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TWO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO OPEN CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Today, the Washington State Charter School Commission announced that two non-profit organizations have submitted proposals to open high-quality charter public schools in the state of Washington. If they are authorized to open in the 2019-2020 school year, they will expand the Commission's portfolio to 12 schools in the state.

Those applicants are:

- Ashe Preparatory Academy: a K-8th grade school with a proposed location in the Skyway/West Hill neighborhood of Renton
- Whatcom Intergenerational High School: a 9-12th grade high school with a proposed location midway between the Bellingham/Ferndale school districts

While Ashe Preparatory will expand the impact and reach for Seattle area families that charter schools serve, Whatcom Intergenerational High School will be the state's northernmost located school to date, and the first charter public school in Whatcom County.

This year's submissions marks the fifth round of applications received by the Commission. Each applicant was asked to put forth an innovative, rigorous and culturally responsive plan to meet the needs of students they intend to serve. The applicants' next step will include having their proposals evaluated by a cadre of experienced reviewers from across the country and Washington state.

“This is a major accomplishment for the operators of these two schools,” said Joshua Halsey, Executive Director of the Charter School Commission. “They are brave enough to imagine education differently, and are willing to innovate in the sphere of accountability, choice and autonomy.”

The new school applications will be thoroughly evaluated to determine the organizational, academic, and financial capacity of each applicant team. The evaluation process includes an in-person interview with the schools’ founding teams and Public Forums for public input. The Commission will pass final resolutions of approval or denial for each application at its June 2018 meeting at South Seattle Community College’s Georgetown Campus.

Charter public schools are independent public schools operated by non-profit organizations that are allowed more flexibility to be innovative with their educational program and are held accountable for improved student achievement. Broadly, charters public schools must adhere to the same state learning standards, accountability goals, health and safety requirements, and non-discrimination laws. Like traditional public schools, charter public schools must hire certificated teachers, must follow generally accepted accounting principles and are subject to state financial audits. They are free and open to all students.

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

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