

For Immediate Release:

September 13, 2017

Contact:

Alyce McNeil

Alyce.McNeil@k12.wa.us

Joshua Halsey

Joshua.Halsey@k12.wa.us

Office: (360) 725-5511

STATE EDUCATION SPRING TEST SCORES RELEASED; CHARTER SCHOOLS SHOW PROMISING TRENDS

On September 7 [OSPI announced proficiency data](#) based on Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and End of Course (EOC) exams from public schools throughout the state of Washington for the 2016-17 school year. Growth data will be announced/released at a later date by OSPI. While this is the first full year of charter school data, there are some promising trends across the charter public school sector, particularly among systemically underserved student demographic groups.

“This is the first full year of charter school data,” said Joshua Halsey, Executive Director of the Charter School Commission. “There are all kinds of indicators and benchmarks here for us in academics and beyond.” English Language Arts and math are tested every year in grades 3 through 8 and again in 11th grade in Washington State.

There are currently 8 charter public schools in Washington state operating under the Charter School Commission (CSC): 1 elementary, 4 middle, 1 middle/high and 2 high schools.

Students’ scores are evaluated and compared to other schools in Washington State. Compared to state-wide student demographics, charter public schools serve more low-income students and a higher percentage of students of color. The Commission’s Academic Performance Framework takes these and other relevant considerations into account when it assesses each school’s outcomes.

Looking at that data in context of school demographics is critical. For example, the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch at charter public schools is 66 percent, the statewide average is 43 percent. The percentage of students of color at charter public schools is 77.2 percent; the

state average is 44.8 percent. Overall, Commission-authorized charter schools outperformed the state average in 5th grade and were on par with the state for 8th grade SBAC math.

Fortunately, standardized test scores aren't the only indicators for student learning or school success in charter schools. We can also find success in charter schools if we look at attendance, rates of suspension and mission specific goals. And, we can also find inspiration and hope in systems level successes, classroom level successes, and special education and learning intervention strategies.

During the 2016 – 17 school year, 5 of 6 operating schools participated in state testing based on their grade configuration. Notably, all CSC schools except one met or exceeded their **academic** mission-specific goals:

- 61.8% of students met their personal growth target on the Scholastic Reading Inventory at **Green Dot Destiny**
- Students at **Rainier Prep** made average growth of 1.5 years within the year on the STAR reading assessment
- 73% of Kindergarten and first grade students at **SOAR** met their yearly growth goals as evidenced through in-program benchmark assessment
- 88% of students at **SOAR** completed a year of dance education according to pacing and benchmarks at their grade level
- 84% of students at **Summit Olympus** met their personal growth target according to their Personalized Learning Plan
- 98% of students at **Summit Sierra** met their personal growth target according to their Personalized Learning Plan

“Considering the challenges that our charter schools experienced last year and its impact at all of the schools, these results are promising,” said Halsey. “Some of the results are not quite what we ... or the schools... would like to see. But this is a chance to assess, adjust and achieve. We’re poised for recovery.”

Fortunately, the five-year charter contracts give these schools a great chance at both recovery and excellence. Halsey believes the kids at the charter public schools have a chance to be real “comeback kids.”

School officials are already strategizing individually and collectively on ways to achieve marked improvements next year.

About Washington State’s 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.

###

