

June 3, 2015

Board of Directors
First Place Scholars Charter School
172 20th Ave
Seattle, WA 98118

As you know, at the May 21st meeting of the Charter Commission, Commissioners voted to provide First Place Scholars Charter School (First Place) a final opportunity to demonstrate compliance with its legal obligations. This decision was made out of respect for the mission and goals of the school and the passion and hard work that First Place and its leaders have devoted to this school. We are hopeful that over the next couple weeks First Place can provide the necessary assurances that will allow First Place to continue as a public charter school.

Commissioners and staff have carefully reviewed your responses to the Commission's inquiries regarding special education, English language learners and the academic program. Although key staff have been hired, special education policies and procedures have been put in place, and evidence of an English language learners program is beginning to emerge, we are still missing critical information in several key areas outlined below that the Commission requires in order for Commissioners to vote in favor of you maintaining your charter. Several deficiencies deliberated at length at our meeting included:

- Lack of fidelity to key components of the Education Program under the charter contract including student level data regarding academic learning over the course of this school year;
- Lack of special education services as required by law including a lack of fidelity, and capacity, to implement the school's general and compensatory services special education plans;
- Lack of evidence that First Place has satisfied legal requirements for serving English language learners (ELL), including a lack of an ELL programmatic plan and evidence that required assessments and services have been provided to students; and
- The financial viability of the school.

This letter follows a lengthy process in which First Place has been given multiple opportunities to demonstrate that its education program is being operated in accordance with First Place's legal and contractual obligations as a public charter school. Since November 4, 2014, the Commission has been working with First Place in an effort to ensure that it is satisfying its obligations to its students and the citizens of Washington. This has resulted in probation, corrective action, notices of concern, and

multiple meetings and requests for documentation. It has also resulted in the Commission identifying resources to help support First Place and providing First Place with assistance of a professional with expertise in the field of special education. In order for Commissioners to vote in favor of First Place maintaining its charter and continue to serve students as a public charter school, the Commission requires concrete evidence that First Place will bring itself into compliance with its legal obligations; make whole those students who have not received services to which they were entitled during this school year; and establish a strong foundation for future compliance. Because First Place has already had several opportunities to demonstrate progress and compliance since January, this is a final opportunity. The Commission views this as a demonstration of support from the Commission to First Place; failure to satisfy the conditions set out below by the identified deadlines will leave the Commissioners with no choice but to vote on resolution of revocation of the school's charter.

Set out below are nine conditions that First Place must satisfy by June 15, 2015. If those conditions are not met, we anticipate a resolution of revocation of First Place's charter contract to be presented with a strong likelihood of the resolution passing. If they are met, then First Place will be allowed to re-open for the 2015-2016 school year as long as it complies with its contractual and legal obligations and satisfies seven additional conditions designed to demonstrate that the deficiencies present during this school year have been corrected.

CONDITIONS TO BE SATISFIED BY JUNE 15, 2015

Special Education

- 1. Demonstrate that Special Education and related services are being provided for all eligible students and will continue to be provided going forward for students who may enroll and may be identified as eligible to receive special needs services and supports (School Psychologist, SLP, PT, OT, services for students with visual impairments, services for students with hearing impairments, services for students with autism, services for students with physically impaired, etc.).**

Evidence required:

- Documentation showing that First Place has hired or retained personnel, with the proper credentials, to deliver these services;
- Copies of contracts/agreements to provide students with required services; and
- A budget excerpt detailing allocations dedicated to paying for special needs programs, services, staffing for school year 2015/16.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

- 2. Demonstrate that all required Special Education compensatory services are currently being delivered to each eligible student in accordance with the proposed corrective action compensatory education plan.**

Evidence required:

- Master schedule for Special Education compensatory services signed by service providers at completion of each service delivery.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

- 3. Confirm that required (from 2014/15) Special Education compensatory services will be delivered per plan prior to the beginning of the 2015/16 school year.**

Evidence required:

- Master schedule signed by all assigned service providers;
- Documentation and other evidence that First Place has the funds, financial support, or other resources to deliver the compensatory services per the plan.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

- 4. Demonstrate that required Special Education compensatory services ordered by OSPI on December 31, 2014 as a result of Special Education Citizen Complaint (SECC) No. 14-64 are being provided.**

Evidence required:

- OSPI approved documentation that services have been secured with a private contractor, chosen by the parent, to conduct an independent educational evaluation (IEE) of the student.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

English Language Learners

- 1. Provide progress reports documenting delivery of required ELL services for all eligible students between the dates of May 15, 2015 and June 15, 2015.**

Evidence required:

- ELL schedule for each student signed by teacher providing services.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

- 2. Provide copies of the plan for each student eligible to receive language acquisition services/support.**

Evidence required:

Each student's plan must include:

