



WASHINGTON STATE
Charter School Commission
STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

2017 NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR: IMPACT : SEATTLE

June 16, 2017

Report Submitted By

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This document was adapted in large part from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) *Charter School Request for Proposals Recommendation Report*. The Commission wishes to express its thanks to NACSA for their willingness to share both the document and the background information that led to its adaptation in Washington.

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Executive Director:

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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) was created in 2013, after the approval of Initiative 1240 and subsequent passage of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6194, to serve as a statewide charter school authorizer. The eleven-member Commission is tasked with running a process to approve new charter schools, and effectively monitoring the schools it authorizes through ongoing oversight.

Mission

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

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

The Commission is committed to being culturally responsive. To that end, the Commission has adopted cultural competence definitions to support this commitment.

Cultural Inclusion

Inclusion is widely thought of as a practice of ensuring that people in organizations feel they belong, are engaged and are connected through their work to the goals and objectives of the organization. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition: "Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work." Inclusion is a shift in organization culture. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes each feel valued and essential to the success of the organization.

Individuals function at full capacity, feel more valued and are included in the organization's mission. This culture shift creates higher-performing organizations where motivation and morale soar. ¹

Cultural Responsive Education Systems

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the beliefs that all culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavors when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development, and they are provided access to high quality teachers, programs, and resources. ²

Cultural Competency

Cultural competence provides a set of skills that professionals need in order to improve practice to serve all students and communicate effectively with their families. These skills enable the educator to build on the cultural and language qualities that young people bring to the classroom rather than viewing those qualities as deficits.

Cultural competence allows educators to ask questions about their practice in order to successfully teach students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Developing skills in cultural competence is like learning a language, a sport or an instrument.

The learner must learn, relearn, continuously practice, and develop in an environment of constant change. Cultures and individuals are dynamic – they constantly adapt and evolve.

Cultural competence is:

- Knowing the community where the school is located
- Understanding all people have a unique world view
- Using curriculum and implementing an educational program that is respectful of and relevant to the cultures represented in its student body
- Being alert to the ways that culture affects who we are
- Places the focus of responsibility on the professional and the institution

¹ Puget Sound Educational Service District. (2014). Racial Equity Policy. (p. 7) Seattle, WA: Blanford, S.

² Leadscape, National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (2010) Culturally Responsive Coaching for Inclusive Schools. (p. 4) Tempe, AZ: Mulligan, E. M., Kozleski, E. M.

- The examination of systems, structures, policies and practices for their impact on all students and families viewing those systems as deficits.³

Focus on Quality

The New School Application solicitation and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is designed to ensure that charter school operators possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate high levels of expertise and capacity in the areas of education, charter school finance, administration, and management, as well as high expectations for excellence in professional standards and student achievement.

Autonomy and Accountability

Charter schools have broad autonomy, but not without strong accountability. Charter schools will be accountable to the Commission for meeting academic, financial, and organizational performance standards. The three areas of performance covered by the evaluation policy correspond directly with the three components of a strong charter school application and the three key areas of responsibility outlined in charter contracts.

Accountability

Evaluation of charter school performance is guided by three fundamental questions:

- Is the educational program a success?
- Is the school financially viable?
- Is the organization effective and well-run?

The answers to each of these three questions are essential to a comprehensive evaluation of charter school performance.

Charter schools are evaluated annually against standards in the following categories:

Academic Performance – Charter schools are required to make demonstrable improvements in student performance over the term of the charter. Schools are required to administer all state standardized tests and to adhere to academic standards.

Financial Performance – Schools must demonstrate the proper use of public funds, as evidenced by annual balanced budgets, sound audit reports, and conforming to generally accepted accounting practices.

Organizational Performance – A nonprofit corporation holds the charter school contract and is responsible for complying with both the terms in the contract and all applicable laws. This charter school board of directors is a public body and is required to adhere to public meeting and public records laws.

Approved charter schools will be granted a five-year charter. Schools unable to demonstrate academic progress or unable to comply with legal/ contractual or financial requirements may face sanctions, non-renewal, or charter revocation.

