

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**ATTN**: Accountability framework governing charter public schools in Washington

## Charter Public School Accountability Actions

Charter public schools in Washington are subject to an <u>accountability framework</u> overseen by the Washington State Charter School Commission, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Auditor's Office and each charter public school's board

WASHINGTON – As part of its role in overseeing charter public schools in Washington, the State Auditor's Office has released its regular accountability audit reports for the 2021-22 school year. Twelve out of 13 charter public schools authorized by the Commission had no findings. One school had two findings, which align with oversight action the <u>Washington State Charter School Commission previously identified</u>. One school (Rainier Prep) was not audited this year due to showing consistent results in previous audits.

Public Charter School	Audit Result
Catalyst Public Schools	No findings
Impact Commencement Bay Elementary	No findings
Impact Puget Sound Elementary	No findings
Impact Salish Sea Elementary	No findings
Pinnacles Prep	No findings
Pullman Community Montessori	No findings
Rainier Valley Leadership Academy	No findings
Spokane International Academy	No findings
Summit Atlas	No findings
Summit Olympus	No findings
Summit Sierra	No findings
Whatcom Intergenerational High School	2 findings
Why Not You Academy (Cascade Public Schools)	No findings

Specific to Whatcom Intergenerational High School (WIHS), the State Auditor's Office found that:

- The Board of Directors conducted business while WIHS Whatcom Intergenerational High School's nonprofit corporation was administratively dissolved by the Secretary of State.
  - Commission Oversight Action: In its contracts with charter public schools, the Commission requires schools to immediately notify the Commission of any changes to its nonprofit corporation status. Failure to do so is a breach of contract. The Commission has added a requirement for schools to submit proof of active nonprofit status to the Commission annually.
- Whatcom Intergenerational High School did not have adequate controls to ensure compliance with state procurement laws for public works.
  - Commission Oversight Action: In September 2022, the Commission issued a Letter of Inquiry requiring the school to submit evidence of following its financial and procurement policies. As a result, the school conducted an investigation and implemented additional protocols to ensure adherence to all policies.

"Charter public schools are a tuition-free public school choice available to families in our state," said Commissioner Christine Varela. "In Washington, charter public schools are subject to unique and strict accountability requirements to ensure the interests of students come first when evaluating the practices and performance of each school. As with any public school receiving taxpayer support, the State Auditor's Office plays a critical accountability role in the oversight of charter public schools. Additionally, the Commission has specific system compliance responsibilities in accordance with state law."

Every charter public school authorized in Washington has an executed contract between a qualified provider and an authorizer that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations for each school. Additional details on the accountability framework governing tuition-free charter public schools in Washington may be found in this infographic.

## 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 charter public schools and their boards 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.

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