- A two sentence description of the services being provided to support the student's English language development;
- Description of the procedure for determining that the services being provided are appropriate for the student's language development needs;
- Name of staff who is responsible for providing instruction; and
- A chart that shows the intensity and frequency of instruction.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

Core Educational Program Components

- 1. Demonstrate student progress monitoring is occurring 2014/15.**

Evidence required:

- Samples of 2 student "Report Cards" from each classroom teacher for 2014/15, signed by Linda Whitehead and the student's teacher(s). Each "Report Card" must contain assessment of each student's social emotional growth and be accompanied by information that describes how the various student assessments that were used

throughout the grading period contribute to the final “Report Card” score for each content area assessed.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

Financial Viability

- 1. Establish a viable expense budget for the 2015/16 school year using the Commission budget template.**

Evidence required:

- Expense budget for the 2015/16 school year using the Commission budget template.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business June 15, 2015.

UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF JUNE 15, 2015 CONDITIONS, FIRST PLACE MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED TIMELINES

Special Education

1. **Provide monthly progress reports demonstrating that required current and compensatory Special Education services are being delivered.**

Evidence required:

- Master schedule signed by all assigned service providers.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business on the following dates:

July 5, August 5, September 5, October 5, January 5, 2016, April 5, 2016, July 5, 2016.

2. **Demonstrate that appropriate roles and responsibilities have been assigned to school faculty and staff, and that those faculty and staff have been given sufficient time and resources consistent with their other responsibilities, to ensure school can/will satisfy its legal obligations as an independent LEA for special education purposes.**

Evidence required:

- Name of special education coordinator;
- Name of Section 504 coordinator;
- Name of individuals on school's IEP team;
- Description of respective roles of each IEP team member;
- Explanation of who makes ultimate placement determinations on IEP team;
- Explanation of if/when the school principal gets involved with placement decisions;
- Signed statement by every member of the IEP team that h/she understands and pledges to abide the policies, procedures and timelines (to identify, evaluate, place and serve students with special needs) as set forth in the school's special education program; and
- Explain how each of the identified individuals will be able to satisfy assigned roles and responsibilities given their other responsibilities.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business July 15, 2015.

3. Describe and demonstrate how students who are identified as being eligible for both state transitional bilingual instructional program (TBIP) and special education will participate in the TBIP to the same degree and consideration given every other child in the TBIP.

Evidence required:

- Evidence that students identified as being eligible for both the state transitional bilingual instructional program (TBIP) and special education program participate in the TBIP to the same degree and consideration given to every other child in the TBIP. For example:
 - IEP team includes certificated staff member with expertise in language acquisition.
 - Student schedules
 - Professional development to students' Special Education teachers and evidence of collaboration between ELL and Special Education teachers.
- District process for exiting a student from TBIP due to conditions beyond linguistic parameters.
- For student(s) who have been exited from TBIP due to conditions beyond linguistic parameters, provide evidence that an IEP team, which includes a certificated staff member with expertise in language acquisition, has determined that the student's disability is the factor for the English language skill deficiency. Include the data the team reviewed to make this determination.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business August 1, 2015.

English Language Learners

1. Demonstrate that First Place has implemented all aspects of the school's Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) and Title III policies and procedures within the OSPI required timelines.

Evidence required:

- Copies of home language surveys results for all students who are potentially eligible for services;
- State-approved language proficiency placement test score sheet with date enrolled and date administered for every eligible student;
- State-approved language proficiency annual test score sheet for every eligible student;
- Written parent waiver from parents who choose not to have their child receive ELL services;
- Description of services implemented at each grade level;
- Procedures for determining on a periodic basis that instructional services provided to each ELL student are appropriate for each ELL student's language development needs;
- ELL staff schedules; and
- Roster of eligible ELL students indicating type and amount of English language support services being provided to each student and evidence of service.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business October 10, 2015.

2. Provide monthly progress reports documenting delivery of required ELL services for all eligible students.

Evidence required:

- ELL schedule for each student signed by teacher providing services.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business on the following dates:
October 5, 2015; January 5, 2016; April 5, 2016; July 5, 2016

- 3. Provide copies of First Place’s completed and submitted Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) grant application (OSPI Form 219) and Title III Federal grant application (OSPI form 232).**

Evidence required:

- Completed TBIP grant application; and
- Completed Title III federal grant application

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business July 3, 2015.

Core Educational Program Components

- 1. Describe and demonstrate how First Place will fulfill its contractual obligations as defined in provision 4.4 Education Program of the charter contract.**

Evidence required:

- Review the entire provision 4.4 Education Program of the charter contract and describe and demonstrate how the school will comply with each goal and objective as described. Use attachment 1 as a template for your response.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business August 15, 2015.

Financial Viability

- 1. Beginning July 15, 2015 (date determined by when books for 2Q can be closed), submit to the Commission quarterly financial results using the Commission quarterly financial template.**

Evidence required:

- Completed quarterly financial result using the Commission quarterly financial template.