Autonomy

In exchange for rigorous accountability, charter school operators experience substantially greater authority to make decisions related to the following:

- Personnel
- School management and operations
- Finances
- Curriculum
- School day and calendar
- Education Service Provider (ESP) agreements

Evaluation Process

Commission staff manage the application evaluation process and evaluation teams that include national and local experience and expertise on the operation of successful charter schools. The Commission staff leads these teams throughout the evaluation process to produce a merit-based recommendation regarding whether to approve or deny each proposal. This report from the evaluation team is the culmination of three stages of review:

Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation team conducted individual and group assessments of the merits of the proposal based on the complete submission. In the case of experienced operators, the Commission and NACSA supplemented the evaluation team’s work with due diligence to verify claims made in the proposals.

Capacity Interview

After reviewing the application and discussing the findings of their individual reviews, the evaluation team conducted an in-person assessment of the applicant team’s capacity.

³ Center for Improvement of Student Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CISL/EliminatingtheGaps/CulturalCompetence/default.aspx>

Evaluation Team Ratings

The evaluation team members each produced independent, ratings and comments regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or denial.

Commission staff collated the team ratings into an overall recommendation report to approve or deny each application based on its merits as outlined in the rubric. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the members of the Commission.

Recommendation Report Contents

This recommendation report includes the following:

Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

Recommendation

An overall rating regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

Evaluation

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant team to execute the plan as presented:

Educational Program Design and Capacity

- Program overview
- Curriculum and instructional design
- Student performance standards
- High School graduation requirements (if applicable)
- School calendar and schedule
- School culture
- Supplemental programming
- Special populations and at-risk students
- Student recruitment and enrollment
- Discipline policy and plan
- Family and community involvement
- Educational program capacity.

Operations Plan and Capacity

- Legal status and governing documents
- Organization structure and relationships
- Governing board
- Advisory bodies
- Grievance/complaint process
- District partnerships
- Education service providers (ESP) and other partnerships
- Staffing plans, hiring, management, and evaluation

- Professional development
- Performance framework
- Facilities
- Start-up and ongoing operations
- Operations

Financial Plan and Capacity

- Financial plan
 - Budgets
 - Cash flow projections
 - Related assumptions
 - Financial protocols
 - Fundraising plan
- Financial management capacity

Existing Operators (if applicable)

- Track record of academic success
- Organizational soundness
- Plans for network growth

Rating Characteristics

Evaluation teams assess each application against the published evaluation rubric. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

Exceeds

The response surpasses all key performance expectations/goals found under meets expectations. It exhibits high overall performance in all categories and routinely goes beyond what is expected and is fully aligned with the strategic mission of the Commission.

Meets

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

Partially Meets

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail or specificity and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

Does Not Meet

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas or the response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Applicant Name

Impact Public Schools

Proposed School Name

Impact: Seattle

Mission

The mission of Impact: Seattle is to prepare a diverse student population to succeed in college and impact communities as the next generation of equity-driven, innovative leaders.

Board Members

Sara Morris

TBD

Tatiana Epanchin

TBD

Tony Byrd

Secretary

Micaela Razo

TBD

Proposed School Leader

Jen Davis Wickens

Proposed Location

210 S Hudson St, Seattle, WA 98134

Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Minimum Enrollment	Maximum Enrollment	Grades Served
2018/19	196	196	K-2
2019/20	280	280	K-3
2020/21	336	336	K-4
2021/22	336	336	K-5
2022/23	336	336	K-5
At Capacity (2021/2022)	336	336	K-5

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Recommendation

Impact: Seattle

APPROVE

Summary Analysis

Impact: Seattle will serve a maximum of 336 K-5 students in the Seattle/Tukwila region. Impact: Seattle proposes an educational program that offers school based mentor groups, personalized learning pathways, and project based learning.

Impact: Seattle describes and demonstrates a charter school that seeks to understand its students, their families, and their cultural and educational values in order to provide a curriculum, school experience, and environment that fosters student development and later life success. Impact: Seattle details a comprehensive outreach strategy that will consider the languages, locations, and targeted enrollment populations.

Impact Public Schools (IPS) proposes that Impact: Seattle would be the first charter school operated by IPS. IPS's 10-year growth plan includes eight charter schools located throughout Washington, (the Puget Sound and Central/Eastern Washington regions). IPS proposes to eventually serve close to 7,000 students, providing IPS with the economies of scale to better support its schools.

