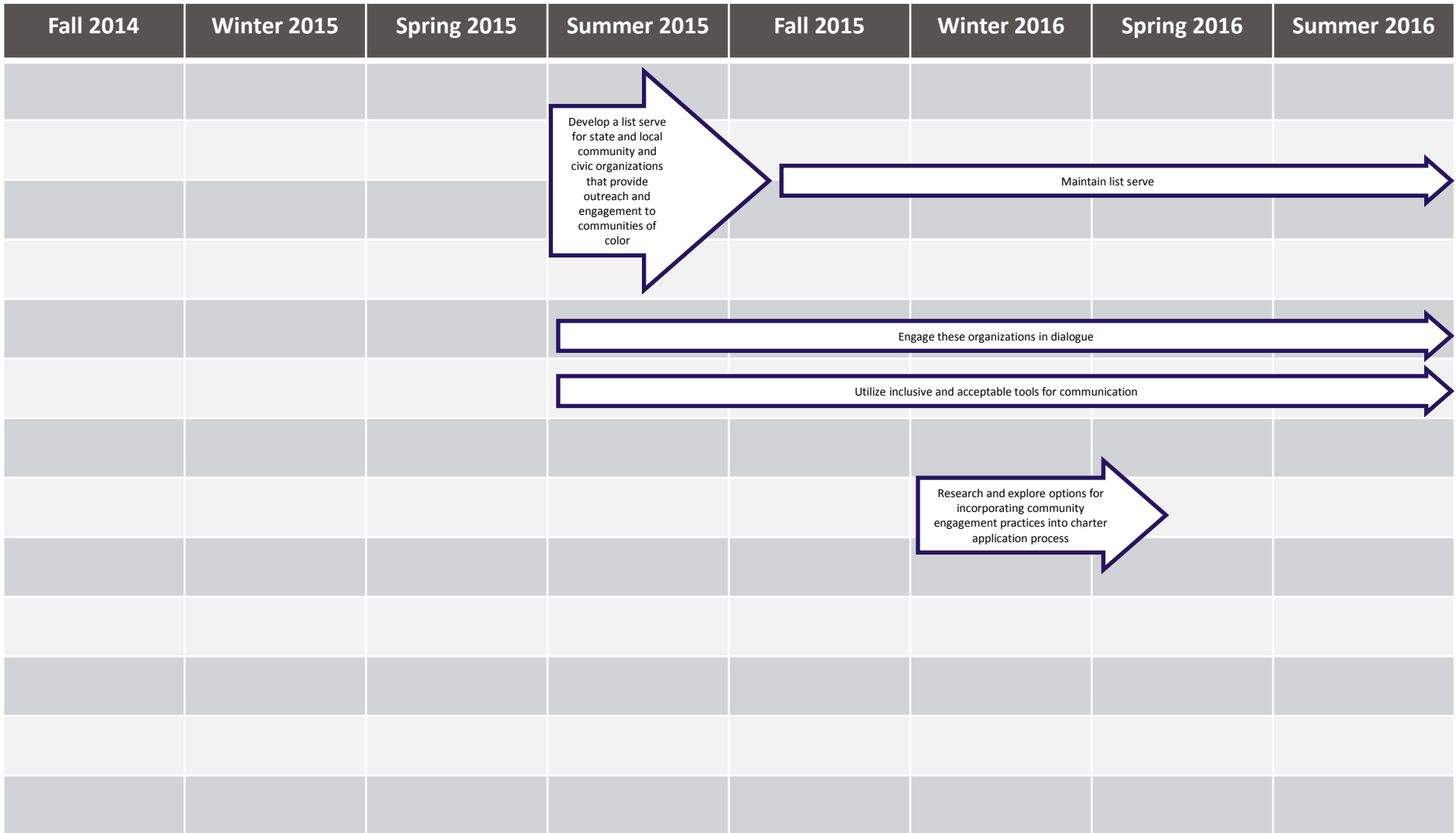
Operationalize the Commission Fall 2014-Summer 2016



Develop a Communications Plan Fall 2014-Summer 2016



Outreach to Communities of Color Fall 2014-Summer 2016



Foster Connections to Public Schools Fall 2014-Summer 2016

Fall 2014	Winter 2015	Spring 2015	Summer 2015	Fall 2015	Winter 2016	Spring 2016	Summer 2016
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Proactively educate about charter schools

Develop strong lines of communication between district and Commission staff

Deepen Commission understanding of district hopes and fears concerning charter schools

Publish district legal obligations to charter schools sited within their boundaries on Commission, OSPI and SBE websites

Publish how district can best collaborate and develop relationships with charter schools on Commission, OSPI and SBE websites



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Strategic Plan feedback was requested from the following Stakeholders

Washington Charter Schools	Excel Public Charter School, Kent First Place Scholars Charter School, Highline Green Dot Public Schools, Tacoma PRIDE Prep Charter School, Spokane Rainier Prep, South Seattle SOAR Academy, Tacoma Summit Public Schools,-Olympus, Tacoma Summit Public Schools- Sierra, South Seattle
Washington Charter School Association	Marta Reyes-Newberry, Mitch Price, Lisa MacFarlane - Board
State Board of Education (SBE)	Ben Rarick, Jack Archer,
OSPI	Superintendent Dorn, Dierk Meierbachtol,
Educational Service Districts (ESDs)	Dana Anderson ESD 113 John Welch PSESD
District Superintendents And/or designee	Kent: Edward Lee Vargas Highline: Susan Enfield Seattle: Larry Nyland, Charles Wright and Clover Codd Tacoma: Carla Santorno Spokane: Shelley Redinger
Center for Reinventing Public Education (CRPE)	Sarah Yatsko and Robin Lake
Community Stakeholders	Jana Carlisle (Partnership for Learning)
WA Student Achievement Council	Gene Sharratt
League of Education Voters (LEV)	Chris Korsmo
Gates Foundation	Telca Karen Porras
Other Charter Authorizers	Jeannette Vaughn
Community at large	Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee: Co-Chair Frieda Takamura