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WASHINGTON'S CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION AUTHORIZES FOUR NEW CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Olympia, WA – Today, Washington State’s Charter School Commission (the Commission) announced their authorization of four new charter public schools in Washington. [Catalyst Public Schools](#) in Bremerton, [Cascade Public Schools](#) in Midway/Federal Way, [Whatcom Intergenerational High School](#) in Bellingham/Ferndale and [Impact Public Schools](#) in South Seattle/Renton have been approved to open their doors in September of 2020. Before a standing room only crowd, the new charter leaders and their supporters laid out their plans to meet the needs of the students and the communities they serve. These schools will be held accountable for rigorous learning goals established by the [Commission](#) in addition to the unique student and community goals which they have set for themselves.

“The Commission is delighted for the students and families of Bremerton, Whatcom County, South Seattle and South King County to have four new, highly innovative charter public school options. Each of these schools has been through an extremely rigorous application process requiring extensive community engagement. The result was four very different schools – each with a unique and innovative approach to learning – while sharing the same high expectations for every child,” said Commission Chair Cindi Williams.

The Commission’s evaluation process included thorough reviews of planned education programs, school finance, school operations/governance, and in-person interviews with applicants. Public forums were hosted for each applicant to provide families and community members an opportunity to learn about and provide input on each application.

“These new charter public schools speak to specific needs within their communities and have developed student centered, innovative and creative ways of addressing those needs. From competency-based learning to “leaving to learn”, to intense mentorships, these schools are designed to meet the needs of the individual learner,” said Commission Executive Director Joshua Halsey.

The approved schools will open in the Fall of 2020 and will be subject to strict oversight and public accountability, including annual performance reviews to evaluate their success in improving student outcomes. Over the next year, the approved schools will acquire facilities, hire staff, enroll students and become part of the community they will serve.

Here is a summary of the four newly authorized charter public schools in Washington:

Operator: Catalyst Public Schools
School Name: Catalyst: Bremerton
Grades Served: K-8
School Location: Bremerton

Summary:

Catalyst: Bremerton will serve approximately 500 K-8 students in Bremerton and Kitsap County. Co-founded by experienced charter school leaders, Catalyst: Bremerton plans to improve educational outcomes for students through a rigorous academic program coupled with dynamic supports for all learners. Additionally, the school will employ positive youth development practices so that students find their purpose and passion in life and act as catalysts for change in their own communities. Catalyst: Bremerton will be the first charter school serving Kitsap County.

Operator: Cascade Public Schools
School: Cascade: Midway
Grades Served: 9-12
School Location: Midway (South King County)

Summary:

Cascade Public Schools will open an innovative high school for 400 students in the Midway area of South King County. The school will combine personalized, interdisciplinary, college preparatory academics with a robust internship program designed to prepare students for post-secondary and career success. Each student will be paired with a supportive adult mentor thanks to a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound. Cascade: Midway's program emphasizes the development of non-cognitive competencies so that the definition of student success is not limited to academic achievement alone.

Operator: Whatcom Intergenerational High School
School: Whatcom Intergenerational High School
Grades Served: 9-12
School Location: Bellingham/Ferndale

Summary:

Whatcom Intergenerational High School (WIHS) will be the first charter school to serve students in the Bellingham and Ferndale area. The 300-student school will employ "Phenomenon-based Learning" (a model focused on the study of real-world conditions) and each student will be paired with an elder (community-based mentor) to support intergenerational learning. Partnering with Whiteswan Environmental, a local, Indigenous-lead, non-profit organization, WIHS aims to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being with Western knowledge so that all students can contribute to a more just and sustainable world.

Operator: Impact Public Schools
School: Impact | Salish Sea Elementary
Grades Served: K-5
School Location: South Seattle/Renton

Summary:

Impact| Salish Sea Elementary will be Impact Public Schools' (IPS) second elementary school serving upwards of 500 students in the South Seattle or Renton area. The academic model includes personalized learning pathways for every student and project-based learning starting in kindergarten. In addition to the core academic program, students receive significant social-emotional support and work to develop non-cognitive competencies through school-based mentor groups. IPS opened Impact | Puget Sound Elementary in Tukwila in 2018 and currently serves 176 kindergarten and first grade students. IPS aims to be Washington's first homegrown charter management organization.

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.

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