Overall, Impact: Seattle submitted a thorough and viable application that meets the Educational Program, Operational and Financial Plan and Capacity requirements of the application.

Summary of Section Ratings

Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weaknesses in others.

Therefore, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must maintain a "Meets" rating in all areas.

Executive Summary	Educational Program Design and Capacity
MEETS	MEETS
Operations Plan and Capacity	Financial Plan and Capacity
MEETS	MEETS
Existing Operators	
NOT APPLICABLE	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Impact: Seattle

Rating

MEETS

Executive Summary: Summary

Impact: Seattle describes an approach to establishing and operating a school that reflects its mission and vision and builds *continuing* community and family engagement while also creating a culture of professional development and intellectual curiosity. The outreach, engagement, and academic plan are designed to create a supportive environment for students and families.

Impact: Seattle’s proposed Education Program Terms, research-based curriculum design, culturally responsive instructional strategies and program design elements, align to the school’s mission and vision. Based on the demonstrated actionable strategies and data driven interventions, there is a strong likelihood of student academic success. The structures, processes and routines for establishing and sustaining school culture, and the leadership capacity are exemplar and support a high likelihood of success for the proposed school.

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated a strong and sophisticated understanding of the needs of the student population it will serve as evidenced by its curriculum, instructional strategies, mentor program and proposed school culture.

Executive Summary: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The applicant has articulated a strong mission and vision statement that focuses on serving a diverse student population, at risk students, and aligns with the school's goals, location and community engagement.▪ The applicant has comprehensively demonstrated community outreach, assessed need and community demand for the school with academic (i.e. achievement gap, students of color under-enrolled in college-bound programs, disproportionate discipline data) and community input data, via the Community Design Team meetings, photos from meetings, sign in sheets, signed petitions, post-it projects and a wide range of letters of support for the school.	

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

Impact: Seattle

Rating

MEETS

Educational Program Design and Capacity: Summary

Impact: Seattle has completely and articulately provided the following three measurable Educational Program Terms demonstrating the essential design elements of the school model:

1. School based mentor groups
2. Personalized Learning pathways for every student
3. Project Based Learning

The proposed design elements articulate the alignment between the mission, vision, and values of the proposed school. Additionally, Impact: Seattle provides a strong research and experiential base (Summit Schools) supporting the strong likelihood that the proposed educational program will be rigorous, engaging, and effective for the targeted student population. The addition of two assessment indicators (Deeper Learning Rubric & Habits of Leadership Framework) go beyond required curriculum requirements and address the whole-child.

The school's instructional methods include Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) instruction, multi-age classrooms, departmentalized teachers and small-group instruction (differentiated). Impact: Seattle provides a detailed description of GLAD, its effectiveness with English Language Learner (ELL) students, and as a culturally responsive instructional method. Culturally responsive strategies that involve families, community-specific student projects. Impact: Seattle consistently demonstrated data-driven decision-making and employment of validated assessments to gauge student progress, as evidenced in its descriptions of methods, approaches and instruments (i.e. University of Chicago STEP, Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)) which are evidence and research based, and its ongoing utilization of baseline, formative, and summative assessments.

Impact: Seattle has coherently aligned its curricular design elements with their Mission, Vision, and Values. Additionally, by incorporating students' background and culture into their personalized learning program, Impact: Seattle seeks to cultivate a culture of respect, understanding, and curiosity of one another's experience. This type of focus has the potential to improve student engagement and fuel learning. Building community within and around the students is reflected in the school's structure and operations on a deep level that considers the inclusion of parents, the development of the teaching teams, and a bridge to the larger community through the use of the Expeditions activities.

Impact: Seattle provides multiple schedule options for parent meetings, orientations, and involvement, in consideration of the variety of commitments of the parent body.

In addition to the Education Program terms, Impact: Seattle provides 10 design elements that are culturally responsive and in strong alignment with the school's mission and vision.

Impact: Seattle’s knowledge of and understanding of research-based, culturally responsive and Inclusive instructional strategies are clearly demonstrated by the listing of a variety of instructional methods, descriptions and interventions (Tables pg. 18-19 and 21-22, 25).

Impact: Seattle provides a comprehensive and complete overview of the planned curriculum, inclusive of each subject area, alignment to state standards, with specific and measurable outcomes by grade bands, and a comprehensive and strong sample course scope and sequence for K-1 Science (Attachment 3).