Evidence must be received by the Commission by close of business on the following dates:
July 15, 2015 (date determined by when books for 2Q can be closed).

- The Social-Emotional Report is filled out monthly by the classroom teacher.
- This assessment is used to track the social-emotional progress in the following competencies:
 - self-control,
 - self-awareness,
 - self-esteem,
 - relationship capacity,
 - conflict resolution,
 - ability to focus, and
 - creativity
- Each competency on the Social-Emotional Report has 3-6 behaviors contributing to the positive development of the competency.
- For our mental health reporting, we evaluate the social-emotional reports on a quarterly basis to measure for progress.

For our mental health reporting, we evaluate the social-emotional reports on a quarterly basis to measure for progress. By completing a monthly Mental Health report for each student, we are better prepared to recognize patterns in behaviors and address them accordingly with the parents and teacher.

- All student assessment data, whether academic or socio-emotional, will be produced in multiple formats, which provide both aggregated and disaggregated results by various demographic categories.

Academic Growth:

For the at-risk students we serve, we must attend to both the academic and social-emotional needs of our students to support obtaining their academic goals.

- Our students' achievement will be measured against their own progress: our students are assessed upon enrollment and periodically throughout their educational career at FPSCS so that the level of progress of each child is clear.
- The majority of students at FPSCS arrive two to three years below grade level and may also have social/emotional challenges as well.
- The teachers and case managers' work together to address behavior difficulties and assist the family to support their students' success so that the children are then supported in gaining proficiencies and accelerating their progress toward grade level performance.
- Beginning in 2014-15, First Place will implement all required state testing, including the summative Smarter Balanced Assessments.

In addition, First Place will use interim assessments in reading and math. We are currently investigating several. As we consider and try out various assessments, First Place teachers must always consider three important social-emotional factors.

- First, many of our students have experienced trauma, and are especially sensitive to failure. Over-testing or taking tests that are a poor fit for their skills may cause some students to shut down emotionally and cognitively.
- Second, testing may not provide an accurate measure of our students' accumulated skills and knowledge. As an example, because our students are highly mobile, they often have gaps in their education. Some tests may misinterpret these gaps to mean that a child has little

<p>or no knowledge in a specific subject or skill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Third, some tests are not culturally relevant. As recently as this year, we have tried tests that included references to products and games relevant to middleclass lifestyles, but not relevant to economically disadvantaged and immigrant families. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reading Interim Assessments - First Place is investigating various formative reading assessments and comparing them with the STAR multiple choice assessment that we have used for several years. As soon as the Smarter Balanced Assessments formative assessments are completed, we will include those.▪ We will build on our prior experience to fine-tune and accelerate instruction. Primary teachers have been using phonics assessments, including CORE phonics survey and <p>Fountas and Pinnell phonics. They are also using Reading A-Z. We are also trying out the Columbia Teachers College Reading assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We anticipate selecting a school-wide blended learning literacy program, and are still reviewing options. We anticipate selecting a program with embedded formative assessments and robust student progress tracking:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ First, the program and assessments will provide students with instructional resources to personalize their literacy development, as well as providing teachers with indicators of individual literacy strengths and gaps so that teachers may provide	
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<p>to track each student’s social-emotional progress in the following competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ self-control, ○ self-awareness, ○ self-esteem, ○ relationship capacity, ○ conflict resolution, ○ ability to focus, and ○ creativity <p>Organizational Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Place will regularly evaluate teaching staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Washington State Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project is in the process of developing a comprehensive 8-tiered approach to teacher evaluation that includes student performance as well as professional practice. When this model is in place, First Place will contract with a local educational agency to carry out the evaluation, to ensure objectivity. ▪ We will also put in place an assessment system for administrators and the Board. ▪ In addition to assessing individuals, First Place will regularly assess programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The key to improving teaching is regularly evaluating current programs. Fuchs and Fuchs (1986). ▪ Finally, we will implement a system that will collate and synthesize all the information we have gathered in the individual data systems. Through its data system, FPSCS will create reports based on the assessment information, including attendance and social-emotional progress, to give a snapshot of the student’s progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data will be analyzed quarterly with a final report at the end of the year for individual students, classrooms, and as a whole school (when applicable). 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The timely analysis of data will allow for the principal to make adjustments, refining and improving instruction.▪ Annual reports will be produced encompassing academic highlights, and organizational progress and made available at the annual First Place sponsored fundraising event, Parent Advisory Council meetings, and school functions.▪ The persons responsible include the school principal, education team, mental health team and family support services—assisted by the administration.▪ The school principal will be responsible for the managing the data, interpreting it for classroom teachers and all FPSCS staff, as well as leading and coordinating professional development to improve student achievement.▪ School leadership will seek out training in Smarter Balanced Assessment; the Washington State Performance Framework, and the data systems we implement to enhance reporting ability and reduce time spent compiling reports.	
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