Educational Program Design and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor/Advisory Groups are mechanisms that many charter schools are using successfully to meet the social emotional needs of at-risk students, the population of students, which this school proposes to serve. (pg. 12) ▪ The incorporation of social/emotional and character development standards (i.e. Habits of Leadership Framework and the Deeper Learning Rubric) from two other states recognizes the importance of this area of development for current and future success in school, work, and personal life. ▪ Incorporating a daily 100-minute Project Based Learning (PBL) block enables sufficient time for students to deeply explore topics and benefit from the problem-solving and honing of critical thinking that can come from deep exploration of a topic. (pg. 15) ▪ Utilizing a student’s cultural and community background is educationally sound, supports self-esteem, and familiarizes the school and community members and organizations to each other. Incorporating and learning about students’ backgrounds and cultures, with students as both the learner and the teacher, cultivates respect and understanding of one’s own and of others’ culture and background. This inquiry into one another furthers a supportive environmental bedrock for learning. ▪ The applicant provided a complete annual academic calendar for the school. This calendar exceeds the required 180 days of instruction (pg. 4) per Washington state minimum instructional requirements as stated in RCW 28A.150.220(2). The annual calendar aligns well with the proposed educational program terms, mission, vision, and culturally responsive strategies as demonstrated by the scheduling of Impact Institute, Expeditions, Celebrations of Learning, family meetings and Rites of Passage. ▪ The proposed school schedule has a strong likelihood for optimal student learning, as it has solid instructional time, numerous opportunities for extra student support, reflection, and one on one mentor meetings. ▪ The identified challenges of serving a linguistically diverse population will be supported with strategies to meet the needs of the students and community members with a comprehensive use of baseline, formative, and summative assessments, ELL-specific language, science, and social studies strategies and programs (GLAD) with proven results. ▪ The IPS Service Model Overview provides particularly compelling elements of Level 1 of the RTI program. This is in part evidenced with the 1:1 check-in with mentor at least once per week; 1:1 	

writing conference at least once per week; and 30+ days for PD, collaboration and planning and the personalized home-school 504-communication plan. (pg. 44)

- The applicant's strong demonstration of its comprehensive outreach to parents/guardians and community members' involvement in developing the proposed school, is evidenced by the Community Design Meetings, signed petitions in support of Impact Seattle, numerous letters of support for the school and an extensive listing of community partner outreach and meetings since December. Additionally, community-based organizational partnerships with the school have been established with: Community and Parents for Public Schools of Seattle, Stand University for Parents (Stand up) and League for Education Vote, King County Library, and the Drills and Skills Program (pg. 61).
- The applicant proposes to engage parents/guardians in the life of the school by conducting 6-8 parent workshops throughout the year. Of positive note is the intention in "building a dedicated, visible, and accessible parent space to meet with other parents and volunteers".
- Home visits, translation services, Family Nights, Parent Patrol, participation in classroom and school activities are a few of the culturally inclusive and family support/engagement/volunteer practices for building family-school partnerships to strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement.

OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

Rating

MEETS

Impact: Seattle

Operations Plan and Capacity: Summary

The IPS CEO and Educational Model Design Consultant have significant experience supporting and/or working at charter schools and charter management organizations. Additionally, the CEO has extensive experience with diverse communities, outreach, and engagement.

Impact: Seattle has numerous strengths. Impact: Seattle will be the tenth school the IPS CEO, Ms. Wickens, has co-designed and launched throughout her career and, upon Commission authorization, will be the fourth public charter school she has opened in Washington. Two of the four proposed board members have significant expertise in education. The school has already garnered significant philanthropic support and has access to other significant resources such as a rubric for teaching skills and a technology infrastructure via partnership with Summit Public Schools. Impact: Seattle describes a comprehensive professional development program that includes over 40 days of professional development per year and topic coverage such as restorative justice, equity, diversity and inclusiveness.

Impact: Seattle has identified a facility and has begun contract negotiations for purchase of that facility.

Impact: Seattle describes an ambitious plan to open IPS schools serving all grade levels in the Puget Sound region and in Central and Eastern Washington.

Operations Program Design and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of positive note is the focus on staff <i>continual</i> learning. This is ensured through the use of an Individual Learning Plan that will be regularly tracked (pg. 86). Career path development and variety in teacher career path allows for continued interest in the profession and investment in the school. This career trajectory supports the school’s strategy for retaining high-performing teachers and is inclusive of a Career Matrix Survey, teacher induction, positive working conditions, meaningful evaluation and coaching and annual satisfaction surveys. The school’s proposed procedures for hiring are exemplar in that they include an extended day of simulations and parent and student involvement in teacher hire, guided by an IPS hiring rubric. This is also evidenced by the two wave hiring process: certificated staff by April 2018 and non-certificated by May 2018, and the proposed hiring plan which exceeds state rules and regulations regarding staff qualifications and accountability, and demonstrates culturally inclusive hiring practices. IPS leaders and educators agreed on a continuum of teaching skills and <i>then</i> selected and modified Teacher/Principal Evaluation tools that can also serve as a career path development tool. 	

- IPS does not specifically commit to what services it will offer the school though it alludes to back office/financial and operational support, school leadership coaching, professional development, and technology. (pg. 63 and Attachment 14).
- The applicant has completely provided all required legal documents, along with a strong description of the board selection process, a demonstrated understanding of the roles, responsibilities and commitment required to be a board member, a plan for board training and development inclusive of a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, participation requirements, and coverage of the development of cultural competence (pg. 76).
- There is a concern that per the application the board could function with a minimum of two members. It is unclear how the board could function well with two or even three members- especially as IPS implements its long-term growth plan and adds more schools.
- Also of concern are the unlimited board terms.

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Impact: Seattle

Rating

MEETS

Financial Plan and Capacity: Summary

Impact: Seattle provides a thorough budget and budget narrative, and projects a strong understanding of school finance and financial needs. The budget narrative considers various scenarios in which unexpected expenditures arise, and provides viable contingency for those eventualities. It also includes a cash flow projection for the year. The financial policies are developed with solvency and risk-management in mind, and include healthy financial practices and adherence to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) accounting principles. The school’s plans for financial transparency are supported by regular opportunities for finances to be presented in Board or other public meetings.

The CEO has extensive experience in financial management and in fundraising. The description of the multi-event fundraising plan is inclusive of events that could become a meaningful tradition. The applicant meets expectations in this category.

Financial Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school principal has ownership over school-site budget (pg. 104) ▪ The Board finance committee reviews a sample of invoices to check for internal control violations (pg. 104) ▪ The Table on pg. 108 clearly shows breakout of board and staff roles and responsibilities ▪ There are solidified commitments from philanthropic funders evidenced in the application as well as a viable fundraising plan inclusive of a variety of ongoing fundraising methods and events as exemplified by ongoing smaller donations. ▪ The application does not detail the financial services that IPS will provide to Impact: Seattle (pg. 107). The exact services will depend on a service contract to be negotiated between the school and CMO. ▪ There are no funds provided for any non-instructional staff – security, office staff, etc. It would be very difficult to run a high quality school without those personnel. (Attachment 27 – pg. 8) <p>Financial plan workbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benchmark assumptions are based on a survey of the sector. ▪ The Contingency Budget plan is well-reasoned and articulated in the budget narrative. 	

EXISTING OPERATORS

Rating

Impact: Seattle

NOT APPLICABLE

Existing Operators: Summary

Not applicable, IPS is a new non-profit.

Existing Operators: Analysis	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	NOT APPLICABLE
Not applicable, IPS is a new non-profit.	

EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Cathy Fromme, Team Lead

New School Application Director

Washington State Charter School Commission

Dr. Cathy Fromme began her tenure with the Commission in March of 2014, with the initial development efforts on the Performance Frameworks, oversight and authorization processes and the Commission's first Strategic Plan. She served as the Commission Deputy Director and is currently the New School Application Director. Cathy began her journey as an educator 35 years ago as a first grade teacher in California, and has since held district, regional and state department positions in Washington and California. Prior to staffing the Commission, Cathy developed Washington's statewide Special Education Mediation System and chaired several statewide education committees as an OSPI Program Supervisor. As the Diversity Manager for the Washington Department of Natural Resources, she facilitated positive/inclusive working relationships and diversity in the workplace. Cathy is a long-standing Peer Reviewer for federally funded programs. She has consulted, written and presented extensively in the areas of workforce diversity, trust, social capital/relationship building and transition and the change process. Cathy holds a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology/Education from UCLA, a Master of Science in Therapeutic Recreation/Special Education from San Jose State University, and doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Washington.

Adam Aberman, Evaluator

Adam is the CEO and Founder of The Learning Collective www.thelearningcollective.com with 20 years' experience in education. Over the past 14 years, Adam has reviewed over 100 proposals for charter schools in 7 states: California, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York and Washington. Adam has led teams a team of reviewers on over 50 of those charter school applications, submitting the finalized application reviewers to boards of education. Adam has also evaluated over 150 current, K-12 charter schools nationally - in California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Washington, and Washington DC - including lead for charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is submitted to authorizers. Previously, Adam was the Director of Global Digital Strategy for Ashoka's Youth Venture, which helps teams of youth internationally launch socially responsible businesses and organizations. Prior to Ashoka, Adam was the Executive Director and Founder (and currently Board Member Emeritus) of icouldbe.org, the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 25,000 teens and e-mentors nationwide. Before establishing icouldbe.org, Adam was a Regional Coordinator for the New York City Department of Education. Adam began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. Adam received a B.A. from Vassar College and a Master in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A frequent speaker at conferences, Adam has also won numerous awards including Cause Marketing Silver Halo Award for Best Use of Social Media (2009) and International Computerworld Magazine Honors Finalist Award (2002).

Laura Crandall, Evaluator

Laura Crandall, of Crandall Strategy & Research, has twelve years of experience in education management. She was Head of School in a preschool through grade eight independent school for six years. There, she lead a faculty of thirty-five, managing a \$2.4 million budget, and greeting over 200 students daily. Laura also understands crisis management, having served as Interim Head of School in 2016 for an independent school that suffered the sudden loss of their School Director.

As the Business Manager of an independent school, Laura was responsible for facilities management, policy and procedure development, financial management and controls, and admissions processes. She has a deep understanding of what is essential to providing an educational environment in which students will thrive. Laura holds an MPA with a focus in local government, and her area of expertise is organizational development. She is practiced in meeting facilitation and consensus decision-making, and has led Lean process improvement projects.

Paula Kitzke, Staff

New School Application Director

Washington State Charter School Commission

Paula joined the Commission on September 9, 2016. She began her career in education as a teacher in Colorado where she assumed various leadership roles in the districts. Paula accepted a teaching position at the University of Colorado – Denver where she worked to train teachers and administrators to support personnel working with students with disabilities. She also held a joint appointment at the University of Idaho between the College of Education and College of Life Sciences to support teacher evaluation and STEM resources for rural school districts. Paula brings extensive experience supporting special education in charter schools at the state level. She has worked as a Program Specialist with a focus on policy and implementation for charter schools in Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, and most recently four years in North Carolina. Paula’s focus remains on supporting administrators in an educational system that meets the needs of students who are at risk and creatively utilizing all resources available so that every student will learn. She believes all students need a community in which they feel safe and are able to contribute within their environment. Paula holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from the University of Wisconsin and a Master of Arts from the University of Colorado. She remains a Badger and Green Bay Packer fan.

Nadja Michel-Herf, Staff

New School Application Director

Washington State Charter School Commission

Nadja joined the Commission as Director of School Quality & Accountability on December 12, 2016. Prior to working at the Commission, Nadja served as the Assistant Director for Financial Performance & Strategy at the Indianapolis Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation. In that role, in which the Mayor’s Office serves as charter authorizer, she managed the public charter application, replication, and renewal processes, culminating in approval of five new, three replicated, and four renewed schools, estimated to serve over 5,000 new students. She also oversaw financial performance oversight for all 39 Mayor Sponsored Charter Schools, including formative and summative monitoring and assessment and internal performance management. Nadja began her career in public education service at District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). At DCPS, she managed the annual central office budget process, guiding programs to re-direct funds from lower impact to higher impact initiatives, in line with the 5-Year District strategic plan. Nadja is passionate about equity and believes that all students, regardless of background or circumstances, deserve access to a quality public education. Nadja graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from New York University. She earned her Master of Arts from Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs where she was a Syracuse University Graduate Scholar and Maxwell Dean’s Professional Scholar.